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 /tequilaavionaustria



89

VIOLETTA
Not all Polish women
are created equal.
Actually, some really
are Poles apart



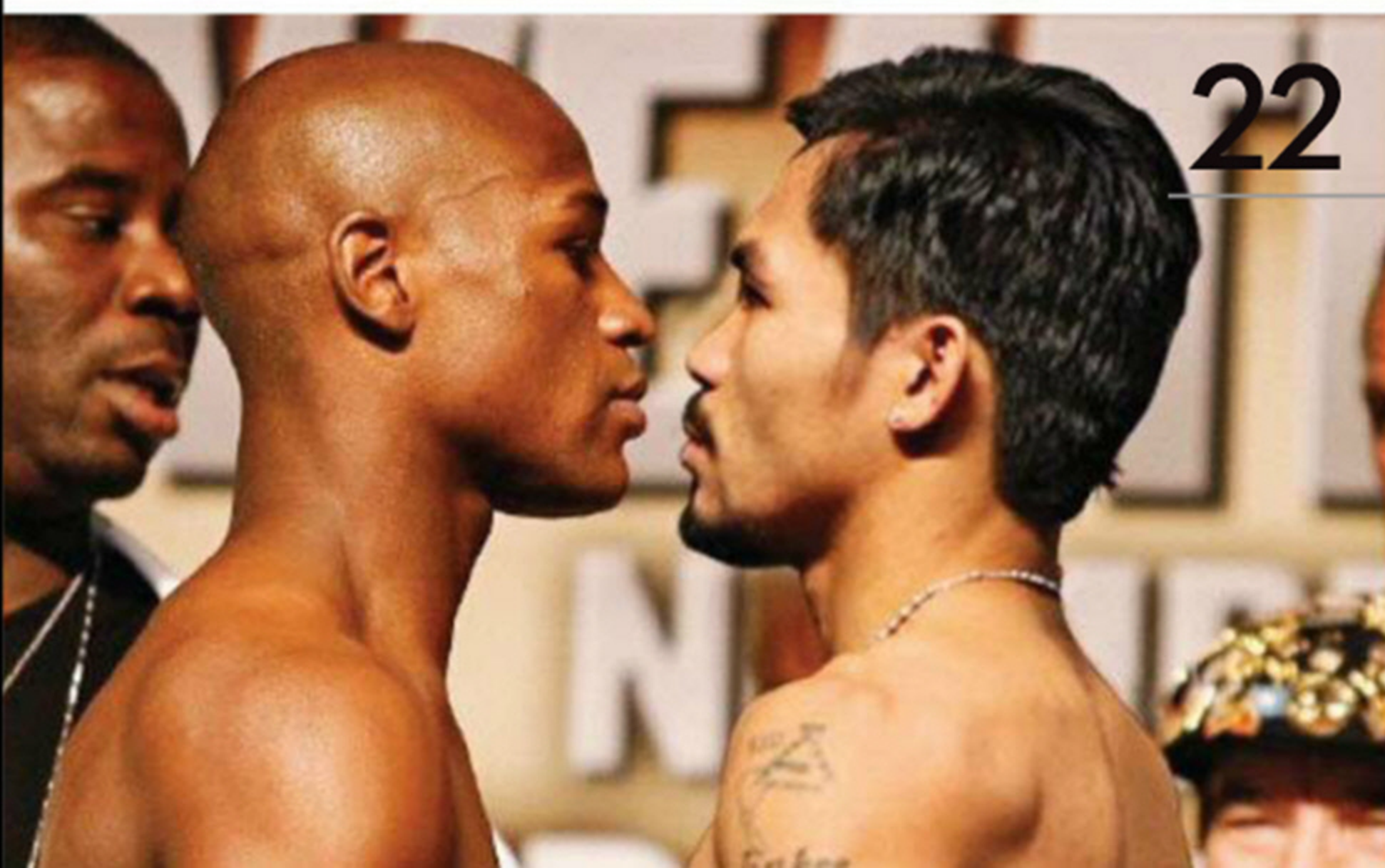
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What really goes down in reader land



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FROM THE EDITOR

AS A teenager growing up on Sydney's upper north shore, I appeared a pretty regular kid. Played club rugby, helped my mum around the house, mowed lawns for some extra cash. But behind this outwardly normal façade lurked a habitual criminal with a dark secret.

Yes folks, I was – *gasp* – a semi-regular marijuana smoker. Nothing too dedicated; just the odd joint or a few cones with friends or at a party on the weekend. We didn't take the illegality of our little sessions too seriously – we weren't exactly the Walter Whites of the weed world. But in the eyes of the law, we were criminals who needed to be punished by The System.

This would become most apparent, mid-toke, in late 1983, as I sat in a pleasantly baked fog with some mates in a small clearing adjacent to the local football oval. As I gently exhaled some of Mullumbimby's finest, two large and menacing figures in blue uniform appeared, hollering for us to hit the ground and spread 'em. Rather than shoot it out – not really my style, and the lack of a gun would have made it tricky – I did the next logical thing: I ran like a scalded cat. My speed was not the issue; rather, my directional sense: I bolted almost straight into their waiting cop car parked in a nearby cul de sac, which was manned by a pimply junior constable not much older than me.

So add 'resisting arrest' to the charges of possession of both a controlled substance and of a prohibited implement (er, a juice bottle with a bit of garden hose stuck in it.) Several weeks later, a bored magistrate shook her head wearily as she fined me \$200 and made me promise to be a good boy for six months.

Fast-forward over 30 years and in most states, you're unlikely to find yourself in court for a minor pot bust, despite it still being a criminal offence in half the country. More significantly, trials of medical marijuana look likely to finally go ahead, giving some hope to families using an extract to successfully treat kids suffering from epilepsy and cancer. Is it possible the draconian stance on this ancient plant could finally be moving to something more rational? Read more in our feature on [page 102](#). And enjoy the issue.

Ash Westerman

SOCIAL



PARTY PEOPLE



BANG ON TRACK

Penthouse rolled out the red carpet for VIPs at a trackside mansion in Adelaide recently to celebrate the success of the TEAM PENTHOUSE Audi R8 GT3 race car which competed in the maiden round of the Australian GT Championship held at the Clipsal 500. Special guest Gabi Grecko took to the stage along with Publisher Damien Costas (left), who spoke about the new direction the legendary *Penthouse* brand is taking. Throughout the evening guests enjoyed their fill of the new selection of Penthouse Wines & Spirits and cut up the dance floor.

There was plenty of podium champagne for driver Nathan Antunes, who claimed overall round honours by winning the first two GT races then finishing third in the final. Antunes drove with great skill and consistency, and did well to keep clear of trouble all weekend – particularly avoiding the carnage of a spectacular crash which caused an eye-watering \$1m worth of damage to Ferrari, McLaren and Audi competitors.





PENTHOUSE EVENT PLANNER



MÖTLEY CRÜE (WITH ALICE COOPER) 12-23 MAY

Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth livenation.com.au

SHOCK-ROCKER Alice Cooper joins the legendary Mötley Crüe for the Aussie leg of their Final Tour in what's being billed as "one final victory lap" for the Crüe. As for Alice? He'll probably never retire. The Final Tour marks the end of an era for the mighty Crüe, with all four original members having signed a binding 'Cessation of Touring' agreement, which takes effect at the end of 2015. Expect to see the infamous Cruecify drum coaster, fire spitting bass and pyrotechnics.



ADELAIDE FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

10-19 APR

Adelaide

adelaidefoodandwinefestival.org

Eat and drink yourself into a wine and cheese coma at this ten-day food fest, which features a coffee crawl, markets and the Bacon Trail – a tour of all things porcine.

JIM JEFFERIES

15-19 APR

Sydney

ticketek.com.au

This coke-snorting comic is great at telling stories... filthy, disgusting ones that you'll feel guilty for laughing at. From musings about anal sex only being a good idea on screen because, let's face it, you "can't smell porn" to jokes that would make a feminist snarl, Jeffries is definitely best suited for a night out with the boys, minus the girlfriend.

THE BLACK KEYS

16 APR

Adelaide

ticketek.com.au

Adelaide's the last stop on the map for this American rock duo who've been touring the country to promote their uplifting 8th full-length album *Turn Blue*.

BRITISH INDIA

16 APR

National

oztix.com.au

These indie rockers are hitting the road to support their latest album release, *Nothing Touches Me*. Their epic 18 date tour starts in Alice Springs and finishes in their home state of Victoria.

SYDNEY SAILBOAT EXPO

18-19 APR

Sydney

sydnaysailboatexpo.com.au

A chance to check out what's hot in sailing, plus catch a workshop or two on topics like splicing, boat maintenance, sailing fitness and more. Worth a nosey if you're a seasoned sailor or just keen to dip your toes in the sailing pond.

STEPHEN K AMOS

23-26 APR

Sydney

ticketek.com.au

This UK comedian has an uncanny ability to shift from smart, refined jokes about politicians to big bold gags about booze and sex. While he started out with the intention of getting laughs, his style has evolved into something deeper over the years.

GROOVIN THE MOO

25 APR - 10 MAY

National

2015.gtm.net.au

Now in its 11th year, the Moo will be Mooing its way through Australia, starting in Oakbank before heading to Bunbury, Bendigo, Canberra, Maitland and Townsville. Highlights include Hilltop Hoods and Wolfmother.

TARGA TASMANIA

28 APR - 3 MAY

Tasmania

targa.com.au

Closed-road tarmac racing, gorgeous natural surrounds and more than 2000 kilometres of against the clock racing over 40 stages make this event unmissable for petrol heads.

ACE FREHLEY

28 APR - 7 MAY

National

ticketek.com.au

When you listen to the studio albums of Kiss from the '70s, it's a no brainer why some fans are still pissed off that the band moved on without this influential axe man. Watch Ace as he tears through an exciting set of KISS classics and songs from his latest album, *Space Invader*.

JIMEOIN

1 MAY - 20 JUN

Various

ticketek.com.au

He's been flexing his eyebrows and rattling off razor-sharp gags about the mundane reality of every day life for over 20 years, yet somehow, Jimeoin manages to stay relevant (and hilarious). No gimmicks, just good craic.

SYDNEY FESTIVAL COMEDY GALA

3 MAY

Sydney

sydneycomedyfest.com.au

If the comedy festival leaves you feeling a little overwhelmed for choice, experience a taster of everything by grabbing yourself a ticket to the Gala. Get in quick though as it's bound to sell out.

LIOR SUCHARD

5-10 MAY

Sydney

sydneyoperahouse.com

This self-proclaimed mind-bender reckons he can read your mind and tell you what you're thinking. Why he'd want to know what's lurking around our grey matter is the only mystery to us. The skeptic in us is calling bullshit on this one.

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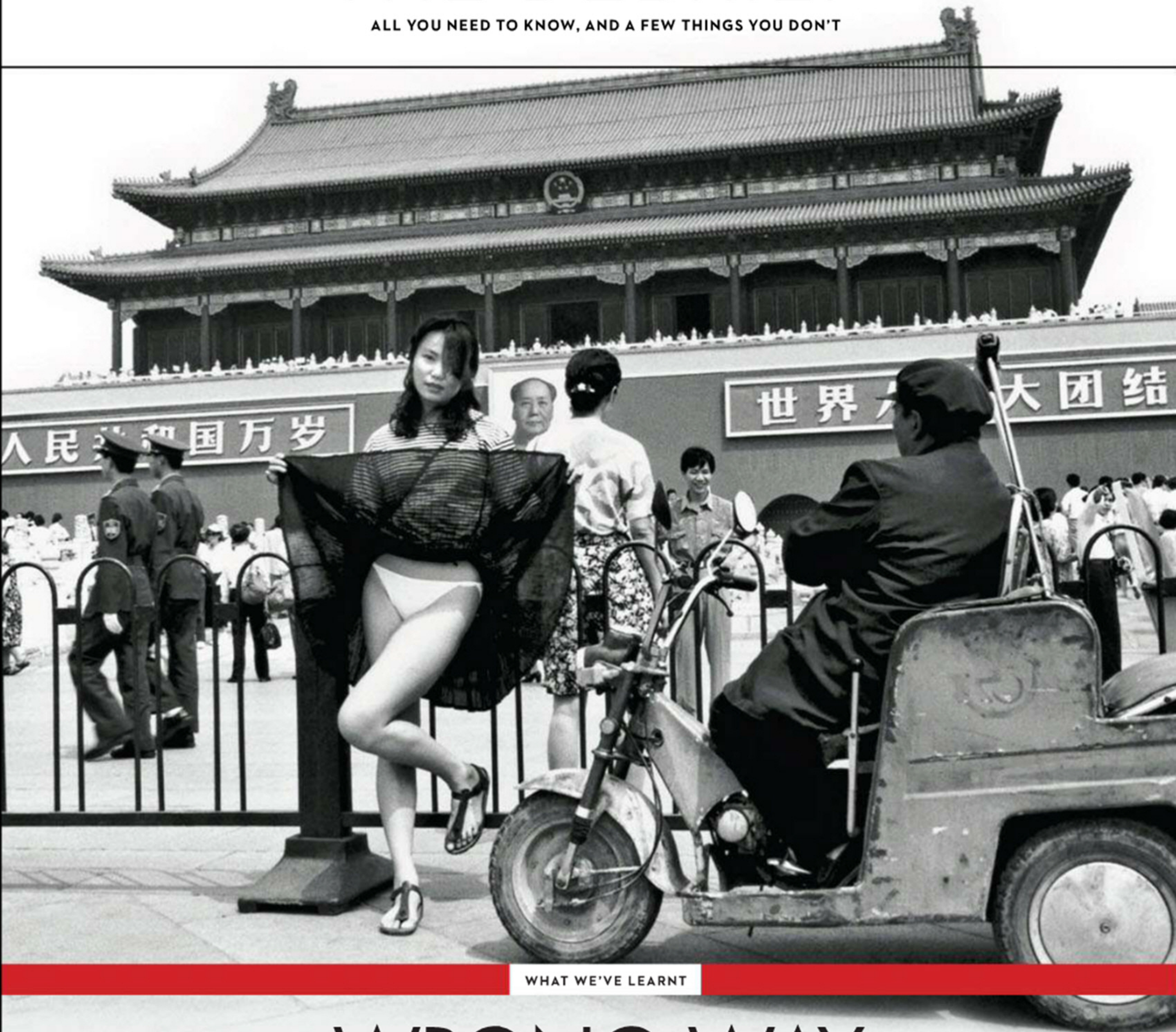
#AVIONLIFE



/tequilaavionaustralia

THE DEBRIEF

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW, AND A FEW THINGS YOU DON'T



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

WRONG WAY, TURN BACK

BUSY MAKING A LIST OF ALL THE PLACES YOU'D LIKE TO TRAVEL TO? HERE'S A BUNCH TO NOT INCLUDE...

WORDS : STEPHEN CORBY



CHINA – THE AIR APPARENT

Here's our travel tip on China – 1.3 billion people tend to make a place pretty crowded. So everywhere you go will be busy, and hard work, because those 1.3 billion people haven't grown up with the same sense of personal space that you have.

Sure, the Great Wall is 21,000km long, but all the bits you can get to are busy. Apparently you can see it from space, so you might be better off saving your money for when rocket flights get cheaper.

Beijing has The Forbidden City, which is impressive, but it's right next to Tiananmen Square, which is where the whole tanks and dead students thing Never Happened. And when you get back and try and show people your photos of The Forbidden City, all anyone will comment on is how bleak and black the sky looks in the background. At midday.

The air tastes almost as bad as it looks, you never see a living thing other than humans and cockroaches, and you blow black snot out of your nose. For these reasons, China is not the easiest or most relaxing place to visit. It's worth seeing, of course, because the sheer scale of the place, and the population, simply can't be imagined until you see it. If you do go, however, you'll find it does inspire you to travel more. Because if this is what the rest of the world's going to look like one day, you'd best go and see the good bits now.



YOU CAN ALMOST TASTE THE CORRUPTION

Africa, from Cairo to Cape Town, is an amazing continent, but there are some really shitty parts.

Top of the list to avoid would be Nigeria, a place possibly most famous for being staggeringly corrupt. While it ranks among the worst 10 countries of the world for terrorist acts, crime, HIV/Aids, corruption, bribery and more, it's number one globally for paying the highest average salaries to its elected officials.

To say Nigeria has nothing going for it would be doing it a kindness.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT



MOST OBVIOUSLY INSANE

Apparently you can go to North Korea as a tourist; Dennis Rodman did (left), and he seems to like it.

This comes as a surprise because they're generally fairly secretive about just how bad life is in this bizarrely decrepit country of 25 million basically imprisoned souls.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea describes itself as a 'socialist state', which is a really strange way of describing a dictatorship run by a lunatic, Kim Jong Un.

You might find bits of it quite empty, of course, because young Kim has recently been shipping people off to hell-holes like the Qatari World Cup site to work as slave labourers, so he can collect the foreign currency they earn.

North Korea also believes that is the rightful ruler of the whole peninsula and that the people in South Korea (not an exciting place to visit, either, sadly, unless you really love cabbage) are just in denial. Hence the constantly tense border and de-militarised zone, which isn't worth a visit either.

Let's just scratch all of Korea, shall we?



MOST OVER-RATED

We'll dispute a few of these in a moment, but a survey on Reddit asked people to vote for the most disappointing tourist destinations. The result, taken from a significant 50,000-plus responses, was that Los Angeles is the single biggest letdown to visit, followed by the Pyramids of Egypt and Stonehenge in the UK. This might seem harsh on Los Angeles, which is an extremely fun city if you're familiar with it and know where to go, but it reflects the fact that people always expect too much from it on first acquaintance.

American myth leads us to believe it's going to be a city of stars, sunshine and beaches full of Pamela Anderson. The reality is a giant, gridlocked expanse of concrete where you'll spend an unavoidably large amount of time sitting in a car. The beaches are grey, but the girls are fabulous, and the more you visit the more you love its grittiness. And its In'N'Out burgers.

If there's one city in America you don't want to visit, it's Detroit, which is an absolute toilet, and a broken one at that.

As for the Pyramids and Stonehenge, sure, Cairo is a difficult, dangerous and stomach-liquefying place to visit, but there's nothing disappointing about the Pyramid of Giza, with each of its 2.3 million stones bigger and heavier than a LandCruiser. If you're disappointed by that, you've got no soul. Egypt is hard work – particularly for your stomach – but you really must go there anyway. Stonehenge is somewhat ruined by having a whopping great motorway a stone's throw from its ancient mysteriousness, but there's still a bit of magic about it. The English cities to avoid like an ancient plague are Newcastle – because you'll get punched – and Birmingham, which feels like an actual physical representation of the word 'misery'.



SHUT IT AND START AGAIN

If, as a country, you have got a bit of an overcrowded shithole on your hands, and particularly if it's your capital, you could always just abandon it and start again, which is what the Egyptian government plans to do with Cairo.

The country's capital, which butts right up against the Pyramids and makes them look a bit messy, is apparently getting a bit crowded, with its 18 million people, so the plan is to build a new one at an unknown location.

The government has announced that it will be big – 390 square kilometres, or the size of Singapore – and that it will house seven million people. The other 11 million people should be starting to feel a bit nervous, although it's hard to see how the Egyptians will find the \$45 billion building such a city is estimated to cost.

AND YOUR LOCAL LOSER IS...

There really are some poor-quality contenders when it comes to singling out which Australian cities you shouldn't bother visiting.

The small towns with less excitement than a game of chess being played by two corpses are really too numerous to mention, and if we stick to the big cities, Perth and Adelaide certainly deserve a mention for their dullness, but our obvious loser is Canberra.

People say Washington DC has the same kind of orderly boredom about it, an unavoidable side effect of rubbing up cheek to bum cheek with too many politicians, but DC is outrageously exciting by comparison and has museums, in the Smithsonian, that knock Canberra's



piddling ones for six.

It's not just that all the obvious tourist spots are lame (the War Memorial is the only one worth seeing), it's the city itself. Nowhere has man so failed to achieve a feeling of conviviality. The whole place seems to be designed as a series of circles, the aim of which is to spin you around until you're bored and then spit you out again.



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STAR POWER

WOMEN ON THE RISE

FIVE TALENTED BABES WHO ARE BLIPPING THE RADAR

1. CHARLOTTE MCKINNEY

It wasn't until this former Guess model got starters for American burger joint Carl's Jr that we really started paying attention. In the ad, Charlotte walks naked through a farmer's market, her spectacular rig hidden by fruit and vegetables, *Austin Powers* style. "I'm a curvier bombshell with big boobs," McKinney says. "I'm not high-fashion. I don't do runway. You won't see me at Fashion Week." Based on Kate Upton's success, we think she'll do just fine.

2. CARMEN JORDA

Normally the hottest things at a Formula One race are the grid girls, but 26-year-old Carmen Jorda, who's just signed with the Lotus F1 team, is set to change that. She's the daughter of former racing driver Jose Miguel Jorda, and is only the second woman to land a seat with an F1 team. Jorda joins Lotus as a development driver, with a view to racing the car later in the year. Consider our engines revved.

3. EMMANUELLE CHRIQUI

Entourage the film is set to screen in the middle of this year, and mercifully, the scalding hotness that is Sloan will appear, cast again as E's love interest. Emmanuelle Chriqui is just one of those women that we could stare at all day. The 37-year-old Canadian is still the hottest thing on TV, despite embodying the voice of a cartoon character on Cartoon Network's rehashed *Thundercats*. It should be illegal for a body like that to be hidden behind the voice of a cartoon.

4. EMILY RATAJKOWSKI

Emily Ratajkowski found fame in 2013 after stripping off for Robin Thicke's 'Blurred Lines' video and since then has proved she's an extremely attractive force to be reckoned with. The 23-year-old beauty has been kept busy with modelling and testing out her acting chops in *Gone Girl* opposite Ben Affleck.

5. KELLY ROHRBACK

This busty blonde battled five other equally hot bikini babes to win the title of *Sports Illustrated's* 2015 Rookie of the Year, capturing 39 percent of the votes. Unbelievably, it was Kelly's first-ever professional shoot. Before getting in front of the lens, the 25-year-old was a pro golfer. Tell us you wouldn't love to play a round with her. 



1 TOP

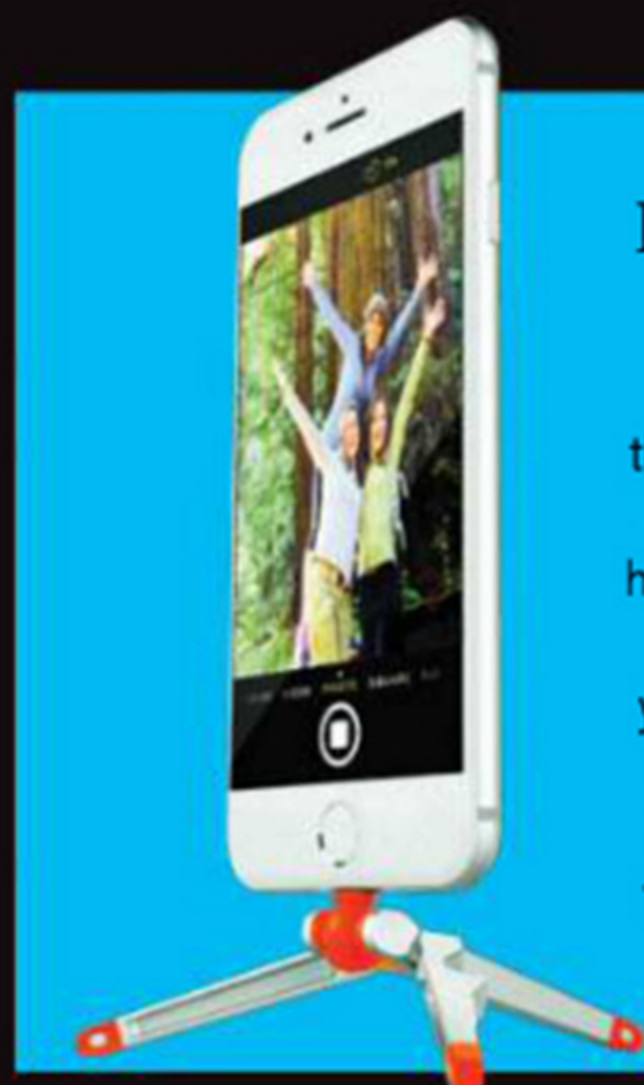
A ROUND-UP OF COOL STUFF THAT
PUSHED OUR BUTTONS THIS MONTH



1

A NEW SLANT

Say goodbye to depressing watered-down spirits with the Whiskey Wedge. The silicone form creates a chunky wedge of slow-melting ice that slots into a hefty old-fashioned tumbler. Result is a cool drink that retains its full flavour. **\$20**



2

HOLD THE PHONE

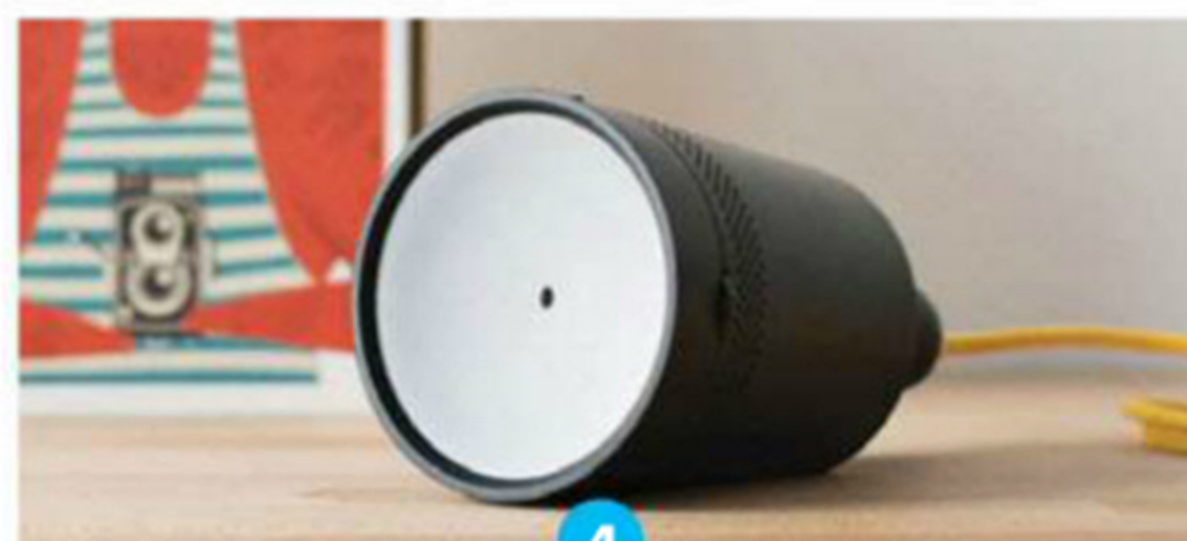
Conference calls, FaceTime... porn. There's a lot of handy things that you can do with your phone when you don't have to hold it. The Stance is a compact tripod that plugs directly into your phone's charging port giving you hands-free operation. When you're ready to unplug, the Stance has a built-in bottle opener. **\$30**



3

TOOLBOX FOR YOUR WRIST

Pairing a Swiss-made timepiece with a multi-tool bracelet packed with 20 tools for tackling any task, including a variety of drivers, wrenches, a glass breaker, a cutting hook and the ubiquitous bottle opener, the Leatherman Tread QM1 is the only wearable you need. **\$500**



4

BEAM ME UP

The Beam Smart Projector screws into any light socket, instantly creating a big screen image. It connects to smartphones via Bluetooth and delivers content over Wi-Fi. Perfect for an impromptu movie night. **\$400**



5

DON'T POP YOUR CORK

Pour a glass or two of your favourite vintage without ever having to crack open the bottle. Simply insert the needle through the cork, pressurise and then pour. After pouring, remove the needle and the cork reseals itself, allowing the bottle to continue aging. **\$299**



6 SKELETON CREW

Rolling naked never looked so good. Featuring minimalist body work almost hidden by a skeletal aluminium frame and a water-cooled, Honda-sourced 1234cc V4 engine at its heart, the Ariel Ace motorcycle can blast to 100km/h in just 3.4 seconds. It's also built to order and completely customisable. Want to alter the height of the handlebars, seat, or foot rests? Swap 'em. **\$34,000**

7

LIGHT UP THE MOUNTAIN

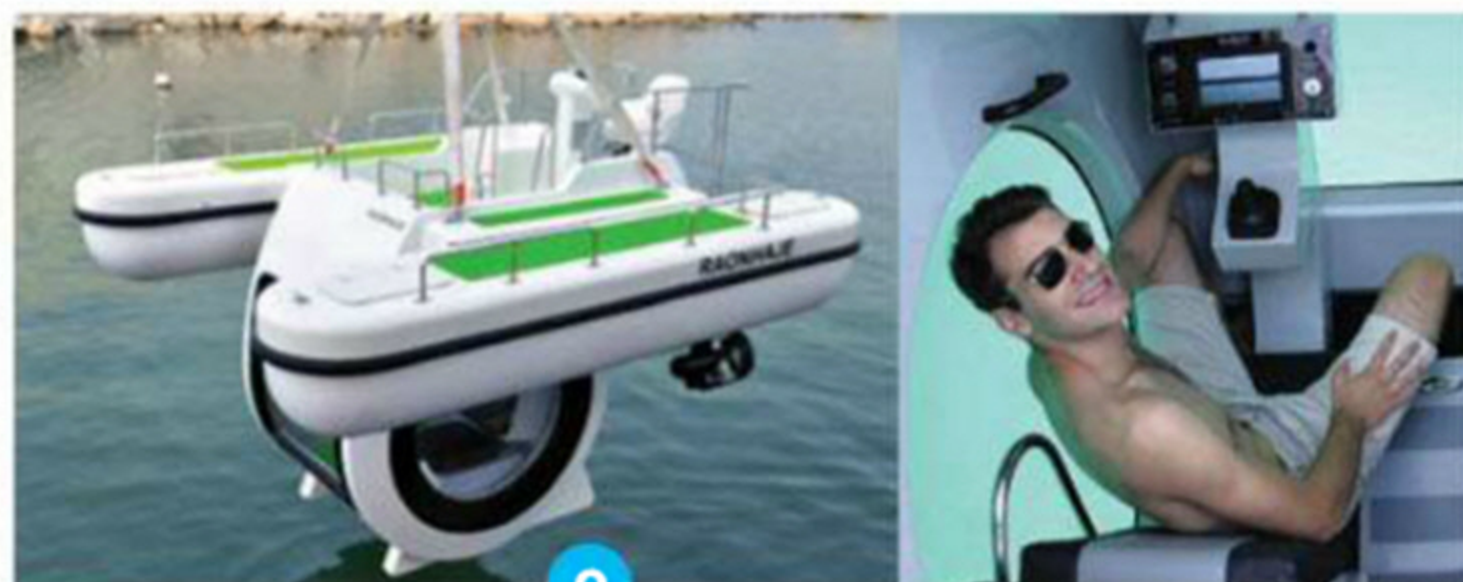
If you're the kind of snowboarder who likes to get noticed, these LunarEndor QS LED Snowboard Boots from Nike, with their 30 inbuilt LEDs, will turn plenty of heads on the slopes (and have you looking like you stepped out of *Tron*). The boots also feature Lunarlon foam for a softer ride and improved impact resistance. **\$ 1100**



8

HIT THE HIGH NOTES

Ten years of research went into The Phantom – a small, spherical, Wi-Fi connected amplifier and speaker that audiophiles are saying sounds better than speakers 20 times its size. **\$2000**



9

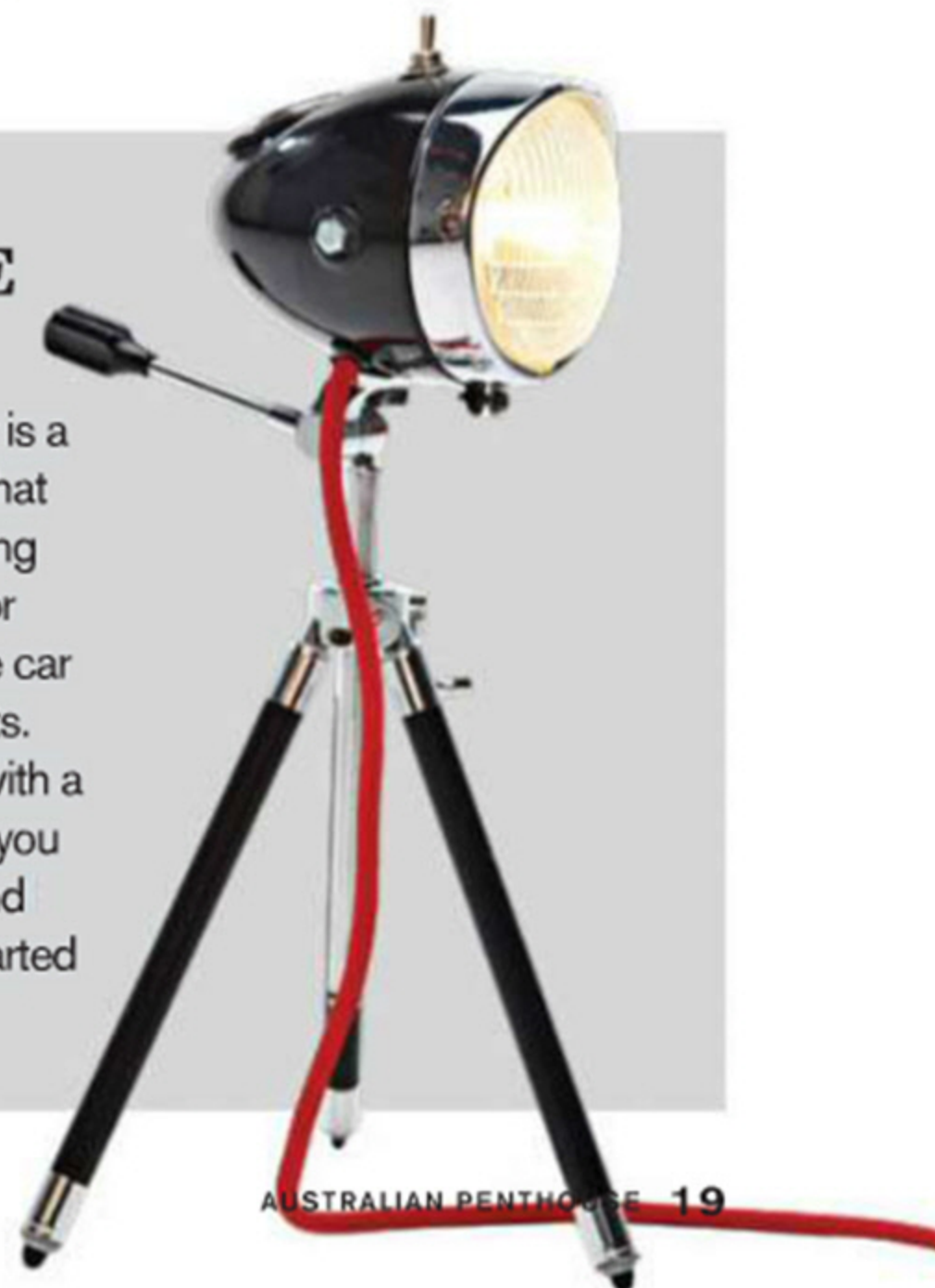
IN THE DEEP END

Explore the world beneath the waves with this luxurious semi-submarine from Korean firm EGO. The 'Penguin' has two floating hulls either side of a central cabin that sit below the water, allowing you to explore the ocean floor without actually getting wet. **(POA)**

10

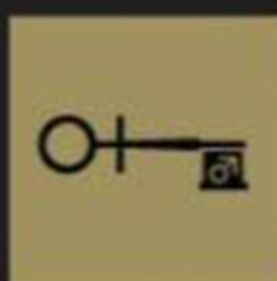
LEAVE THE LIGHT ON

Urban Light Factory is a German company that specialises in creating stylish desk and floor lamps out of vintage car and motorcycle parts. Each lamp comes with a history sheet telling you about the vehicle and where your lamp started its life. **(POA)**





WELCOME TO YOUR NEW **PENTHOUSE**



PENTHOUSE.COM.AU

MAN OF THE MOMENT

DAMON HERRIMAN

AUSTRALIAN ACTOR

IF WE'VE entered a golden age of TV – and we have – then it's also true that we've entered a golden age of character actors. Almost every iconic show of the era has featured an ensemble cast headed by one or more gifted character actors given time to grow into leading roles. James Gandolfini in *The Sopranos*. Steve Buscemi in *Boardwalk Empire*. Bryan Cranston in *Breaking Bad*. Almost everyone in *The Wire*, give or take Idris Elba. And the fan favourites: Omar Little, the Baltimore standover man; DEA agent Hank Schrader, Walter White's brother in law, blazing away in a car park. Tig in *Sons of Anarchy*. Floki in *Vikings*.

Not necessarily the prettiest guys. Just the most talented.

If you watched *Justified*, you can add another name: Dewey Crowe. Played by 45-year-old Sydney actor Damon Herriman, Dewey was described, succinctly, by Australian critic David Dale as “a cowardly, murdering, drug-dealing, brothel-owning hillbilly redneck with delusions of grandeur.” Not to mention: a loser, and tragically thick. But then, oddly, beloved.

One of Herriman's Australian industry nicknames was ‘the chameleon’. Those skills weren't lost on the likes of Stephen Soderberg, who directed him in a stage play in Sydney, or on the audience for last year's INXS TV mini-series, in which he played swaggering lawyer Chris Murphy. Or on Rusty Crowe, who cast him as a priest in *The Water Diviner*. Nor were they lost on the casting director of *Justified* – for which he'd auditioned with such a convincing redneck accent that they only learned he was Australian after he was hired.

The current season is *Justified*'s last. The morally complex black comedy/drama based in Harlan, Kentucky, is declaring after six series. Dewey didn't make it. The twitchy best mate to the

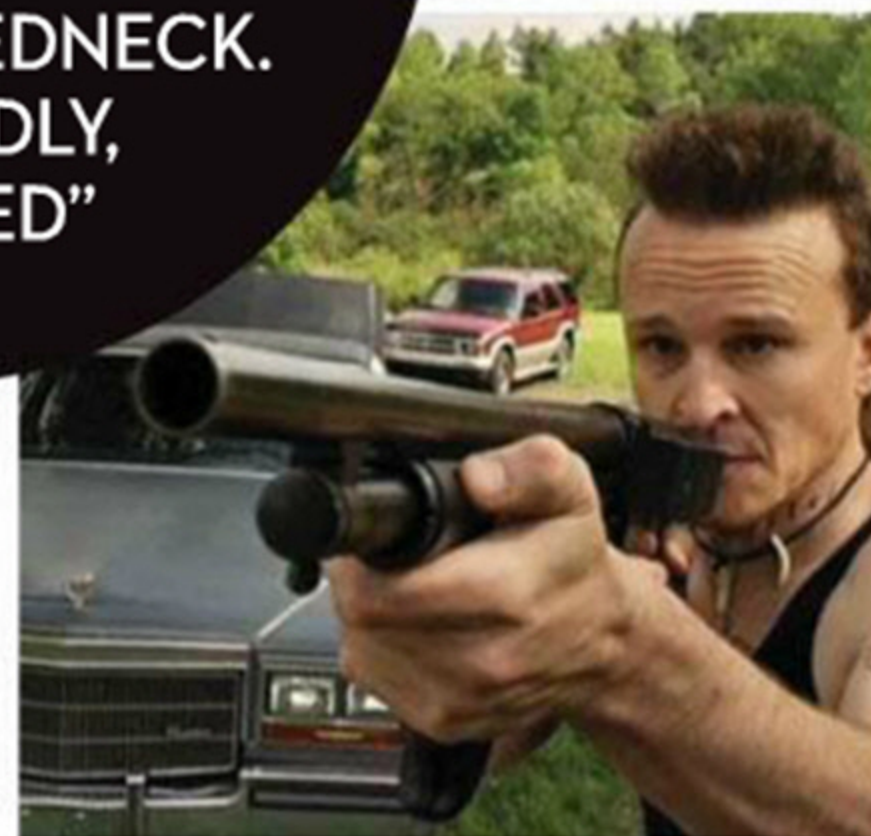
show's biggest villain was shot in the back of the skull by his pal in Season 6's debut. It was surprisingly touching. The writers reasoned that he'd become too popular with *Justified*'s fan base.

“I loved it,” Herriman said, of Dewey's execution. “It would be nice for me if he were still alive, but a lot less interesting. He'd had his nine lives and he'd stuffed up one too many times.”

The genius of Dewey Crowe was watching him struggle to cope with situations unfolding in ways precisely the opposite of how he'd anticipated. Herriman, on the other hand, is coping well.

Post *Justified*, with Dewey still fizzing in the brain's of Hollywood casting agents. He's signed on to play a detective in *Battle Creek*, a Michigan-based cop show from Vince Gilligan, the man who made *Breaking Bad*. And *Flesh and Bone*, a limited eight-ep TV series set in NYC by David Michod, the Australian director of

“HERRIMAN'S CHARACTER IN *JUSTIFIED* IS A COWARDLY, MURDERING DRUG-DEALING, BROTHEL-OWNING HILLBILLY REDNECK. BUT ODDLY, BELOVED”



Animal Kingdom. And a ‘dark comedy’ about the Cronulla Riots. And now *Quarry*, an HBO series set in New Orleans in the 1970s. “It has awesome scripts,” he says.

Great character actors always feel like they've been there all along even as they arrive suddenly. But whether you're Tilda Swanton, Christopher Waltz, Mark Strong or a jumped-up Australian, you've got to make hay when you're the flavour of the month.

“This should be an adventure,” says Herriman. ☺



SPORT

WORDS: DAVID LEWIS

CLASSIC HITS

THE SHOWDOWN BETWEEN TWO OF BOXING'S GREATEST FIGHTERS WILL NET SPORT'S BIGGEST PAYDAY, BUT IN THE 'NOBLE ART', NOTHING IS EVER THIS STRAIGHTFORWARD

FLOYD Mayweather glides around the ring in the stifling heat of his Las Vegas gym, aiming punches and insults at his sparring partner to a sycophantic soundtrack of sniggers and chuckles from a fawning gallery of hangers on.

It's September 2008, and the patsy on the end of the blows and banter from the world's top-earning athlete is none other than South African-born two-time world welterweight champion Lovemore Ndou, the naturalised Australian who, six years on, has swapped upper cuts for affidavits in his new life as a Sydney-based lawyer.

Since then, Mayweather – boxing's pound-for-pound potentate – has clocked up another \$US450 million from eight title defences. And on May 2 in Las Vegas, he is expected to pocket around US\$180 million from his long-anticipated duel with Manny Pacquiao from sport's first US\$300 million mega-bout.

With 'Money' Mayweather habitually splashing up to US\$1 million for a single item of bling, committed to sustaining an entourage of over 30 flunkies, as well as running two private jets, a fleet of ultra-luxury cars and a host of lavish homes, too much cash may never be enough.

Hence the war of the welterweights

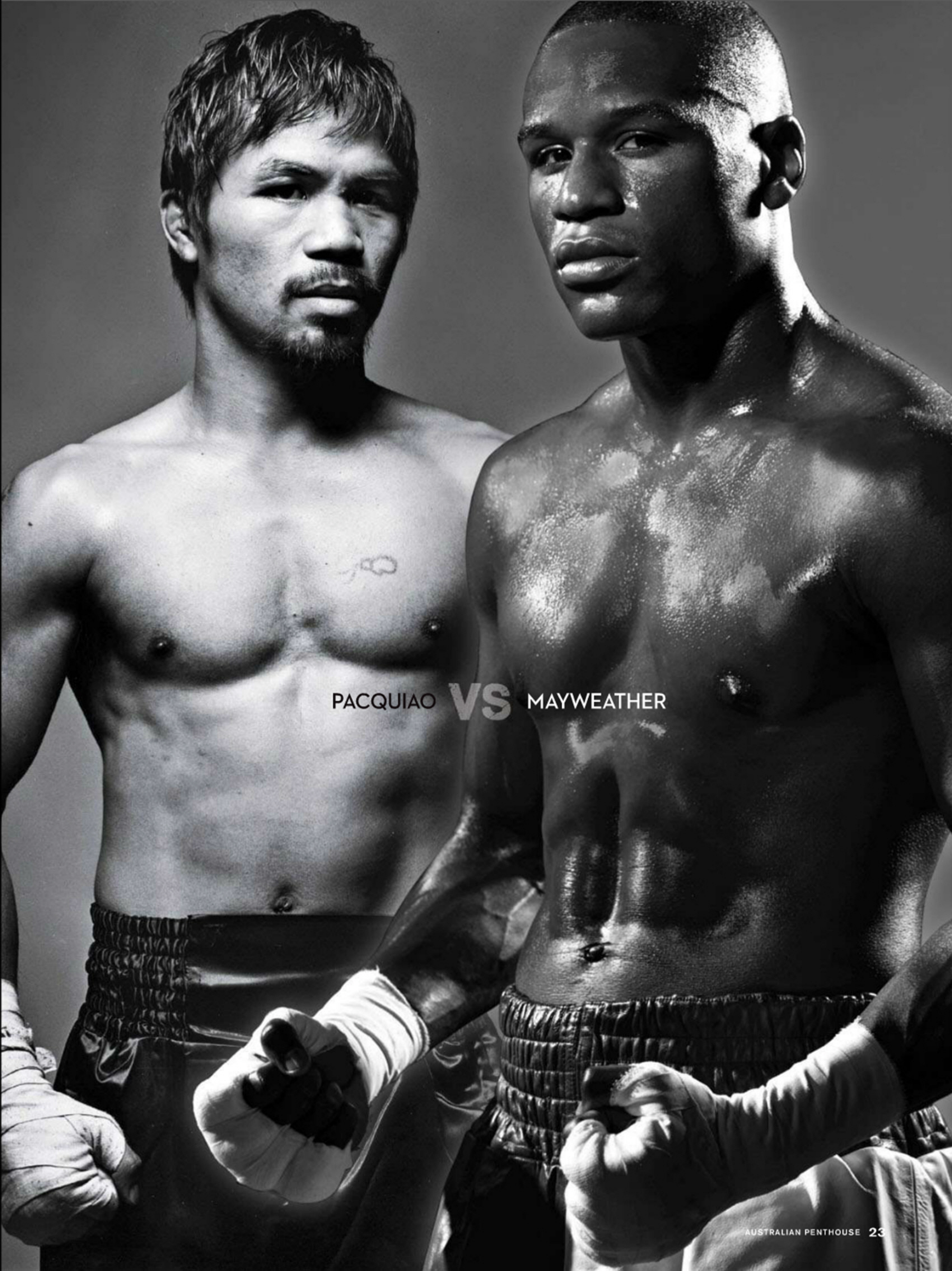
between the unbeaten five-division champion – whose baseball caps bear the logo TBE (The Best Ever) – and Pacquiao, the Filipino Congressman who went from sleeping in cardboard boxes on the streets of Manila to winning titles across eight weight classes.

The duel has been five years in the making after Pacquiao's refusal to undergo random blood and urine tests sabotaged their planned 2009 showdown.

Smouldering antipathy between Pacquiao's promoter Bob Arum and Mayweather – whom Arum used to manage – cast a pall over further negotiations. Then, seduced by the size of the financial pie, nine months of intermittent talks between rival networks Showtime/CBS, who have Mayweather under contract, and HBO, which has a deal with Arum's Top Rank to screen Pacquiao's bouts, finally delivered a deal on February 21.

Ndou, who spent four months in Mayweather's inner sanctum, feels a certain sense of anticlimax in the long-delayed summit.

"It would have been a better fight five years ago when it was originally mooted," he says. "Mayweather is 38 now, while Pacquiao is 36, and has lost a couple of fights since 2009. His aura has been diminished a bit."



PACQUIAO **VS** MAYWEATHER

"For Floyd, it's always been about the money – he has a certain lifestyle to support. It's a fight the public always wanted and he needs.

"They both have great hand speed, but Manny carries more power than Mayweather, who can only stop you with a combination of punches. But I think he'll be too shrewd for Manny, and too evasive. He doesn't allow himself to get hit. In this era there really is nobody like him."

There is a caveat, however, with Ndou adding: "I wasn't impressed with Mayweather's last two fights against Marcos Maidana. If he performs like that again he'll be in trouble against Pacquiao."

During his spell in Mayweather's lair, Ndou recalls a contradictory character who melded generosity with gaudy ostentatiousness and humour with flashes of humility.

"In the ring he's always talking, calling you names, trying to belittle you – but you can't help liking him.

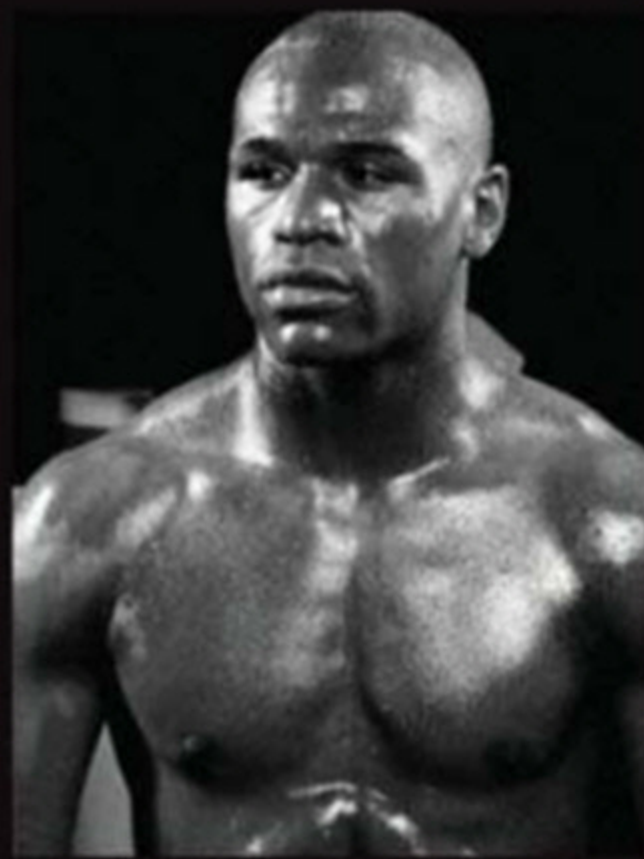
"Personally, I think he's got he's got ADD ... the guy can never settle and do the same thing for more than five minutes. If you're watching TV, he'll be flicking channels every couple of minutes, or he'll turn it off and launch into a diatribe with his crew who laugh and holler at everything he says – funny or otherwise. He loves to have people around him ... he needs to be the king of the court."

Australia's greatest ever fighter, Jeff Fenech, also counts Mayweather as a friend after a string of meetings, and has first-hand experience of Pacquiao, after his former protege Nadel 'Skinny' Hussein floored him in a fight in the Philippines back in 2000.

"Styles make fights and I don't think Floyd has ever fought a Manny-type fighter and vice versa," says the three-time world champion.

"Floyd is blessed in that he's never been hurt and has a great defence whereas Manny has been damaged in recent fights. Floyd has it all covered. He's smart and has waited for the right time to take this fight.

"He looks to have all the aces up his sleeve and he will have too much for Manny. It's intriguing, if Manny won I wouldn't die with surprise but I just don't



MAYWEATHER VS PACQUIAO: THE STATS

1. WINNING RECORD

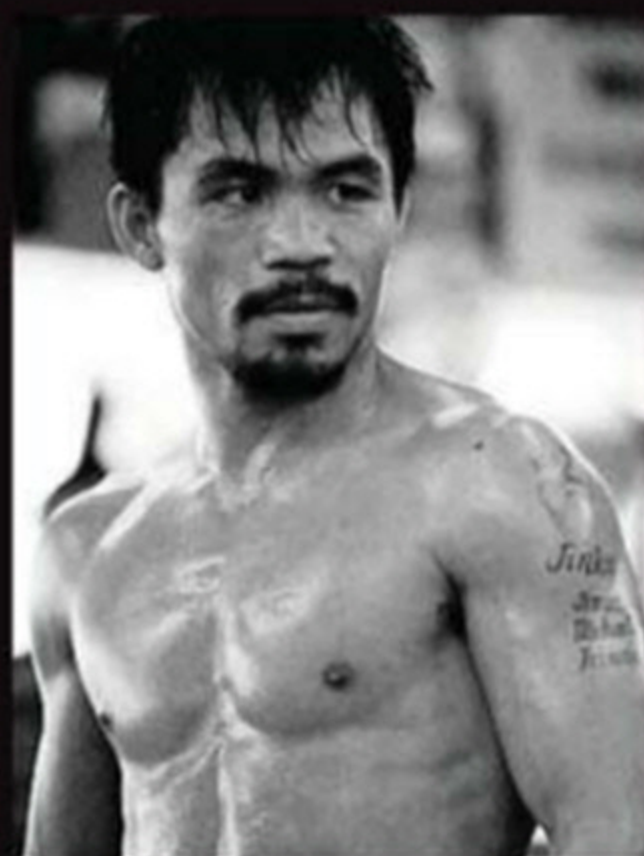
Mayweather is undefeated with a professional record of 46-0-0 with 26 knockout wins. Pacquiao has a professional record of 56-5-2 with 38 knockout wins.

2. STYLE OF BOXING

Mayweather uses the orthodox stance while Pacquiao is a left-hander or southpaw. Mayweather follows the classic boxing style where as Pacquiao is described as a boxer/brawler/swarmer.

3. KEY STRENGTHS

Mayweather has exceptional skills and is very tactical, which is why he's quite difficult to hit cleanly. Pacquiao, on the other hand, is known for his great footwork and fast speed. He's an explosive power puncher. In terms of arm reach, Mayweather has 72 inches, while Pacquiao's reach is 67 inches.



see it happening."

While Mayweather (47-0) is renowned for inflicting slow annihilation on his opponents rather than swift kills, Fenech believes he could collect the 27th KO of his career, adding: "Manny was knocked out by Juan Manuel Marquez and Floyd's a much better fighter than him.

"The bottom line is Manny should be kissing Floyd's butt for even having the opportunity to make up to \$120 million from this fight. The truth is he wouldn't have gone three rounds with greats of the '80s like Roberto Duran, Marvin Hagler, Sugar Ray Leonard or Thomas Hearns. Whereas Floyd is special and would be competitive in any era."

Fenech still carries a grievance over Hussein's controversial tenth-round stoppage against Pacquiao in a WBC International super-bantamweight title bout 14 years ago.

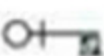
Hussein flattened Pacquiao with a left jab in the fourth round. Video of the knockdown shows that 18 seconds elapsed from the moment Pacquiao hit the canvas to when the fight was restarted by referee Carlos Padilla.

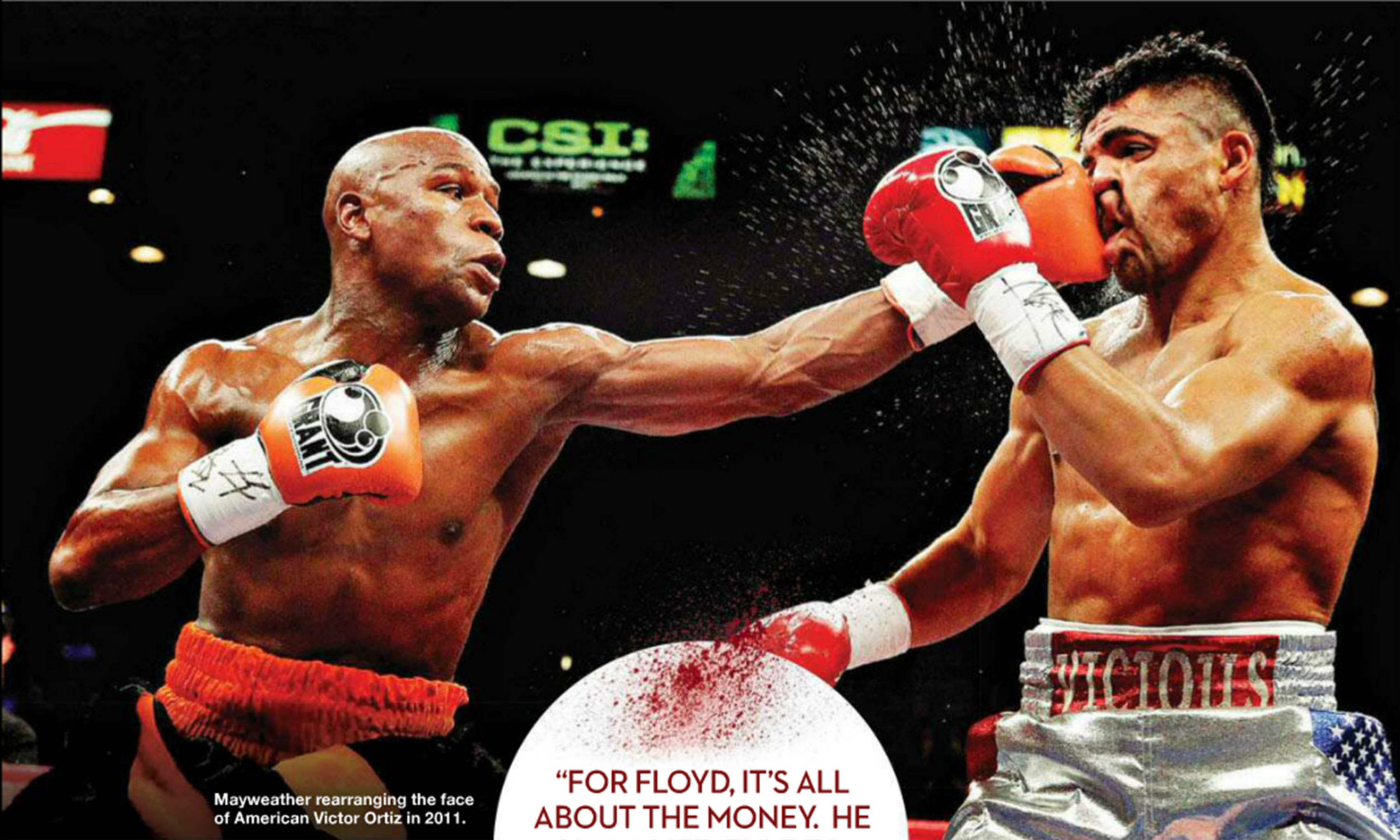
"Everybody knows that the referee gave Manny a reprieve ... it was a straight knockout. If the referee had just counted to 10, the fight was over," insists Fenech. "But Manny showed lot of tenacity to come back from that, and what he has achieved with his record [57-5-2] is incredible"

Fenech describes both protagonists as "gentlemen" and concurs with Ndou that beyond the posturing and lavish excesses, Mayweather has a philanthropic streak.

"I love Floyd for all he represents," Fenech says. "There are two things that define you as a person: your patience when you have nothing and your attitude when you have everything, and Floyd hasn't changed.

"He bided his time and when he got money he was cocky and showy and good luck to him. He's worked his arse off and deserves what's he's got.

"He goes out of his way to help people and hands out gifts to friends, family and those he doesn't even know worth millions every year. I've known him for 15 years on and off; he's a one-off, inside and outside the ring." 



Mayweather rearranging the face of American Victor Ortiz in 2011.

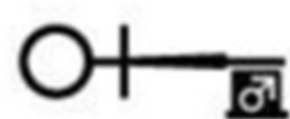
"FOR FLOYD, IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MONEY. HE HAS A LIFESTYLE TO SUPPORT. IT'S A FIGHT THE PUBLIC WANTS, AND HE NEEDS"



Mayweather delivering the big don't-argue to Juan Manuel Márquez in 2009.



LEFT AND BELOW: Pacquiao smacked down Timothy Bradley II last year, ending Bradley's undefeated streak.



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WEB OF INTRIGUE

WORDS : SAMUEL SPETTIGUE



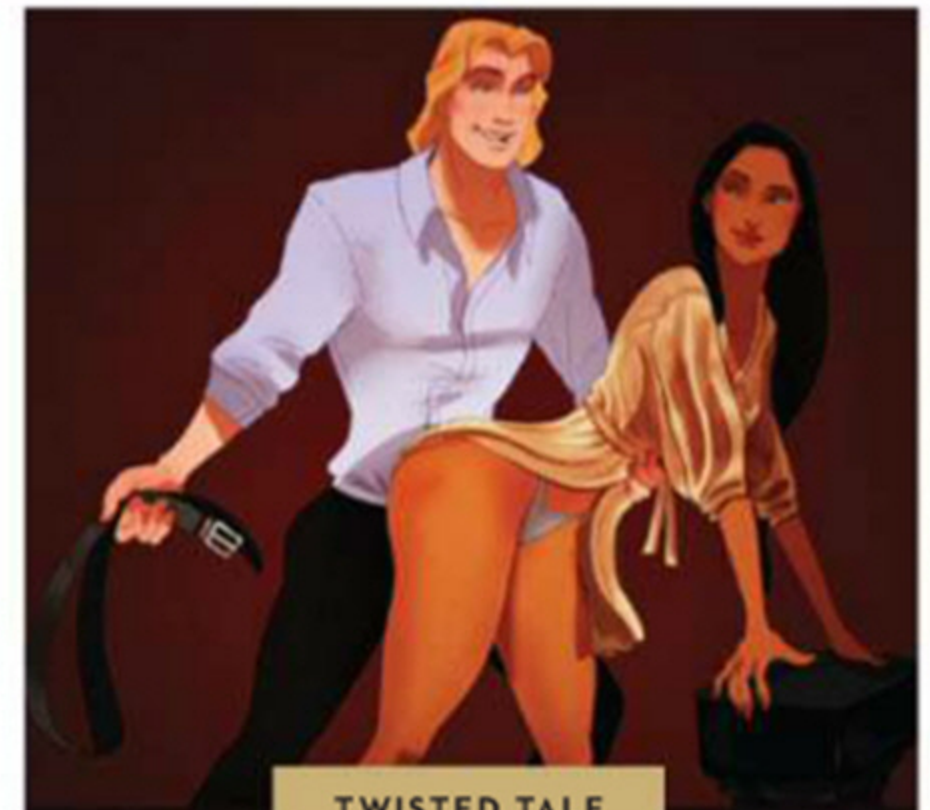
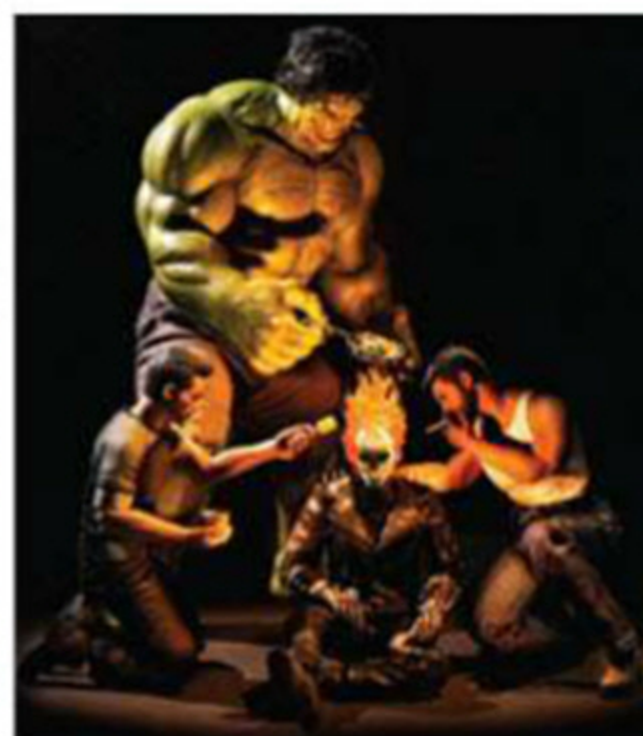
GEEK ALERT

SECRET LIFE OF SUPERHERO TOYS

Since the dawn of humankind, toys have captured the imagination of children across the world, but what do toys do in their spare time? In 2005, Pixar Animation Studios attempted to answer that question with their highly acclaimed and award-winning masterpiece *Toy Story*, but toys have come along way since the '90s. These days kids can get their hands on much cooler and incredibly life-like toys that are based

on movie franchises like the *X-Men* or the *Avengers*. But have you ever wondered what these newer superhero toys get up to when we aren't looking?

Indonesian born photographer, toy collector and all around super-geek Edy Hardjo created a project that shows what these superheroes might do when they're not trying to save New York City from an army of invading Chitauri, putting a bunch of action figures into some creative and often hilarious situations. Using 1/6th scale figures, Edy is able to take some incredible shots like Thor getting a hair cut, Spiderman cleaning Captain America's shield, The Hulk playing hopscotch or flashing his monstrous green member at Black Widow and Catwoman. You can check out more of Edy's work on his Facebook or Instagram accounts.



TWISTED TALE

FIFTY SHADES OF DISNEY PRINCESSES

The Internet is a dark and mysterious place full of the weird, wonderful and downright crazy. When *Fifty Shades of Grey* collided with Disney in an explosion of fantasy, fairytale magic and latex at Cosmopolitan recently, the results were pretty unforgettable. Once seen, any innocence you had left will vacate quicker than the tequila you thought you could keep down at your last work night out. Don't expect to see a Red Room of Pain attraction opening at Disney World any time soon.



POWER PLAY

POWER RANGERS REIMAGINED

A *Power Rangers* reboot written and starring James Van Der Beek and directed by a guy famous for making Taylor Swift and Britney Spears music videos? Turns out, it's the best thing the Internet never knew it needed. The 90s kids' series has gotten the gritty sci-fi superhero treatment – with brilliant production values – in a new short film titled *Power/Rangers*.

The 15-minute clip debuted on YouTube and has had nearly 14 million views so far. Directed by music-video director Joseph Kahn it stars Hollywood action babes Gina Carano from the *Fast and the Furious* franchise and resident *Battlestar Galactica* badass Kate Sackhoff popping up as the Pink Ranger Kimberly. Do yourself a favour and go and watch it. Right now.

FIND BALANCE. FIND ULTIMAT.

A CAREFULLY CRAFTED BALANCE OF WHEAT, RYE AND POTATO

FROM THE CREATORS OF PATRÓN.



WORDS : SAMUEL SPETTIGUE

XBOX ONE/PS4/PC

THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT CD PROJEKT RED

THIS is the final chapter in the epic saga of the sword-and-spell-wielding monster-hunter (and all-around badass) Geralt of Rivia. Due for release late May, Geralt's latest adventure sees the amnesia he suffered in the first two games cured and his memories fully restored, with him back on the quest to find his lost love Yennefer.

As with previous *Witcher* games, *Wild Hunt* is set to be exceptionally narrative driven, with a big focus on interaction, choice and the consequences of the player's actions – many of which will have a direct affect on the outcome of the game. With enough characters, locations, herbs, unique monsters, side quests and collectibles to keep even the most passionate of completionists happy, developer CD Projekt RED also claims that *The Witcher 3* is "30 times bigger" than *The Witcher 2* and features an open world that is significantly larger than *Skyrim*. When you also consider that the developers have promised at least 100 hours of content and a beefy 50-hour story (with a staggering 36 possible endings), there is sure to be no lack of things to do.

With a mind-bogglingly vast open world, stunning graphics, a new and improved "responsive" combat system and an all-star cast featuring *Game of Thrones* star Charles Dance, *Wild Hunt* is set to release in Australia on May 19th, and if what we've seen so far is anything to go by, it's expected to be a red-hot contender for GOTY.



XBOX ONE / XBOX 360

RISE OF THE TOMB RAIDER

LARA Croft doesn't have the best luck. After the intense events of the first chapter of the famous action-adventure franchise reboot – which included escaping the shipwrecked *Endurance* after a violent storm, and surviving on the island of Yamatai – Lara must now fight to prove what she saw during her harrowing final confrontation in the monastery.

This time she'll find herself in Siberia, and instead of just scavenging and surviving she's actively seeking out danger. Crystal Dynamics did a fantastic job of grounding Lara in reality, so there are big expectations for the sequel. From what we've seen so far, you can expect plenty of beautiful yet intensely hostile environments, a *The Last of Us*-style crafting system, a narrative that focuses on Lara's deteriorating mental state and more tombs to explore than you can shake an bloodied icepick at. Expect it in the fourth quarter of this year as an Xbox exclusive.



3DS

ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK 3DS

Nintendo's latest *Zelda* re-release perfectly showcases *Majora's Mask* as a truly a timeless masterpiece. It's a flawless and spectacular adventure game featuring a unique time-management mechanic that gives the hero Link 72 hours to save the world. Players can rewind time and replay the three days over and over, giving you enough time to collect all the required gear to beat the four main temples and time-specific side quests. What sets *Majora's Mask 3DS* apart from other remasters is the new features, like an updated quest log and new Song of Double Time to speed time forward when required. These make it not only one of the best remastered games ever released, but also easily the most compelling reason to own a 3DS.



WORDS: MARIA LEWIS

WYRMWOOD
SPECIALTHE FILMMAKING
BROTHERS BEHIND
THE CULT HIT TALK
ALL THINGS
UNDEADBREAKOUT BABE
BIANCA BRADEY

Aussie actress Bianca Bradey is one of the few females in the film, but steals the spotlight as a grunge girl trying to survive the sudden zombie Apocalypse while – unbeknownst to her – her older brother Barry (Jay Gallagher) searches for his sister just kilometres away. Charismatic and kick-ass, the twenty-something has emerged as one of the most exciting new stars of the genre – with some serious gun skills to boot.

PREVIEW

WYRMWOOD

COLUMBIA PICTURES

It had always been a dream of brothers Kiah and Tristan Roach-Turner to make a movie, but not just any movie: the ultimate zombie horror film. The pair grew up watching flicks like *Razorback* and *Evil Dead*. When it eventually came time for Tristan – an electrician by trade – and Kiah, a digital guru – to make a deposit on their first home, they found themselves itching to do something else with the money. That ‘something else’ was *Wormwood*. Set in the Australian Outback, it features everything from zombies, sci-fi surgery, mind control, weaponised boomerangs and a lot of gore. For Tristan, it was all about pushing the boundaries. “There are some awesome filmmakers out there, but it’s like there’s some kind of embarrassment to make a genre film,” he says. “I’m just over here like, ‘Come on, let’s get some shotguns out and blow people up!’”

The formula seems to have worked for the Roache-Turner brothers, who have had one of the first surprise hits of 2015. Everywhere from *Variety* to the *New York Post* have praised their efforts, with universally positive reviews for what *Empire* magazine called “*Mad Max* meets *Dawn Of The Dead*”.



DEAD ON TARGET

Despite the brothers pooling together what would have been a deposit on their first home and borrowing from their parents to get *Wormwood* made, they weren’t necessarily expecting a financial success. Yet the film managed to make nearly \$100,000 on a one-night-only release, opening across 74 screens in Australia. Its popularity saw extended runs in several cinemas along with a coveted distribution deal in the US. Making it tough for the guys, though, has been illegal torrenting, with *Wormwood* becoming one of the most pirated films in the world. It’s sitting in Pirate Bay’s top 10 alongside *American Sniper* and *50 Shades Of Grey*.



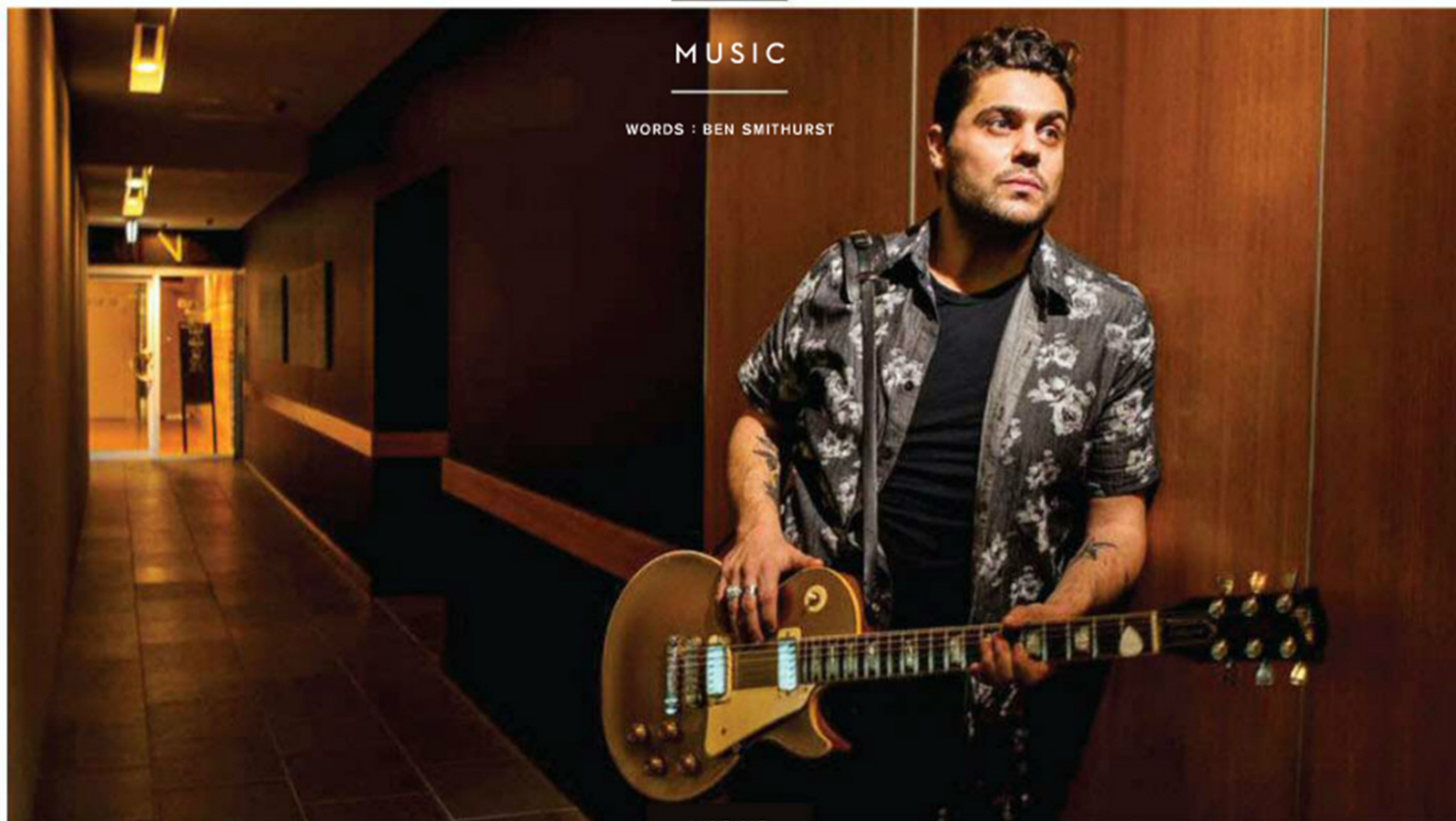
NEXT STOP; GHOST TOWN

Now that the Roache-Turner brothers have a cult hit on their hands with their debut feature, the question on everyone’s lips is what are they planning next? Perhaps surprisingly, they say it’s not *Wormwood 2*. After spending years with the characters and story, the brothers are keen to leave it behind for a while as they focus on their follow up feature: an R-rated ghost story with lashings of H.P. Lovecraft. “We’re 37 pages into the next script,” says Tristan. “It’s like an R-rated *Ghostbusters* with big guns and big action.”



MUSIC

WORDS: BEN SMITHURST



MIC UP

DAN SULTAN

Dan Sultan is pretty, with a semi-Hound Dog coif and five-hipster-baristas worth of tattoos. Sometimes he gets a bit portly, because Dan Sultan is equal parts old school rocker (drinks, smokes, sleeps until 10am) and reformed chubby teen, but mostly he is well-built and occasionally rakish. In 2004, Claire Bowditch called him “the black Elvis”. The pair had played in succession at the Sydney Festival. Sultan was then 24. Thin. “I was watching the faces of women in the front row and I swear a few of them were going cross-eyed and falling backwards out of their chairs,” Bowditch said.

Sultan rocks. His third album, *Blackbird* (named after the Nashville studio where it was recorded) won the ARIA for Best

Rock Album in 2014. He won Best Male Artist in 2010. His hip-swivelling live shows are top-shelf, adding a layer of eclectic roots-rocking authenticity into the wobbling, Bundy-soaked trifle of Aussie rock’n’roll. His tier owes less to pub rock than to Elvis and James Brown. But the trifle Sultan once knew best was custard cream and jelly.

“I had to be [girls’] friends because none of them wanted to be my girlfriend,” he said, back in 2005, his star just rising. “But some really do try to take liberties now.”

Real Elvis went from svelte to fat. Australia’s Black Elvis went the other direction. Both carried a tune the whole way.

THE BREAKDOWN



THE LIVE SHOW

“Legendary,” says *Sunday Age*, ex-*Rolling Stone* critic Craig Mathieson. “Few local artists can fill the Corner Hotel in Richmond on a Sunday afternoon, especially when they’ve already sold out the storied band room the night before. But if you put Dan Sultan on a stage he can make the difficult look easy, the implausible matter-of-fact.”



THE SOUND

Blackbird was Sultan’s third album, and his most commercial. *Rolling Stone* gushed of the “lean, addictive riff-rock” of the first single ‘Under Your Skin’, and spilled seed over the “anguished blues piano howl to bluegrass banjo” of ‘The Same Man’. “Leaving behind parochial expectations for the geographic heart of roots-rock and soul has focused his fire and upped his craft as a writer.”



THE ICONOCLASM

He’s black, and he was inspired by the Warumpi Band. But his songs aren’t political so much as they’re songs. “It used to be that you had to sing about land rights, you had to sing about children being taken away, which I’ve done,” Sultan said last year, “but thanks to No Fixed Address and uncle Archie [Roach] I can just be in a rock’n’roll band. I don’t have to be a martyr.”



THE ROOTS

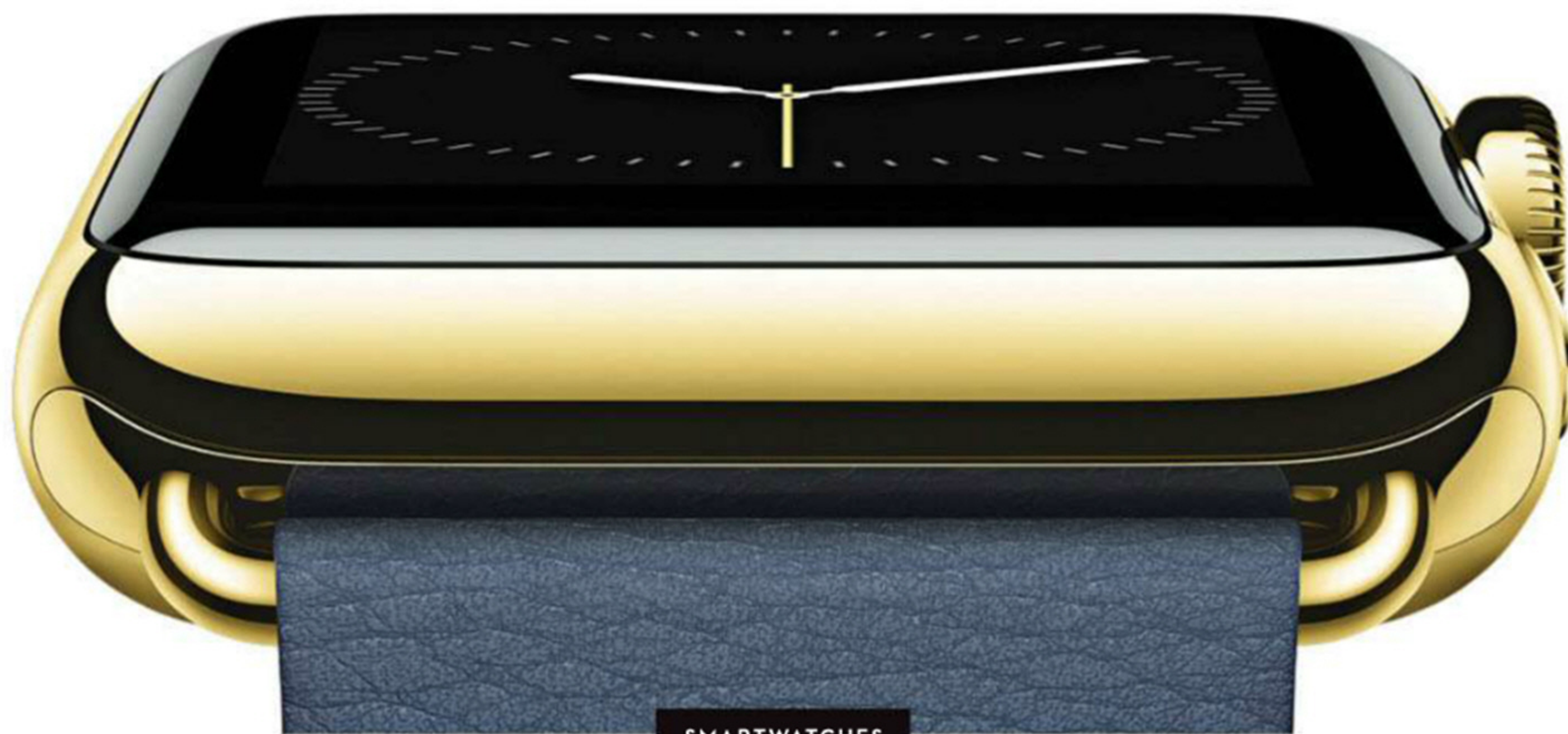
Sultan’s Dad was Irish. His name comes from his mother, Roslyn Sultan, who got hers from the Afghan cameleers who opened up the Outback to colonial trade. Her ancestry was in the eastern Aranda and Gurindji, the most famous of whom, Vincent Lingiari, led the 1966 walk-off from Wave Hill station.



THE BREAK

Sultan was unknown and “on the bones of my arse” when Paul Kelly invited him to play on the *Cannot Buy My Soul* album – a tribute to Kev Carmody, with whom Kelly had written the Lingiari tribute song ‘Little Things Big Things Grow’. Other acts included The Waifs, the John Butler Trio, The Drones, Tex Perkins, Augie March, Missy Higgins and Bernard Fanning.

WORDS : SAMUEL SPETTIGUE



SMARTWATCHES

NOW WEAR THIS

FROM the wrist communicators seen in *Star Trek*, *Knight Rider*, *Power Rangers* and *Batman*, to the infinitely advanced and ever-evolving range of timepieces worn by the walking Rolex ad James Bond,

wearable tech has been the wet dream of young boys for decades.

Now, finally, the tech is ready for the mass market. So are the front-runners genuinely useful pieces that offer real advances in functionality and

communication convenience, or just the latest fad for the tragically tech-obsessed? Here's our rundown of four of the main competitors set to jostle for a slice of a market estimated to be worth \$3.6 billion by next year.



APPLE WATCH

The Apple Watch has easily become the most hyped and anticipated of all of the smartwatches. Offered in two sizes (38mm and 42mm), three versions (Watch, Watch Sport and Watch Edition), a ludicrous variety of different interchangeable bands and a sapphire glass touchscreen, the ambitious Apple Watch is set to truly ignite the smartwatch market.

Navigating with the Apple Watch can be done either via touchscreen or by using what Apple are calling the Digital Crown, on the side of the watch. By rotating the Digital Crown you can zoom in and out of the app menu, scroll through lists and navigate various menus. There's a button below the Digital Crown that can be pressed to access 'Friends', which

is essentially a contacts list of people that you communicate with most. From this menu you'll be able to do things like send messages, make calls, send mini sketches or tap patterns that other Apple Watch users can feel on their wrist. Note, though, that the Apple Watch will only work when paired to an iPhone.

As well as pushing all of your regular iPhone notifications over like iMessages, emails, and reminders, the Apple Watch also has plenty of third-party apps like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp to keep you entertained and connected. There are also the regular Apple apps like Weather, Photos, Health, Calendar, Passbook (including Apple Pay), Maps, Music and a whole host of apps to monitor health and fitness.



SPECS

PRICE: \$359+
DISPLAY: 1.3-INCH
 CIRCULAR P-OLED
 SCREEN
PROCESSOR: 1.2
 GHZ QUAD CORE
WI-FI: NO

LG G WATCH R

As with the Apple Watch/iPhone, the G Watch R, with its 1.3-inch circular P-OLED screen, can be paired with a compatible Android device, allowing the watch to receive notifications, etc. Unlike the Apple Watch's limited watch-face customisation, the G Watch R has access to hundreds of different options on Google Play as well as a host of third-party apps. The only finish is what you see here, but the band can be swapped for any standard 22mm watchstrap.



SPECS

PRICE: \$449+
DISPLAY: 2-INCH
 CURVED AMOLED
 SCREEN
PROCESSOR:
 1 GHZ DUAL-CORE
WI-FI: YES

SAMSUNG GEAR S

Features a giant 2-inch curved AMOLED display that looks like a miniature melted iPhone, a magnificent 360x480 pixel resolution and a SIM-card slot to provide access to its own network service (data plan required). Comes in black and has a few different options for bands should you wish to change it. Unlike its Apple and LG rivals, a Samsung phone is not necessarily required in order for the watch to work, but to download apps and make the most out of it, yes, a pairing is required.



SPECS

PRICE: \$250+
DISPLAY: 1.56-
 INCH CIRCULAR
 LCD SCREEN
PROCESSOR:
 TI OMAP 3B
WI-FI: YES

MOTOROLA MOTO 360

In a bid to keep the design close to the classic timepiece as possible, Motorola's Moto 360 features a 1.56-inch circular LCD display that's both stylish and understated. The Moto 360 is available in three different case finishes (Light, Dark and Champagne Gold), nine different bands (including different coloured leathers and metal links) with prices starting at a very reasonable \$250.



FORCE TOUCH

The Apple Watch's Force Touch feature senses how much force is applied to the screen and distinguishes it as either a 'light tap' or a 'deep press' for additional functionality. Force Touch will also appear on the new MacBook range.



ANDROID WEAR

Android Wear is a specific version of Google's Android OS that's tailored for smartwatches. But Google doesn't design or produce the devices themselves, so although the Android watches may look different, they all operate very similarly.



BUYER BE WORN

As with any new technology, there's always risk for early adopters. Premium prices, short battery life and lower quality materials are all potential pitfalls. Where tech is concerned, good things really do come to those who wait.

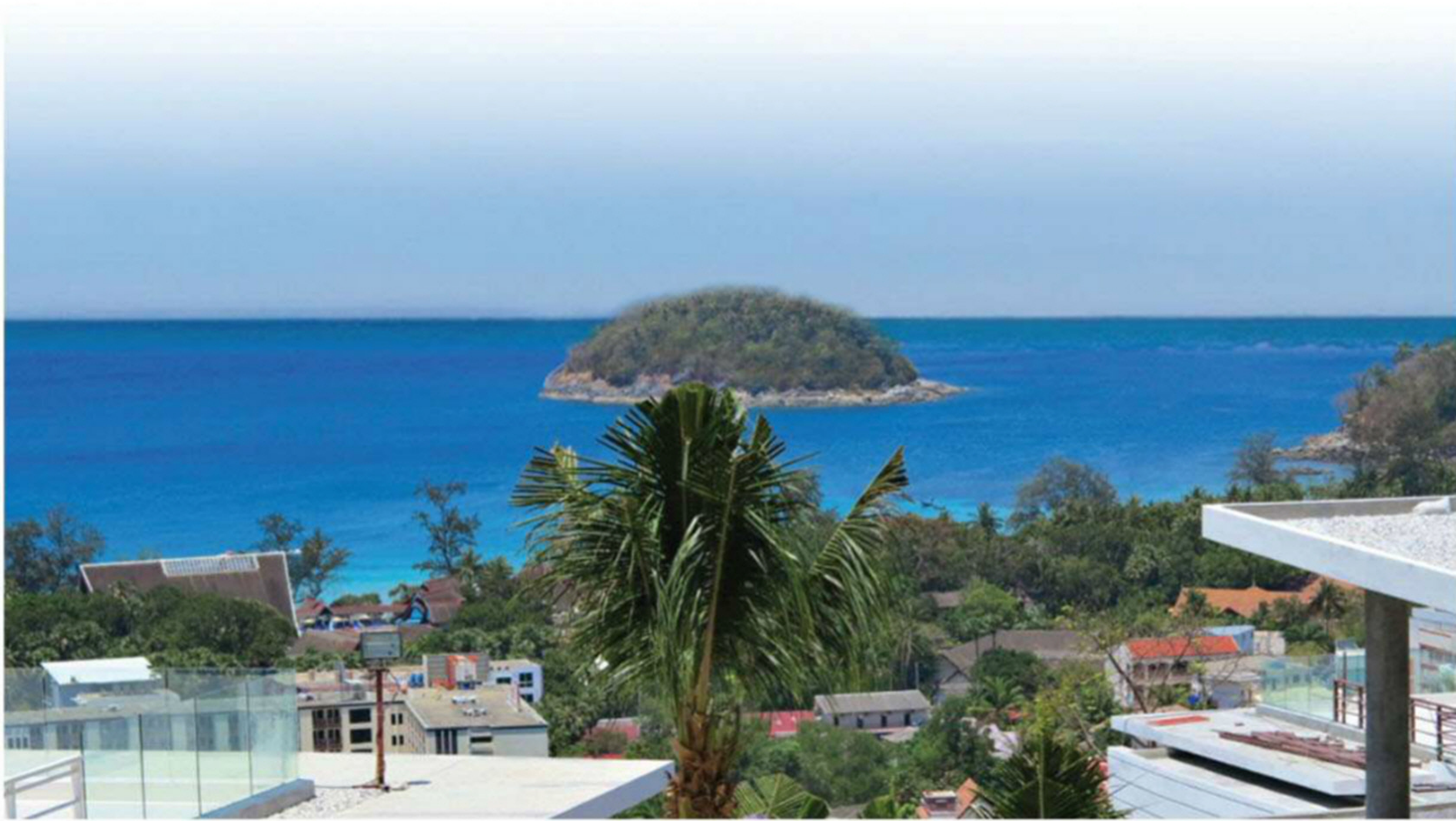
THE VIEW

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REPORT

WORDS : MARK ABERNETHY

THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT

IN THE RUSH TO SUBSTANTIATE CLIMATE CHANGE, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT SCIENCE HAS OVERCOOKED THE PROBLEM?

TENS of thousands of visitors will descend on Paris for the 21st International Climate Conference in December, looking for a way to stop the earth's temperature rising more than 2°C from pre-industrial levels. The 195 represented nations will be faced with cutting around 60 percent of their burning of fossil fuels by 2050.

But before a single climate warrior arrives in Paris, there are major problems, from the accuracy of the weather models and the baseline emission figures, to the horse-trading about which countries will cut what and from which year.

Sitting over the entire conference will be the disparity of wealth between the poor and rich nations. European governments may be investing billions in wind power and 'clean' power stations, but China and India are committed to coal-fired electricity for their impoverished populations.

In the original UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from 1992, the stated goal was to "prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system," without inhibiting the burgeoning living standards of Indians, Chinese and Indonesians. So the Rio agreement divided the world into Annex I nations – charged with reducing coal use and replacing it with solar, wind and hydro – and non-Annex I nations, which would make an effort but wouldn't be measured. Just to add a glimmer of cynicism to the exercise, heavily industrialised Mexico, South



"CHINA'S CARBON EMISSIONS HAVE QUINTUPLED SINCE THE FIRST RIO CLIMATE CONFERENCE IN 1992"

Korea and Brazil were excluded from the Annex I group.

Paris now has this problem: the world produced 35 million kilo-tonnes of man-made CO₂ in 2013 – China and India produced a third of it. China's carbon emissions have quintupled since the first Rio climate conference in 1992, and it will build a new 600 megawatt power plant every 10 days for the next 10 years.

India will increase its coal-fired electricity capacity by 300 percent by 2025 and Indonesia will increase its coal usage by 7 percent per annum to 2025 as it doubles its electricity generation.

So, while one group of Paris conventioners talk about their climate models, another will defend the right of Asian peasants to affordable electricity.

Chief counselor of the Australian Climate Council, Professor Tim Flannery, is optimistic about Paris, seeing it as an historic coming-together of both developed and developing nations.

"This is the first meeting where all the participants are committing to truly global action, not just the developed nations," says Flannery, who headed the Climate Commission under the previous Labor government.

He says the US, European Union and China are coming to Paris with significant emissions undertakings and China has signed a bi-lateral agreement on emission with the US.

Paris could mark a new beginning on climate action, but hanging over the conference is growing

polarity between the 'warmists' and the 'skeptics', especially around the integrity of climate modeling. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – the climate think-tank that advises the United Nations – started a fight in the scientist world when it authorised the 'hockey-stick' graph that shows temperature being flat for the pre-industrial centuries and then suddenly spiking upwards in 1870 at the start of the industrial revolution. The flat part of the hockey stick should reflect natural undulation, say the critics, to show warming and cooling eras since 950 and therefore illustrate that climate is cyclical, not coal-dependent.

The hockey stick opened a debate about 'homogenising' temperature data – changing temperature readings to reflect what they should be. In the United States, Republicans are touting congressional hearings into the charge that NASA tampered with evidence by homogenizing its temperature data, and in Australia skeptics have seized on the Australian Coastal Ocean Radar Network (ACORN) which contains adjustment anomalies in the temperature data.

Then there's the fight about whether the planet has warmed in 16 years. Skeptics say the surface air temperature has not risen since 1998, but Flannery says the earth has warmed 0.9°C since 1910 and a temperature trend is made up of multiple long-term measures so simply quoting surface air temperature over a decade is not accurate.

Flannery has retained his optimism as climate theory becomes unfashionable under the current government: the government closed down his Climate Commission, the Renewable Energy Target is effectively in abeyance following the Warburton Review, the Carbon Tax has been scrapped, and the government rejected investment in the UN's Green Finance Fund, only to change its mind.

"You have to focus on the positives," says Flannery. "The cost of renewables is coming down, and the excuse for doing nothing [that it costs too much] is increasingly unviable. There are now 1.3 million Australians using solar, so there is real action in people's lives."

Professor Stewart Franks, from the



"EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS MAY BE INVESTING BILLIONS IN 'CLEAN' POWER STATIONS, BUT CHINA AND INDIA ARE COMMITTED TO COAL-FIRED ELECTRICITY FOR THEIR IMPOVERISHED POPULATIONS"

University of Tasmania, completed his Ph.D. in a climate discipline which included building a climate model. He questions the role attributed to carbon dioxide. "Carbon dioxide is the driver of climate? It's not true," says Franks. "Carbon dioxide is just the most controllable aspect of the climate."

The real climate determinants are El Nino, La Nina and the circulation of oceans. He says there is a major climate effect from water evaporation and water vapour – in terms of whether the sun's energy is in the air or the ground – but young scientists research carbon because that's where the funding and recognition are.

Franks calls himself an environmentalist; he cringes at the tearing up of another farm or forest to get at the hydrocarbons. However he says there are so many red herrings around climate.

An example is the often-quoted idea that 97 percent of scientists accept global warming theory. But Franks has

another version of this media canard. "That figure came from the American Geophysical Union, of which I'm a member, along with 12,000 others. They sent a survey on global warming to the 76 members who listed themselves as 'climate scientist', and 73 of them agreed that mankind was having an impact on global climate."

Franks says the arguments in Australia about more 'extreme events' etc., are suspicious because the patterns that dictate drought, flood, storms and wildfire are set by the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and La Nina systems, which dictate seasonal climate in the Western Pacific. The ENSO is where we get our long, dry winters that create such havoc for farmers and rural fire services.

He also questions the projection of opinion as fact when it comes to carbon. "The role of carbon dioxide is difficult. We know, for instance, that carbon dioxide contributes a certain amount to a



Clockwise from left:
One of the giant coal-burning
power plants in northern
China; Professor Tim
Flannery remains optimistic
that change is possible;
Professor Stewart Franks
claims CO₂ is not the core
problem; United Nations
Climate Change Conference
brings together politicians,
journalists and lobbyists.



greenhouse effect, but then it contributes no more. There's a limit to the damage it can do."

Beyond the science, Franks is wary of the ideological agenda. "If you really wanted to stop carbon going into the atmosphere, you'd tell China to stop burning coal."

Which brings us back to Paris and a binding agreement on all countries to reduce carbon emissions... without telling the villager in central China that he can't power-up his big-screen TV.

It's quite a task, most of which is built on scientists' climate models. It's just that the climate models don't engender the same confidence in the scientific world as they enjoy among arts graduates working in the media and government.

"The climate models are rubbish," says Franks, whose early career saw him quantifying uncertainty in models. "They're designed to predict catastrophe, and that's all they do." 



A LOAD OF HOT AIR

THE HEATED RHETORIC BEING EXPENDED BY CLIMATE DENIERS ONLY FURTHER EXACERBATES THE CORE PROBLEM, ARGUES **STEPHEN CORBY**

PICTURE, if you will, a climate-change denier. Shock jock Alan Jones is an easy one. Now imagine that rather than denying that global warming is real, Alan is refusing to accept that he has some kind of insidious, slow-working yet terminal disease.

Again, this is easy with Jones.

Effectively, he would not only refuse to accept that he had this illness, despite painfully obvious symptoms and wads of scientific evidence, he'd refuse to acknowledge that the disease even exists.

If someone did that, of course, we'd forcibly hospitalise them, yet people like Jones – a surprising number of them, frankly – seem to enjoy denying climate change, and deriding those of us, including a deafening majority of scientists, who do believe it's very real.

According to the denialists' highly scientific argument, it's just been quite hot lately, and there's nothing to worry about, even if a few islands have disappeared under the waves.

What's amazing is not only that otherwise sane people, and politicians, are willing to be swayed on this – although Malcolm Turnbull doesn't shift much – but that it's an issue people can suddenly change their minds on.

And this is what makes climate change a difficult sell to the neo-con, religious right and their "get your hands off my money" attitudes.

Combatting global warming isn't just something we need to do, it's what we must do. To really effect change, though, is going to be incredibly difficult because doing so will reshape economies, both globally and within your household, and force us to accept radical shifts in things we take for granted.

Scientists already accept that the best we can hope for is to restrict a rise in average temperatures to 2°C from pre-industrial levels. To achieve that, the world needs to reduce the amount of fossil fuels it's burning by around 60 percent by 2050. I think we're more likely to go back to the moon, in a rocket built by aliens, and James Cameron.

Politically, even striving for this target is extremely hard work because the number of people who believe in climate change is not the same as the number actually willing to make personal, or monetary, sacrifices.

Even a carbon tax that was measurably working became one of the reasons for the electoral shellacking Labor copped not long ago.

Our country jumped off the sheep's back and into the coal

"CLEARLY TONY DIDN'T NOTICE THE RISE IN TEMPERATURE OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS BECAUSE HE WAS JUST SO HAPPY AND COMFORTABLE IN HIS SPEEDOS"

As our Prime Minister, and prime policy setter, does.

Famously a denier – and thus representing our whole country as the same on the global stage – Tony Abbott has admitted in the past that "adding to carbon dioxide concentrations is going to change the climate".

Yet he also told Alan Jones in 2009 that "the world's warming has stopped. Now, admittedly we are still pretty warm by recent historical standards, but there doesn't appear to have been any appreciable warming since the late 1990s."

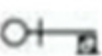
The inconvenient truth is that all of the 10 warmest years on record occurred between 1998 and now. Tony didn't notice, because he was just so happy and comfortable in his Speedos.

The real problem, of course, is that even if, in their dark moments, huddled on the dunny reading *The Guardian*, they accept the science might be right, what people like Jones and Abbott really can't take is the medicine for this disease.

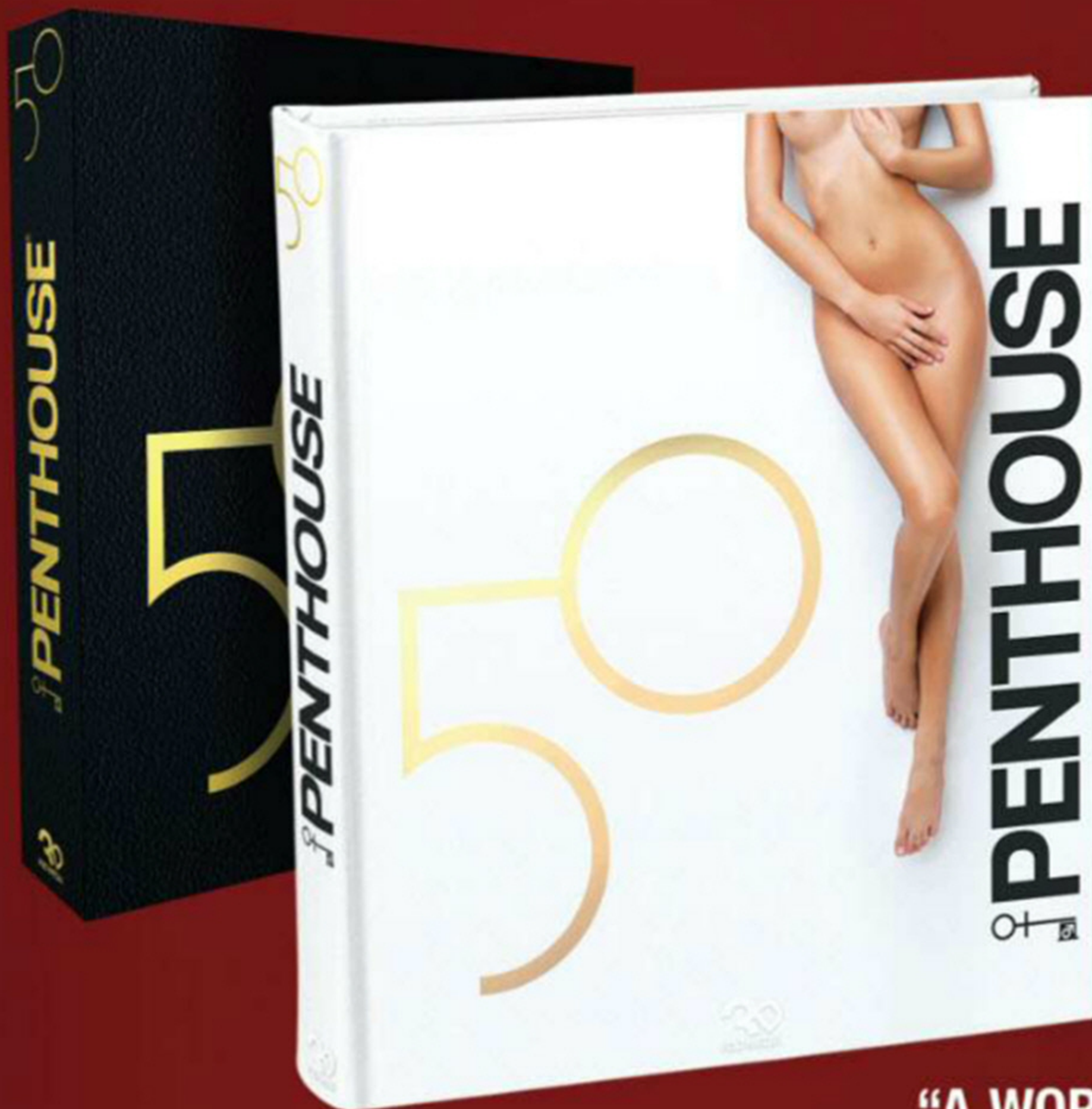
pit some time ago. Digging our economy out of a reliance on something that the whole world needs to wean itself off will require some serious political weight lifting.

Which brings us to the more palatable, yet often left unspoken, argument our local naysayers are making. Nothing we do is going to make a scrap of difference – other than giving us a warm, green glow at night after driving our electric cars home – unless the one third of the world's population who live in India and China are forced to make even bigger changes.

And what is India doing? Increasing its coal-fired electricity capacity by 300 percent by 2025, and getting more populous every day.

Fighting global warming can feel like an impossible (e)mission, but it's something we all need to find the energy for. Listening to the dear old deniers wittering on is just a waste of more carbon dioxide. 

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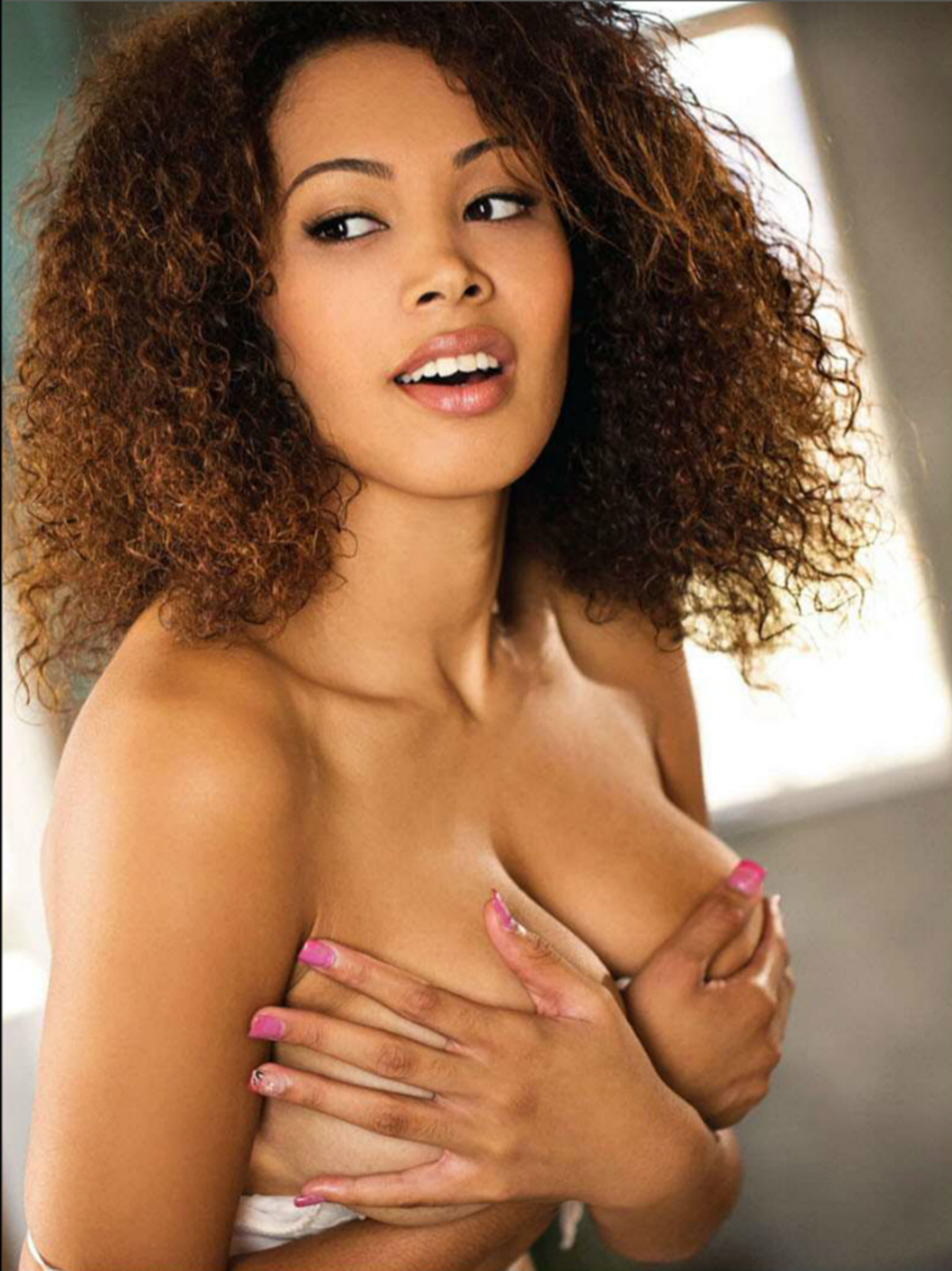
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CAN BE THE NATURAL WONDERS
THAT REALLY LEAVE AN IMPRESSION...

















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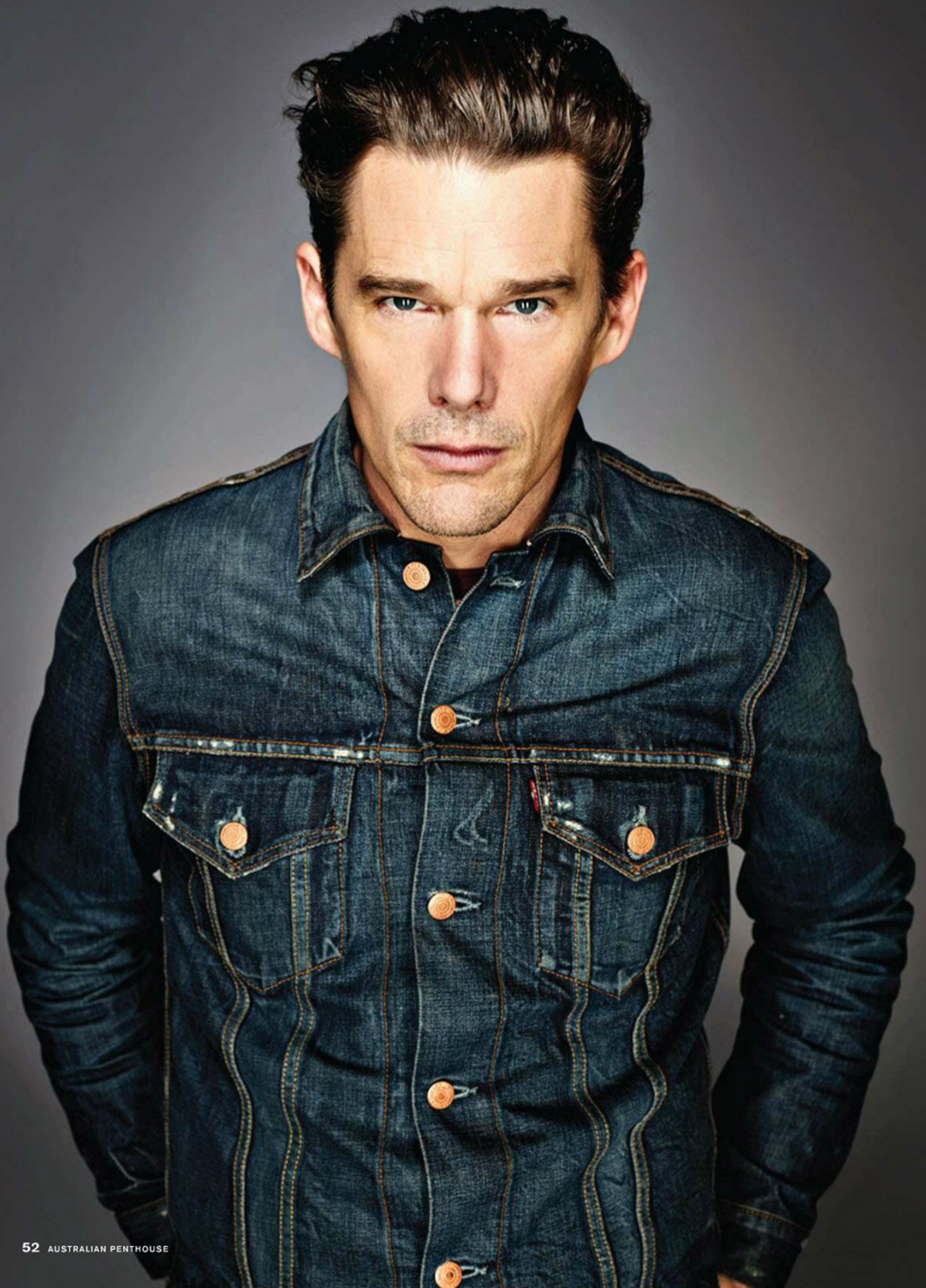
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FROM BOYHOOD TO FACING MANHOOD

ETHAN HAWKE CONTINUES TO FAVOUR GRITTY ROLES IN SMALL PROJECTS TO BLOWING STUFF UP FOR THE BIG BUCKS, BUT STILL QUESTIONS MANY OF HIS OWN DECISIONS

IF THERE was any justice – and it's a rare commodity in Hollywood – Ethan Hawke would have collected an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for his role in *Boyhood* earlier this year.

Both his long-time friend and collaborator Richard Linklater (who directed) and co-star Patricia Arquette were also hot favourites in their respective categories. Arquette collected a statue; Hawke collected backslaps of commiseration. But after 12 years working on and off with them on *Boyhood*, during which time he was twice nominated with Linklater and Julie Delpy for co-writing *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight*, you'd think he'd deserve something – for perseverance, if nothing else.

Shot over a dozen years, *Boyhood's* sumptuous time-lapse study of the evolution of a young Texan named Mason, from childhood to teenager, was the front runner for much of the awards season. "It's my favourite movie I've ever been involved in," Hawke told us, and yet – after two decades and eight films with Linklater – the 44-year-old is still a little baffled as to just how it has touched a nerve. "I thought [Linklater's] *Waking Life* was brilliant, and that didn't really find an audience, and I expected the same thing to happen to

Boyhood, so I was a bit shocked by it."

Hawke, who played Mason Snr, lost out to JK Simmons in *Whiplash* for the Oscar, though he's seemingly unconcerned. While he'd no doubt have been delighted to win at the fourth attempt – he has been nominated for acting once before, on 2001's *Training Day*, when he lost to Jim Broadbent for *Iris* – he takes some consolation that his on-screen wife in *Boyhood*, Patricia Arquette, did win for Best Supporting Actress. Besides, for Hawke, awards are all well and good, but he has never felt the need for such validation. "I really try not to use that as a bar for success."

Indeed, Hawke's career has never been about studio showboating. Alongside penning two novels (and adapting the second, *The Hottest State*, for the screen), his CV has always been an eclectic mix of genre pictures and provocative indies, from Andrew Niccol's *Gattaca* to Sidney Lumet's fine swansong *Before The Devil Knows You're Dead*. For an actor who boasts leading-man looks, Hawke has never played on them. Blockbusters, superheroes, franchises – he doesn't go there. Strangely, he grew up in the era when Hollywood was pitching its tent-pole movies for the first time. Born in Austin,

Texas – his mother was a nurse, his father an insurance actuary – he was acting by the age of 13, in a school production of Shaw's *Saint Joan*. A year later, he'd won a part in his first movie, Joe Dante's 1985 kids' movie *Explorers*, opposite a young River Phoenix, but Hawke was wounded when it flopped. When he returned to the film business, notably in 1989's *Dead Poet's Society*, he largely steered clear of mainstream fare.

This is, arguably, why he's always suspect about the hoopla around the Academy Awards. "The thing about the Oscars is that it's not the best movie, but the best movie that also made money and had a campaign," he sighs. "Any award in the arts is a dubious honour. I know we don't have any other criteria on which to name something a success – but you know, lots of wonderful movies are made each year, and rarely – 10 years later – are the five movies nominated for Best Picture the same five that people still now think of as the best movies of that year."

Admittedly this year's top films might be different – movies like Oscar-winning *Birdman* and Linklater's *Boyhood* look to have longevity. But Hawke's point is salient. Why has it taken this long for Linklater to get recognised, he asks? "Take

a movie like [his] *Dazed and Confused*. I thought that was one of the greatest movies of the '90s when I first saw it. But it didn't get nominated for an Oscar or win any prizes. Rick [Linklater] has never been a very flashy director that way."

Hawke isn't being difficult; he's just a little narked that it has taken the industry this long to catch up with someone he first worked with on 1995's *Before Sunrise*, the first of their melancholic "Before" trilogy.

"He's on his own journey with cinema. It's something he cares really deeply about and I feel the collection of his work is starting to speak for itself and people are starting to notice. Like: 'Wait a second! This guy has slowly been making a lot of great films. They're all very subtle.'"

In some ways, Hawke can feel aggrieved that he too hasn't quite gained the recognition he has deserved. Now 44, when he has not been working with Linklater, a lot of his time this past decade has been taken up with genre films. A 2005 remake of John Carpenter's *Assault on Precinct 13* was followed by visceral works like *Sinister* and *The Purge* – both produced by Blumhouse Productions, a company specialising in making low-budget but well-crafted genre movies that blitz the box office.

"I grew up on them," says Hawke. "A good genre movie has a great punk-rock feeling to it. I always liked early John Carpenter films. My first movie was with Joe Dante, who'd done *The Howling*. My mentorship was in Roger Corman genre movies. What you can do with a genre movie is similar to what you can do with a comic. It's hard to make movies that people want to see. As much as I love *Before Midnight*, it's not a lucrative project. More people saw *Captain America* in a tiny town in Montana in one weekend than everyone who saw *Before Midnight*!"

His more recent move in this world is *Predestination*, a time-bending sci-fi thriller from the Spierig brothers. They'd all worked together before, on 2009's vampire tale *Daybreakers*, which was just as well, as the script – in which he plays a nameless agent travelling back in time to the 20th Century to prevent a serial bomber destroying New York – was tough to digest. "I wasn't sure what was happening," he admits, "but I loved the tone; the mood and the feel of it. It was fun to see something that was so un-formulaic and so wild in its very DNA."

Complementing it, in a strange way, is Hawke's other new film, *Good Kill* – which swaps the fantasy technology of *Predestination* for very real military hardware, that of drones. "[It's] a story about these pilots that used to be flying F-16s in Iraq and now they sit in a Winnebago, drinking a diet Coke, picking up their kids from school, while they assassinate people via satellite," says Hawke. "It almost feels like science fiction but it's not."

It reunites Hawke with Andrew Niccol, with whom he made *Gattaca* and the underrated *Lord of War*, two other films dealing with the moral complexities behind technology and weaponry.

Good Kill is the kind of serious drama that Hawke does best. The story centres around major Thomas Egan (Hawke), a US fighter pilot who is brought back to the

married too young. That's why I did."

There was a lot of furore when he split from Thurman – not least with accusations that he'd been unfaithful with Canadian model Jennifer Perzow during his time shooting the 2004 thriller *Taking Lives* with Angelina Jolie. It didn't help when he and Shawhughes went public; she'd been nanny to his and Thurman's children. But Hawke smartly went out of his way to put such speculation to bed. "My [first] marriage disintegrated due to many pressures, none of which were remotely connected to Ryan," he later said.

That's not to say he didn't have a mini midlife crisis when he turned 40. "It seemed kind of arbitrary but I think I went into a mild state of panic," he reflects. "I've always looked at myself as such a student. My self-image was one of a student and a learner, and I felt like I was supposed to be

"THESE EX-PILOTS NOW SIT AROUND ASSASSINATING PEOPLE VIA SATELLITE"

US to operate drones targeting Taliban units overseas from a remote Las Vegas airbase. The film is a stark examination of drone warfare and the brutal, clinically efficient ways combats can be waged by remote control. Hawk's character is shown directing deadly strikes against terrorists as if it were a regular 9-5 job, outwardly with the detachment of a computer game programmer. Once the day's killing is finished, he drives back home in his sports car to his wife (January Jones) and their two children, and this is where the narrative of *Good Kill* achieves its greatest impact. "It's so claustrophobic and you see what makes these guys go nuts, sitting in this tiny room with a bunch of other people and all this deadly technology," he says.

A father of four, Hawke has never unravelled in quite the same way. He has a son and a daughter, Levon and Maya, with ex-wife Uma Thurman, whom he met on *Gattaca*, and two more daughters, Clementine and Indiana, with second wife Ryan Shawhughes, whom he married in 2008. A child of divorce, he always longed for his own family, he says. "I think a lot of young people do. You long for a centre. Something that you can build from. That's why a lot of young people get

done being a student, and I should now know something. And I went into a panic that I didn't know anything. And I didn't know how to stop being a student. Then I realised I don't have to."

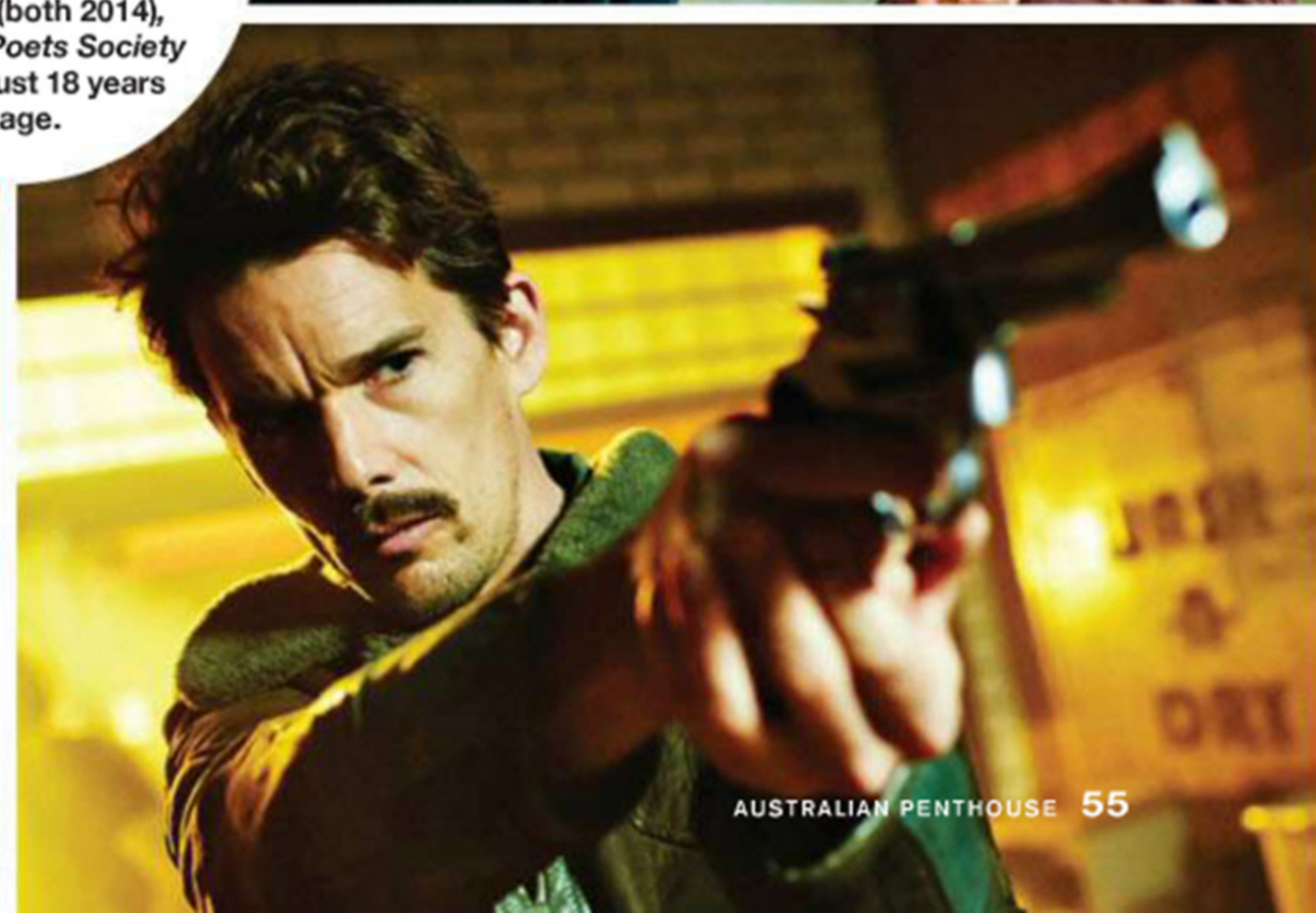
His latest pit-stop for study has been Chet Baker. Alongside a stack of films in the can, including memory thriller *Regression* with Emma Watson and western *In the Valley of Violence*, is *Born to be Blue*, a biopic of the jazz trumpeter. Set in 1969, when Baker was drug addled and minus so many teeth he could no longer play his instrument, it has been a passion project for Hawke for years.

That term – passion project – is one that crops up an awful lot with Hawke. He's acutely aware of the lost "financial opportunities" he forgoes by following his heart and creative muse, rather than his accountant's advice.

"I made nothing on *Boyhood* and *Before Midnight*, so I try to do enough work in other kinds of movies to keep paying the bills and my kids' education" Hawk says. "It's a fine line to walk sometimes, but I'm not good enough at the movie business to make those films. I have to find my own way and things seem to be working out for me." ○✎



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Hawke's cinematic evolution over 26 years, from this year's *A Good Kill*, to *Reality Bites* (1994), *Predestination* and *Boyhood* (both 2014), and *Dead Poets Society* (1989) at just 18 years of age.



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IT'S BEEN SAID THAT "ONE'S DESTINATION IS NEVER A PLACE, BUT A NEW WAY OF SEEING THINGS." HERE ARE TEN GREAT PLACES TO HELP OPEN YOUR EYES

WORDS : STEPHEN CORBY + BEN SMITHURST

THEY say nothing broadens the mind like travel, but aviator Charles Lindberg spent the first half of WWII imploring Germany, France and Britain to calm down and erect "a western wall of race and arms" to repel "the infiltration of inferior blood" from Asia. Lindberg was a lot of things, including a bigot. But poorly travelled wasn't one of them.

Travel, it turns out, is like university, or hallucinogenics, or sex. It doesn't necessarily broaden the mind... unless you're willing to be pliable. But either way, what fun!

There's nothing wrong, per se, with spending every holiday at the exact same powered van site beside the very same septic tanks at the same old Snake Haven Caravan Park. It's familiar, and close to the amenities block. And yet, what possibilities...



Join the 49 percent of Australians to own a passport and the world opens to your ministrations like a delicate flower. The hi-fi staccato of Latin America. African rhythms. Europe's multifaceted charms; London's hedonism, Italian elan, the hard-heeled Krautian majesty of the Autobahn, Portugal's flat chooks. Japanese weird. Balinese schiz. Debauchery and spirituality. War and peace. The welcoming arms of Isis or the roughneck bars of Finland.

Every man must decide for himself the prize he'll pluck from travel's gilded chest. It could blow your mind, or just your savings; you could find love, or God, or syphilis. "Real freedom lies in wildness, not in civilization," said our airman, Charlie.

Lindberg was wrong about Asia. But at least he saw it firsthand.

● ASIA



SINGAPORE

In global terms, Singapore is such a distinctive sort of city-state that it feels like it must be very, very old, a nexus of trade and culture for millennia, where Indiana Jones once shot a man off a sampan. But it's not. Singapore is new. Newer than Sydney! It's been inhabited for 850 years, but burned it to the ground in 1613, and was 1000 people in huts for two centuries.

Since then it's seen glorious British Imperialism (twice), glorious Japanese conquest (once, when the systematically massacred Malay clogged Sentosa Beach – now a fine golf course), and two years mucking in with Malaysia. Yet since 1965, the Lion City has stood on its own: a citadel of commerce and trade – and perhaps the world's priciest city. One that's about food and drink.

Try Raffles – famously, the old British bulwark hotel – for a clichéd, but great, High Tea (expect to pay A\$70). Try Club Street (a closed avenue of bars) and Boat Quay (a row of terraced expat pubs) for boozing. Try Pangaea, the ultra-rich oligarch's bar below the US\$5.7b

Marina Sands, opposite the Merlion.

Sup heartily at the Hawker Centres after 6pm. Little India, the district east of the Singapore River, across from Chinatown, is a challenge: everywhere is authentic and rich, as indeed is Chinese – and most other cuisines, including French and Japanese – even in any of a hundred food courts. Try Geylang, Singapore's seediest hood. A red-light district spared Singapore's post-'70s gentrification, immediately east of the CBD, for everything the rest of the city isn't: swarming scooters, sidewalk bars, karaoke joints and clamour, with alleyways of frog-porridge vendors (divine) and strip joints.

Don't try chewing gum. There is a \$500 fine. Singapore is lovely and multicultural and clean, but run by friendly fascists.



HONG KONG

Hong Kong is the Africanized bee of Asia: an unlikely hybrid of Western and non-Western that geography dictated ought never to have happened – but is now robust to the point of being unkillable. Had Britain's geopolitical seed not fertilised on the cusp of the

Pearl River Estuary and the South China Sea, the vibrant calabash of harbour and high rise, finance and feng shui that currently comprises the 'Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Of The People's Republic Of China' wouldn't exist.

Hong Kong is a vertical city, a non-noir (at least in daytime) Blade Runner megalopolis. Its charms – now being abandoned by a string of expats decamping to Singapore – are many, but are mostly marinated in the spicy syrup of population density. HK's seven million dwellers are wedged into just 1100km²; Kwun Tong, the city's most rammed district, houses over 57,000 people in one square click.

As per other crammed cities, this means vibrancy on tap; unlike many others, in Hong Kong, you're also safe as the houses nobody lives in. Public transport is excellent, the food is spectacular, and shopping incredible in the world's third most important finance hub (after London and New York). If you fancy, you can dive in as a westerner abroad like nowhere else, carousing either side of the city's central escalator, or spearing off to have your fortune read by clairvoyants.



Oddly, the three-day Hong Kong Rugby Sevens, which was played in March this year, waters down the city's unique taste – but can, nonetheless, be a perfect taster as a weekend abroad. Keep schtum about democracy protests and take at least 1000 business cards.

THAILAND

It's been a rough trot for Thailand, what with a pair of British tourists being hacked to death in late 2013 at the resort island of Koh Tao. It was followed last year by the declaration of martial law, generals stepping in to quash civil unrest after a bloodless coup.

Fools! We worry so needlessly. The Land of Smiles' new rulers soon declared that military rule was, in fact, a tourist attraction that tourism governor Thawatchi Arunyik hoped might created "a buzz" on social media. And yet, machine-gun toting soldiers have disappeared from the streets.

In truth, once the military junta took power, and to a large extent, even before that, any unrest swept serenely past many western tourists, few of whom stay in Bangkok. "Honestly," says Guy Pendle, who was in Phuket at the time, "most locals I spoke to about it said they were sick of the bullshit. Once the curfews lifted, it was totally fine."

If you've not been to Thailand, it's a country easy to dismiss. It's become a land of easy stereotypes, snagged something between the jagged idyll of, say, Alex Garland's *The Beach* (with the 2000 Leonardo DiCaprio film taking its drugged-out 'Eurotrash in paradise' theme to the big screen), and Full Moon raves. Foreigners on courses of steroids. Red Bull lunacy. But steer clear of the trust-funded gap-year dreadlocked whiteys in Thai fisherman's pants and the old Thailand remains. Amiable, cultured and dripping in jungle and white sands, with some of the world's most inspiring temples and easiest smiles.

They're also clichés. Thailand is steeped in cliché. But if you're not one, you'll easily avoid them.





L



POLES APART

ICELAND

There is simply nowhere on Earth that's even remotely like Iceland. They film the awesome bits of *Game of Thrones* that are set "beyond the wall" there, and they don't need digital enhancement.

Steam (or hydrogen) comes pouring out of the snooker-table-green earth randomly, and jet-engine noisily. When it rains, you can't see. Anything. But if the sun does, ever, come out you'll be treated to the most jaw-droppingly, fuck-off vistas your eyes can swallow.

Tolkien-ishs vaulting mountains with waterfalls pouring down them by the dozen.

There is a valley where you can see plate tectonics in action (it's quite slow, though) and a lake of genuinely luminous warm water where you can whack what looks like whale sperm on your face. And the women are absurdly, elfishly beautiful – arguably the world's most striking. Their genetic excellence seems to be based on the eating of foods like singed sheep's head, ram's testicles and fermented poisonous shark.

Beauty always has its cost, and the food in Iceland – particularly if you don't love dried fish – is almost as much of a test as the booze prices, which are legendary.







AMERICAS

TEXAS

Texas is a celebrated traditional hub of US Conservative politics, with the state accounting for a third of all capital punishment executions in the US since 1976 (1398 as of January, hoo boy!), and the Republican party romping home in every presidential election for three decades.

All of which makes Austin, the state capital, weird. Hence the proliferation of 'Keep Austin weird' shirts and bumper stickers. In a city of almost 900,000 (to Houston's 2.2m), Austin has over 50,000 students (and no NFL team; University of Texas political alumni collude to make sure the college team is the only game in town). It spawned global pot icon Willie Nelson. And it has South by Southwest, the (primarily) music festival, frequented by bands trying to crack the US, even if they're already big globally, or on a domestic comeback.

The result is a sort of very exciting San Francisco of the south: charming, freewheeling, and liberal, where cute Fiat 500s and Mini Coopers crouch in traffic beside monstrous Escalades and Yukons

and F350s. Where the multiple bars are friendly and heaving, and where an Australian accent is your key to a big night out, and sprinkled with hipsters and pretty young things. A place with many bands.

It's also a city where your twin goals must be Tex-Mex and Texan barbecue. The locals' tip is Curra's Grill for the former – an unpretentious joint in Oltorf Street, with helpings the size of a man's head – and for the latter, Mickelthwait's Craft Meats, on Rosewood. No Beetle-sized Stetson required.

NICARAGUA

What do you think of when you think of Nicaragua? If you're of a certain vintage, memories former US Marine lieutenant colonel Oliver North may loom large but uncertain in your mind. In the late '80s, Ollie admitted he'd decided that illegally selling weapons to Iran, and giving the funds to the Contras – badass right-wing guerrillas trying to overthrow Nicaragua's leftist Commie government – was a "neat idea".

The scandal almost brought down

Ronald Reagan, but not really! Because who likes the Commies? Not America, and especially not '80s America. And especially not the CIA.

Except that today, Nicaragua is more than that. If you are a surfer, it is a sort of sexy multiethnic paradise, with Caribbean and Pacific Coasts, and a firming grip on ecotourism. Compared to Costa Rica, its southern neighbour, awash with American expats, tourists, retirees and infrastructure, Nicaragua is low-fi but also untouched. It has old-South American architecture, rum and diving at a fraction of the price elsewhere in the Caribbean. Consider Lombok to Bali in the Australian imagination.

The party hub of San Juan del Sur, 130km south of the capital, Managua, by road, has a terrible beach – for waves; you'll need to head north or south for half an hour – but is awash with \$10-a-night clapboard beach stays. The water is bathtub warm. The offshores fan all day long. And Ollie North, now 71, sits back at home in San Antonio watching Fox News, his back ramrod straight and unrepentant. It's hard to tell whether he liked Nicaragua at all.



MEXICO

If Mexican tourism were a cricketer, it would be Keith Miller: an almost perfect all-rounder, but loved especially by those with a sense of history. Unsurprisingly, the only activity it is a tad light-on for is skiing – with just one small resort, Monterreal, in Coahuila State. But then, Keith Miller wasn't much of a spinner.

Encompassed by 10,000km of coastline, seeming governed by a succession of corrupt buffoons since time immemorial, and cheek-on-jowl against the US, Mexico's long been defined – even plagued – by its 'south of the border' status. And indeed, the Mexican Drug War, the ongoing low-intensity conflict between the government and the cartels, is estimated to have killed up to 147,000 people from 2006-2013.

Yet in the self-reinventing capital of Mexico City – population 21m – the vibe today is cool. It's 1480km² of ancient Aztec temples, tequila bars, soccer nutjob, modern art museums and restaurants that have perfected the trick of taking traditional Mexican food upscale without losing authenticity.

Restaurant-wise, dive into Cali surf and turf at MeroToro, in Condesa, or wash down late-night tacos with an Indio beer at Taquería El Califa. Take a 40-min cab north from downtown to Teotihuacán, a sprawling city of ruins from 100BC – with a pyramid you're encouraged to climb – and dive into and out of galleries with the relaxed-agenda locals.

Or just lock yourself into a high-end white-sand resort for a fortnight. Mexico is an all-rounder. Nobody's forcing you to get out.





FLEM-FEAT

BELGIUM

IF YOU want to go drinking in Europe (and it really does offer some powerful beer-based locations, from Munich to Prague) you'll want to go where they take it very seriously indeed - Belgium.

It is virtually impossible not to get rollicking drunk and vomit in the rubbish bin of your nice hotel room while in Brussels. Or that's what my ex-girlfriend said, anyway.

The city is frothing over with beer-drinking and brewing houses and their ales follow the Trappist monk approach, which is to make them stronger than wine, and in some cases not far off whiskey. The food is great, though, because it's basically a city of hot chip stands. These *frites* as they call them, are simply the best drunk food in the world.

And because even people who've just had one quick beer with lunch are quite jolly, it's a very bright place to be, despite its slightly grey weather. Even the city's proudest symbol is a bloke taking a whiz in the water, a statue called the Manneken Pis.

The one danger to watch out for is that there's a tiny whiff of Canberra about the place, because it's rammed full of politicians. Brussels is the capital city of the European Union, and hosts the EU parliament. Stay well clear, and have another beer.





● CORBY'S TO DO LIST ●



VENICE

Rome, Florence and Milan are all magnificent, grand and impressive cities, but everyone says Venice blows them into the water, or the canals. The word is that not even being one of the world's most overwhelmingly visited cities, with all the tourist-trappery that comes with that, can ruin the sheer beauty of this floating wonder.



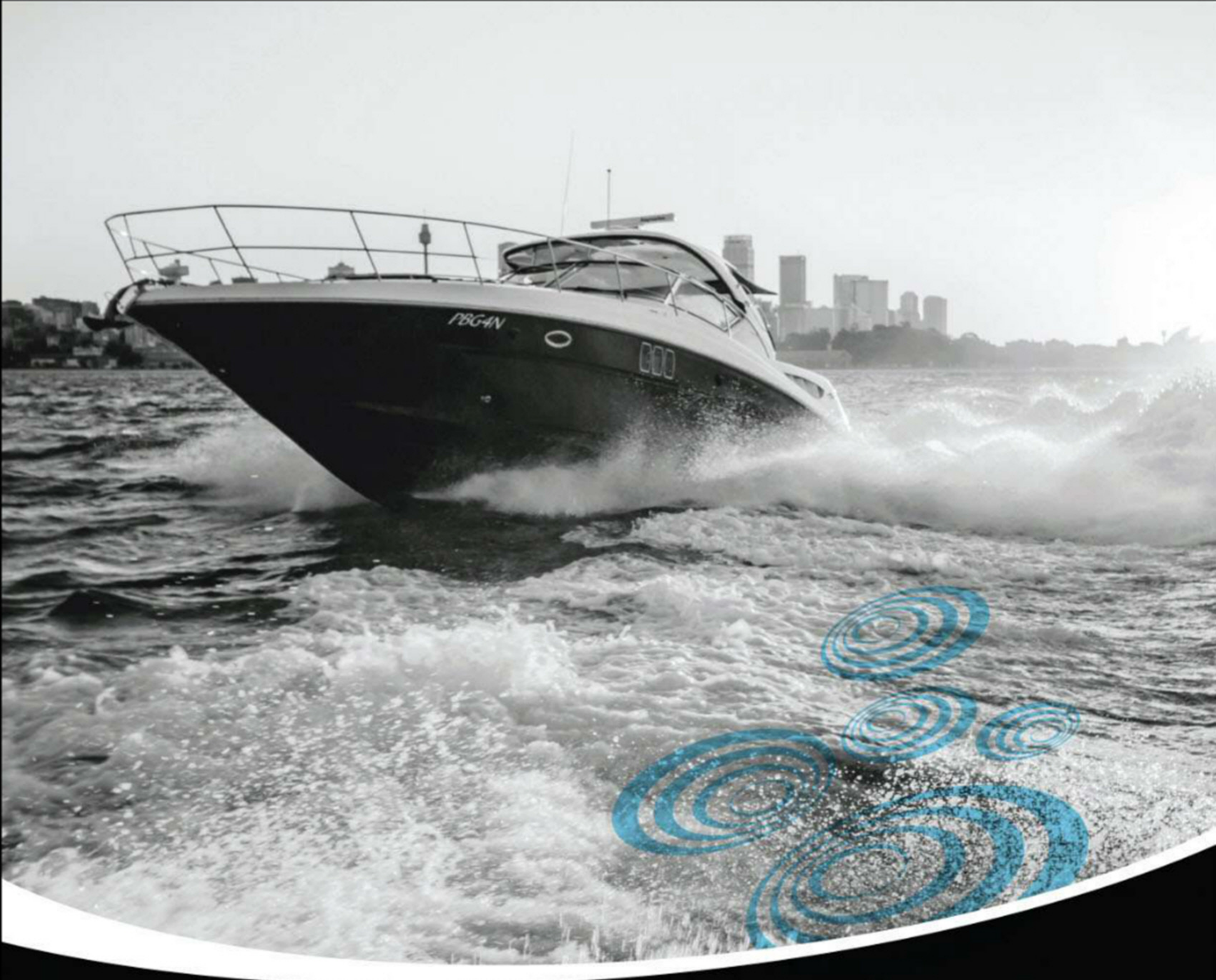
SOUTH AMERICA

To my shame, I've never visited this entire continent, but I damn well will before I depart. The magic of Brazil appeals, with its massive, mad cities, but I'm also very keen to see Argentina, where they eat meat at least three times a day and wash it down with rivers of red wine. It sounds well hard.

ALASKA

There's a real sense of urgency about this one, partly because I fear Americans will somehow ruin its natural wonders if I don't get there soon (they've already managed to smog up the Grand Canyon), and partly because we really don't know for how much longer you'll be able to see a genuine Sarah Palin in the wild, possibly eating her own young.





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UP AT THE POINTY END

THE BATTLE IS ON BETWEEN THE MAJOR AIRLINES TO OFFER THE MOST DECADENT FIRST-CLASS EXPERIENCE IN THE SKY, AND GIVE PASSENGERS EVEN MORE REASON TO HECKLE THE PEASANTS IN CATTLE CLASS

THE sheer self-indulgent joy of flying First Class is such a polar opposite to the livestock-like horror that is travelling in economy that it's as if it's actually happening in a parallel universe.

In cattle class, all you want is for the suffer-fest to cease, the hours to tick away and your knee-crunching misery to end. Meanwhile, in First, when the pilot comes on to announce there's been a two-hour delay and you'll have to circle for a while, you hear people cheering.

Economy class food is synonymous with stand-up comedians cracking wise; so bad that it's actually a tired cliché. A tired quiche is what you're more likely to be served, filled with the same kind of fish that's sold as cat food.

I recently put on at least 5kg on one First Class Dubai to Sydney flight on an

ingredients, who will make something that's not on the menu, if you prefer.

Of course it's really rude not to sleep in the giant bed, with its big downy pillows and a proper fluffy quilt and silky pyjamas, particularly when no one in economy is getting any sleep at all, and would happily kill the nearest three strangers just for an hour in First Class.

But I also had to find time in my busy evening for a shower, in the giant First Class bathroom, with its heated floor.

You have to actually book a time in for this, unfortunately, which is about the only stage that it ever occurs to you that there might be other passengers in First – you're all hidden away from each other behind closed doors in private cabins. But a shower at 40,000 feet, and coming out of it feeling refreshed and ready to eat even more, is something

“IN FIRST, WHEN THE PILOT ANNOUNCES THERE'S BEEN A DELAY AND YOU'LL HAVE TO CIRCLE FOR A WHILE, YOU HEAR PEOPLE CHEERING”

Emirates A380 because I decided not to waste time actually sleeping in my full-sized bed, ensconced in my private cabin, trading it for trying to eat, and drink, everything on the menu.

Not only are the offerings astonishing, and genuinely restaurant-level good – a proper Indian curry, steak, caviar, a tea menu with 15 different kinds of tea – but you don't have to stick to them.

Oh yes, not only can you eat whenever, and however often, you desire, there's a chef on board, with a selection of

that has to be experienced.

We did test out a bed in a First Class Etihad A380 cabin, which is possibly even a few notches higher in terms of comfort and food than Emirates. It was fabulous, and I slept like a rich person, without a care in the world.

If I was properly rich, of course, I'd want more, which is why Etihad has recently taken First Class to a whole new level with The Residence.

There is just one of these stunning new three-room suites – featuring a lounge,

BOOK 'EM

If you just want to experience true high-end high flying once in your life, prepare to spend big. You could take a flight in The Suites with Singapore Airlines, which is available for \$5726 for a return journey from Sydney to Singapore.

A slightly more exciting destination would be Los Angeles, and you can fly your more typical version of First Class with Qantas there and back for just \$9499.

There's also the option of flying to Europe with someone like Emirates and just doing one long leg in First, before switching back to economy, although this could be like a form of self-torture. A Sydney-Dubai one-way airfare in First will still sting you \$11,096.

Still, all these options look like total bargains compared to taking a flight in The Residence with Etihad. It's obviously a popular option, though, because we struggled to find availability for a one-way journey from London to Abu Dhabi, finally tracking one down, for \$24,870.



“AND YES, THIS DOES MEAN THAT IF YOU PAY ENOUGH MONEY, YOU CAN JOIN THE MILE-HIGH CLUB IN YOUR FLYING DOUBLE BED”

a bedroom and a private bathroom with shower – on each Etihad 380, and it can accommodate two extremely spoilt passengers. The layout is so spectacular and luxurious, and the service so astonishing that it really would seem like a feasible alternative to taking your private jet.

It's worth checking out their promotional video, featuring Nicole Kidman, who highlights their goal of not just improving on what's been done before, but totally reimagining it.

And yes, this does mean that if you pay enough money, you *can* join the mile-high club in your flying double bed. Presumably you just need to put the Do Not Disturb sign up so that your personal onboard butler – each of whom has been trained by the Savoy Butler Academy in London – will leave you to it. Yes, *you get a butler*.

As you might have guessed, flying from Sydney to London in this kind of style will not be cheap, once it becomes available this year. Flights from Abu Dhabi to London are already on offer for around \$20,000 so the kangaroo route, as it's known, should set you back about \$40,000.

Etihad has also cruelly announced that it won't be giving upgrades, even to First Class passengers.

The Residence, which takes up

a staggering 12 square metres of the aircraft – enough to house 200 economy passengers, at least – and also features two LCD screens, may be unprecedented, but Singapore Airlines was already offering a class above First with its Suites, launched in 2008.

Hidden behind double sliding doors, these Suites were the first to feature a stand-alone bed – and a double at that – rather than one converted from a seat after take-off and they did look quite spacious, until Etihad's Residence came along.

Travellers enjoying Singapore's Suites also have the option to pre-book their amazing food, choosing from a selection of more than 60 dishes.

Other airlines are already working to catch up, and to make First Class even classier. Emirates has said it will reveal a new private room on its A380s “very soon”, according to spokesperson Shaikh Majid Al Mualla.

The super suite will be “based on our [first class] cabin but more as a room concept and private,” he said.

It will be interesting to see what the other big airlines come up with to combat the effort Etihad has made to make flying at the pointy end even more prestigious, but for now The Residence in the sky is as good as it gets. It's just a shame you still have to line up at Customs with the poor people. ✈️

FLYING HIGHER

The truly rich, of course, don't fly First Class, because it's beneath them. If you've got your own private jet you go where you want, when you want, and you can have an orgy, staffed by sexy dwarves dipped in chocolate, all the way there if you like.

Travelling in your own jet rocks, because you don't even land at the same part of the airport as the filthy GP (General Public). Some very fortunate colleagues and I got to spend a few days zipping between Portugal and Spain in a private jet – pimped out with gold and white leather spinning armchairs, a bed out the back and our own hostie, serving caviar during take off – and it was a ridiculous, rock-star experience.

We never even passed through customs or had our bags checked, just out of the bus, through a door and onto the airport apron to walk onto our luxurious plane. The whole thing feels opulent to the point of being evil, and you get the urge to stroke a white cat the whole time, while threatening Mr Bond. First Class is brilliant, ridiculous even, but there's always something better.



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MOTORING

WORDS : BEN SMITHURST





X FACTOR

BMW'S NEW X6 M IS COMPROMISED AND A BIT POINTLESS, BUT ALSO VERY ADEPT AT DEFYING PHYSICS

“A PLACE for everything and everything in its place.” It’s a catchall proverb for conservatives everywhere, dating to the 17th Century, but even if they’re right that doesn’t make it interesting. All the best things happen when something is jammed somewhere it’s not supposed to be – whether you’re talking innovation, or violence, or penetrative porn. That’s why House of Lords Tories get caught in their fishnets and their servants.

Welcome to BMW’s second generation X6 M SUV: a car that enthusiastically forgets its place.

Despite being very German and with a throaty pair of pipes, the X6M is not into porn. What it is into, however, is both violence and innovation. Which is why BMW decided to launch it in Austin, Texas, at the Circuit of the Americas – the three-year-old, US\$400m-plus host track of the Formula One United States Grand Prix.

Ignore the first initial: SUVs might be Sports Utility Vehicles, but they’re not really for sport. Or, at least, not for motorsport. They’re for schlepping kids to soccer practice, or for lawyers with unused mountain bikes, or to make tiny, naturally frightened women feel like linebackers in traffic. They are not for racetracks, because they are too high, too wallowy, and too heavy. And so launching one at a very twisty F1 circuit should be madness.

It turns out that it’s not.

The X6 M ignores ‘everything in its place’. It also ignores physics. This isn’t a small car. It’s a 2.3-tonne, 4.9m, five-door SUV with coupe aspirations. It mates a 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 – which, contrary to earlier reports, is almost entirely new – to a very

hickory-smooth eight-speed gearbox. The V8 produces 423kW and 750Nm, with peak torque slathered creamily from 2200-5000rpm, for a lightning 0-100km/h return of just 4.2 seconds.

The last iteration of the X6 M arrived back in 2009, with an equally confusing sense of purpose. This time around, humanity’s love for the SUV having only grown more obsessive, we might be ready for its charms.

When you buy an SUV, you buy a box: for filling with prams and kids and maybe paddleboards. This has a typical interior to match its expected circa \$200k pricepoint and BMW

lineage: hefty doors, near to every surface Alcantara or carbonfibre or rich soft leather. Its roofline hunkers restrictively at the superwide, vision-thieving C-pillar, as per the coupe influence. It has a respectable 580 litres boot space. You can tell as much about any SUV in a dealership lot. Why not, if it’s capable of race days, take it on track?

The X6 M’s twin turbos, tucked inside the V8’s vee, are almost entirely lag-free. It takes high-G turns like a lower, much lighter vehicle, and with traction disengaged, can be pushed into drifts – drifts! – at will. The steering is not dripping with road feel, but it is pin accurate. On optional 21-inch alloys, it’s not as smooth over corrugations as a regular X6, which will annoy some. But not those who seek M badging. Over smooth Texan roads, this wasn’t an issue. Over Australian goat tracks, it might be. Still. How can you expect a car that embraces not making sense to know its place?

The X6 M is a madcap, schizophrenic calabash of luxury, lunacy and function. It might be pointless, but it is also very good.

SPECS

ENGINE: 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8

OUTPUTS:

423kW/750Nm

100KM/H: 4.2sec

WEIGHT: 2200kg

CONSUMPTION:

11.1L/100km

PRICE: \$200,000



RANGE ROVER SPORT HYBRID

HYBRID THEORY

IMAGINE, for a second, being free of all your responsibilities. What if kids, work and a mortgage suddenly vaporised, and the world really was your oyster? What would you do? Hopefully the response you're thinking is not "lock myself in the dark room with Redtube and giant screen" and perhaps something more like, "Travel! Explore! Discover stuff!"

But by what means would you do it? There's no beating the freedom and independence offered by a car. You'd want something loaded with luxury and comfort, yet capable of taking on any godforsaken terrain you chose to tackle. Oh, and it would also need to be frugal, to give you a decent range when fuel got scarce, and it would need to burn diesel, because petrol quality can be dodgy in some off the more off-grid regions you'd want to travel.

In short, the car you'd want for an epic global odyssey is the new Range Rover Sport diesel hybrid. It's powered by a 3.0-litre V6 turbo-diesel engine which combines with the electric motor that's sandwiched between it and the eight-speed automatic gearbox. It's a

combination that sees the hybrid deliver a claimed combined consumption of 6.4L/100 compared to the ordinary diesel's claim of 7.3L/100km.

Naturally, Land Rover provides you with loads of pricey options; the on-board telly, rear-seat entertainment, premium Meridian hi-fi, surround camera system are just a few of the extras that help pimp this thing into the ultra-luxo class. Go for the 5+2 electric seating option if you have a big family or want room to pick up hot hitch hikers. But you don't need to cover the Sport in extras because the basic car is so good. It looks fantastic both inside and out. New for 2015 are the diamond-turned 21-inch alloy wheels plus a panoramic sunroof that's a no-cost option.

The Sport, just like the standard Range Rover, is pure class inside. This is where it beats all its rivals, including the Porsche Cayenne. It also beats them off-road, if you really try putting it to the test. Land Rover's Terrain Response

system fiddles with virtually all the car's mechanicals to suit whatever snotty surface you happen to be driving across, while the hybrid model's battery system is protected by a boron steel bash plate.

You get all the usual hybrid gizmos in the Sport, including readouts that show you battery charge and power levels. If the battery has ample charge, you can

switch to electric-only power, for stealthy late-night departures or just a bit of green-washing smugness as you and your massive SUV waft around silently and with zero emissions.

To drive the Sport hybrid is comfortable, thanks to the standard air suspension, and it handles with remarkable poise for a big SUV. It's also

quick. Land Rover quotes 0-100km/h in 6.4sec. Quick, but not as impressive as the supercharged petrol model's 5.0sec. But that's hardly going to matter when you're roaming the globe.

- ALEX BOYD

SPECS

ENGINE: 3.0-litre turbo diesel + electric

OUTPUTS:

250kW/700Nm

100KM/H: 6.7sec

WEIGHT: 2200kg

CONSUMPTION:

6.4L/100km

PRICE: \$146,900





BMW 228i CONVERTIBLE

LIFTING THE LID

ALL OF life is a compromise. In motoring, this is apparent no more than in convertibles, and specifically, the sort of roof you choose. Hard versus soft?

Hard is great: better looking, stiffer, more secure and with better noise insulation. Soft is not so great: it perishes faster, it will eventually leak, and ISIS goons can thrust their machetes through your roof at the lights. But soft is also lighter, often by hundreds of kilos, and the smaller a car, the more weight kills.

The newest M4 Convertible has a hard roof, and its weight blunts the base car's track focus. The new 2 Series has a soft roof. And it's sublime, with a lasagne-like sandwiching of five insulating layers. This model is bigger than its forerunner, the 1 Series convertible, by 72mm in length, 26mm in width and with a wheelbase extended by 30mm. It's the 1 Series convertible grown up. And it's good, minimising many of a soft-top's inherent vices.

The roof can be raised at up to 50km/h (10km/h faster than before) in just 20 seconds (which is 10 seconds faster). Despite that fabric lid, torsional rigidity is boosted by a fifth and bending strength bettered by 10 percent, largely thanks to cross-bracing front and back and reinforcements in the rockers. It has a 180kW, 350Nm (from 1250rpm), 2.0-litre in-line turbo four-pot, and it's staunchly rear-wheel-drive holdout status allows a purity of driving experience, and with the roof closed, Germans assured up, "you can easily have a phone conversation at 180km/h".

Match that to the silky optional eight-cog auto and it hits the everyman mark in a category soon to be haloed by BMW's forthcoming M2, an open secret, atop the utilitarian aggression of the sibling \$85,800 M235i, with its 3.0-litre straight six.

The entry-level 220i soft top starts at \$54,700. The nicely balanced 228i tips the scales at \$68,900. 



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GOOD TASTE

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DRINK

FIZZER OF AN
ARGUMENT

WHO SAYS CHAMPAGNE IS A WOMAN'S
DRINK? TIME TO MAN UP AND BURST
A FEW THOUSAND BUBBLES

WORDS : STEPHEN CORBY

WHY IS it okay for men to drink wine (sometimes) but not champagne? It can't be just the bubblyness that makes it a girly tippie, because beer has bubbles, and so does Bundy and Coke.

Logically, there's no good reason for a man not to enjoy a nice champagne – or sparkling wine, as the law requires we call the stuff made locally – even if he's not at a wedding at the time.

It can be quite delicious, after all, and it provides a kind of light and breezy drunkenness, a *joie de vivre*, once you've downed enough of it.

As you'd expect, the French have a very different opinion of who should drink bubbly, and when.

Ask Nicolas Delion, the Asian Pacific manager for the famous brand Taittinger, and he'll tell you the answer is pretty much "everyone, all of the time," and for very French reasons.

"Champagne is a wine of love, of seduction; it is definitely part of men's instinct," he oozes.

"When choosing a champagne a man should just think on who and how he would like to seduce. Premium champagne, with a high proportion of first-press grapes and long ageing, will always do it better, as it will be easier to drink and will provide more pleasure."

So just to be sure, is Delion suggesting that champagne quaffing is actually a manly pursuit, much like women?

"Champagne can absolutely be a manly drink the same way white wine is, and it perfectly matches manly activities such as seducing ladies!" he beams. "This is also why it is a perfect choice for weddings."

Yes, in France, weddings are all about seducing ladies, even for the groom. But then having a liquid lunch with Delion and his boss Clovis Taittinger is enough to convince you that the French national answer to just about everything is: "Because... sex!"

So now that you know you should be drinking the sparkling stuff, and that you'll be more studly when you do, what kind should you be drinking?

You can probably guess what Delion's answer is going to be – French, because it's sexier – so we asked a local, Ed Carr, the Chief Sparkling Winemaker for



BUBBLING OVER

Just to make the whole sparkling argument slightly more confusing, you have to throw prosecco and cava into the mix. So what the hell are they?

Ed Carr explains:

"Prosecco is a very different style generally based on youth, slight sweetness and fruitiness... a very different style that has great popularity and is showing strong growth. This would indicate the style and price are favourable to a large proportion of sparkling wine consumers."

"Cava is different again but is a well-known style with a large market share. Cava is a wine that expresses the historic region/varieties and winemaking of Spain."



House of Arras in Tasmania.

Perhaps surprisingly, Carr has no problem with not being able to call sparklings produced outside of France by the one name.

"Champagne is champagne, and rightly so," he says. "But champagne is not one wine – there are 36,000 hectares of vines and 19,000 growers of which more than 2000 make and sell champagne. And 260 major houses that make up around 80 percent of the volume. So the quality and style of champagne varies tremendously from the mediocre to absolute benchmarks."

"There is a similar quality range for sparkling wine, so as a consumer it is better to assess by individual brand and label rather than country of origin."

"The New World (that's us, by the way) cold-climate sparkling wines have, relatively recently, achieved world-class standards and should be judged on their respective quality and price."

"The consumer has generally grown up with champagne as the choice for top quality but this has now changed and it will take considerable time for this view to broaden to include sparkling wine."

Delion counters, with great passion, that while sparkling wines can be of very high quality, buying a bottle with the word champagne on it gives you a guarantee of quality, based on France's strict appellation laws.

"Champagne can only be produced out of three grape varieties, last fermentation has to be in the bottles, and ageing has a minimum length set by law," Delion booms.

"Sparkling wine production has pretty much no rules and can be either extremely premium (in this case they are more expensive than most champagnes) or can be of very low quality."

"Besides quality, there is of course a strong symbol in buying, drinking, or offering champagne, thanks to over three centuries of tradition as the finest celebration wine throughout the world. "When you drink champagne, you do the same as Queens and Kings!"

And you know what queens and kings get up to, don't you? Sex, possibly in baths of champagne.

There are plenty of good Australian sparklings that can take on the French,



including House of Arras, Clover Hill and Jansz, but it's only the French brands that really allow you to go right over the top and spend stupid amounts on a single bottle, like Taittinger's Comtes de Champagne 2005, which, at \$350, is quite spectacular.

But can you really tell the difference in taste between that and a \$60 champagne, or do you just tell yourself you can? Is it worth the money?

Delion gets quite emotional about this, pointing out that Comtes expresses the very best of Taittinger's soils, grapes and know-how to provide "an unlimited array of aromas", which is quite a few.

"The average drinker would probably not feel all the subtlety of its taste, but would definitely enjoy a higher level of emotion," he says.

Ed Carr of Arras loves the good stuff as well, and rates Comtes in his top 10 champagnes. "I hope the average punter would recognise its quality but beauty always remains in the eye of the beholder, which often reflects the wine experience of the consumer and ultimately the ability to fund the purchase of such great wines," he says.

He recommends his winery's own premium effort – the Arras EJ Carr Late Disgorged, at just \$150 a bottle, which is matured for a minimum of 10 years.

"CHAMPAGNE IS A WINE OF LOVE, OF SEDUCTION; IT IS DEFINITELY PART OF MEN'S INSTINCT"

"This age gives the wine an incredible power, elegance and intensity. Something every man should put on his list of wines to try before he dies," he says.

Carr agrees that wine that bubbles, whatever it's called, is something that men should drink more of.

"These wines exhibit complexity, flavour and depth that should interest wine consumers of both genders," he explains. "The sparkling wine sector is gender biased toward females so the blokes need to drop their preconceived ideas and be more adventurous."

We have to agree, but more for the French reasons. ☺

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WORDS : AMIE BARBELER



BREAD WINNER

JOIN THE CLUB

A SHORT HISTORY OF A TALL SANDWICH

WE'VE all been there. You stumble back to your hotel after a big night on the town when you realise that you're bloody starving. You have two options. You could leave the hotel in your drunken stupor and go forage yourself a feed, or, the obvious option, you could drunk dial room service and have them deliver you a club sandwich (with a side of fries, of course).

Club origins

The exact origins of this meaty beast are a bit of a mystery, but legend has it that it was invented by a chef in a private gentlemen's gambling club in New York in 1894. Makes sense when you think about it really; inventing a meal that could be eaten with one hand, leaving the other free for gambling. From there, the club made its way from the gambling tables of the Big Apple to menus across Europe sometime around the 1920s.

These days, we live in an age where

paninis and wraps are hot on the lunch circuit, whereas the "it" sandwich of yesteryear has taken a backseat on the café menu. But let's not overlook the practicality and downright deliciousness that is the club sandwich.

Crafting the club

Its architecture is simple: a double decker amalgamation of sliced roast chicken (or turkey) on the bottom layer, stacked with bacon, lettuce, tomato (and egg if you're fancy/from London) and, of course, a liberal spreading of mayo.

Bon Appetit's editor-in-chief Andrew Knowlton reckons the bread must be sliced sandwich white or wholewheat and must be toasted, but not overly so. "It should still be a little chewy in the middle," Knowlton says. He also attests that the turkey or chicken has to be shredded or thinly sliced, not large chunks of meat. Because there's nothing more disappointing than biting into a sandwich and tearing out half the chook in one bite.

Bonus points if the iceberg (yep, has to be iceberg) lettuce is shredded too. Oh, and this: "It has to be cut in triangles," insists Knowlton.

Pimp my sandwich

If you're not a club purist and want to stray away from the mainstay ingredients, you've got a myriad of options for jazzing up the flavour. Swap out the mayo for honey mustard or pesto, the lettuce for spinach, or the bacon for a lighter option like ham or pastrami. For full flavours that will compliment the roast meat and bacon, add some ripe avocado and brie cheese. Or take inspiration from the world's most expensive version, masterminded by a chef in England, which uses a combination of quail eggs, white truffle, Iberico ham, roast *poulet de Bresse*, frisée lettuce, semi-dried tomatoes, homemade mayonnaise and sourdough bread (all for the cool price of around \$200). Call us old fashioned, but we'd rather wrap our collective jaws around a classic club any day. 

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HENTY WINGMAN

SHOULDER THE LOAD

FINALLY, A BACKPACK THAT GETS THINGS STRAIGHT

COMMUTING to work as a cyclist or runner, then having to suit up for the day used to be a tricky exercise. Well, it just got a whole lot easier, thanks to two inventive Tasmanian mates. Frustrated after cycling to work and removing suits from backpacks with more creases than an elephant's ass, Jeremy Grey and Jon Gourlay knew there had to be a better way. The Henty Wingman was born.

The Wingman sports a clever two-in-one design. The outer shell is a suit/dress bag. Then there's a spacious hold-all designed to take all your other gear. Wear either piece as a stand alone backpack, or wrap the suit bag around the gym bag and you've got yourself the mother of all backpacks. There's even has enough room for your laptop or tablet.

Cyclists aren't the only ones that will dig the Wingman. It's ideal for motorcycle riders, gym goers, runners, swimmers, and of course those that travel a lot. If



you're heading interstate and only want to take carry-on luggage the Henty Wingman is perfect. It has been designed to fit carry-on specifications and overhead lockers, and unlike a traditional overnight bag or case, you won't need to press your clothes at your destination.

So how does it work? The suit/dress bag rolls into a tubular shape forming a diameter of about 25 centimetres. This shape is held in place with PVC ribs that run up the length of the bag, so this unit won't collapse in on itself and is able to hold the garments in place. Less movement means less creases. A removable coat hanger is included.

The Henty Wingman also comes with a hi-vis waterproof rain jacket, an adjustable shoulder strap, reflective piping for added night visibility, a stabilisation waist strap and a quick-release buckle. It's available in two sizes; compact and standard, and three inner lining colour options. **\$199 from henty.cc.**

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VIOLETTA

PHOTOS : MIRON CHOMACKI

A WORLD APART

WE TRAVELLED TO POLAND IN
SEARCH OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE
AND NATURAL BEAUTY. WE FOUND
IT IN THE FORM OF VIOLETTA...



“ GREW up in Legnica, a town located in the south-west of Poland, but I left in my late teens. I currently live in Poznan, one of the biggest cities in Poland but in soon I'll be moving to Warsaw – Poland's capital. Moving and new surroundings excites me.

“If you're planning a trip to Poland, Warsaw is definitely a must-see destination. The city has a really interesting history and has many tourist attractions, such as the beautiful Old Town, the Royal Route, the Chopin museum, the magnificent palaces and the former Jewish ghetto.

“Because I love travelling so much, I can't pick a favourite destination. I have so many and there are many places I'm looking forward to visiting in the future. Travelling enriches my life, gives me the adventure and new challenges that I crave. I also travel for education and to learn new languages. As someone who loves her food, I find that I'm always surprised at the different flavours the world has to offer.

“Before I was a model, I worked as a sales manager for a luxury-car dealership. But as soon as I discovered modelling, it quickly became my focus and my passion. I started modelling three years ago and since then have worked with many brands and photographers.

“I'm attracted to men who are ambitious, passionate and adventurous. And of course, it helps if they love to travel...”

A full-page photograph of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair sitting on a bed. She is wearing black lace lingerie, including a strapless bra and matching bottoms. She is looking over her shoulder towards the camera. The background is a softly lit bedroom with a headboard and pillows.

“BEFORE I WAS A
MODEL, I WORKED
AS A SALES MANGER
FOR A LUXURY CAR
DEALERSHIP”











"I AM ATTRACTED TO
MEN WHO ARE
AMBITIOUS AND
ADVENTUROUS"







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BONUS QUIZ NAME THESE FILMS



1. Lost in Translation 2. Euro Trip 3. The Hangover 2
4. Hot Tub Time Machine 5. Road Trip: Beer Pong

1. Which country consistently ranks last in terms of the frequency of which people have sex?

- a. Japan
- b. Australia
- c. Iceland

2. Which tiny country does Belgium, France and Germany border?

- a. Luxembourg
- b. Liechtenstein
- c. Frankfurt

3. Who was the first person to sustain controlled, powered flight?

- a. Richard Pearse
- b. The Wright Brothers
- c. Professor Ernst Heinkel

4. What's the global average number of sex partners for one person?

- a. 5
- b. 7
- c. 12

5. In what country do people have the most sex each year?

- a. France
- b. New Zealand
- c. Germany

6. What's the penalty for masturbation in Indonesia?

- a. \$250
- b. Prison
- c. Decapitation

7. If you travelled by sea to Tasmania from Melbourne, in which port would you normally arrive?

- a. Launceston
- b. Devonport
- c. Hobart

8. How long is the Great Wall of China?

- a. 8769km
- b. 21,196km
- c. 425,893km

9. Which chef is associated with Qantas?

- a. Curtis Stone
- b. Neil Perry
- c. Bill Granger

10. Which of these islands does not belong to Greece?

- a. Lifou
- b. Kos
- c. Zakynthos

11. Which one of these is not a real airline?

- a. Bearskin Airlines
- b. Yeti Airlines
- c. Giraffe Air

12. Which country was previously called Abyssinia?

- a. Yemen
- b. Afghanistan
- c. Ethiopia

13. What's the world's average age for loss of virginity?

- a. 16
- b. 18
- c. 22

14. Which of the following smells increase blood flow to the penis?

- a. Lavender, chocolate
- b. Donuts, licorice
- c. All of the above

14. Which colour does NOT appear on the South African flag?

- a. Orange
- b. Gold
- c. Black

ANSWERS: 1.a, 2.a, 3.a, 4.b, 5.a, 6.c, 7.b, 8.b, 9.b, 10.a, 11.c, 12.c, 13.b, 14.c, 15.a.

PENTHOUSE JOKES

NUN TO SEE HERE

A car full of Irish nuns is sitting at a set of traffic light in Dublin when a bunch of rowdy drunks pulls up alongside of them. "Hey, show us your tits, you bloody penguins" shouts one of the drunks. Quite shocked, Mother Superior turns to Sister Immaculate and says, "I don't think they know who we are – show them your cross." Sister Immaculate rolls down her window and shouts, "Piss off youse drunken misbegotten bastard sons of dried-up grandmotherly whores, or I'll come over there, tear youse each a new asshole and then bite off yer poxy balls off". Sister Immaculate looks back at Mother Superior quite innocently and asks, "Was that cross enough?"

SLOW HAND

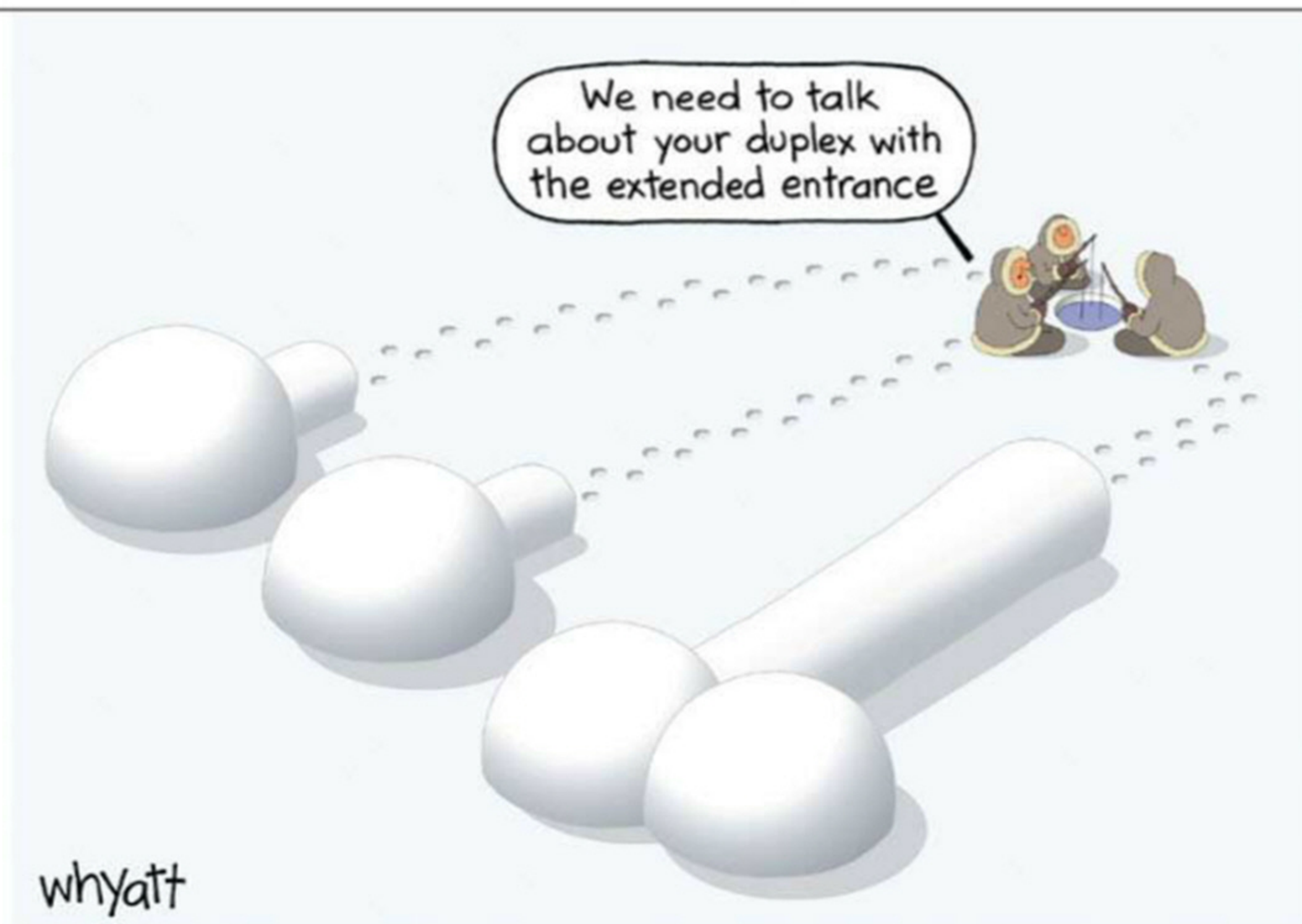
I was having dinner with world chess champion Garry Kasparov the other night. Our table was covered in a check tablecloth. It took him two hours to pass me the salt.

TIGHT SCHEDULE

A bloke asks the gym instructor: "Can you teach me to do the splits?" She says: "How flexible are you?" Bloke says: "I can't make Tuesdays."

QUIETLY SEETHING

A guy joins a monastery and takes a vow of silence: he's allowed to say only two words every seven years. After the first seven years, the elders bring him in and ask for his two words. "Cold floors," he says. They nod and send him away. Seven more years pass. They bring him back in and ask for his two words.



He clears his throats and says, "Bad food." They nod and send him away. Seven more years pass. They bring him in for his two words. "I quit," he says. "That's not surprising," the elders say. "You've done nothing but complain since you got here."

IN DEEP POO

A guy dies and is sent to Hell. Satan meets him, shows him doors to three rooms, and says he must choose one to spend eternity in. In the first room, people are standing in shit up to their necks. The guy says, "no, let me see the next room." In the second room, people are standing with shit up to their noses. The guy says no again. Finally, Satan opens the door to the third room. People are standing with shit up to their knees, drinking coffee and eating Danish pastries. The guy says, "I pick this room." Satan says okay and starts to leave,

and the guy wades in and starts pouring some coffee. On the way out Satan yells, "Okay you lot; coffee break's over. Everyone back on your heads!"

VIEW FINDER

Jesus is dying on the cross, and Peter is down the hill comforting Mary Magdalene when he hears Jesus's faint voice, "Peter...Peter..."

"I must go and help my Saviour," he says and goes up the hill, only to be beaten and kicked back down by the Roman centurions guarding the cross. But soon he hears, "Peter... Peter," in even fainter tones but he cannot ignore the call. Peter limps up the hill, leans a ladder against the cross, and gets halfway up when the centurions knock over the ladder, beat him brutally, and toss him back down the hill.

Again he hears, "Peter... Peter..." ever fainter, and again,

he cannot refuse his Lord. In pain, he slowly staggers up the hill, drags himself up the ladder, and finally gets even with Christ's face. Just as the centurions are reaching for the ladder, Jesus says, "Peter... Peter... look, I can see your house from up here."

GET THE CLUCK OUT

A man goes to a psychiatrist and says, "Doc, my brother's insane, he thinks he's a chicken." The doctor says, "Why don't you have him institutionalised for treatment?" The guy says, "We would. But we need the eggs."

EXPENSIVE LESSON

A guy asks a lawyer what his fee is. "I charge \$50 for three questions," the lawyer says. "That's awfully steep, isn't it?" the guy asks. "Yes," the lawyer replies, "Now what's your final question?"





FAITH, HEALING, HOPE AND DOPE

FOR SOME PARENTS OF SICK CHILDREN, THE BENEFITS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA ARE IRREFUTABLE. YET TREATING THESE KIDS IS TURNING PARENTS INTO DRUG CRIMINALS

WORDS : MATT BLOMBERG

ADAM Koessler was at a Brisbane hospital on January 2 when he arrested and charged with supplying dangerous drugs to a minor. The drug was cannabis; the minor was his two-year-old daughter.

Nine days earlier, on Christmas Eve, Doctors at the hospital had discovered a cancerous tumour wrapped around two-year-old Rumer's spine and pressing on her vital organs. As the experts began to draw up a chemotherapy plan, Koessler, well aware of the toxicity of the "medicine" that doctors would pump through his young daughter's body, began to research a natural alternative: cannabis oil.

Australian law prohibits the cultivation, possession, use, and distributing of illicit drugs, including cannabis, leaving Koessler potentially a judge's hammer away from a prison stint. But this isn't a story about smoking bongs and buying buddha sticks; it's a story about a liquid extract from a plant that can bring moments of peace to humans enduring the most evil and destructive conditions you've never imagined. It's a story about parents who run the law's gauntlet every day in order to see their children play; about the battle to legalise the right to give life to a child; and about the laws and loopholes that shape the game.

As chemotherapy commenced for two-year-old Rumer, her father mixed what he described as "medical grade cannabis oil" into her food to offset the deathly side effects. Details of the strength and

makeup of the oil remain secrets of the courts, however, following his arrest, Koessler made clear through the newspapers that the alternative treatment had benefitted his daughter.

Gone was the bed-stricken girl suffering in silence, he said, replaced once again by an infant with an appetite and the spirit for play. "Her cancer-ridden little body was alive again," the father was reported as saying. "She would say 'Daddy, tummy's not sore' and she would be able to eat like a champion and began to gain weight." "Her energy was up and she wanted to go outside with me instead of laying on her back with her legs curled up."

Modern science has proven that at least two compounds present in the cannabis plant – tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is hallucinogenic, and cannabidiol (CBD), which is not – can, indeed, work against chemotherapy side effects such as severe pain, nausea and depression, and even stymie tumour growth. Medical cannabis is also non-toxic, unlike chemotherapy, which some medical professionals claim is more lethal than cancer itself. And the miracle weed doesn't work just for those struck by malignant tumours. Cyberspace is awash with footage of young epileptics in frightening fits, beating themselves bloody or twitching and gasping for air, those visuals followed by stories of the satiation an ill child can realise through a spoonful of the black oil. Some mothers claim that the fits, once unceasing, have been completely eliminated. And these are not new revelations.

Humans have used cannabis as medicine, legally, for thousands of years. Hippocrates, the Greek physician known as the Father of Western Medicine, prescribed it for pain. Ancient civilisations in the Americas, India and China used it for centuries before that. You only have to go back two generations, and cannabis medicines were on chemist shelves. However two periods of demonisation – in the early 1900s, when the U.S. targeted border-crossing Mexicans with the first anti-Cannabis laws, and from 1971, when President Nixon declared "War on Drugs" – led to the stigmatization of a plant that is only now being accepted once again for its therapeutic value.

In the U.S., 23 states have legalised cannabis for therapeutic use (we will follow them blindly into war, it seems, but not medicine), while Canada, Holland and Israel, among others, are years ahead of the play. Australia is catching on, too, albeit piecemeal and slowly. In an August letter to broadcaster Alan Jones, Prime Minister Tony Abbott said that he had "no problem with the medical use of cannabis", and went on to say that if a drug had been found to be safe abroad, it should be made available here.

Across the table, however, is the mainstream medical fraternity, whose footsoldiers argue for rounds of long-winded clinical trials to measure supposed potential side effects such as hallucinations, addiction and psychosis, while also muddying the issue, through either deviousness or incompetence, by generally failing to differentiate between recreational dope smokers and terminally ill children. And behind the doctors stands the pharmaceutical industry, which turns hundreds of

"23 U.S. STATES HAVE LEGALISED CANNABIS FOR THERAPEUTIC USE. WE WILL FOLLOW THEM BLINDLY INTO WAR, BUT NOT MEDICINE"

billions in profits annually on the back of a global population increasingly dependent on its synthetic drugs, some of which might be made obsolete should this plant extract be accepted as a worthy alternative.

Mike Baird, the NSW Premier and a staunch advocate for medical cannabis, has committed \$9 million to conduct clinical trials of medical cannabis, the results of which will not be known for two to five years. Victoria has agreed to a study of its own. But the very nature of the cannabis plant may render all trials useless, as pointed out by Professor David Pennington, the former dean of the University of Melbourne's medical school. "Cannabis can never be a pharmaceutical agent in the usual sense for medical prescription, as it contains a variety of components of variable potency and actions, depending on its origin, preparation and route of administration," Dr Pennington wrote in the Medical Journal of Australia earlier this year. "It will not be possible to determine universally safe dosage of cannabis for individuals based on a clinical trial."

So as men in suits procrastinate over trials whose redundant results are years away, thousands of parents like Adam Koessler are forced to break the law in order to give life to their children.

"WE HAVE a product – and we know how to replicate the product, exactly – that is saving kids' lives."

Tony Bower is a lifelong horticulturist with a masters in marijuana and a degree in the dirt. He walks barefoot around his lush Crescent Head property on the NSW mid-north coast, clawing his shaggy beard while discussing the neural functions of different receptors in the human brain. And he says he has a refined and safe product, Mullaways Medical Tincture, which is proven to stop seizures and should be on the market changing lives now.

"I have studied this plant my whole life," Bower told us on a visit to his property. "The plant I use is bred specifically for what I do," he says. "Everything we use comes from the

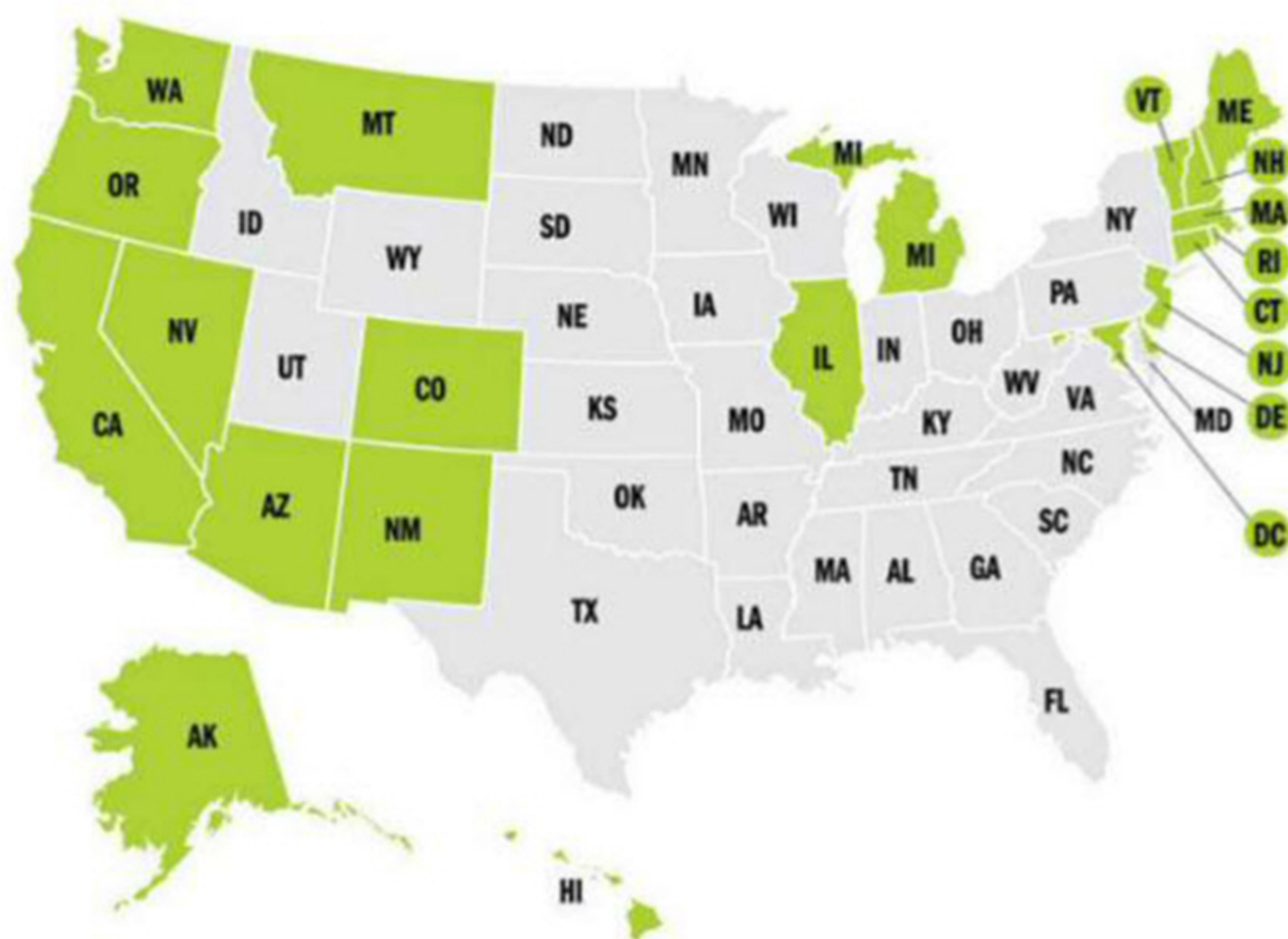


ABOVE: Modern science has proven that at least two compounds present in cannabis can work against chemotherapy side effects such as pain and nausea, and even stymie tumor growth.

LEFT: Adam Koessler with his two-year-old daughter Rumer. Koessler was arrested by police for mixing cannabis oil into her food to offset the side-effects she was suffering from chemo.

BELOW LEFT: States in the USA where medical marijuana is legal.

BELOW: Koessler reunited with his daughter, after three weeks apart due to his arrest.





TOP AND ABOVE: Tony Bower, who had his prison sentence reduced on appeal, following a police bust of a crop of plants marked for medicine. He continues to distribute the oil he has in stock, but risks an extended prison sentence if found to be cultivating.

RIGHT: Jai Whitelaw, bloated and sick in 2012 while on a high dose of the steroid Prednisolone used to treat his seizures.

FAR RIGHT: Jai 10 days after he was first administered Mullaways cannabis oil in late 2014. "His eyes are sparkling, not dull; He's energetic and social," said his mother.



original plant, so it has the very same properties. Because we copy the plant exactly, we know exactly how much THCA there is, every time."

Bower has isolated a little-explored compound in the cannabis plant, tetrahydrocannabinolic acid, or THCA, which is the precursor to THC and has the same medicinal powers, without the risk of hallucination. Over the past two decades, the master grower has purpose-bred a strain of cannabis he calls the Cleverman, from which he extracts a liquid solution that has been used by people suffering cancer, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, glaucoma, arthritis and migraines, to name a few. Now, though, he is under close police watch, unable to grow, and using his limited stock to treat about 150 terminally and chronically ill children. His email inbox is a trove of before and after clips and messages of thanks.

Bower caught the attention of authorities around 2008 when he began distributing his tincture for free around northern NSW. He has been in the crosshairs ever since. Most recently, in October, Bower had a 12-month prison sentence reduced to a six-month good behaviour bond on appeal following a police raid on his property that uncovered a crop of Cleverman plants marked for medicine. He continues to distribute the oil he has in stock, but risks an extended prison sentence if found to be cultivating. "Once I am off parole, if the government hasn't pulled their finger out, I don't give a shit, I'll replant, I'll grow."

Bower doesn't mince words. When asked what his patients suffer from, he says "they are all gonna die. It's intractable epilepsy. There are different names for the conditions but basically, they seizure, waste away, and eventually have a seizure that kills them. It's usually a drop seizure, where they fall over, smack their head on something and die."

Bower wants the government to allow him to grow, extract the medicine and provide it to whoever needs it. He implores all who doubt its effectiveness or question its safety to put it to the test scientifically. He laughs at the mention of any similarities between his product and smoking dope. "Side effects? The main side effect of my medicines is living. If you want to see side effects, you should see the state of some of these kids while they are taking all the drugs that the doctors give them."

If you don't believe Bower, you might believe one of the mums. For five years, Michelle Whitelaw followed the script, treating her ten-year-old son Jai, who suffers from three rare forms of epilepsy (extend), with whatever the doctors prescribed him: she watched him swell on steroids, waste away on opioids, withdraw when coming off narcotics. She watched his brittle bones break, his teeth crumble, her son's spirit disappear, all side effects of the doctor's drugs. Michelle was well aware of Tony Bower and his tincture – she says she had it in the house – but declined to use it for fear of being prosecuted, and because her husband, a federal government employee, had his job at stake.

Then, mid-December, eight months after Professor Ingrid Scheffer, a leading paediatric neurologist, had

"YOU SHOULD SEE THE STATE OF SOME OF THESE KIDS WHILE THEY ARE TAKING ALL THE DRUGS THAT THE DOCTORS GIVE THEM"



told Michelle that the next slide into regression might be the end of Jai, the mother of five was left with no choice. "He didn't know who I was, he was withdrawing, his eyes were rolling back in his head, he didn't know where he was," she says. "I thought: this is regression, we are going back to hell."

Doctors had Jai on "a cocktail of 35 tablets a day" at times. His mother described him as "literally a zombie, just an empty shell with a heartbeat that couldn't walk, couldn't talk, nothing." Then, when all was lost, when the country's leading neurologist had declared "we have done all we can," a desperate mother turned to the tincture. "The only regret I have to live with now is that I had the tincture for so long but didn't give it to my son earlier," she says.

Michelle's account of the moment that she gave her barely-responsive 10-year-old his first taste of the tincture is similar to that of Adam Koessler's – their stories are hard to believe and probably wouldn't be if they were unique. "The minute I gave it to him, within four minutes, he asked me if he could have drink and he told me he loved me; he called me mum and I thought I was dreaming."

Eleven days later, Jai was riding a bicycle. "It's the first time he has ever been able to ride a bike. I'm so angry at the medical system, at the hospital system, because we have had five years of hell and two years fighting for him to be allowed this medicine," she says. "When we compare it with the crap we have put in his body, it really blows me away. It works." If there are to be any side effects, it beats a dead child.

Jai now takes low doses of Bower's tincture thrice daily, and has been weaned off all but two anti-epileptic drugs. His seizures, once coming hundreds a day, have all but ceased: when we spoke to Michelle in late February, she reported only three episodes since December 14, and that for the first time Jai was attending classes at school.

But amazement has now evolved into anger. The whole experience, Michelle says, has left her with hatred for a system that prescribed her boy into a toxic oblivion while a natural alternative was within arm's reach. Jai now has no night vision, poor peripheral vision, and cataracts. One drug burnt holes in his sarcophagus, "so they prescribed him another drug to repair the throat. Its like every medication needs another medication to counteract its side effects."

Michelle believes that most medical professionals she deals with are aware of the power of medical cannabis, but dare not speak against the mainstream for fear of being removed from it. She thinks that at a certain point, Jai and others like him become nothing more than cash cows for pharmaceutical companies and the doctors that peddle their products. "That's exactly what it is: a business. Our children are all numbers in the system and we line their pockets. A sick kid is money for them. Yet, someone like Tony can make a medicine that is saving how many people, and that's just brushed off."

While Bower's tinctures have been brushed off by the establishment, Andrew Katelaris, a Sydney-based doctor, has been brushed completely.

Dr Katelaris first "unlocked the enormous medical potential of cannabis" in 2003, going public with a cannabis-based nasal spray that would ease the suffering of HIV patients. That bought him to the attention of the medical board, he says, and after two years of back and forth, he received an "ultimatum that I either ceased experimenting and administering cannabis or cease being registered.... It was an easy choice."

Since 2005, Dr Katelaris has operated as a renegade practitioner, developing medicines based on the non-hallucinogenic CDB compound and supplying them to the chronically ill. Having spent years inside the medical machine, he is well qualified to be its judge. And his judgement isn't pretty. He labels the government and the doctors as puppets of the pharmaceutical companies, which are granted all preferences in medical research.

And he reveals that a doctor's top priority is not always his patient's health.

"There's a very clear conflict of interest when doctors, backed by pharmaceutical medicines, are deciding how to treat patients.

"They are prepared to trade people's health for their own short-term financial wellbeing," he says.

"We are living in what I call a pharmaco-fascist society where the medical council has draconian powers to edit what the doctors say, so if you for instance start criticizing immunization or fluoridation or proposing medical cannabis, you may find yourself under a suspension of practise condition," Dr Katelaris said as he drove to treat a terminally ill patient in Canberra. "They've got a stranglehold over the opinion of the people."

Dr Katelaris believes that egos inside the medical establishment are preventing a "medical revolution" from moving forth. With generations of work at risk of being brought undone, no one is willing to step out of line, despite the pro-cannabis evidence being so stark.

"BIG PHARMA IS DELAYING THE INTRODUCTION OF HERBAL CANNABIS SO THEY CAN BRING IN THE SIMILAR BUT PATENTABLE ANALOGUES"

He says that renegade practitioners like himself "are increasingly being approached by doctors to look after their relatives who have been failed by the health system." And he believes that the pharmaceutical companies, which have long enjoyed complete control over the market for prescription painkillers, are racing to create a synthetic version of medical cannabis that would allow them to maintain that control.

"There has been a very active research program around artificial cannabis, or analogue drugs, because you can't patent cannabis in its herbal form," he says of the pharmaceutical companies, which take out long-term patents, usually about 20 years, to establish exclusive rights to produce newly discovered drugs. "The way I see it, they are delaying the introduction of herbal cannabis so they can bring in the similar but patentable analogues."

Like Tony Bower and Michelle Whitelaw, Dr Katelaris spoke candidly to *Penthouse* about what are jailable offences under the current law. It is almost as if they are egging at authorities in order to expedite the process of what seems to be a foregone conclusion. Bower and Katelaris will maintain their selfless commitment, charging forth under the guide of their own moral compasses rather than the law they believe betrays so many. On the other side, the so-called puppets of the medical fraternity will no doubt continue to argue about dangerous side effects, seemingly oblivious to the vile effects that their toxic medicines have on the human body.

Michelle will continue to struggle, too, though she doesn't have five years, or even two years, spare to wait for the changing of a law that shapes her anxious existence. "Trials don't save lives," she says. "Children are dying. The law needs to change now." 



ABOVE: Since 2005, Dr Katelaris has operated as a renegade practitioner, developing medicines based on the non-hallucinogenic CDB compound and supplying them to the chronically ill.

LEFT: Nicole Gross was so desperate to find relief for her son's near-constant, debilitating seizures that she moved him from Chicago to Colorado so he could receive medical marijuana.

BELOW: Dr Katelaris believes that the pharmaceutical companies, which have long enjoyed complete control over the market for prescription painkillers, are racing to create a synthetic version of medical cannabis that would allow them to maintain that control.





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HEAD IN
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ALPINE CLIMBING IS BOOMING, AND MIND-BLOWING SUMMITS ARE ACHIEVABLE FOR THOSE WITH THE BALLS AND DETERMINATION – OR A CREVASSE-LOAD OF CASH...

WORDS : BEN SMITHURST



THERE are just 14 mountains in the world that rise above 8000 metres, jutting up into the Jetstream, a realm described as “the death zone” by people not prone to melodrama. It’s called the death zone, simply, because at that height there are lots of ways to die. There’s cerebral edema, where the brain swells with fluid and is squeezed through the base of the skull. There’s hypoxia; simple lack of oxygen in the thin air. There are the consequences of just losing a glove, or dropping your ice axe. There’s a misstep, an overbalance, and a thousand metre drop.

Every minute spent above 8000m is borrowed time; the human body can’t survive up there for long, and a climber must descend to recover – or die.

Which makes “climbing Mount Everest” – height: 8848m, or 29,029ft – a dicey entry to scrawl onto your bucket list. Or so you’d think.

Wrong.

It’s easy. If you’ve got the cash.

“These days people are climbing

Which is outrageous. Or... is it? To the old-school purists, perhaps, it’s an affront. But to the sherpas in Nepal, a country where the annual income is around US\$450, the Sherpa’s wage – up to \$10,000 a season – for carrying the tent, gas and rucksack of German, Nigerian or Australian businessman is a godsend.

There are no shortage of Australians.

Domestically, mountain climbing is having a moment. According to the Australian School of Mountaineering, based in Katoomba, demand for courses and instruction has skyrocketed over the past decade. Not all want the bare minimum of instruction. Many their phones, says one instructor, and for every one person who calls seeking the minimum skills to be babysat up Everest for a Facebook selfie, “we get five or ten who want to learn their skills properly, to be able to do it themselves, over the long term.”

‘Long term’ isn’t a matter of week or months, but years. Andrew Lock’s passion for climbing was ignited by a

ALMOST 4000 PEOPLE HAVE NOW SUMMITED EVEREST. IN 1990, ONLY 18 PERCENT OF ATTEMPTS WERE SUCCESSFUL; TODAY THAT NUMBER STANDS AT 56 PERCENT

as a trophy,” griped Jamling Tenzing, son of Tenzing Norgay, Sir Edmund Hillary’s climbing partner, last year. “It’s something to tick off the bucket list. People who have the money, wealthy people, they are willing to pay up to \$135,000 for a shot at [Everest]. Everything is taken care of. All they have to do is walk.”

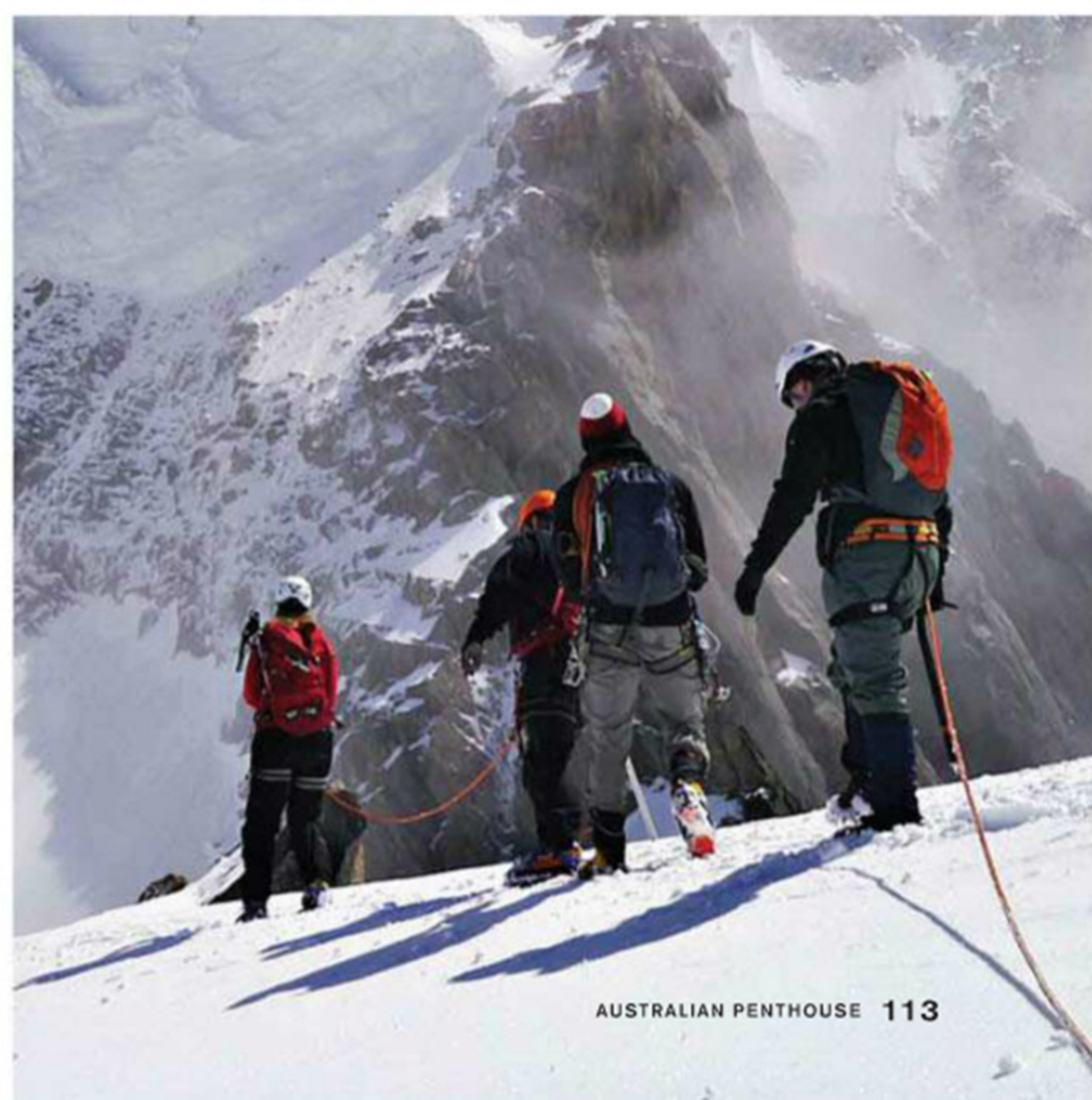
“There are people going up there who have no idea how to put on crampons.”

As touched on in John Krakauer’s *Into Thin Air*, the author’s firsthand account of the 1996 Mount Everest disaster, in which eight climbers were killed by a rogue storm, commercial guiding is big business. And tragedies still occur. But business is booming. Almost 4000 people have now summited Everest, in 1990, only 18 percent of attempts were successful; today that number stands at 56 percent.

touring slideshow in a Wagga pub in 1991. Tim Macartney-Snape and Greg Mortimer, the first Australians to reach the summit of Everest, in 1991, were on tour. Lock was inspired, with Everest his immediate goal. But it took him six years of dedicated training to get there – when he failed.

Over the next two decades, though, Lock conquered all 14 ‘eight-thousanders’. All are clustered around Nepal and Pakistan. He’s the only Australian to do so. Lock has summited Everest twice, and achieved six ‘first Australian’ ascents, and four solo ascents in his 18 successful 8000m-plus summittings out of 25 attempts. His preferred climbing style is either solo, or in very small teams, working with neither Sherpa support nor bottled oxygen. It’s a gruelling, and expensive in more expensive







THREE TOP TIPS

Think Everest is the hardest? Think again, says Andrew Lock – it's barely in the top five. Here are three among the hardest eight-thousanders.

K2 - 8661m, 2nd highest

"K2 is billed as the hardest of them all, and it is. It's steeper, it has worse weather generally, it has more technical climbing. But I still wouldn't consider a guided climb of K2 to be as remarkable an achievement as an unguided climb."

Annapurna - 8091m, 10th highest

"Way, waaay more dangerous than any of them. There isn't a route on that mountain that isn't threatened by extreme avalanche risk. It's not so much the snow slopes, it's these great big seracs, ice cliffs, that build up over the centuries from that snow that's gradually moved down the snowface and they just overhang every route. It's the mountain that mountaineers fear. When I climbed Annapurna in 2007, my ascent was about the 120th ever of that mountain. And for those 120 ascents, there had been 60 deaths."

5. Makalu - 8463m, 5th highest

"On par with Everest for difficulty, with both of them just above Lhotse (8516m), and then all the others would follow."



ways than the purely financial. Over his 25-year career, big mountains have claimed over 20 of his mountaineering friends. Those include Australian legend Lincoln Hall, rescued on Everest after being abandoned for dead, and left overnight, at 8700m in 2006. Another was Russian alpine celebrity Anatoli Bukreev, the hero of *Into Thin Air*, with whom Lock conquered K2 in 1993 – the tragic descent of which killed three climbing mates.

Lock has paid his dues. His attitude is similar, if not precisely aligned to Norgay's junior's.

"All of that is the commercialisation of Everest, and the other guided 8000ers," he says. "In order to get those punters up, they do just literally now fix rope from where you set foot on the base camp, to the summit. You can't fall off at any point. There's not the risk there once was. You've had the spirit of adventure taken out of it. And certainly, the challenge is taken out of it."

Everest is the world's highest peak, but it's far from the only guided summit. Multiple adventure companies offer packages on other eight-thousanders including Lhotse (8516m), Cho Oyu (8201m), Manaslu (8163) and Gasherbrum 2 (8035m). As high as those peaks are, tensions on them grow even higher – between cashed-up novices, grizzled alpinists and occasionally even the sherpas.

In 2013, an experienced Italian, British and Swiss trio, including Swiss speed-climber Ueli Steck, considered one of the world's most famous mountaineers, were set upon by up to 100 Everest Sherpas in what's been described as "history's highest fistfight fight". Their scuffle started up at around 8200m, or 27,000ft and continued lower at their 6400m base camp.

At issue: etiquette – and presumably, the Europeans' frustration at amateurs being nursed and pushed up once-insurmountable peaks.

"The fight broke out after the three Westerners appeared to disrespect the Sherpas and go against accepted climbing etiquette," reported London's *Telegraph*. "The Sherpas were working on the Lhotse Face, a 3700ft-long wall of glacial blue ice, fixing a rope

for future fee-paying clients to ascend. But the three men, climbing without the assistance of the Sherpas, crossed over the lines being laid by the Sherpas – in contrast to the commonly-held belief that if Sherpas are working on a section of the mountain, you should steer clear of them."

Surprisingly, Lock sees no problem, per se, with paying your way to the summit of Everest – or any other 'guided' eight-thousander.

"Guiding's been around since climbing has," he says. "The early Swiss guides went along in knickerbockers and with these incredibly long wooden staffs." Indeed, the Alps' figurehead Mont Blanc hosts 30,000 climbing attempts per year – and only 1-3 deaths. "It's just that one deems it sort of reasonable to be guided on the smaller, less technical peaks, but there's a question mark whether guiding on the 8000m peaks is appropriate. My position is that it probably is... however, because it's so unregulated, every punter who's got a bit of money can just

some others in the team". He'd been "buried in avalanches, narrowly missed by avalanches, fallen through crevasses, fallen through cornices, taken falls, had bivouacs without any equipment at 8000m, and all without oxygen". But the reason he survived those instances, Lock says, is that, luck aside, he'd paid his dues on the way in.

If you really want to learn to climb, Lock suggests the traditional path.

"Firstly, learn to rock climb. You need to have that absolutely down-pat before you move to the alpine environment. The alpine environment is the wrong place to learn.

"Then, go and do a technical mountaineering course in New Zealand. New Zealand is the most underrated alpine training ground in the world. It has big mountains, bad rock, dangerous snow conditions, terrible weather – it's perfect. It is technically dangerous and technically challenging.

This, says Lock is the perfect next step into the alpine world. You'll add

"FIRSTLY, LEARN TO ROCK CLIMB. YOU NEED TO HAVE THAT ABSOLUTELY DOWN-PAT BEFORE YOU MOVE TO THE ALPINE ENVIRONMENT. THE ALPINE ENVIRONMENT IS THE WRONG PLACE TO LEARN"

turn up at the mountain."

What to do, then? Apart from not pissing off the sherpas...

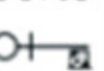
"It all depends upon what your ultimate goal is," says Lock. "If all you want to do is do Everest and it's just ticking a bucket list, then you might as well pay a bunch of guides to drag you up, drag you down, keep you safe and let them take all the risk and the management decisions. Then go home and don't worry about it anymore."

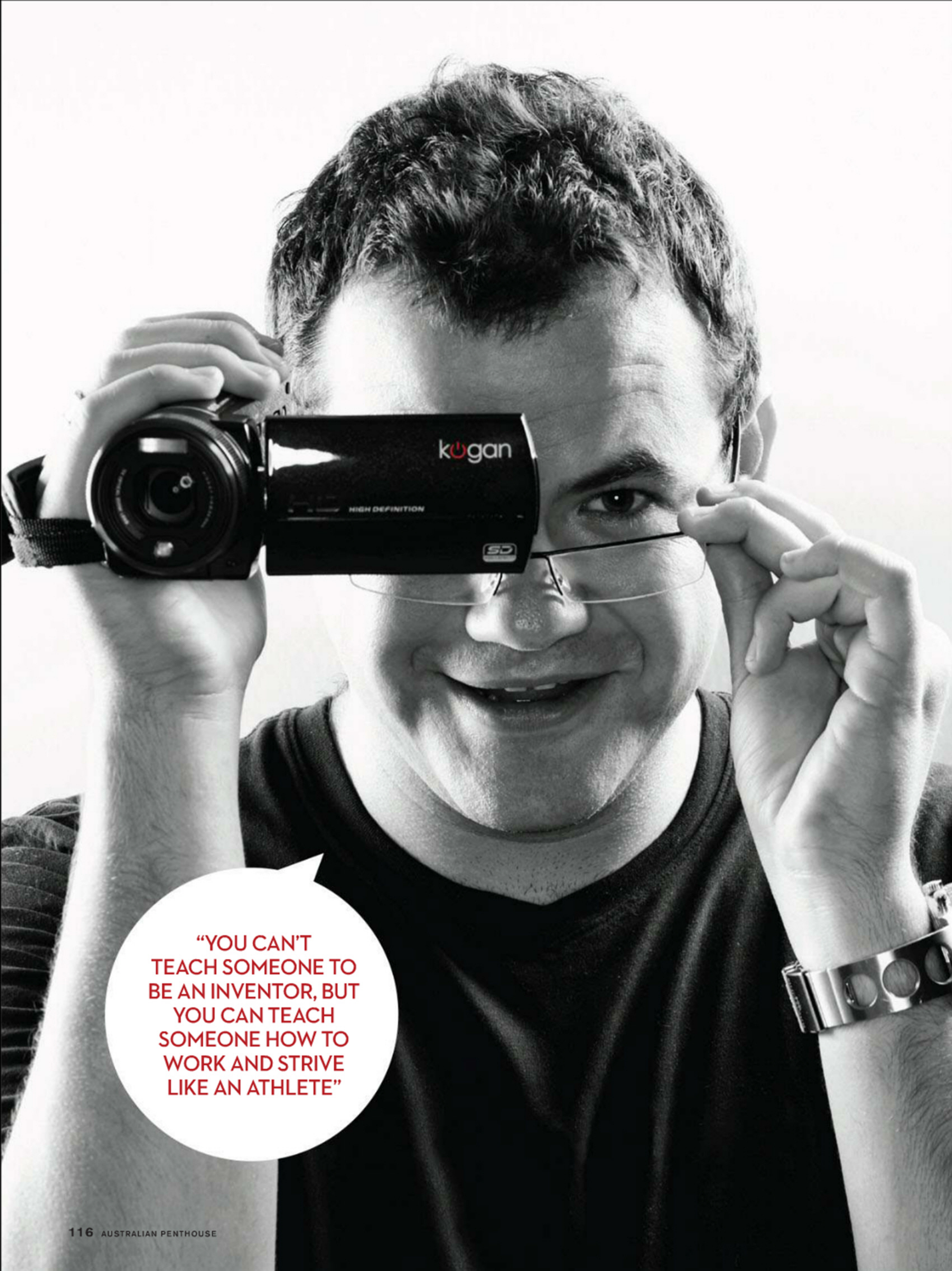
Lock himself has hosted guides – including his first successful summiting of Everest, in which he lead paying punters, nine years after his first shot. ("On my first expedition, in 1991, the permit cost \$3000. When I went back in 2000 it was \$70,000 and by then I couldn't afford the fees – and that's just for the piece of paper.") In the meantime, however, he'd conquered K2, which "nearly got me, and certainly [killed]

survival skills such as crevasse rescue, avalanche awareness and bivouacking in the snow to your arsenal.

"Then I would say go and join a club. Join the New Zealand Alpine Club or something similar and climb with friends of similar or, ideally, greater experience and learn from them. It will take some years to do that. And then set your goals on whatever particular bucket list item you have in mind. If you follow that path you have a much greater chance of surviving and becoming a real climber, rather than just a guided client. And there's a big difference."

Or, you know... just pay up. Your selfie will light up Facebook. Just don't expect respect from the old heads.

"At the end of the day," says Lock, picking an errant icicle from his stubble, "if people want to do that, it's fine. Good luck to them. But those sorts of ascents are meaningless to me." 



**“YOU CAN’T
TEACH SOMEONE TO
BE AN INVENTOR, BUT
YOU CAN TEACH
SOMEONE HOW TO
WORK AND STRIVE
LIKE AN ATHLETE”**

ELECTRIC AVENUE

FROM MOVING TVs FROM HIS GARAGE, RUSLAN KOGAN HAS BUILT THIS COUNTRY'S MOST SUCCESSFUL ONLINE RETAILING EMPIRE

AUSTRALIA'S most successful online retailer entered the industry because he had a hankering for a big-screen TV. Ruslan Kogan was working for international consultants, Accenture, in Melbourne in 2006 but his love of electronic gadgetry was outrunning his salary.

"Those big-screen TVs were five thousand dollars in the shops," says Kogan, now 32. "I used to deal directly with Asian companies to import my gadgets, so I called a few Chinese factories to see if I could get a quote on a TV."

Kogan was quoted \$1000 for a high-spec, big-screen TV made for European distribution; the same model was retailing for \$4000 in Australia. The business opportunity seemed so obvious to Kogan that he quit his job at Accenture and started kogan.com in his garage a few days later.

"I told the factory I wanted to do an order of 80 TVs, branded as Kogan, and they laughed. It wasn't worth their while."

Kogan couldn't make a minimum order. So he did what would become a core tenet of his operations: he added value. Seeing that the TV factory had an amateurish sales brochure in 'Chinglish', he redesigned and rewrote the entire brochure to make it palatable to English-speaking customers. The factory managers were appreciative and they made a small production run of Kogan televisions.

To this day, as kogan.com has become Australia's largest online retailer, with 25,000 products from electronics and fashion to garden products and homewares, the core sales success is still the Kogan TVs: the \$99 16" model sells by the hundreds every day.

Kogan now operates in 14 countries,



with offices in Hong Kong, China and the UK, and a call centre in the Philippines. The company – built from scratch, grown organically and still with no external investors – employs 200 people, has annual sales turnover over A\$350 million and according to financial media speculation, is growing sales between 200 and 300 percent each year.

Yet, as Kogan tells *Penthouse*, he and his senior management don't call it a retail business. "We're a statistics business masquerading as a retailer."

The distinction is why Ruslan Kogan is so eagerly courted by investment bankers wanting to launch kogan.com.au as a public company: whereas Amazon data-mines customer behavior to sell more products, Kogan uses data-mining and analytics tools in Google to establish demand for specific products. Kogan then makes and sells those products: the retailer carries less inventory, it takes fewer losses on stock and it can keep its margins low, which drives more business.

"A traditional retailing business carries 50 percent good-selling stock, and 50 percent not-so good," says Kogan. "At this company we carry 99.97 percent good-selling stock. We identify actual demand."

Kogan has scores of patented algorithms and tools that ensure the company stocks the products that are trending in internet activity. It's this attention to consumer demand that means kogan.com.au generates \$2 million revenue-per-employee per annum whereas Amazon generates \$673,000.

In order to carry the right products at the right price, he has continued manufacturing his own goods. Around 70 percent of the products are Kogan private labels (15 brand names) covering the range of products. And the size

THE BOTTOM LINE

COMPANY

Kogan.com.au

SECTOR

Manufacturing and retail

FOUNDED

2006

ANNUAL TURNOVER

A\$350 million in 2014 (estimated by the *Wall Street Journal*)

EMPLOYEES

200



**“ALL
ENTREPRENEURS
ARE TRYING TO DO
SOMETHING
BETTER, I’M JUST
DOING THAT WITH
CONSUMERS”**



of the business means the quality and specifications Kogan can demand from its Chinese manufacturers is very high.

“We have a philosophy, of objectivism. We’re fact-based. Nothing is done on gut-feel or personality.”

Kogan is also suspicious of meetings, so for the early days of kogan.com, decisions were made in email chains with participants making ‘reply all’ contributions to the discussion. It was a good contest of ideas, but the company expanded and the emails grew too big. He compromised, so a senior manager can now call a meeting, under two rules: a meeting can’t last more than five minutes, and no one can sit down.

His HR policy is simple: you have to make a business case to work at the company and he prefers to hire people smarter than him. You then have to make a business case to be promoted. And firing? “If you just want to coast along, then it’s our fault. We hired the wrong person.”

Ruslan Kogan is in an expansion phase right now, although he doesn’t divulge details. But along with the maturing of his business, his outlook has changed since his twenties. “I used to think entrepreneurs were born, not made. But my parents are

from the Soviet Union and while they don’t understand much about the free market, they taught me the value of hard work: Dad worked nights as a taxi driver; Mum worked as a cleaner and waitress. So, entrepreneurs are both inventor and athlete: you can’t teach someone to be an inventor, but you can teach someone how to work and strive like an athlete.”

The Wall Street Journal estimates Kogan’s net worth at \$400 million and he knows he could retire a wealthy young man, spending his days in his favourite pastime of fishing and camping with his mates. But he isn’t going anywhere: he and his team are changing the industry, making it easier for normal people to buy what they want at low prices, with solid warranties and after-sales care.

Adding value to the consumer is a common enough promise, but it rings true at this Aussie company: many boys have collected lost golf balls and sold them back to golfers. But when Ruslan Kogan was 10, he’d clean them up and package them in an egg carton.

“All entrepreneurs are trying to do something better,” says Kogan. “I’m just doing that with consumers.”



**ABOVE: The Kogan Factory in the UK
BELOW: From EBook readers to juicers,
the company’s range is based on
carefully monitored consumer demand**



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- Start up costs relatively low in comparison to other business operations

*Return continues for the life of the containers.
Average container life is 15yrs.



SUMMARY OF RISK-RETURN TRADE-OFF BETWEEN ASSET CLASSES

INVESTMENT	RETURN*	NO. OF YEARS
Shipping Containers	26%	20
Value-priced stocks	14.62%	33
Growth stocks	11.96%	33
Stocks (S&P 500)	8.97%	136
Corporate bills	8.00%	150
Commodities (CRB index)	5.53%	93
Treasury bills	5.10%	172
Municipal bonds	4.24%	150

Source: Global Financial Data, 2012

*Average annual return over the stated time period

Disclaimer: Information provided is not intended to be Tax, Financial or Accounting advice. We recommend you obtain independent advice from your own Tax, Financial or Accounting Professionals as individual tax or financial positions may vary.

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EXTREME TRAVEL ADVISOR

HOW TO ROAM THE MORE COLOURFUL CORNERS OF THE GLOBE WITHOUT ENDING UP IN THE SHITHOUSE

THERE'S travel, and then there's travel. In one, you smile for the check-in girl and do your homework on how much to tip at your destination; in the other, you smile because you're no more than 20 paces from a toilet and you prepare for the bribe-rates at each checkpoint. So forget the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs' Smartraveller Travel Tips. For the man who visits shit-holes, and wants to avoid prison, blackmail and hospital, here's *Penthouse's* Extreme Travel Advice.

1. Make passport copies before you arrive: In many parts of the non-civilised world (including France) the hotel asks for your passport when you check in. Your official answer is, no, they may not keep your passport at the desk, but they can have the copy you made for their convenience.

2. Count your money at the counter: Sorry, champ, but we're not in Kansas anymore. Just because it's a bank, just

because it looks official and just because the teller wears socks with his shoes, doesn't mean you're not in Laos. When you change money, make him fan it out on the counter, make him count it as you point, make it loud and simple like *Sesame Street*. But whatever you do Don't Leave The Bank Before Counting Your Money!

3. Dude Looks Like a Lady:

Sometimes a man of the world is approached by a tall, tarty creature who moves like a deer and seems up for anything. It's times like these, especially when there's a language barrier, that you must double-check to ensure you aren't looking through your beer-goggles. You might miss that very thick Adam's apple, and end up with something – as they say – coming between you.

4. Sister payment: In parts of Africa and central Asia, a man may arise from a night of romance and discover that a certain young woman's male relatives are arrayed outside his door,

PANTS INFERNO

"It is a Rolex – see, it say it right here!"

"No stealing in this hotel, sah! All staff my family!"

"This water not from Nairobi – this from mountain spring, filtered by me, personal!"

"She not prostitute – she my sister!"

"I take you short cut. Best price, for you mister!"

"Vindaloo not strong – mild, for you sah!"

"No mister – Rayon our word for Silk."



"IN KOREA, THAT DELICIOUS 'STEW' MIGHT BE CAT; IN THE PNG HIGHLANDS IT'S PROBABLY DOG AND IN RURAL MEXICO IT'S BOUND TO BE DONKEY"

and would like their honour restored with whatever US dollars are at hand. You're usually such a shy cove, but after that fourth rum it really didn't seem too good to be true.

5. Tourist price: In the third world you'll meet rich, white 'searchers' who go barefoot and tell you how they don't pay tourist prices; they rode the train roof to Karachi and ate 3¢ japatris from a blind woman in Varanasi. Be careful of the 'I don't pay tourist prices' pose. As they say in the Cairo souks: you wanna behave like a douche, prepare to be beaten and robbed like a douche.

6. No self-drive: As much as we believe we have the skills of Daniel Ricciardo and the courage of Mick Doohan, there are some parts of the developing world where a man must simply swallow his pride and hire a car with driver. Self-drive in Mumbai or Saigon isn't only about your medical bills: you run over the wrong person in the wrong part of Shitsville, and you'll

wish you hired that young kid who hangs around the hotel lobby. Yep, Lada and all.

7. Last call: In Australia, the last call is a time-honoured chance to scoff at authority and refuse to budge. Try this in the earthier taverns of Angeles City, Vung Tau or Bangkok and you could wake up in a gutter with gaps in your smile. Tip: many of the late-night joints in Southeast Asia are owned by Triads, Tongs and assorted gangsters. When the doorman points at you, stand up, smile, and be cool.

8. All in the timing: Throughout the Andes, a modern man in search of adventure often finds himself in the dilemma of travelling long-distance by bus and needing sudden, urgent visits to the lav. Remember this about bus-rides through the Andes: they make a toilet stop every two hours. So, travel with toilet paper and as Bob Hudson would say, don't you ever let a chance go by...

9. Stew: Okay, so friendly locals are offering this great-smelling beef stew. Reflect: if this is Korea, it might be cat, in the PNG highlands it's probably dog and in rural Mexico it's bound to be burro. In Cambodia, northern Thailand and Laos? You're eating rat.

10. Lady friend: Many men, in a moment of insanity, think it might be fun to travel through the third world with their lady in tow. Tip: dye her hair black before venturing into the Middle East (only in Homeland does a blonde American chick storm around Pakistan in a bum-hugging pantsuit telling men what to do). Also, she might like to reconsider wearing a skirt if she wants to take public transport around Cairo – some of those dudes carry on like an octopus. 

POINTS WORTH NOTING

HOW TO MAXIMISE THE RETURN ON YOUR FREQUENT FLIER MILES

FREQUENT Flier miles are a currency like any other, and as per other parts of life, the lives of the rich are on another plane – or, at least, at the roomy, pointed end of the same vessel.

Whether you're spending your third accumulated year aloft or just doing a semi-regular interstate work run, it pays to enrol in a frequent flier program. The problem is that it doesn't necessarily pay very much, particularly at the budget, low usage end of the scale.

As noted by a *Choice* investigation last year, there are three main drawbacks to claiming flight-miles rewards. First, "the airlines control the value of the points, and when and where they can be redeemed", meaning that, even if you've finally accrued a zillion points "and managed to not let any of them expire and you want to upgrade from economy to business class, the airline is under no obligation to make a frequent flyer seat available on any given flight." Second, you have to fly a lot to earn enough points to be of any value, and they typically expire. Third, airlines profit greatly by selling frequent flier points to 'partners' such as credit card companies and telcos for more than they cost the airline to redeem. This is what makes frequent flier schemes so profitable; indeed, bizarrely, Frequent Flier schemes often outlive the collapse of their parent airlines.

Even so, there are ways to get the most out of the points you collect – even if none is as satisfying as arriving early to knock back champagne in the lounge. If you fly employer-funded business class for business, or can pay your business expenses through a points-boosted credit card, they'll come in especially fast.



Obviously, though, it's important to know what your points are worth before you spend them.

Ruslan Kogan, millionaire CEO of Australian online tech store Kogan.com, (see page 112) takes over 100 domestic and international flights a year.

As a devoted nerd, Kogan calculates the value of his points via a spreadsheet comparing the product or service he's eyeing, its dollar value at the RRP, the points required to pay for it and, ultimately, the dollar value per point.

Kogan published his table for last September in News.com.au, encouraging punters to follow his system, and it's instructive.

It compared upgrading from economy to business class from Melbourne to Hong Kong – typically \$5000, or 80,000 points – with buying an iPad Air from an online frequent flier portal (\$749 or 120,000 points). At a worth of \$5000, the flight upgrade redeemed points at 6.25 cents each. The iPad: a measly 0.62 cents per point.

Generally, then, to make your point go farthest, avoid non-flight rewards, especially.

The exception can be department store

gift cards, if you spend them wisely. On Velocity, right now, 18,000 points buys a \$100 gift card for David Jones or Myer. That's a worse exchange rate than Kogan's iPad, at just 0.55c per point, but use your gift card during Boxing Day Sales, for example, and the value can jump.

Another thing: cattle class is for mugs – at least in terms of value-for-points. Always check the cheapest fare before you redeem any points. A reward Qantas one-way flight from Sydney to Melbourne will cost a minimum of 6400 points on Jetstar – and \$29 in taxes and fees. Buy the flight instead and it'll cost perhaps \$89... without any specials.

Finally, consider bypassing the points upgrade to buy business – or even first class – directly with points.

"A budget economy flight on Qantas from Sydney to Melbourne may cost \$100 or 8000 points," Lauren McLeod, of local travel startup Flightfox told *Australian Business Traveller*. Whereas "a one-way business flight on Qantas from Sydney to London may cost \$10,000 or 128,000 points, so your points would have a per-point value of almost 8c, or 11 times more than the discounted domestic flight".



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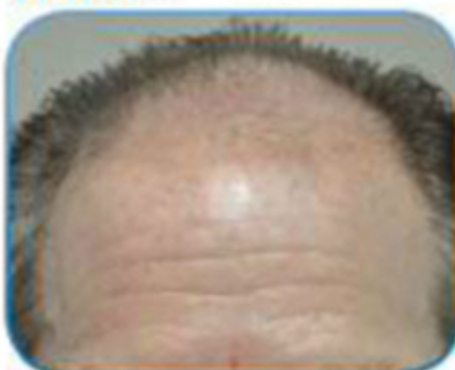
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NOW SCREENING: INSOMNIA

PHONES AND LAPTOPS IN THE BEDROOM COULD BE DOING MORE THAN COSTING YOU SLEEP

THE bed must be reserved as a place for sleep and sex only. That was the decree of psychologist Richard Bootzin in his influential 1972 proposal for a "stimulus-control" approach to better sleep. One central tenet was operant conditioning: The bed must be a sanctuary, such that the brain is trained to sleep when it is in the bed.

The allowance for sex – which, in its ideal form, is one of the most stimulating things a human body can experience – always seemed at odds with the stimulus-control approach. Otherwise, though, the idea of stimulus control made sense to a lot of people. It also included advice to avoid bedroom behaviours that abet anxiety, like clock-watching.

So last year when Charles Czeisler, a professor of sleep medicine at Harvard Medical School, found that around 90 percent of people in the developed world use some kind of electronic device within the hour before bed – and correlated the degree of use with ever-poorer sleep – one of his first theories of the case was overstimulation. Czeisler wrote, "In addition to making phone calls, mobile phones now allow the user to instant message, listen to music, send emails, play games, and surf the Internet." So they do. And all of that stimulation, the researchers proposed, may "impede the natural withdrawal of sympathetic nervous system activity necessary for sleep onset." Or, preclude one's ability to chill.

All of this blue light before bed suppresses melatonin, a hormone that

helps with sleep timing and circadian rhythms. At night, our melatonin levels are supposed to rise in anticipation of sleep. In 2013, scientists at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute asked 13 people to use electronic tablets for two hours before bed. They found that those who used the tablets while wearing orange goggles, which filter blue light, had higher levels of melatonin than those who either used the tablets without goggles on or, as a control, with blue-light goggles on.

Research concludes that the effect of light-emitting screens on circadian cycles "has important implications for understanding the impact of such technologies on sleep, performance, health, and safety." Expanding on the safety claim, Czeisler went on to say that given the rise of e-readers, and their increasingly widespread use among kids and adults, more research into the "long-term consequences of these devices on health and safety is urgently needed."

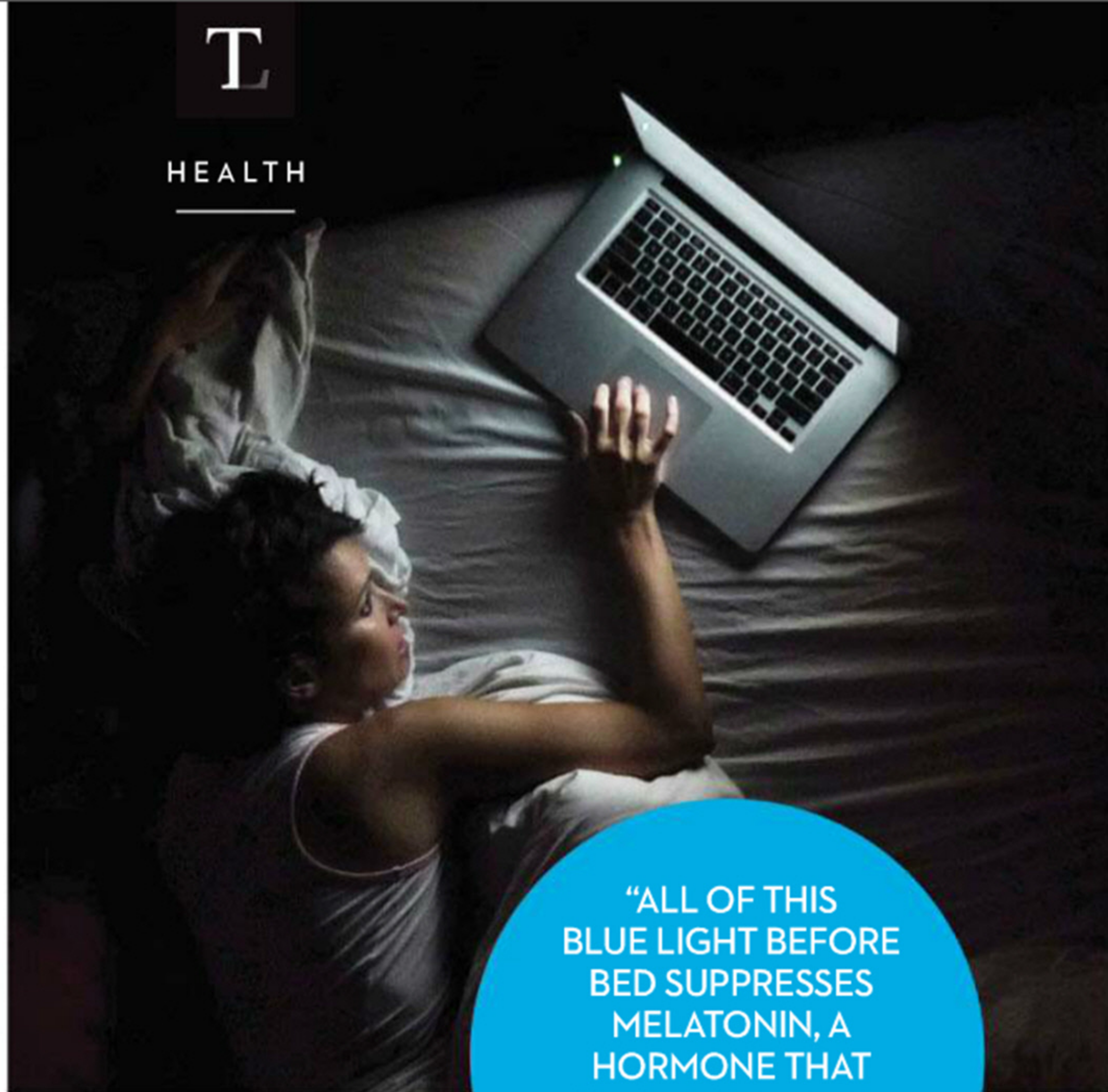
"We introduce these devices that have medical and biological effects without requiring any health studies on their impact," he elaborated, noting the absence of a safety evaluation process like what might be done for a medication. "I think it's time to rethink that."

"ALL OF THIS BLUE LIGHT BEFORE BED SUPPRESSES MELATONIN, A HORMONE THAT HELPS WITH SLEEP TIMING AND CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS"

Czeisler even goes on to raise the spectre of cancer, even, noting that chronically suppressed melatonin has been linked to increased risks of breast, colon, and prostate cancers.

Lest this all sound too technophobic, remember that the messages we get from the screens also bring us a lot of good feelings. Primarily in the form of little bursts of dopamine, the sort that comes from a Facebook like or an effusive tweet or a sexy text. That dopamine surge mimics the process of eating something delicious, or, in an extreme and tired comparison, a drug.

There is software that can attenuate out some of the blue light from the screens of phones and computers according to time of day, and there are also glasses that are made to filter short wavelengths. While they seem like a logical solution for the night time tech user, which is apparently almost all of us, more research is needed. The only way to be sure to avoid the adverse effects on sleep is to fully power down. 



MUD, SWEAT & FEARS

EXERCISES TO TURN YOU INTO ONE TOUGH MUDDER

If you're bored of the monotony of marathons, consider an adventure-course challenge like Tough Mudder. To be successful (and survive the buttered-up monkey bars, electrified mud pit and quarter pipe covered in cooking spray) you'll need to be fit, fast and strong. These will help.

1. BURPEES

Why: Burpees are a full-body exercise that virtually work every muscle in the body, meaning you can burn more calories in less time, as well as boosting overall strength and endurance.

How: Bend over or squat down and place your hands on the floor in front of you, just outside of your feet. Jump both feet back so that you're in the plank position. Drop to a push-up (your chest should touch the floor). Return to plank position. Jump the feet back in toward the hands. Jump into the air, reaching your arms straight overhead.

2. BOX LATERAL SHUFFLES

Why: The Shuffle exercise warms up your glutes, hip flexors, quads, calves and hamstrings, while increasing your agility, coordination and providing a good cardio workout.

How: Stand with one foot on the box and the other foot down by the side of the box on the floor. Jump sideways so the opposite foot is on the box, while the other is on the floor. Repeat the shuffle side to side. Emphasise your upper body motion by throwing your arms up during leaps.

3. HIP THRUSTS

Why: This exercise is designed to improve your strength, speed and power by activating the glutes, hamstrings, quadriceps and adductors.

How: Begin seated on the ground with a bench directly behind you and hold a loaded dumbbell over your legs. Make sure the bar is directly above your hips, then lean back against the bench so that your shoulder blades are near the top of it. Begin the movement by driving through your feet, extending your hips vertically through the bar, with your weight supported by your shoulder blades and your feet. Extend as far as possible, then reverse the motion to return to the starting position.

4. OBLIQUE PLATE TWISTS

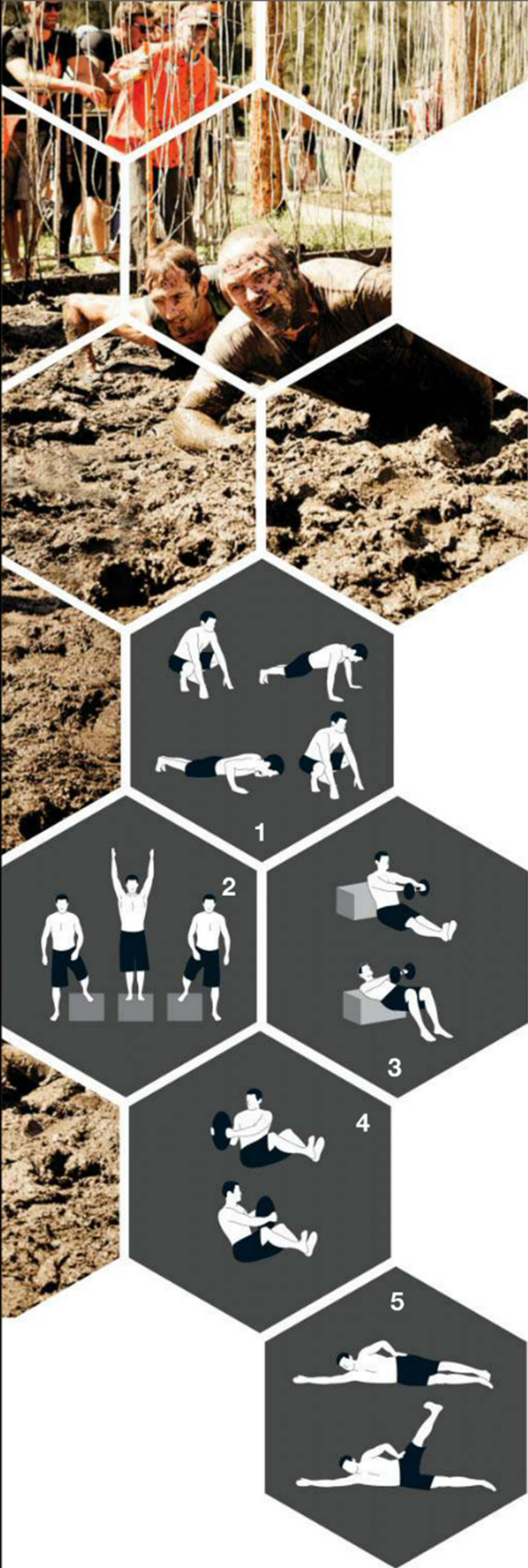
Why: No matter how much power you have, you won't be able to deliver it if you don't have strong obliques.

How: Sit on the ground with your legs together, fully extended straight in front of you. Hold a plate weight in both hands above your hips, elbows bent. Lean back slightly and raise your legs off the ground. Twist your torso to one side, bringing the weight with you. Make sure your legs stay straight and off the ground. Twist to the other side, bringing the weight with you.

5. SIDE LYING HIP LIFTS

Why: This exercise targets the lower abdominals, more specifically, the obliques, and improves strength and endurance throughout the legs.

How: Lie down on one side. The arm that's closest to the floor should be extended straight above your head and shoulder while your other arm is bent with your hand on your hip. Your legs should be extended and stacked on top of one another. Slowly raise your top leg as high as you can. Pause, then return to the starting position. 



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Sin City

THE WORLD'S OLDEST PROFESSION IS UNDERGOING AN IMAGE ADJUSTMENT

I'VE handed over money to have sex with prostitutes. I've dated prostitutes. I've accidentally come across friends secretly working as prostitutes.

I fell for a prostitute who lived in San Francisco online from Sydney and flew halfway across the world to be with her. "Sunny" was such an erotic vision that she'd been photographed by Earl Miller for *Penthouse*. I wasn't going to die wondering what she'd be like in bed.

I have no shame in admitting any of these things.

Paid sex is more common than people think and sex – good sex – is a basic human need. Many men prefer paying for sex rather than being in relationships or throwing themselves into the dating scene. For about a year following the breakdown of my marriage to my first wife and a subsequent split with another woman I managed to fall in love with, I was one of them. I wasn't ready to have my heart trampled on all over again but had desires that needed satiating.

Yes, not every bloke who goes to a prostitute is hard up for sex. Some do it by choice.

The sex workers I know aren't strung-out, zombie-eyed meth addicts from the disadvantaged boondocks of western Sydney. Typically they're educated, middle-class unmarried young women whose only vice is their fondness for annual overseas holidays, boob jobs and the Hermès Birkin.

They have no shortage of customers.

Yet despite the ubiquity of pornography on the internet and the extraordinary cultural imprint made by *Fifty Shades of Grey*, the very notion of exchanging premium sexual services for money is an abhorrent concept to most people.

There is still an attendant shame for many customers and providers. "Prostitute" remains an ugly word. "Whore" remains even uglier. For that reason very few sex workers come out into the open about their work choices and even fewer of their customers would ever entertain the idea of being publicly outed as "punters".

Madison Ashton aka Christine McQueen and Amanda Goff aka Samantha X, both friends of mine, are two notable exceptions. Madison, formerly Richard Pratt's lover, has appeared on the cover of the *Sunday Style* glossy in the *Sunday Telegraph* and *Herald Sun*. Amanda has written a book called *Hooked*.

Neither woman – both single mothers of two children living by the beach in Sydney's east – has paid a heavy price for their disclosures. On the contrary they've kicked on. Madison

advertises her attributes and sexual predilections very publicly through Twitter, while Amanda, a former journalist, got coverage overseas when she revealed her true identity. Both charge a minimum of \$800 an hour for their services, Madison \$1500 for her "Porn Star Experience". They go about their everyday lives as they always have and aren't being run out of town as scarlet women.

So in 2015 is there anything intrinsically shameful about taking money for sex or paying for it when pretty young things get married in churches to flabby old dinosaurs every weekend for "love" and no one bats an eyelid? It's an accepted fact of modern life that there are women who marry for money. But it's much less accepted that some choose to open their legs for it while being single and independent.

The double standard is staggering.

Sydney is one of the most expensive cities in the world, with sky-high property prices, rents, taxes, tolls, school fees and sundry other costs dramatically lightening people's wallets and lessening their ability to enjoy their lives once all their bills have been paid.

Melbourne isn't that far behind. People are also increasingly time poor. Relationships are hard to find and even harder to hold together. Dating apps such as Tinder have changed all the rules about how men and women meet and what they want out of those encounters. The Deutsche Bank Cheap Date Index estimates that Sydney is the second-most expensive city in the world in which to go on a date (\$US104). Only London is dearer (\$US121).

In one interview she did for *Hooked*, Amanda described her new vocation as "RSVP without the bullshit".

Is it any wonder that more women are being tempted into prostitution, especially single mothers? Or that there are hordes of punters happily prepared to hand over for an hour of physical pleasure with a beautiful "courtesan" the same amount of money they'd spend on a few dates with someone perhaps a little plainer and less confident in their sexuality? It's a no-brainer.

There is a thriving underbelly of professional sex in Sydney and it's only going to get bigger. Business is booming.

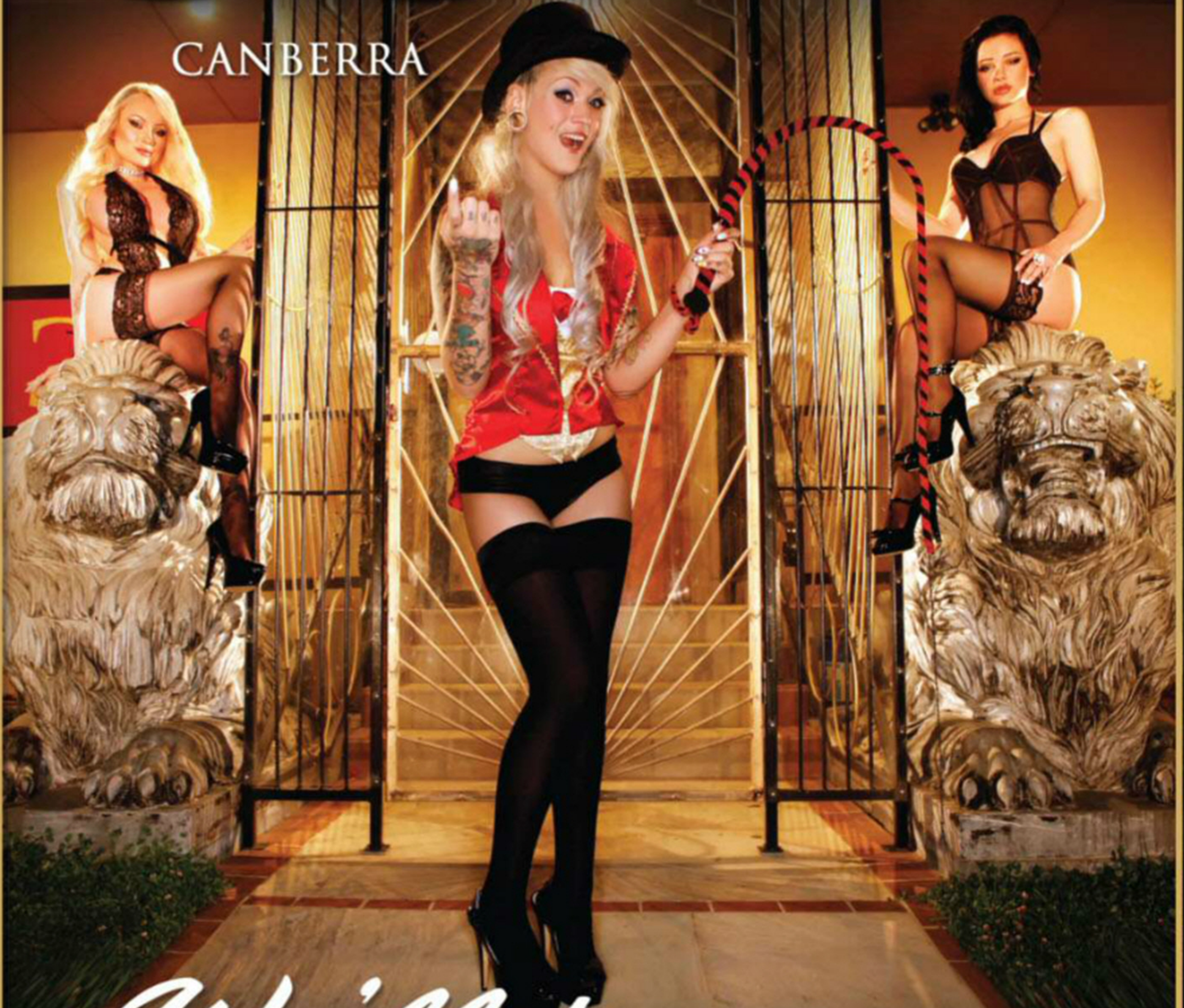
Madison and Amanda should be applauded for their bravery. By putting their faces and real names to the national conversation about prostitution – both those who provide sex and those who pay for it – they're helping to normalise something that has stayed hidden and been stigma-ridden for far too long.

And that's worth tipping. ☺

"PAID SEX IS MORE COMMON THAN PEOPLE THINK, AND SEX – GOOD SEX – IS A BASIC HUMAN NEED"

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IN FOCUS

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THIS FRENCH PHOTOGRAPHER
FELL UNDER THE SPELL OF
BEAUTIFUL WOMEN, AND KNEW
HE HAD FOUND HIS CALLING



“ I KNEW very early that I wanted to work with women; they simply fascinated me. I was looking for a job that would allow me to get closer to their world, their sensuality. Even my childhood was spent close to the feminine, because I had five sisters, with only a slight age difference between them. I was also the youngest of my brothers.

“Becoming a fashion designer would have cost too much, and training to be a hairdresser would have taken too long, so I chose to become a creative, technically savvy makeup artist. Even then, I was back among the minority, but that didn't stop me from achieving one of the best results of my year. With my certificate in my pocket, I took on my first assignments. I moved abroad, primarily to California, the home of many beautiful women . . . even though I did not speak a single word of English at the time.

“Coincidentally, I almost immediately got lucky, and was privileged to be able to work for the great photographer Hank Londoner, who was supplying *Penthouse* with a lot of photos. His wife, a former New York prima ballerina, took me to her heart right away. Giving me her fullest confidence, I was allowed to try out my art on the immaculate young models gracing the front pages of international men's magazines. The adventure had begun, and luck seemed to be on my side . . .

“I HAVE NEVER UNDERGONE ANY TRAINING AS A PHOTOGRAPHER. I'M LIKE AN ALCHEMIST”

“Since I am a born traveller, I've been around some of the most diverse and wonderful places. Actually, I let my models lead me to where I take the shots. I do not really make the decision myself. I choose my models with the eye of the makeup artist, and their appearance helps me choose the style and location of the shots. This all happens quite naturally and easily, and without much preparation. The beach provides the most beautiful backdrop, and my models make my dreams come true.

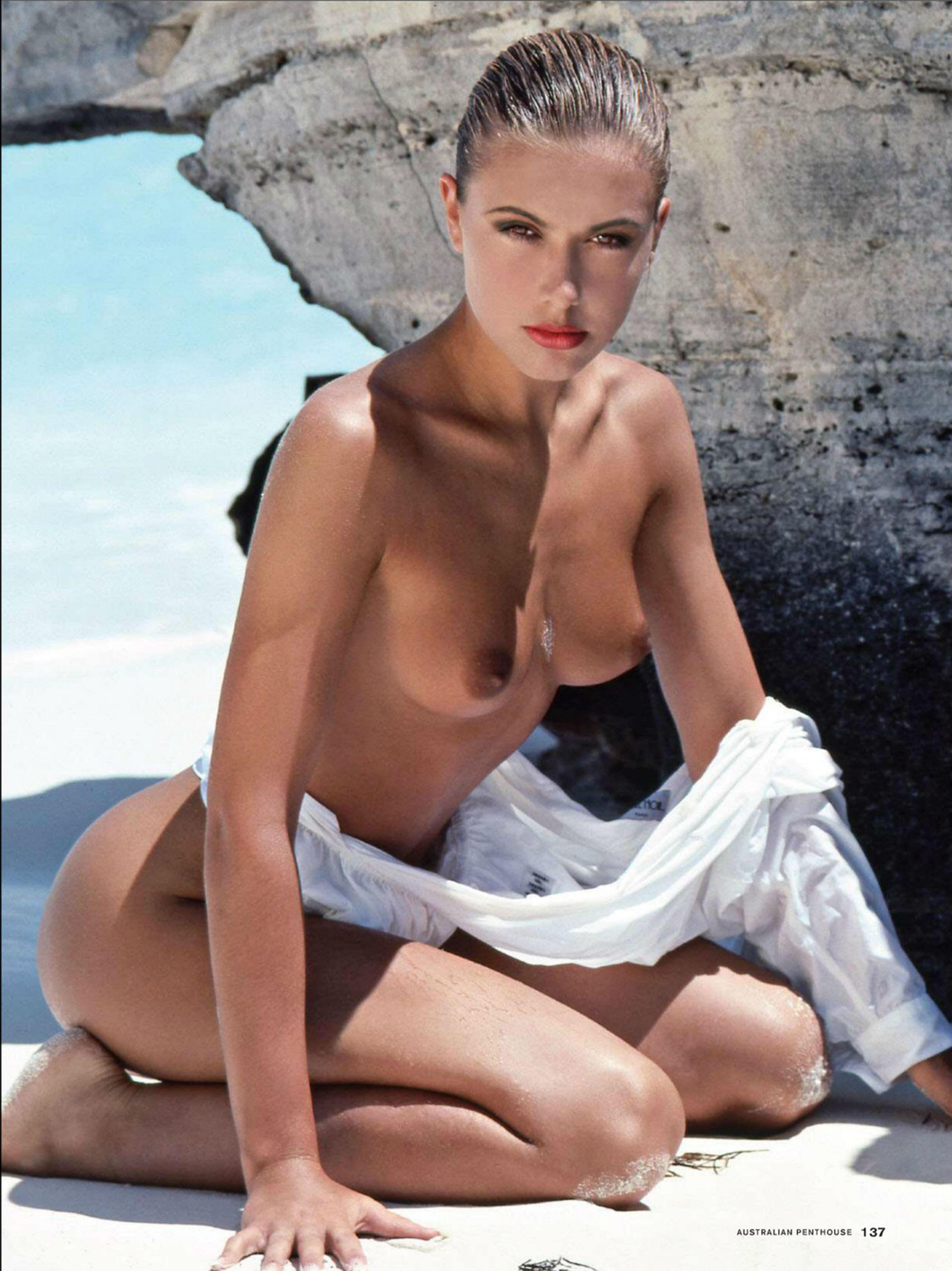
“I have never undergone any training as a photographer. But I have always kept a good lookout and have learned to use tools other than just my brush; What you can see shining through my pictures is the result of 20 years of research. I'm like an alchemist, a biologist, a researcher. I mix all the light sources available to me.”













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FIRST TIMER

I'D NEVER been with an escort before but some of the guys at work had been raving about this new brothel that had just opened in the Cross and I found myself curious.

So last Friday, after a shitty week at work, I decided to kick off my weekend with a visit to the club.

As soon as I entered the place, a hot blonde approached me and smiled.

"I haven't seen you here before, gorgeous," she grinned. "Can I get you a drink?"

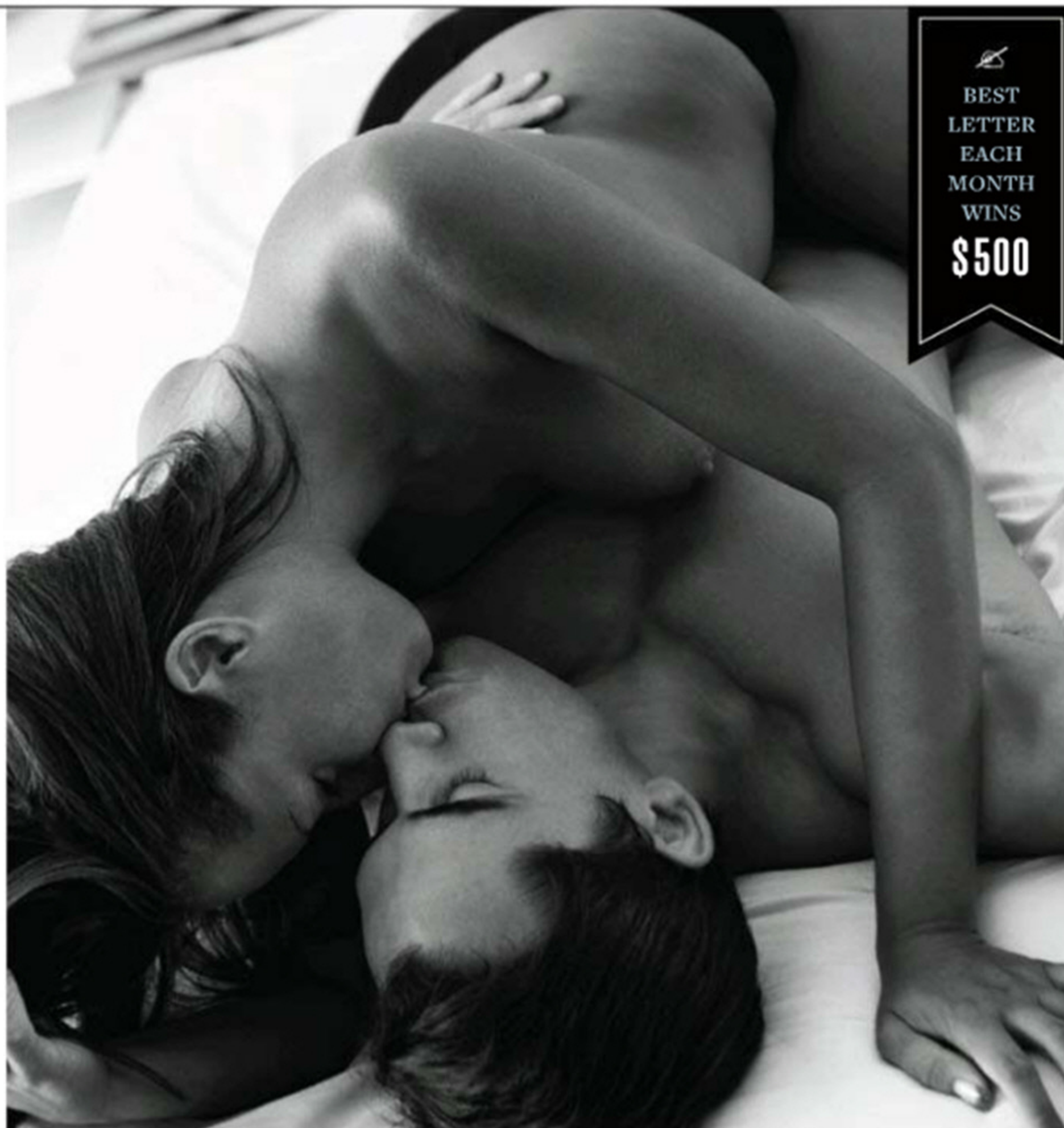
Without waiting for an answer, she led me to the bar and poured me a whisky.

As I sat and drank, each of the club's escorts came and introduced themselves to me. While they were all stunningly hot girls, I decided to go with a sexy 22-year-old curvy Brazilian girl called Sierra who caught my eye. It helped that she was adamant that she could give me the best blowjob of my life.

After my credit card was swiped, Sierra took my hand and led me up the stairs to the room. Before the door had even shut behind us, she wrapped her arms around my neck and kissed me passionately.

Her hands were all over me now, running through my hair, down my back, grabbing my ass, and pulling me into her. She was very aggressive and up for it, which I found really hot. Sierra removed her dress, revealing her amazing tits. I sucked her nipples and kissed my way down her stomach to her pussy, excited to find she wasn't wearing any panties.

I buried my face between her legs. I pushed my tongue in deep and then licked my way up, using my tongue to play with her clit, while my hands stayed on her tits. She had a hand on my head and to make sure I would not leave her pussy. Sierra bucked hard into my face. It was



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so wild and sensual at the same time. Her moaning intensified as I moved my tongue faster and deeper inside of her, fucking her as hard as I could. As Sierra came, she squeezed her legs together and moaned loudly.

After the intensity of her orgasm, I expected Sierra to lay back and take a break. She had no intention of pausing. Instead, she told me to lay on my back on the bed. With both hands, she pulled my underwear down, like she was slowly unwrapping a present. As she pulled them down, she kept her mouth on my cock. First the head, then the shaft as she pulled

my briefs down, then the base of my cock, before licking my balls as she pulled my underwear all the way off. She looked into my eyes as she took my cock in her left hand and went down to her knees. She held my cock straight up and started licking and sucking on my balls while stroking me. It was so hot!

It didn't take long for me to explode cum all over her pretty face. When I asked where her other hand had disappeared to, she stood up and put her finger in my mouth. The answer was obvious when I sucked her pussy juice off her finger.

— S.W, Manly, NSW.

AMPLIFIED

WE WERE finally alone at his place after coming back from the gig. I stood leaning against the wall, my hands in my pockets, one foot on the wall, as I watched Kris. He was dressed in leather pants and a black T-shirt, his long layered wavy blonde hair dishevelled. An ashtray sat nearby, the smoke from a cigarette permeating the air. He was hooked up to this huge amp and was sitting on a chair, playing his guitar, his gorgeous hair hanging in his face. I loved watching him.

Whenever he would look at me, I would tease him, giving him sexy little glances or licking my lips or fingers suggestively. I then got really naughty and simulated masturbating myself. I stood there and spread my legs out and leaned my head back as I ran my hands over my tits and my pussy, moaning. He stared at me, his huge erection growing in his leather pants, hiding behind his guitar. Slowly he stood up, put down his guitar and came over to me.

"You're making it awfully hard for me to play," he grinned.

"What? You don't like it?" I asked him, my eyes darting to his crotch, letting him know that I was fully aware of what my actions were doing to him.

"Come here," he replied, pulling me by the waist towards him. Before I knew what was happening, he picked me up and swung me around. He sat me right on the edge of the amp and positioned me so that I was slightly bent backwards.

He began kissing me with fervour, sending a rush of arousal through me, my body quivering in his arms. I moaned as his tongue found mine. His strong hands gripped me harder as his kisses became more forceful, his hungry lips kissing me so hard I could scarcely breathe. My mind whirled with the sensations his kisses were giving me. My hand reached out to feel his hardness through his pants, causing him to moan in my mouth. He trailed his lips up and down my neck, nipping at my flushed skin. I was so hot and horny and my pussy was dripping non-stop. If he was going to fuck me, I knew he would have no problem slipping inside me. I almost had an orgasm just thinking about having his huge rod inside me; it was nearly driving me over the edge.

He reached his hand inside to seek out

my wetness. His fingers curled through my patch of pubic hair and then down to my pussy as I groaned.

The feeling of his fingers teasing my hole and massaging my clit was so overwhelming. All I could do was close my eyes and concentrate on what he was doing to my body.

I gulped hard as I pulled his pants down over his hips, letting his cock free. He wasn't wearing anything underneath. My mouth and my pussy watered; I was completely enamoured with his penis. I wanted that long thing inside me, filling all my holes. I held the veiny shaft in my hand and bent down to take it in my mouth as he sucked in a breath and moaned. My tongue licked around his head before I covered it and his shaft with my hot wet mouth, taking him as deeply as I could. His fingers stroked through my hair as I serviced him orally, cupping his balls.

He crouched down and spread my pussy lips apart to lick at my swollen clit. I shrieked and came, but this time he did not wait for me to recover. He was horny and ready and so was I.

Kris again pinned me down on the amp and kissed my mouth ferociously

as he pushed his dick up inside my aching pussy. I moaned loudly as I felt his manhood fill me, spreading me so far apart. The orgasmic vibrations of the amp rattled through my body, seeming to concentrate at the very core of my womanhood. Instantly, I screamed out and came, my body throbbing and pulsating. He pounded his hips harder and harder, his big cock sliding against my walls.

"Oh... God..." I groaned.

The vibrations from the amp continued to race through my body. I threw my arms around his neck, pulling myself closer to him while his hands held me against the amp. He then shoved his whole length inside me, fucking me with more fervour as I tightened my pussy around him, causing him to moan loudly. His thrusts drove me to the edge and brought me to heights of pleasure and ecstasy that I'd never experienced before. I succumbed to another orgasm and clenched at him. My tight passage closed around him like a hot, wet glove, gripping him strongly. He moaned loudly and gave a few really hard thrusts as he lurched forward, shooting his load deep inside me.

— M.S., Northmead, NSW.





DESPERATE DESIRE

AS WE walked through the front door, I inhaled the masculine smell of Dave's apartment. It was like a room full of him. I walked over to a black leather couch and lay back on it, still glowing from our fuck at my place earlier.

As if to make sure I could still taste him Dave kissed me deeply, probing into my mouth with his tongue. We kept on kissing tasting each other and exploring each other's mouths. As we kissed, our hands roamed all over each other, exploring hair, backs and bums. As his hands moved around to explore my breasts, Dave broke away from my lips to kiss down the side of my neck. I panted and groped at him as he pushed his hand inside my top seeking out my nipples, which were standing to attention.

Dave unhooked my bra and leaned forward, gently licking each nipple before taking the whole lot into his mouth. It felt as though my insides had turned into hot liquid and I sank back further into the couch moaning as he sucked and teased me with his tongue.

Dave slipped off the couch to kneel in front of me between my legs. Gently, he pulled my lips apart to look at my neat pink pussy glistening with wetness. He leaned down and gently started to lick. I could feel my clit throbbing and growing in response to his warm, wet tongue. Dave placed his lips firmly over me and sucked my clit. The waves of pleasure and orgasms washed through me.

"I need to fuck you now," he grunted, his voice urgent with desire.

Dave took my hand as I stood up from the couch and led me down a short hallway to his bedroom.

He knelt between my legs and stroked my pussy with his beautiful cock. Each stroke was like torture as I craved to feel his fullness inside me. I could tell by the look on his face that he wanted to plunge inside me as much as I wanted him.

I couldn't stand it anymore. I had raised my hips and was pushing against him trying to guide him into me. Suddenly Dave gave into temptation and thrust deeply inside me. It felt amazing as I gripped him tightly savouring the feeling

of him inside me. He fucked me hard and I screamed out my pleasure as he pounded into me. I could feel the intensity building up in me and in him till we were both teetering on the edge.

I could feel the tension building inside me. I knew when I came it would be massive and I knew that I couldn't hold it back much longer.

Dave's breath was hot in my ear, "God, I am so close. I really want to fill you up with my cum."

My teeth were gritted I could feel the edge of my orgasm coming now, "Don't stop fucking me."

Dave pumped me harder and this pushed me over the edge. I screamed out my pleasure as a massive orgasm gripped my whole body. He came seconds after me grunting and panting. I could feel his cock throbbing as he pumped his cum into me.

Dave collapsed over me and I enjoyed the feeling of him lying on top of me for a while before we both collapsed in a heap on the bed. We lay together exhausted and satisfied. The room reeked of sex.

— J.W, Apollo Bay, Tas.

SLEEPING WITH THE BOSS

MEL grabbed hold of my hand and led the way upstairs to her bedroom. It felt strange to be holding my boss's hand but at the same time it felt incredibly sexy, knowing that we both wanted each other so much. We arrived upstairs and Mel playfully pushed me back onto her bed.

"Close your eyes Ellie, don't open them until I tell you, no matter what."

I did as Mel told me and heard her move around the bedroom, open some kind of closet and then some other noises that I couldn't place.

"Open your mouth Ellie."

I did as I was told. I opened my mouth slightly, and as I did so I felt something against my lips. Mel moved whatever it was forward and into my mouth and for the first time I tasted my boss's juices.

"Ellie, can you taste my pussy on my strapon?" Mel laughed.

I couldn't resist opening my eyes. I saw a huge black dildo half way into my mouth, the surface glistening with Mel's tangy juices. I took the whole length into my mouth, savouring the first taste of my boss' pussy. I knew what was coming in my mind and I was intrigued. I wanted to know how it would feel to have such a big length inside of me and how it would feel to be fucked by a woman. My pussy began to flood to the point that I could feel my wetness on the inside of my thighs just thinking about it.

Mel was standing, looking down at me with a knowing look on her face. I could read her mind and see her lust.

"Please, Mel, fuck me with this," I said, holding up the strap-on and looking up into her eyes, gently running the tip of my tongue over the end of dildo that had just been in my mouth.

I slipped off the bed to kneel on the floor. I think Mel knew what it was that I was going to do. She stepped into the straps and moved her legs apart. My head was in line with her pussy and I could smell her pussy and I just knew that I had to taste what I could smell. I moved the strap-on up Mel's legs, until the straps were just on her upper thighs. With my free hand I slowly ran my fingers up the inside of her thigh, feeling the softness of her skin, and a



faint dampness that I'm sure had begun to leak from her pussy. I was right.

As my fingers moved closer towards her pussy, the tips began to feel even more wetness. I moved my hand away, and at the same time moved my head closer to her body until I could just reach her inner thighs with my outstretched tongue. I slowly licked up her thighs, stopping occasionally to place soft, warm kisses on her skin. At first, the taste was slight, but as I grew nearer Mel's partly shaved pussy lips I knew that I was tasting Mel's juices, and they tasted divine. I inhaled deeply, savouring the sweet smell, before I used my free hand to slowly part Mel's pussy lips.

My tongue darted between Mel's parted lips and I knew that I found something I'd want time and time again. Her lips looked swollen with desire, and coated in juices, and as I slowly

ran my tongue over the soft wet flesh I heard the first moan emanate out of my boss. The moan continued ever louder as I used my tongue even more, and for the first time I used the tip to penetrate Mel, and I swear as I did this her pussy seemed to flood with wetness. As I did this I felt Mel run her fingers through my blonde hair and this drove me on even more, which drove Mel to push my head even closer to her body and in the process push my tongue further inside her.

"Are you teasing me, Ellie?" she said through a hushed voice, probably trying to maintain her breathing and balance.

"No," I replied, "just making sure that you're wet enough for what I'm about to do." As I finished I moved my head away from her body and slid the strapon off her hips and down her legs. I removed the dildo from the harness and slowly inserted the dildo, which must have

been at least eight inches long, maybe more. The dildo spread her lips wide and then slid in with the simplest of ease, the whole length becoming coated in her juices.

I could hear Mel groan softly as the dildo slid in and out of her. Her groans grew louder and as I repeated this process a few more times they kept on growing.

I was in a greedy mood, so I pulled the dildo out of Mel and slowly eased it into my own pussy. I enjoyed the intense feeling of being filled up by this black fake cock. I began to tease Mel's nipples as she grabbed the dildo and started to drive it hard and fast inside me. As the tempo increased though so did the feelings emanating from my clit. I could feel that familiar warmth beginning to build inside me, and I knew that Mel fucking me was going to cause what felt like the most intense orgasm of my life.

Mel brought her head down to lay on the bed next to me and breathlessly whispered in my ear, "I'm gonna make you cum so hard, Ellie."

I grabbed hold of her head and pulled her mouth down to mine and kissed her intensely. Her thrusting seemed to take on an even greater vigour and this set off the ticking time bomb of my orgasm and I knew that I was gonna cum very, very hard.

It was one particular rub of my clit that simply did it for me, and my breathing stopped and a low groan, muffled by our kissing began, and the flood of electricity began to race around my body and kept on being intensified to the point at which I thought I was definitely gonna pass out. As I thought this I could feel what seemed like litres of Mel's juices stream down the dildo and onto my pussy and she began to thrust a little harder, causing me to have at least two, possibly three orgasms at once, they just seem to roll into each other.

After a few minutes more of thrusting Mel collapsed on top of me, our naked bodies clinging to each other, the sweat that had formed acting like suction, and we wrapped our arms around each other, gently kissing and teasing each other with our kisses and tongues.

— R.F, Geraldton, W.A.



SAPPHIC SWINGERS

IT WAS the most erotic thing I'd ever watched. I was seeing two beautiful women fucking in front of me, while at the same time, the rest of the women in the room were openly fondling each other or masturbating around me. The smell of sex permeated the air.

I'd never been a swingers club before, let alone on lesbian night, but I'd always been intrigued about the idea of having sex with a woman and since recently becoming single, I thought, why not?

I watched intently as the two women fucked faster and faster. The tension in the room rose to a fever pitch. One screamed out in passion as the other slammed her hips harder and harder against her playmate's firm round arse, the slapping resounding in the room. Breasts swayed and bobbed as hips grinded and slammed against each other. Their orgasms seemed to set off a chain reaction, for all around the room came cries of ecstasy, mine included, as we spectators brought ourselves, or others to an electrifying climax. The woman masturbating on the couch next to me cried out moments later, as she reached an intense (and loud!) climax too.

As I watched the women have sex, four lesbians suddenly enveloped me at once. One started to skilfully eat my pussy, while two kissed and caressed by breasts, and the third kissed and tongued my mouth. Hands caressed all over my body. I'd never been so turned on in all my life. I was so wet that I could feel myself dripping. Once I was able to let my body relax and just enjoy these beautiful, skilful women take control of my body, I could feel an orgasm start to build. It was a tongue probing my arse that set off a violent climax.

Catching my breath, I turned my head for a moment and watched two women fucking each other with a strapon. Their moans of pleasure filled the room.

Eventually the pace slowed and pairs and trios lay or sat arms around each other or kissed softly. Several women still lay together and continued fucking. Two used a double dildo, thrusting together while a third, a hand on each, stroked their clits. Another pair lay side by side in a 69, slowly licking each others pussies.

I'll definitely be back!

— P.S, Enmore, NSW.

BIRTHDAY SURPRISE

MY GIRLFRIEND and I had fantasised together many times about having a threesome with another man. So for her 25th birthday, I decided to make our fantasies a reality.

I booked a male stripper to come to our house and do a private show and had spoken to him to arrange some "extras" for my girl.

When she arrived home that night after work, I greeted her with a glass of champagne and told her I had a surprise waiting for her in the lounge room. I let her walk ahead of me and stopped so she walked in alone. She appeared slightly startled to see a sexy and buff complete stranger in our flat, but all it took was for him to kiss her hand and introduce himself for her to relax instantly.

Still holding her hand, he led her to the couch and sat her down. As he removed his clothes, I could see the wanting building up inside of her. He had a good body; well-toned but not overly ripped, which I knew was exactly her type. I walked in and sat on a chair to the side of her so I could watch. She looked over at me and grinned and mouthed the words "thank you." He was down to just his jeans now. He unfastened his top button and walked over to her. Reaching down, he took both of her hands, lifted them up and placed them on his jeans. Without hesitating, she quickly undid the buttons, tugging them downwards before his semi hard eight-inch cock popped out right before her face. She looked surprised at how large his cock was.

I watched as she wrapped her lips around his cock and slowly inhaled the whole thing down her throat. I walked over to her and stood behind her, letting one of my hands wander down to play with her pussy and the other to pinch and play with her nipples.

"Are you ready, baby?" I whispered in her ear. She nodded with a mouthful of cock.

I moved from behind her to the other side of the sofa so she could lean back, hand still holding firmly onto her 'present'.

She pulled him forward and drove his rock hard cock towards her pussy. She was jerking him off into her pussy. I'd never seen her this forward or horny before. I couldn't believe this was my girlfriend!

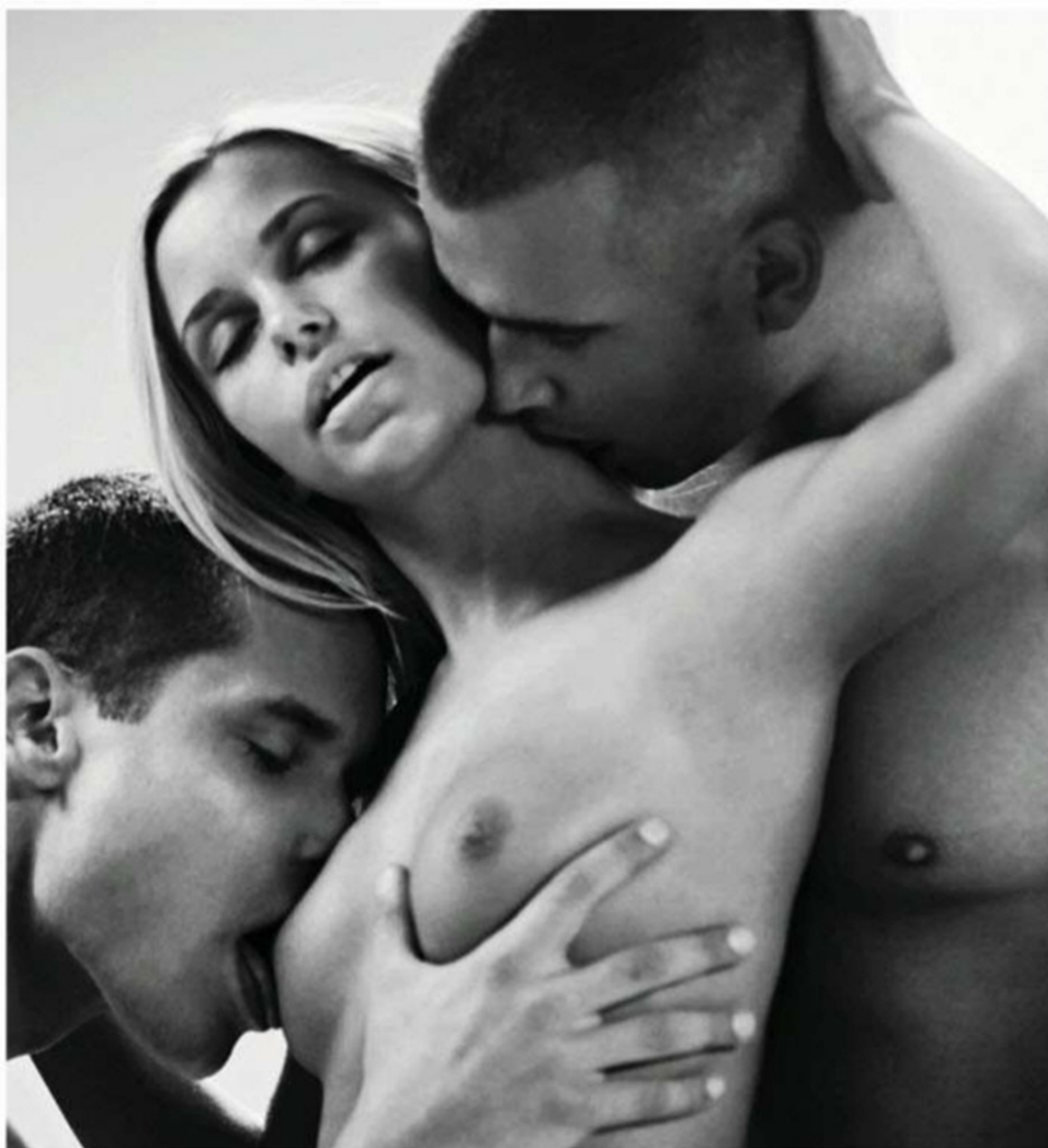
He stood her up and sat down in the chair and motioned for her to sit on his cock. I watched as she slowly lowered herself down onto his solid hard meat. I undid her bra to allow him access to suck on her nipples which he did without any delay. She was soon dropping herself down full force onto him slamming that big dick into herself, I moved in behind her and lifted her off him for a second while I pushed my dick into her ass. She was sliding back and forth as I thrust in and out of her. We had simulated this approaching moment with a dildo many times before but now it was finally happening for real.

She lowered herself back down took his cock in hand and started rubbing it into her pussy. I stopped thrusting as she guided it back inside her. She was so tight with him and I inside her. As she started riding him again, I began thrusting myself back and forth in her ass. Rapidly her frenzy built back up and soon she was fucking us both hard and she was telling him how much she wanted to feel

him orgasm and shoot his cum inside her. He grabbed her hips and started to thrust as deep and hard as he could. I pulled out and sat down to watch he held back until she was ready. As her orgasm started to happen, he started to shoot his load inside of her while she writhed and bucked on his cock. But she was not done yet, "I want your cum in me as well" she turned to me and demanded as she lay down on the couch. I walked over, lay on top of her and slid my cock into her, she was gaping, soaking wet and filled with cum and I loved the feeling of her pussy like this. I knew I wouldn't take long to cum so I told her to play with her clit while I fucked her. It didn't take long for her to start orgasming. Her pussy clenching set me off and I came, filling her overflowing pussy with my cum until I collapsed on top on her.

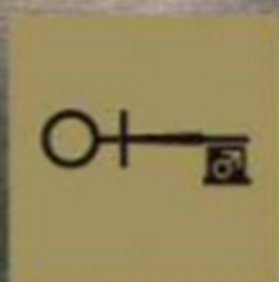
She stroked my face and whispered in my ear, thanking me for what I had done for her.

— K.A., Belmore, NSW.





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