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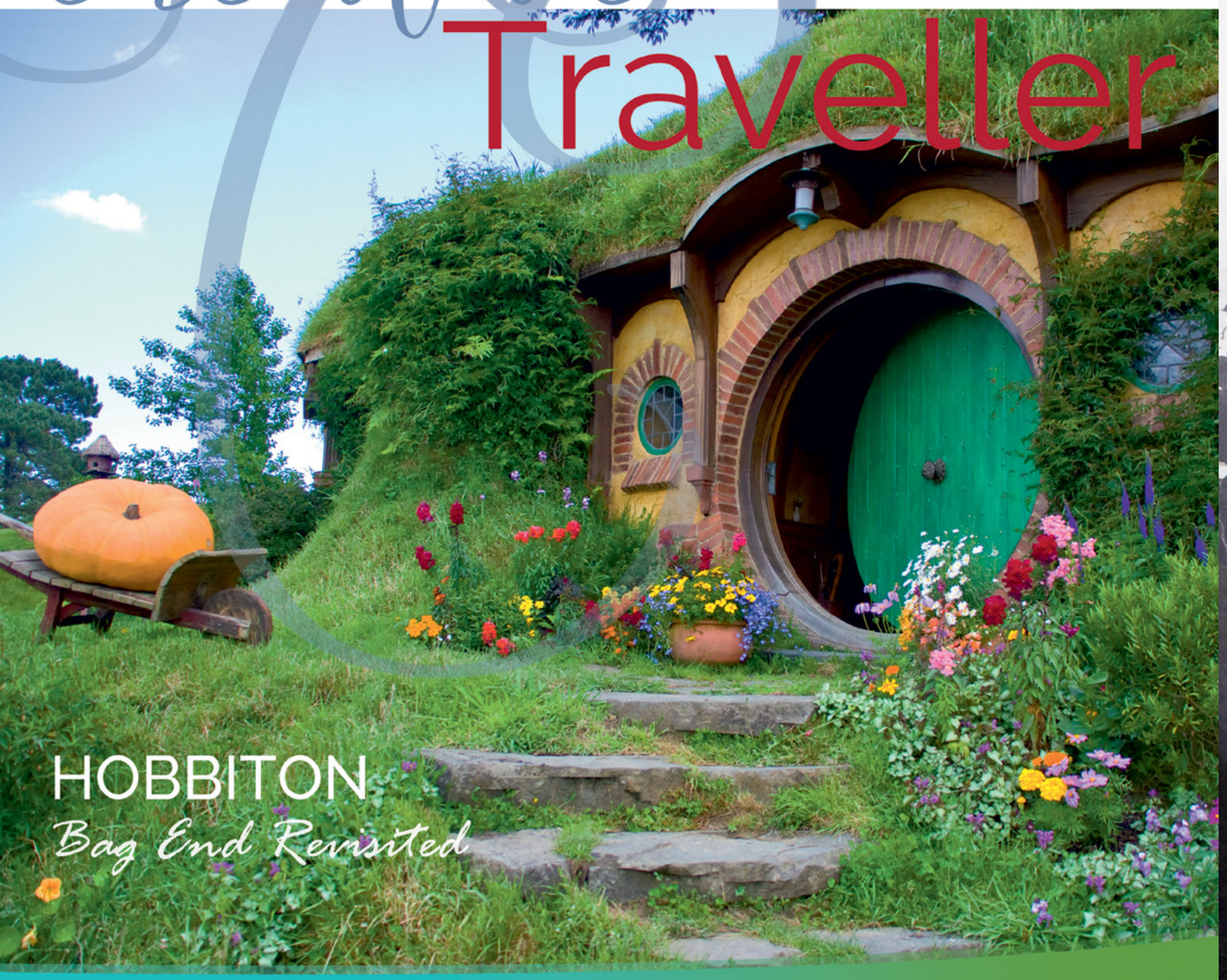

HOBBITON
Bag End Revisited

RARE DOLPHINS
Smallest and Rarest

REMOTE WA
Visit with a Prince

Travel + Art + Life

CreativeTravellerMag.com

Spectacular New Zealand

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contributors

J.R.Poulter knows books! A multi-award winning writer and poet, she has been a senior educator, librarian, book reviewer, associate lecturer in English Expression, editor and once worked in a circus. She has been published in Australia, UK, USA and Europe, having over 30 children's and education books with mainstream & digital publishers. Major awards for her books, include ***Children's Choice, New Zealand, Top Ten Children's & YA Books, NZ, Premier's Recommended Reading List, Australia, Simone Wood Award, USA, LiFE Award, Literature for Environment, International Book Award Finalist, Winner of Purple Dragonfly Award for Picture Book 5 & Younger.*** She takes master classes and workshops for children and adults to teach writing skills and the skills inherent in book creation, whether in poetry or prose, does author talks and readings. J.R. now heads Word Wings collaborative, over 50 creatives from over 20 countries. As **J.R.McRae,** she writes award-winning poetry/haiku, novels (***Free Passage*** won the ***Readers' Favorite Bronze International Book Award***) picture book/graphic novel crossovers and short stories. Included in *Quadrant Book of Poetry, 2000-2010, Basics of Life [ALR Anthology], Trust and Treachery, Colours of Refuge, Mytho*, and journals. Her artwork/photography features in international anthologies, *Reinventing Myth, Colours of Refuge, Musings: A Mosaic, Best of Vine Leaves, Prints Rhyming Anthology.*

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editor's diary

When you think of islands in the South Pacific you probably think of hot sand and swaying palm trees rather than fiords with snow-capped mountains. But New Zealand has all of that!

First of all let me ask you a question. What information would you like to know? Seriously, I want to hear from you so I provide the most helpful information possible. When I write for Trip Advisor people send heaps of questions about specific things they need to know before they go. This magazine is also a forum of sorts.
You can ask via email (jenni.onn@CreativeTravellerMag.com) or via Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/Editor.CreativeDirector).

Now we have a wonderful Marketing Guru on board you'll shortly have all sorts of new streams of communication to use. So have a think and start asking. One of my most popular Trip Advisor articles deals with the process of taking the tilt train to north Queensland. It is just a step-by-step outline of how the process happens. In the next issue I'd like to write a step-by-step outline of how to catch a cruise ship out of Sydney, if you live somewhere else in the world, which most people do!

DIARY PIC. Scorching hot temperatures along the east coast and freezing cold winds on the west coast. December in NZ.

Travel - Well by now you will have guessed that we are featuring New Zealand in this issue. I am quite biased about my favourite parts and have shared what I consider to be the best bits, based solely upon how enjoyable our experiences were on the day.

Many of you who are loving Keith Trotter's series about iconic and remote areas of the vast continent of Australia will be glad to read the next instalment as he travels the coastline of Western Australia.

Art - Takara Beech, Book Designer / Illustrator shares practical advice and personal experience, including how she overcame some of the bigger challenges. Speaking of books, those wonderful people at Walker Books have offered an amazing giveaway designed to melt the hearts of all parents and grandparents so be sure to send in for one of those!

Life - Have you ever wondered why those display houses look so great, especially in photos? It's usually down to correct lighting. Think about it. Aren't the lights always switched on in most photos? Isn't that the first thing a real estate agent does before an open home? Take a look at the one page pictorial of light inspiration.

Contributors. As always, thanks for being the best team in the known universe.

Happy Travels!

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Hobbiton Map Light, Hobbiton
Image © Trevor Onn

NEW ZEALAND LAND OF HOBBITS FABULOUS WILDLIFE & SPECTACULAR LANDSCAPES

01 Pohutukawa blossom, Paihia
Image © Trevor Onn

The previous edition of Creative Traveller Magazine is successfully out the door and in the joyous hands of our eager readers. What is next? Ooh I know, New Zealand!

New Zealand is a tad bigger than most people expect. That's because it looks tiny compared to Australia but remember Australia is a lot bigger than most people expect.

So if you have travelled from the northern hemisphere you'll experience some serious jetlag because NZ is a long way from anywhere, except Australia.

Here we call it crossing the ditch.

GET YOUR PIE HERE!

We have arrived. The ditch is crossed and we are on NZ soil. First stop Paihia. I'll bet you are not sure how to pronounce that. Here's a hint. Pie here. Too easy.

A little aside… I heard a British comedian complaining about how Australians say "No worries" and "Too easy" all the time. Well sometimes things are easy. Very easy. Paihia = pie here. Too easy.

A WORD ABOUT PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Articles in this magazine may mention products and or tour operators. While we occasionally approach them to put in a promo related to their "mention" this doesn't necessarily mean they will. In fact free mentions are more common than not and this is because the information in the article is for the benefit of readers. A good tour operator gets a mention because he is a good tour operator. If he places an ad, that's even better for him/her and for us all!

Back to Paihia…

02 Paihia, Bay of Islands
Image © Trevor Onn

SUBTERRANEAN BIOLUMINESCENCE

Of the many and varied wonders of this region we decide to explore glow worm caves. The Kawiti glow worm caves are a twenty minute drive from Paihia and so we engage the services of Phil from ABC Shuttles and Tours. His comfortable van can seat quite a few people but we are the only passengers as we embark from the township. Along the way I'm impressed by the beautiful green spaces, gullies filled to overflowing with dense clusters of tree ferns; pastures covered in rich green grass and dotted with clean fluffy white sheep.

WHO WERE THE FIRST PEOPLE

Phil discusses the history of New Zealand going back as far as the Moriori people. At the time I suspect he is having a lend of us but no, as it turns out, the Moriori story is true. There appears to be evidence that they were the earliest inhabitants of New Zealand.

Further reading. https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/moriori-a-pride-reborn/

I ask Phil where he goes for holidays and he says the Gold Coast. Apparently it is far better value for him to fly his family to south east Queensland than to spend his holiday dollars in New Zealand!

As the days and weeks progress I discover for myself that New Zealand is an expensive place to take a holiday, and coming from Australia that's really saying something!

But we are in New Zealand and we have the opportunity to see glow worms in their natural habitat! So let's continue.

The Maori landowners of the Kawiti Caves begin the tour by teaching us how to say a few useful words in their own language.

When the tour guide asks us if we are okay we must respond with "Ka pai". Unless of course somebody has fallen down a dark trench, in which case I have no idea what we should yell out, but I'm sure there are words for that as well.

Our group is given 3 lanterns to light our path. One each would be more helpful but the easy boardwalk leads us into the darkness without mishap.

Photos are forbidden because flashes have a negative effect on the glow worms and there'll always be one dill who ruins it for the bunch so it's easier to ban photography altogether. No problem, we all diligently put our cameras and phones away and enjoy the immersive experience.

INTO THE CAVES

Water can be heard trickling beneath the timber boardwalk as the guide explains the life cycle of glow worms. A distant tour group look like gnomes on their way to work with the faint glow of their lanterns lighting the cave walls.

Continued over

03 Entrance to Kawiti Glow Worm Caves
Image © Trevor Onn

Continued from page 4

THE MAIN ATTRACTION

Deeper into the cave system we pass the previous group who are on their way back. They offer flippant banter as they squeeze past and continue on their merry way. Now we come to the main attraction, a high chamber with glow worms filling the ceiling and looking like the Milky Way. I say as much and ruin the guide's punch line. I am taught how to say "sorry" in Maori.

Back on the bus and we are off to visit an unusual tourist attraction, a public toilet. The Hundertwasser toilets are Gaudi-esque tiled creations bedecked with all manner of cracked designs including what looks like a Wandjina in the ladies. Wandjina, by the way, are figures from aboriginal rock art which is under scientific testing in an effort to prove that it is the oldest art form in the world and dates back way beyond the famous cave art of France and Spain.

What you may like to know before you go.
Costs per person.
Phil's ABC Shuttle tour - $40NZ
Kawiti Caves tour - $20NZ

GET YOUR HOBBIT ON TAURANGA

This lovely settlement is a pretty place to explore, with the picturesque Mount Maunganui standing 232 metres tall at the far end of the beach. But then there's Hobbiton. It's one of the reasons you come to New Zealand...isn't it? That and the spectacular wildlife and stunning landscapes. Speaking of stunning...
Hobbiton is quite a drive from Tauranga and you won't get there on foot so we decide to go in comfort with Shore Trips and Tours.

Our friendly chatty bus driver takes us via the scenic route along the surf beach and past McLaren Falls which is a very popular spot on this hot December day.

After a stopover in The Shire's Rest for food and a look at the exclusive souvenirs we reboard the bus with our Hobbiton guide Michael who is originally from Ireland.

ORCS ON THE RAMPAGE

For some reason Michael's Irish accent seems perfect in the setting as he prattles on about breeds of sheep suitable for filming in The Hobbit and what the New Zealand army did to build roads and construct infrastructure to allow Peter Jackson to prepare for the film. The soldiers were subsequently rewarded with Orc roles in the film which worked out well for them, but not so well for the actors. In fact Peter Jackson had to tell the enthusiastic soldier Orcs to back off and stop beating the crap out of his movie stars.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Out of the bus and on foot we follow Michael into the township of Hobbiton. He shares insider information about the making of the film including the fact that it was made using as many practical effects as possible. Practical effects are constructed illusions which are in contrast to special effects, which are created digitally. An example of one of the practical effects is in the building of the cart which Gandalf and Bilbo ride in. As you may know, Hobbits are small and wizards are tall so in order for Gandalf to appear much larger than Bilbo the cart was constructed in such a way that Ian McKellen (Gandalf) sat 3 feet in front of Martin Freeman (Bilbo) thereby creating the illusion of a great variance in their sizes.

Many fascinating behind-the-scenes stories are told as we wander through the gorgeous village.

Hobbit holes are made in many different sizes, again to allow for practical effects to do with character sizes. A child in our group stands in one of the smaller doorways and the perfect sizing effect immediately becomes clear.

SWEET SCENTS AND THE GREEN DRAGON

It is a searingly hot day. The air is sweetened by scent from dozens of tiny Hobbit gardens and pleasant smoke from the cooking fires emanating from the inviting Green Dragon Pub in the valley below.

Continued over page

06 Bag End
Image © Trevor Onn

04 Hundertwasser's arty loo design
Image © Trevor Onn

05 Phil, ABC Shuttles & Tours
Image © Trevor Onn

07 The Green Dragon
Image © Trevor Onn

Continued from page 6

From Bag End and its magical oak tree the walk is all downhill.

I love the Green Dragon. Seated in the ornately carved timber pub with my complementary ginger beer I wish the stories were true. Maybe not the bad bits, but the gentle, happy Hobbits would be most welcome to share this version of Middle Earth with the rest of us.

Regretfully leaving the Green Dragon we return to our bus and our slightly sunburned yet cheerfully chatty guide stays with us until we return to the Shire's Rest. We have just enough time to fork out $75 on a bottle of genuine Green Dragon beer and exclusive Green Dragon flagons from which to drink it. Say "Green Dragon flagons" ten times now.

FRUIT, HONEY AND HAIRY MACLARY

On our return to Tauranga we stop to explore a kiwi fruit farm. The tiny little fruits are still the size of blueberries. Not ready for harvest yet.

One final stop is to Mossops Honey shop where UMF10+ rated honey is $100+ a jar. My garden is full of melaleuca trees back at home. It's time to buy a box of bees, methinks. Forgoing the golden liquid with the price to match I buy some honeycomb. It's good. Wish I'd bought a few bags of it.

The tour ends after a drive by the Hairy Maclary (from Donaldson's Dairy) statue. We learn that Lynley Dodd, the author of Hairy Maclary's adventures, was made Dame Lynley Dodd in honour of her writings and contribution to the community. Keep that in mind next time you feel the urge to write and illustrate a picture book.

MUST DO NZ

AKAROA

If you do ONE thing in New Zealand make it this!

As a travel writer, I'm often asked, "What is the one thing we must do when we get there?" Well in NZ, for me, it is this.

In the ocean near Akaroa live Hector's Dolphins. They are the rarest and smallest dolphins in the world. I suspect they are the cutest as well but how one would measure that is difficult to say.

At 11am we prepare to board The Black Cat for a harbour cruise. I'm wondering if we should have made an effort to catch the first timeslot as the early morning cruisers are beaming as they disembark. Hearing remarks like, "It was worth every penny" our anticipation grows.

The day is perfect, perfect weather, calm seas, clear water and, in time, dozens of friendly Hector's dolphins. They are extremely cute with markings similar to an Orca, except greyscale.

08 Wild seal, Akaroa Harbour
Image © Trevor Onn

THE OOHS AND AAHS

Yes the harbour cliff face is astounding and the penguins and albatross are wonders to behold but those gorgeous little dolphins steal everyone's hearts. Oohs, aahs and joyful clapping surround us as pods of fat, happy creatures speed up from several directions at once and begin playing around the bow of the boat. The little dolphins are so friendly that the captain turns off the boat so we can just enjoy their company. The captain himself says this is the best tour he has ever experienced. He has never seen the sea so clear and the dolphins in such large numbers.

Another buzz for me are the many sightings of wild seals. Seals are quite common in many parts of the world but not where I come from and these are the first wild seals I've ever encountered despite many years of hopeful explorations in wild seal environments.

One other thing worth mentioning is the rare geological formation known as a radial basalt dike, which juts from the rock face into the sea. It is the result of lava flowing into a crack in the crater of the original volcano. This thin wall of lava has solidified and the surrounding softer rock has eroded and left this vast wall of rock behind. It is a rare phenomenon and geologists from around the world come to see it for themselves. I only hope they have fun with the dolphins as well.

Back in town we end the day with an excellent feed of fish and chips at L'Hotel. This has been a truly memorable day.

Continued over page

09 Captain Rob, Black Cat Cruises, Akaroa
Image © Trevor Onn

10 Fish and chips, Akaroa
Image © Trevor Onn

11 Hector's Dolphins, Akaroa
Image © Trevor Onn

Continued from page 8

ANOTHER POPULAR "MUST SEE" FIORDLAND

Dusky Sound.
Amazing views impress from the helipad at the bow of the ship. Many speckled dolphins escort us through their watery home as seals watch from nearby rock outcrops. Waterfalls in their hundreds fall over escarpments into the sea. The wind chill factor is very high. After two weeks of sweltering heat and sunburn we find thermals, beanies, gloves and coats are the order of the day. Even so our faces are whipped by wind burn as gusts of a cyclonic nature rip through the sound.

Milford Sound.
"This is THE Sound" attests one nearby passenger as we enter the headland. A large school of what looks like jumping tuna can be seen in the distance.

A great excitement arises when the fish turn out to be Hector's Dolphins who race to the ship and dance about in the sea below us.

Snow-capped mountains soar overhead as we move quietly through the passage. Vessels of all sizes ranging from small kayaks to a large cruise ship are dwarfed by vast waterfalls. The waterfalls themselves are dwarfed by sheer green cliffs jutting from the depths.

Our group spots a tiny white flying machine approaching from the far distance. "A drone!" they exclaim.

As the white "drone" approaches it soon becomes apparent that it is actually a ten seater plane.

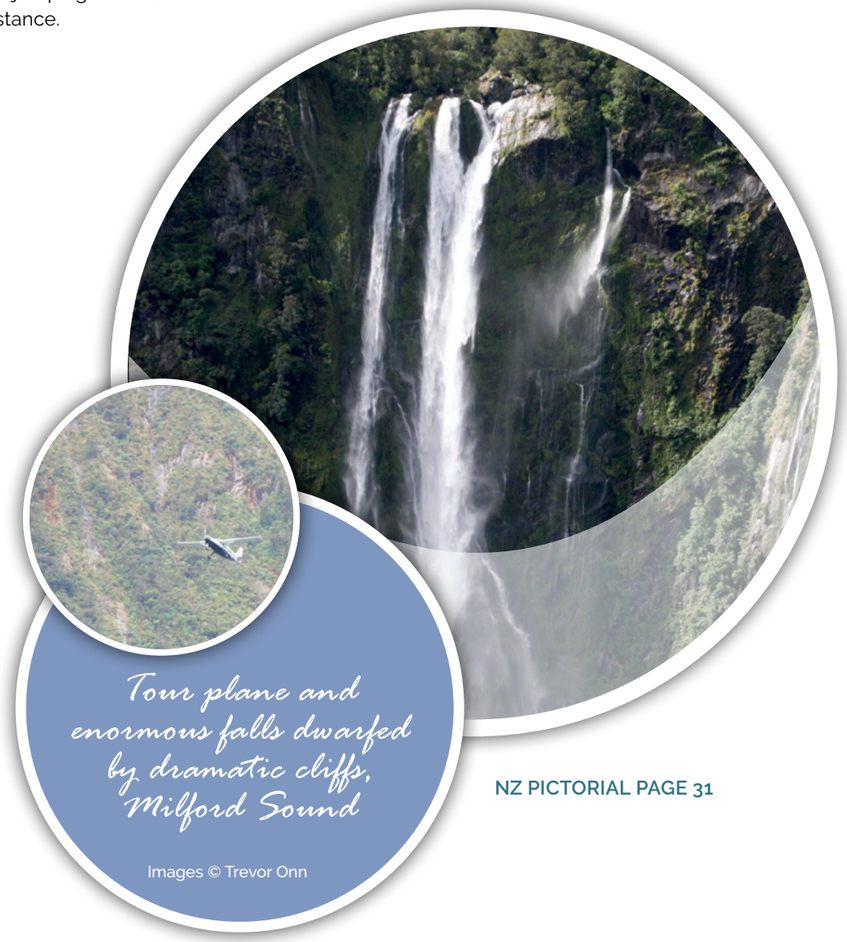
Such is the size of the mountainous cliffs, that normal things look miniscule in comparison.

This ancient landscape leaves us awestruck, well most of us. Incredibly there is a group of visitors having an intense political debate in the midst of this majestic water world. A reminder to us all to wake up and look around. Amazing things may surround us and we really must pay attention.

CONCLUSION

Well that's a tiny sample of our full New Zealand itinerary. Yes there are many more wonders to explore in these fascinating islands. Feel free to email us your comments, letters, photographs and questions.

As always...
Happy travels,
Jen



Tour plane and enormous falls dwarfed by dramatic cliffs, Milford Sound

Images © Trevor Onn

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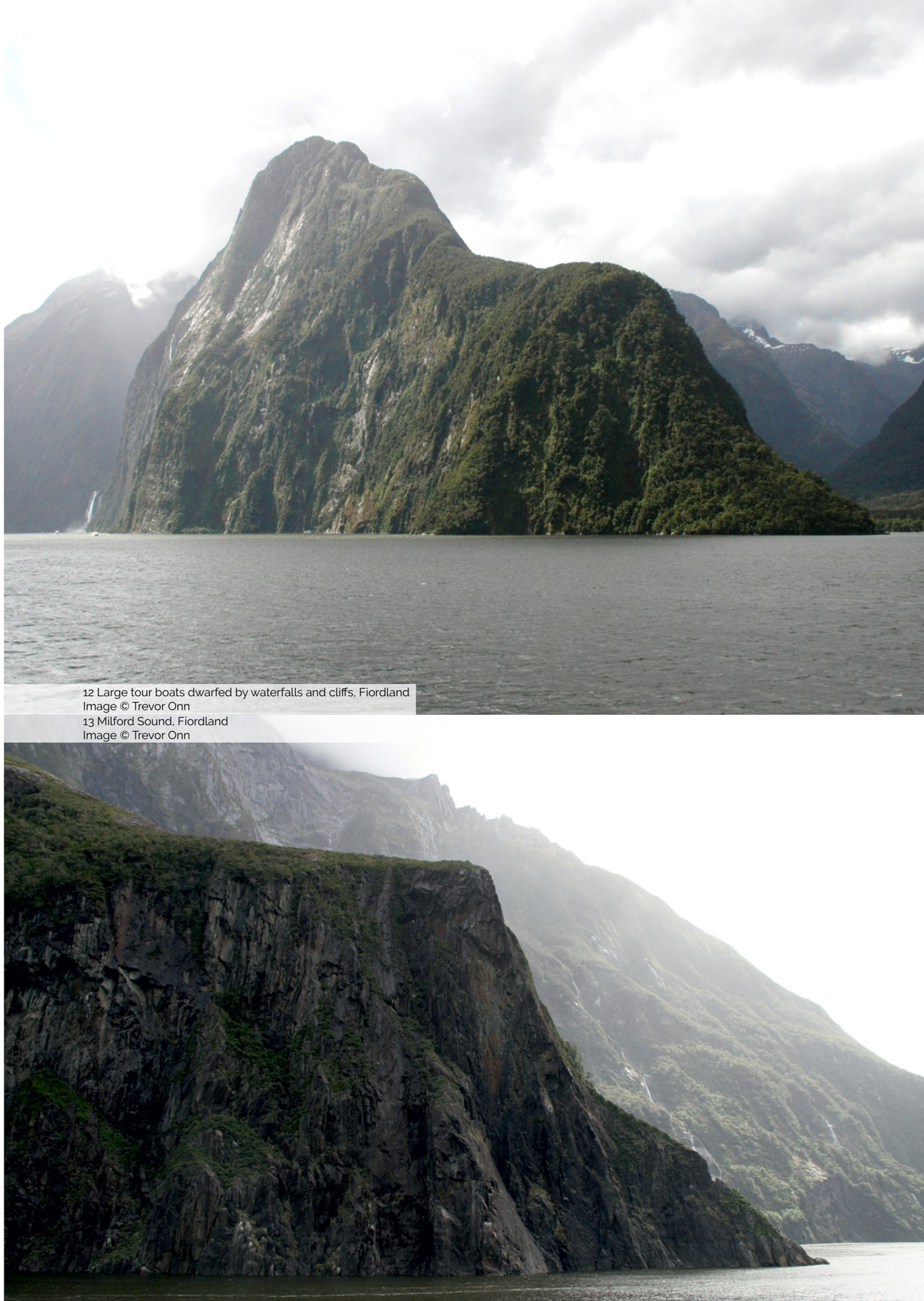


12 Large tour boats dwarfed by waterfalls and cliffs, Fiordland
Image © Trevor Onn

13 Milford Sound, Fiordland
Image © Trevor Onn

THE BIG LAP

PART THREE

Our extremely popular nomad, Keith Trotter, continues his great Australian adventure to legendary destinations of the far west.

We've been on the road for 14 weeks now and the adventures just keep on coming. For the last 5 weeks the north-west coast of Western Australia has been our playground, and now it's time to head south, starting with the pointy bit at the western end of WA, that is, Exmouth.

Up till now, most of our stays have been in caravan parks so we could make the most of the 240V power to run the air conditioning. If you've got the creature comforts, you might as well use them. We had planned to do a lot more free camping, but it had been too warm since we left the Devil's Marbles in the middle of the Northern Territory.

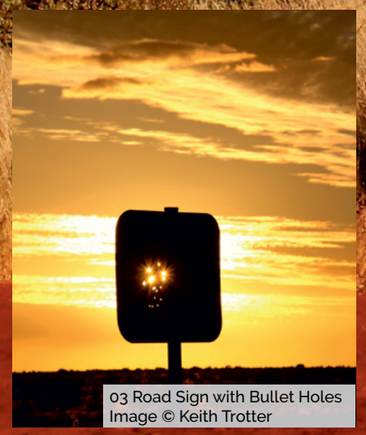
Our target had been to travel no more than 300 – 400km a day, so the 550km leg from Karratha to Exmouth meant we would be staying on the side of the road somewhere tonight.

We pulled up at a wayside stop just near the Exmouth turnoff, not long before sunset and prepared for a quiet evening. No other vehicles in sight and not many photo opportunities here, just a toilet, a bus shelter and a road sign with bullet holes in it. Then the sky started to change colour.

This looked promising. Sometimes all you need are the simple things in life.

01 Roadside Stopover
Image © Keith Trotter

02 Sunset, WA
Image © Keith Trotter



03 Road Sign with Bullet Holes
Image © Keith Trotter

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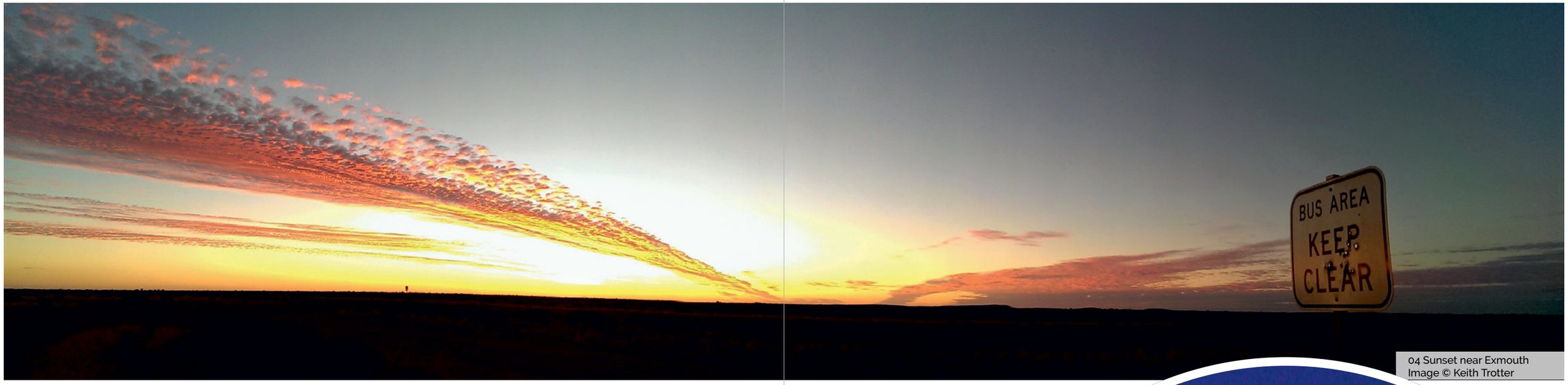

04 Sunset near Exmouth
Image © Keith Trotter

360° PANORAMA

Very soon there was a unique cloud formation with a band of cloud rising from the south, fanning across the western sky and then tucking back into the horizon to the north, and one of the most colourful sunsets of our trip. It was so exciting to be in the middle of nowhere, and to unexpectedly have this wonderful colour all around in a 360 degree panorama. That was my night taken care of. I snapped off about 100 photos in quick succession, then went inside to sort out about 15 of the best to put into a folder so I could post them to social media as soon as we had internet coverage again the next day.

HIGH WIND REGION

Exmouth is a nice little resort town that was only established 50 years ago. It is prone to cyclones and has copped a battering over the years, recording the highest wind gusts on mainland Australia, at 267kph.

While these winds were quite destructive, the highest wind gust ever recorded anywhere was only about 200km north east of here on Barrow Island during cyclone Olivia in 1996.

It gusted up to an incredibly destructive 408kph.

NINGALOO REEF CRUISING

Enough of the history lesson, this is where we had our first of two boat cruises on Ningaloo reef. The glass bottom boat took us out a little way on the reef which the operator knew like the back of his hand.

We spent time in the boat looking through the glass bottom at the coral, and snorkelled on the reef for a while making sure we kept close to the boat.

Later that day, we drove out to the light-house to do a bit of whale watching. On the way there, we missed the turn-off to the light-house and kept going straight ahead. This wouldn't normally present any real problems except the road we were on took us straight under two massive communications antenna and right into a military base that's been there for decades. I quickly realised my mistake and pulled over to check the map. It only took a minute before an official looking 4wd pulled along side of us. A couple of Feds started asking questions like the obvious one "What are you doing here?". "Oops. Did I miss a turn somewhere officer?" I'm sure this wasn't the first time they had to confront some silly old bugger who missed the turn and ended up in their restricted area.

OUR FAVOURITE PLACE

A couple of hours down the road is Coral Bay, population 190. This tiny little fishing / tourist town became our favourite place for the entire trip. As much as we loved Broome and some of the other places ahead, Coral Bay is the place we both voted as our favourite, unquestionably.

WHY?

Here's an example. I stood on the edge of the pristine white sand in this tiny coastal town, the water lapping at my feet. One step, two steps, dive, oh look, there's tropical fish everywhere. They're swimming around the coral that is right there, smack bang in front of you. You don't have to go anywhere, the coral is seriously 10 feet in front of you, and the little Nemos are there too. Look, I found Nemo.

(Clown fish Keith - ed)

Here's another reason why this was our favourite place. The next day we spent an unforgettable all-day cruise on the reef. At first the boat only went 100 metres out. We all jumped in and explored the reef, swimming with hundreds of tropical fish, and quite a few sea turtles, all the time exploring the magic of Ningaloo Reef. We were both new to snorkelling, having our first attempt just 3 days before.

MANTA RAY EXPERIENCE

So you can imagine how special it was to have our maiden attempts on a tropical reef teeming with thousands of tropical fish. Our underwater photographer for the day, made sure we had plenty of memories of our day out.

Next we went further out where we swam with a majestic Manta Ray. These creatures are so graceful, and to swim with one was certainly a great experience. A little further out there were humpback whales breaching and the captain made sure we were close enough to take that perfect shot of the whales heading skyward before crashing sideways in a mammoth splash. This was one of those photo opportunities that I only ever dreamed of taking.

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05 Giant Prawn Statue & Humpback Whale
Images © Keith Trotter

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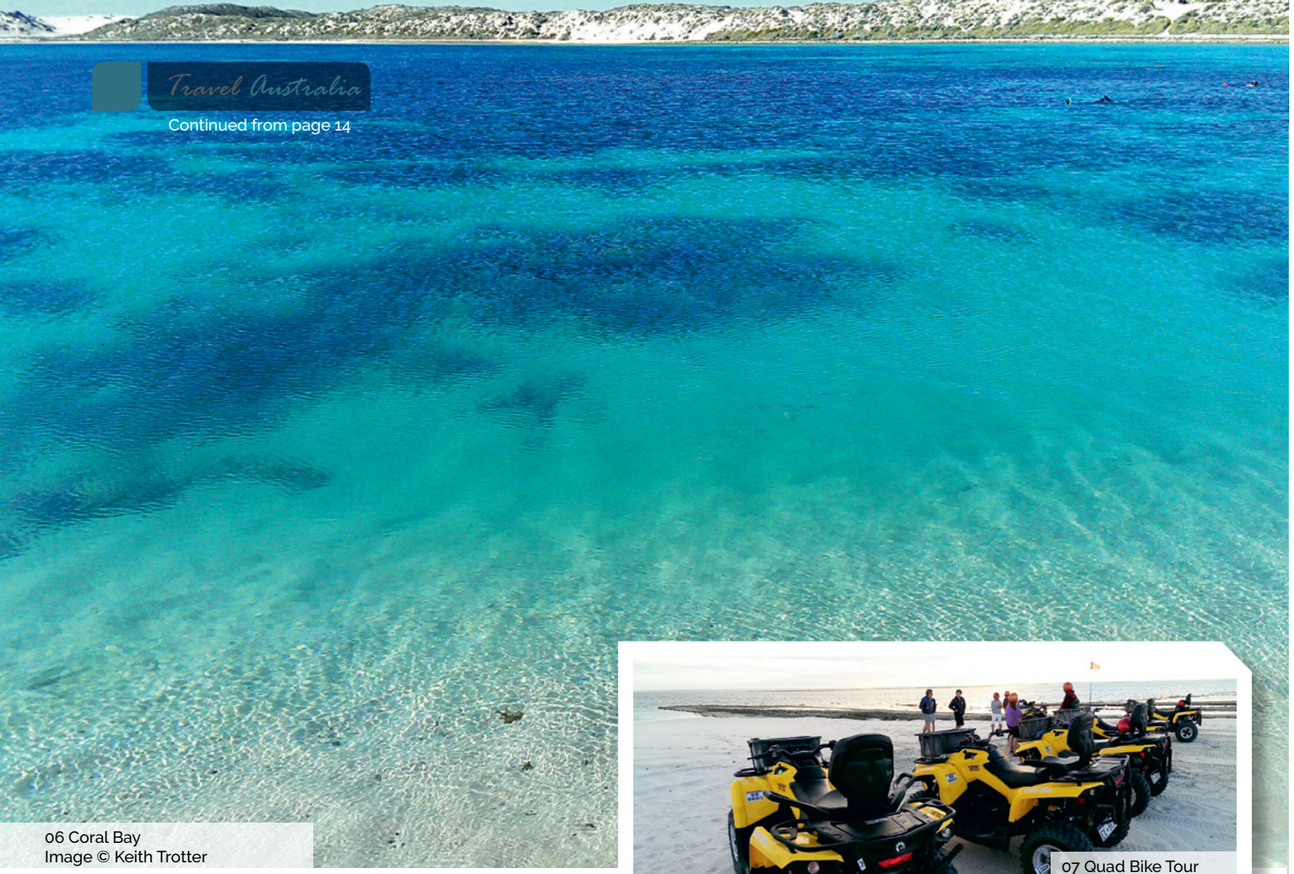


06 Coral Bay
Image © Keith Trotter

07 Quad Bike Tour
Image © Keith Trotter

THE BESTS

If you read my last instalment in the Summer edition of the magazine, I said that the Horizontal falls experience was the best thing we'd done to date, but the next two "best experiences" were just around the corner.

This day on the reef was one of them, and was equal to the thrill we had at the Horizontal Falls; a lot cheaper, totally different but definitely equal. If I had to rank them, and they are only separated by a hair, I would rank this a very close 2nd. What I didn't know at the time was that my number 3 on the excitement scale was about to happen the next day.

All it took was a quad bike, lots of sand dunes and a sunset, and there was number 3. The safety briefing was short but comprehensive. "You can't hurt yourself on these bikes" the team leader told us. Tell that again to the lady who came off only 500 metres into the ride and twisted her ankle. We still can't understand how she could come off on virtually a straight piece of road.

This was no ordinary lady, she was a leather wearing biker who had been riding motorbikes for years, and the incident surprised us all.

Once some first aid had been administered, she was relegated to riding pillion with the tour guide. We spent the next 2 hours riding these bikes to the max wherever we could, hooning up and down sand dunes, flying along the tracks past some beautiful coastal scenery, and just generally having a blast.

This was done without disrespecting the environment. We stopped many times to let the slower riders catch up and to just enjoy our surroundings. At sunset we pulled over for 10 minutes to take it all in.

It was fast, it was physical and it was the most fun I had for the whole trip. Definitely one way to liven up your day, and worthy of 3rd position.

"It was fast it was physical and it was the most fun"

08 Quad bike adventurers
Image © Keith Trotter

Carnarvon was a pleasant stop over with plenty to see but we had to keep moving, so we headed for the coastal town of Denham and Monkey Mia. Let's get Monkey Mia out of the way to start with. Sure there are dolphins, but save your cash for something better. The feeding of the dolphins is the attraction here, but what you get is a crowd of 300 people, give or take a couple of hundred, a few dolphins, and from the crowd, one person is selected to feed a fish to one dolphin. That's it, show's over folks. Keep out of the water, don't make sudden moves or make a noise. Twelve bucks, thanks for coming.

Denham is a nice little town, out of the way and with a population of 600, it has 2 supermarkets (maybe not that super) and a good pub in the middle of town.

TRILLIONS OF SHELLS

Between Denham and the highway are two points of interest that we were glad we stopped at. Shell beach is the first stop on the way out. There is no sand on this beach, just trillions of tiny shells up to 10m deep for a stretch of 60km. It is one of only 2 beaches in the world made entirely of cockle shells, and is near impossible for a soft footed sock wearing tourist to walk across without some form of footwear. Years ago a section of the beach was mined and used as building material. It was sliced into slabs and used in the construction of some of the local buildings.

A bit further down the road are the stromatolites of Hamelin Pool. These unusual looking formations are the oldest and largest living fossils on earth. The microbes that build these are similar to those found in 3.5 billion year old rocks which contain the earliest record of life on earth. Some of the larger formations are believed to be hundreds of thousands of years old.

If you let your mind wander, you can start to visualise the beginnings of life so long ago, before creatures walked the earth.

KALBARRI

For the last few years, many of my WA colleagues told me that if I ever left Victoria and travelled the west coast, I should go to Kalbarri, for no other reason other than that I'd like it. So I took their word for it and was certainly not disappointed.

To start with, it was the best place we stayed since Coral Bay.

Continued on page 16

09 Shell Beach
Image © Keith Trotter

10 Stromatolites, Hamelin Pool
Image © Keith Trotter

11 Exmouth Caravan Park
Image © Keith Trotter

12 Shell Beach shells
Image © Keith Trotter

Continued from page 16

NATURES WINDOW

There were always whales off the coast, breaching out of the water and spouting water through their blow holes. There are plenty of cliff top look-outs along the spectacular coast line where you can view these activities. Possibly the most spectacular place along the whole west coast area, but not on the coast itself is Natures window, about 40km inland from Kalbarri.

This natural feature takes the cake. It is a photographer's dream and just a breathtakingly beautiful spot in this big country of ours. The window itself is cool enough, but it is set in a most picturesque valley of a twisting meandering river. Sitting in front of the window is the perfect place for a holiday snap. It must be, there were queues of people lining up for this photo opportunity, and there was always someone willing to take a few shots for you.

15 Kalbarri region, Western Australia
Image © Keith Trotter

13 Natures Window, Western Australia
Image © Keith Trotter

14 Keith with Prince Leonard
Image © Keith Trotter

If the seasonal conditions have been right, you can duck down to Gregory / Port Gregory and see the pink lake. I'm sure it's been spectacular at times, but not this time. There was only one spot in the lake that resembled anything close to pink, and although the vantage point had no elevation, the zoom lens captured some of the colour, so I was happy.

VISIT WITH A PRINCE

After experiencing all this beauty and excitement, enjoying the wonders of our country, it was time for something completely different. It was time to leave Australia.

We didn't have to go far or travel for too long, and as we didn't have our passports with us, we were informed we would be issued a temporary visa. We were about to enter a land within a land where Princes and Princesses mix it with the common man (and woman) the Principality of Hutt River Province. This is a history lesson that, for me, surpassed all the history we had learned and all the knowledge we had gained on our whole trip. This happened in my lifetime and was about a man standing his ground against an unfair government, without legal representation never backing down and single-handedly beating the might of the Commonwealth, becoming genuine royalty in the process.

It's worth reading up on the history of Hutt River and the eccentric genius of Prince Leonard.

I vividly remember following this story as a school kid, of the farmer seceding from the Commonwealth of Australia, creating history with the formation of the Principality of Hutt River. It was big news in 1970 and it was great to see where it all happened, especially meeting the Prince in person.

By now it was time to re-adjust our time schedule and make our way to Perth. Just a couple of quick stops along the way.

Our last "must see" before hitting the big-smoke was the Pinnacles. These came highly recommended to us but please spend a bit more time here than we did. You can walk through or drive through these unusual limestone formations, but make sure you see them if you're in the area.

We're heading to Perth now, or to be precise, Fremantle, where we catch up with a few friends. You can read about the final leg of our journey in the next issue where we pass through the scenic end of WA as we head back to Melbourne. Some of my favourite photos of our trip were taken during the home stretch, and I hope you enjoy them as much as I enjoyed taking them.

16 Pink Lake, Western Australia
Image © Keith Trotter

“This is where we had our first of two boat cruises on Ningaloo Reef”

Image © Keith Trotter

THE "LOOK" OF THE BOOK
DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION

01 Main image - Where's Bear?!
Images © Lauren Wood, Takara Beech

What constitutes successful book design? Are you hankering to understand a little more about what it's like to be a professional book illustrator? In this article, author Jenny Poulter interviews one of her favourite designers.

We have all heard the proverbial "You can't tell a book by its cover!" But everyone in the Book industry knows if you DON'T have an eye-catching cover, the book will not leave the shelf!

Then there is the internal design - this is very important for any book, but critical for a picture book or chapter book, given the latter are increasingly being given the full illustrative treatment.

Do you go for industry awards for arty innovation **or** do you go for a book that teachers will easily be able to hold up and read to the class and that children will easily be able to read themselves? The challenge is to go for BOTH without sacrificing readability - a fine balance...

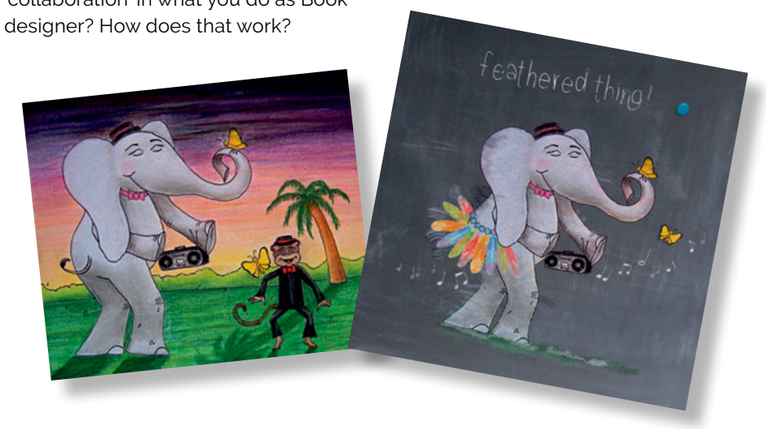
Takara Beech is a Book Designer / Illustrator Extraordinaire with Word Wings. Her trademark is innovation! She shares with us her designer intuition as well as the practical nitty gritties in this interview, highlighting some of her most joyous design experiences and how she overcame some of the bigger challenges.

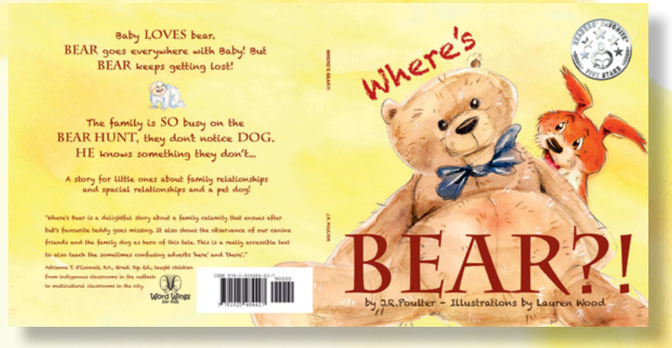
Q. Takara, what are your first thoughts when presented with a 'raw' manuscript and illustrative roughs for a new project?
A. Haha, often I swear and think 'what am I going to do with this?!'

Q. How important is the concept of 'collaboration' in what you do as Book designer? How does that work?

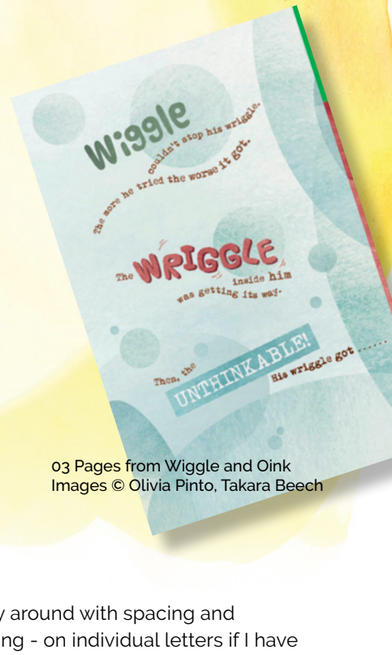
A. My personality is mostly that of a collaborator, I love sharing experiences and taking other people's work and ideas and making them better, bringing them to life in a way that surprises and pleases them and which pleases me. Plus it's more rewarding celebrating success with friends and work mates, than it is on your own.

02 Hip Hop Hoorah receiving a haircut
Images © Jade Potts, Tara Beech





"Make it readable. Make it look fabulous. Make people want more."



03 Pages from Wiggle and Oink
Images © Olivia Pinto, Takara Beech

Q. How does collaboration work?
A. Thankfully for me, I receive a LOT of trust from those I collaborate with. They let me have creative freedom with their work which takes an extreme amount of courage because I have a tendency to pull things apart and cut them up, like a scissor happy hairdresser. I respect that kind of courage and trust! It also helps me produce a better product, plus I love the surprise and excitement I receive when I send my collaborators a finished draft. Usually there aren't many changes so a finished draft looks like it's ready for print - a real live book! I love it. I love their excited reactions.

Q. Do you follow a set process or is each project a 'go with your gut' from start to finish?
A. It is always a go with my gut process! Although having said that I'm certain my graphic design training is really what has become the intuitive, gut instinct in me - 'Make it readable, make it look fabulous, make people want more'. I also spent a LOT of time reading and looking at picture books as well as studying the craft of making them. I like that we live in a day where the boundaries of what a picture book should look like can be pushed... that's creative fun!

Q. What are the elements you look for in the critical title font? How important is this for cover design?
A. I look for readability, and a way to illustrate the story but with type. I ask myself what is this story telling me, how does it feel? Does my font tell that story and convey that feeling? Does the font look like it is part of the whole illustration? I don't see pictures and then type, I see a whole illustration using pictures and type. I see a piece of art. A lot of what I do with fonts is instinct and training too. I usually don't just type in the title and go "voilà, perfect".

I play around with spacing and kerning - on individual letters if I have to - Oh dear, I just revealed a little of my designer OCD. All elements of the cover are important. Your cover has to say 'pick me up, look inside me!' The cover for ***Where's Bear?!*** Also demonstrates how I play around with illustrators images to come up with a nice composition which also hints at the story...

Q. How do you determine which font for the internal pages? What are the critical factors and how do you marry font style and image?
A. I treat the inside of the story the same as I do the cover, I usually bring the cover font inside the book because I have already determined that's how the story feels. Each page is a piece of art to me, each spread is a piece of art. Art with words and pictures. In ***Wiggle and Oink*** it was so much fun playing with fonts that illustrated the feeling of the words.

Continued over

Continued from page 22

Q. What do you think are the standout elements that separate a professional book design from an amateur production?
A. Haha, most everyone who goes into a book store can tell the difference between a self published book and a professionally designed book.

I think the short answer is. It's the designer, and even if I wasn't a designer this would still be my answer.

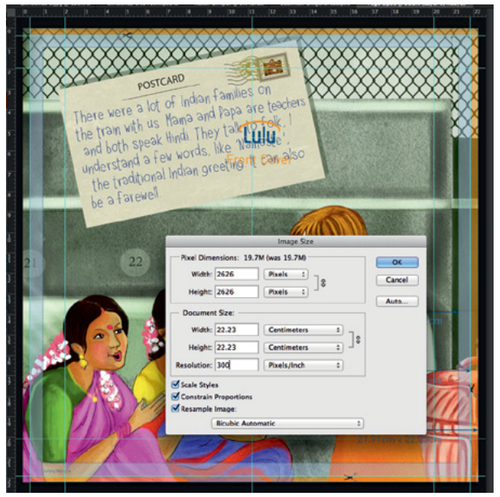
You can just tell there's something different - Professional, university educated Graphic Designers spend years training in all elements of design. They do layout drills every day for three to four years. They do type drills. They design their own fonts and integrate them into good page design. They are asking themselves, "How does that A sit against that E? How does that word sit against the next word? How do those words work on that page? How do they work with the image? Does the image look like it's moving or stationery? Where is your eye looking? Is it supposed to be looking that way?" ... years of drilling down on the details and then doing.

Then there's picture books, even as a designer you have to study the art of creating a picture book! Because good design alone won't carry the story. You have to understand how to make it a moving piece of art from one page to the next. You have to know how to design the book so the reader wants to keep turning the pages.

Q. Back to the internal file, what are the most important considerations in page layout and why?
A. Keep all your important stuff inside the margins, the margins are large, about 2cm - 2.5cm all the way around one page, stay inside this space with all your critical information. Yes, you can illustrate to the edge of the book.

Do that, but just know that it's possible, even probable that anything within that 2cm buffer can get chopped off.

Please, please make sure your characters are moving in the general direction of your page turn. They need to be moving from left to right. If they're facing the other way and moving from right to left, there is a subconscious pause in the reader. It stops them from turning the page. Now if you deliberately want to stop the reader, then it's a method that can be used to keep the reader inside the moment on that page, but I would say, unless you know what you're doing and the story cries out for it, don't do it. It's like turning your back on the reader. We don't want to do that. W e want to invite them deeper into the story.



04 Square page set up for left and right pages
Images © Takara Beech

The image above shows how I set up green guides at the 2cm mark.

You can see all the critical information is inside these guides. Even if the page got chopped here, it still works as a nice image with all the text intact.

Q. Some books are cover to cover double page spreads. Some are text opposite image. Others are a mix. What are the key issues in making these decisions?

How much does story flow buy into it?
A. I think story flow definitely determines what is done with text and where it is placed within the layout of the pages.

The sheer number of words used to tell the story also influences design decisions. Not a lot of words, means text can be integrated into the pictures. It can be super large or tiny. It can dance around the pictures or inside the pictures. Lots of words, means you need more space for them. It's easier to put them on a blank white page but I really struggle with typing lots of plain text on a white page all by itself and then have an image on the opposing page. It's too generic for me.

I want to treat text like an illustration. I want to play with it. I want it to illustrate the story and convey emotion too.

Q. Would you share with us your favourite/s? What are you working on now?
A. My absolute favourite book cover at the moment is ***The Passing,*** which is almost ready for publication. I just loved grabbing elements and mashing together something that told the whole story in one single image.

I love the contrast of the texture against Rose's gorgeous naive character illustration. I love the contrast of black and white against the colour and the symbols within the image.

It's a piece of art and looking at art makes me happy. It's also a beautiful, emotional story about the passing of time, human nature and the ability the earth has to heal and make everything right again.

Rose also has an eye for layout, so she was easy to art direct. In the beginning I was worried.

I think she might have been torn between her own art flair and what she thought a picture book should look like. We're all so guilty of this. Her first image didn't work, yet some of her online videos where she used naive characters in photographic settings were absolutely beautiful.

"Do that Rose, do that!"
And she did.
It's gorgeous.

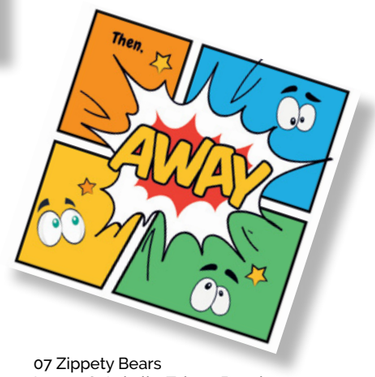
05 The Passing
Images © Rose Clark, Takara Beech

Another book I love is ***Catching a Dream***, the story is beautiful, just beautiful and I love Claudia's painterly style and the strangeness of the images.

My teenage and adult kids thought the symbolism was not suitable for a picture book. I didn't understand. I loved them and felt they would fit a picture book format perfectly, even though it was written for a more grown up readership as an illustrated, ballad form poem and not for little children. Now they have seen the final product, they love it. Mum was right ;)

Oh there's so many, The comic book style of ***Zippitty Bears*** was so much fun and right now I'm working on ***Dark Watch*** which is totally different again, it's monochromatic and creepy.

06 Catching a Dream
Image © Claudia Emanuela Coppola, Takara Beech



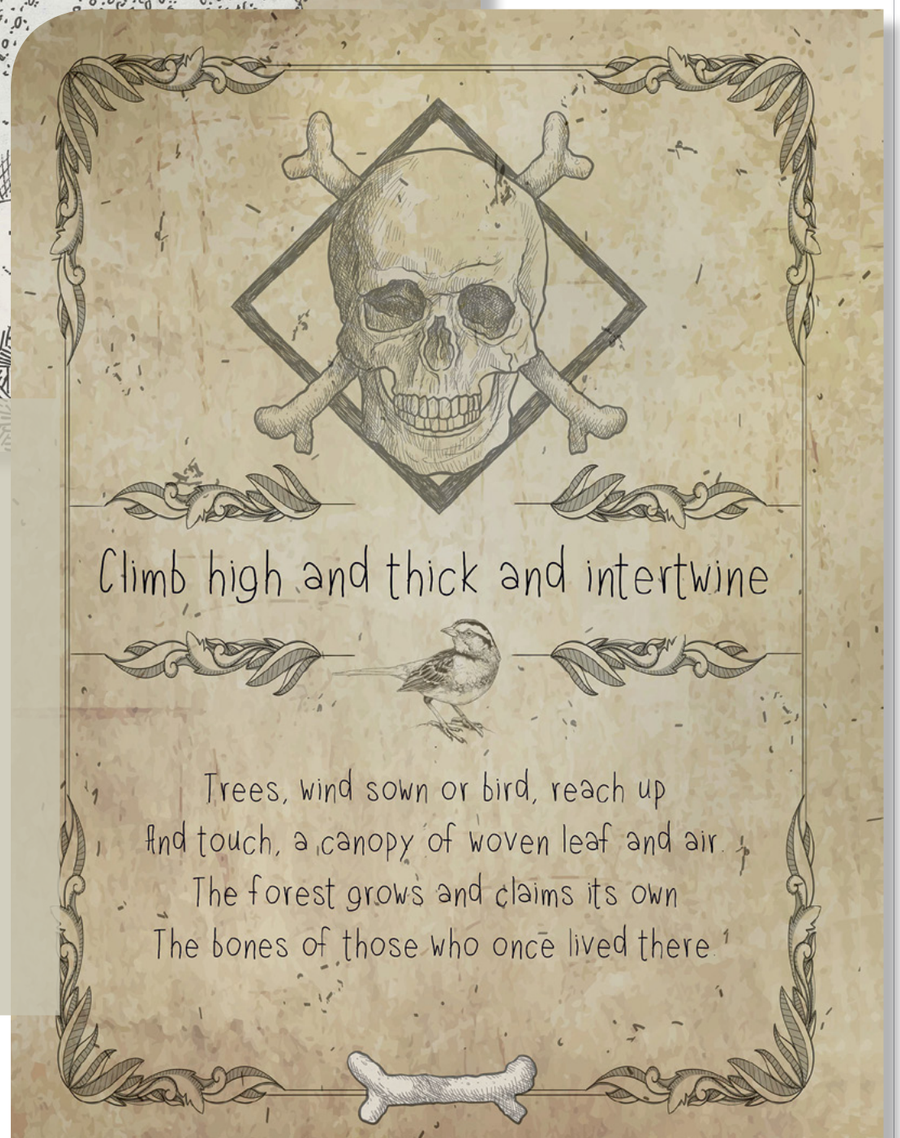
07 Zippety Bears
Image © Ankolie, Takara Beech

I love the end result of so many of the books I've been privileged to design.

I love that moment when there's a spark and I know exactly what I'm going to do to make them shine. It's so frustrating and so rewarding all at the same time.

Thanks guys for your courage and trust, chop, chop, chop xx

Pictorial continues over page



08 Dark Watch
Images © Heather Peters, Takara Beech

09 The Passing
Image © Rose Clark, Takara Beech

10 Catching a Dream
Image © Claudia Emanuela Coppola, Takara Beech

11 Phantasmagorica
Image © Takara Beech

BOOK REVIEWS

Build your own airport! Nice work!

Busy Builders: Airport
By Timothy Knapman
Illustrated by Carles Ballesteros

Flying overseas or interstate or just taking the kids up in a plane for a joy flight, **a model Airport**, complete with airport terminal and models of planes and other airport features to build, might be exactly what you need! This would be great

- for families needing to familiarising small kids with what to expect when they have to go through a big airport terminal for the first time AND
- a boon for 'fly in fly out' parents to share with their kids what happens when they 'take off' for work!

This set, comes with a helpful booklet to answer just about every question a kid could have about the workings of an air terminal!

ISBN: 9781925381443

Walker Books Australia
Reviewed by Jenny Poulter

Build the Dragon
By Dugald A. Steer
Illustrated by Douglas Carrel, Jonathan Woodward

The Dragon Dance is the centerpiece of any Chinese New Year celebration anywhere around the world!

Join in the fun at home by making your own MOVABLE, yes, action figure style, Dragon with its own wind-up motor – **a working model Dragon!**

Want to know more?

This stunning box set includes a booklet on everything you could wish to know about dragons from every corner of the globe.

Did you know, Australia has its own dragon in the form of the Dreamtime Rainbow Serpent?

ISBN: 9781925381702

Walker Books Australia
Reviewed by Jenny Poulter

Guess How Much I Love You. Milestone Moments Gift Set
Sam McBratney & Anita Jeram

Guess How Much I Love You highlights the love between parent and child.

One of the world's most popular books is now a delightful book and baby card gift set, from the award-winning creators of Guess How Much I Love You.

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The perfect Gift for new parents.

http://www.walker.co.uk/Guess-How-Much-I-Love-You-9781406379402.aspx

Walker Books Australia
Reviewed by Jenny Poulter

READER REWARDS

Seven Sensational Giveaways!

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There are 5 copies of this gorgeous gift set to giveaway.

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Build your own airport! Be sure to send in that email to go into the draw for this awesome airport action book.

BUILD THE DRAGON
Create a working model dragon! Be sure to send your email right away to go into the draw for this fun book!

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before 1 June 2018 and tell us why YOU would like one of these BRILLIANT BOOKS.

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NEW ZEALAND

PICTORIAL

01 Radial Basalt Dike
Images © Trevor Onn

02 Hobbiton Entrance
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03 Hobbiton Guide at The Green Dragon
Images © Trevor Onn

04 Waterfall, Milford Sound
Images © Trevor Onn

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NEXT ISSUE

Our upcoming issue sees us visiting incredible cities and landscapes of Australia. This vast and ancient land deserves our full attention so expect articles featuring "how to" find your way around some of the best this massive continent has on offer. Plus, be sure to catch the final instalment of "The Big Lap".

Where will we go in the creative world of the arts?
Well that's a surprise! **See you next time!**

LIGHT INSPIRATION

A little look at lights.

01 Antique Chandelier, Paris
Image © Trevor Onn

http://www.trevoronn.com

02 Warm interior lighting, Paris
Image © Trevor Onn

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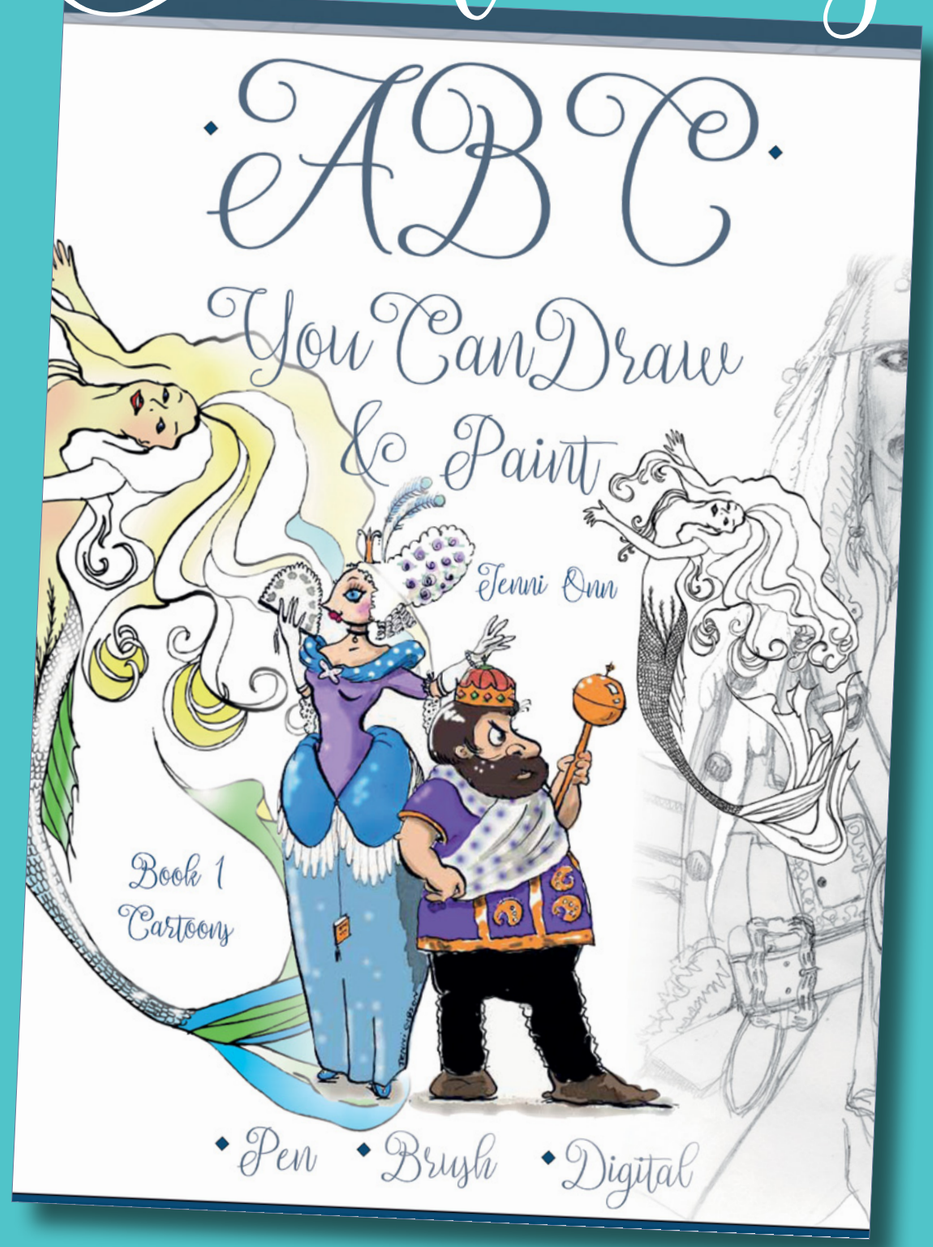
Coming Soon from ABC You Can Draw

Cartoons



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