

# Capturing Asia: pictures on the back of a bike

by Barnaby Sharp

The many faces of Asia are about to be showcased in an upcoming book by visiting Welsh photographer Chris Neale.

Aptly named *Faces of Asia*, the book will feature Neale's photographs of the people who live in Asia's mountain regions. He spent six months in the region in 1999.

The final finishing touches to his book will begin in China in December.

"I'm travelling to China, from there down into Tibet, then Bhutan and finally finishing in Nepal.

"It's a pretty good Christmas present to give myself," he says.

Neale arrived in New Zealand last month after spending four months motorcycling and photographing the

hill tribe peoples in Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand.

His preferred mode of transport from China will again be a motorcycle as, he says, it enables him to access remote areas few travellers can reach.

"On a bike, I can get to places and people who seldom see a foreigner — to meet these people and take their picture is amazing.

"Not too many Burmese villagers owned digital cameras so that was my ice-breaker — everyone wanted to play with it, especially the kids," he says.

It hasn't all been plain sailing for the shutterbug, and he did have some anxious moments during his travels.

"Throughout Burma, there are checkpoints and armed guards, so my opportunities to take pictures were



PHOTO: BARNABY SHARP

FINGER READY: Visiting Welsh photographer Chris Neale plans the finishing touches to his book.

limited. "I got a lot of hassles for just being a foreigner, but with a camera as well,

you have to be that much more careful," he says. He plans to finish his journey in

Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, in February 2005, before flying back to Wales to complete his book.

# New Zealand's newest sports TV finds its feet

by Peter White

Sky Television has pioneered a new concept in New Zealand television over the last 11 months with *Sport 365*, and for sports editor Simon Winter it has been a rewarding challenge.

The former AUT journalism student has been with the show from the start, joining Sky after 18 months at TVNZ as a sports producer for *One News* and *Breakfast*. Prior to this he had successful spells at the *Otago Daily Times* and *Sunday News*.

*Sport 365* is a live-to-air 30 minute daily bulletin in the style of American ESPN Sports Centre and although this is a popular format overseas, it is new to New Zealand.

The presenter-mix on the show is a good blend of experience and maturing talent. Steven McIvor is the ultimate professional with 14 years presenting experience, Alex Lewis has worked at the BBC, Melodie Robinson and Jacqui Leppan add solid journalism skills and glamour, while the photogenic Brendon Pongia is now at ease in front of camera.

But it was tough at the start for *Sport 365* and Simon Winter

almost single-handedly had to create the show from scratch.

Initially the show was affected by a combination of technical difficulties and inexperienced and overworked presenters.

Winter says it took all of his experience to get through the early period.

"We bought a digital editing system that didn't really work for the first four months and had problems putting a show to air as the system kept crashing," he says.

"Our budget wasn't large and our inexperienced presenters were being reporters the entire day, run off their feet, and then presenting and probably not having enough time to prepare properly.

"The large workloads and technical issues all contributed to a show that had a long way to go to be acceptable and I don't think we reached that point consistently enough on a nightly basis until maybe March of this year."

McIvor agrees it was a tough start for the show as it was not a purpose-built news environment and everything had to be developed.

"The transformation has been successful due to a pretty strong



PHOTO: PETER WHITE

ON THE UP: 365 Editor Simon Winter cannot help but smile.

group of people who want to do it."

Pongia started from day one and for the former Tall Black star it was his first job presenting on television.

"Initially it was tough because you don't understand the whole process of how a television show is put together," he said.

"I remember when I took on the role that I backed myself that I could do it and it has been a huge learning curve."

Winter says ratings have been up and down but the technical issues have been resolved and the show has a loyal following. Ratings have progressed steadily

since February and reflect the improved quality of the show.

"From my perspective the stories have got a lot better and presenters have improved out of sight.

"The show is moving along the lines of what I envisioned in the first place and is a forum for expert analysis on issues in our major codes, and we have the people now to develop the show along those lines," says Winter.

"I think we have a mix of the specialized segments and expert analysis that hasn't been seen on New Zealand television before."

McIvor says Winter does not fit the TV1 corporate-type, as he is more down-to-earth, and it helps he is an absolute sports junkie.

Winter's colleagues respect his work ethic, personal qualities and ability to put the show together under pressure.

"Editorially, he is very strong and writes great scripts," says McIvor.

"He works us hard — he's like a hound dog! He's very good for us and fits the bill perfectly."

Pongia remembers how sometimes it was just he and Winter putting the show together because of staffing problems early on.

"Simon works well under pressure and as I'm not a qualified journalist, many times he had to put a whole show together by himself. He knows what he's doing," says Pongia.

Winter loves working in television but appreciates the value of a print background.

"The principles you learn at other jobs are essentially the same but the technology is different. You have to start thinking in terms of pictures instead of words," Winter says.

"Television is a far more lively, interactive form of journalism and a more effective way of communicating a message to your audience."

Winter constantly sets new goals for himself and says the show will continue to be innovative.

"Now the challenge is different — to continue our momentum and increase ratings, and to improve the content and quality of scriptwriting and presenting."

*Sport 365* has new opening titles Winter has worked on over the past six months and two new features — a New Zealand sailing show on Tuesdays and a multi-sport segment on Thursdays.

# Goodbye Wonderwoman, comics aren't just for the boys



PHOTO: DEAN CAMPBELL

by Dean Campbell

Two Auckland women have set their sights on shaking up the Central Auckland comic book scene.

Melissa Steiner and Tui Gordon have opened Cherry Bomb Comics in Eden Terrace — a store dedicated to providing an alternative to the mainstream comic book market.

The pair had an interest in comics but didn't like what was on offer in New Zealand.

They were inspired to open a store of their own.

Steiner says having no female, gay, or coloured characters in a comic is a problem.

"Basic stuff is not being addressed. Sexist portrayals of women — Wonderwoman for example, is just a male fantasy — we have to get away from that."

They aim to stock comics with content as well as style.

"A lot of comics can look at serious issues, such as sexual abuse, and it

can be a non-confrontational way to introduce people to these issues," Steiner says.

The pair had the idea earlier this year and it progressed from there.

Gordon says the only viable way was if they found a place they could use as a shop and also live behind.

A friend saw the 'for let' sign on the Eden Terrace shop and from that point, Steiner says, they "didn't have enough time to talk ourselves out of it".

Gordon describes the store as dual purpose, with items for sale as well as casual reading.

She says people can come in and read feminist literature they won't find in some libraries.

"We don't want to focus on just the buying and selling," she says.

They searched hard for distributors of alternative comics.

But Steiner says that once you locate an alternative distributor it opens up other places.

"Looking into the alternative scene we never knew there would be such a rich variety of comics out there by women," she says.

The women have sourced comics from the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, France and New Zealand.

And not just by women — the number of male New Zealand contributors outweighs female, although the pair hope to maintain a balance between genders.

Gordon says they are always looking for more local female comic book artists, and are happy for anyone to bring work to the shop.

"Hopefully people will pop out of the woodwork," she says.

The shop also stocks graphic novels (novels written in comic form) and clothing. It also exhibits work from local artists.

"It's cool to provide a forum — all the art on the walls is by local female artists. It gives the shop a great feel."

CARTOONS WITH BITE: Cherry Bomb Comics owners Melissa Steiner (left) and Tui Gordon relax on the sofa in their new shop.