

RIDE WITH A VIEW

ONCE HELD IN DARK, SWEATY ROOMS OF TORTURE, SPIN CLASSES NOW TAKE YOU TO A HIGHER PLACE. GEORGIA KICKARD GOES FOR A SPIN

WE'RE CRUISING Up the Tasmanian coastline, on a smooth asphalt road that seems made for cyclists. To our right winks a sapphire-speckled sea; to the left, it's endless paddocks. Easy going, I think happily, admiring the birds zooming above. Then the road slopes suddenly upward.

"All right guys," says trainer Tom over his microphone. "Time to dial up the resistance a bit."

And just like that, I'm back in the room. Spin classes: the world's great fitness divider. No other exercise inspires such enthusiasm and hatred in equal measure. I'm a card carrying member of the latter camp - how could anyone actually enjoy cycling madly in a hot, sweat box? But today is no ordinary spin class.

Fitness entrepreneur and founder Tom Sproats was at the gym when he came up with the idea of turning static cycling into a virtual travel trip "I was doing a spin class with my brother, and the trainer said, 'Visualise yourself climbing a hill'," Tom explains. "We looked at each

other and thought, 'There's a business idea in that'."

Five years later, Scenic Cycle is a thriving business in Sydney's CBD and exercisers can book into classes that take them along some of the world's most scenic (and challenging) locations.

Bikes are state-of-the art. Scented candles dot the room. Sweat towels are complimentary.

Most importantly, two enormous screens cover the front wall of the room, screening real time cycling through extraordinary scenery. It doesn't take long to see this isn't just a workout: it's a slickly executed production.

When Tom tells us to sprint, the video speeds up. And when we're climbing hills, the video slows down. Excruciatingly.

"You can do it!" Tom calls. And I can. Just.

Tom is in negotiations over two more Sydney locations, with plans to expand interstate. Scenic Cycle, it seems, is

poised to be the next big thing in fitness. And I understand why about halfway through my workout.

We're winding up hairpin turns on a thin, gravelly road where billion-year-old cliff faces loom at every corner as we pedal, while charging anthems by AC/DC pound in our ears.

Caught up in the adrenaline I think: I can do this. Suddenly I'm pedalling as though I'm Cade] Evans. I can do this.

I am Cadel Evans. I'm Beyonce. I'm the king of the world. I CAN DO THIS!

By the time the song ends I'm exhausted, totally spent from my miniature tour de glory.

Scenic Cycle might not literally take you travelling, but I definitely went to a happy place.