



Re-creating the great Narnian battle at Flock Hill in the Southern Alps, NZ. Picture by Justin Eeles.

Southern Comfort

Focusing on the diverse destinations which flank the world's third largest body of water - the sometimes-surfing, but generally tranquil Indian Ocean - we turn our attention to South Asia for a good part of this issue.

We tackle the Ocean's namesake, intrepidly, in a special *India in Focus* section. Varanasi is halfway between Delhi and the Indian Ocean port of Calcutta. India's contemporary of Thebes and Babylon, this Hindu mecca guarantees a sensation-engulfing, visceral experience, from page 106, after which the Ayurvedic retreats of coastal locale Kerala provide welcome relief. Ever heard of Hampi? Neither had we, but this otherworldly spot rivals Angkor Wat with its spectacular views and exceptional architecture.

Heading due south, as is our want this issue, we arrive in Sri Lanka. Verdant Yala National Park is *the* place for a spot of leopard-spotting, from page 130, but the island nation also possesses some of the world's most pleasant accommodations, and we go on to profile several of its most intriguing holiday villas.

Now is the time to visit Nepal, the Himalayan country rising proudly out of its recent murky feudal/political quagmire. We choose to do this by way of an Enfield motorbike. The results speak for themselves, from page 138.

Mauritius - now there's a quintessentially Indian Ocean destination. Our contributing editor paid the island nation a visit recently, making sure to escape the five-star spa resorts via bicycle to appreciate the intriguing post-colonial landscape, and explore

tiny villages amidst picturesque peaks and acres of swaying sugar cane. Read on, from page 78.

Another special destination focus this issue is Vietnam: we travel from bottom to nearly top, staying at some of the country's finest accommodations, and meeting one of Hanoi's leading ladies. Find out more, from page 118.

And, for the second in our New Zealand two-parter, we take you to the movies, Kiwi style, to this seriously-South-Pacific, country-sized film set, from page 96.

Finally, find our regular Asia Pacific-wide reviews and updates spread amidst our lifestyle pages - and, don't forget to check in online at *lifestyleandtravel.com*: our site has been completely revamped and is, we believe, both sexy and easy to negotiate, comprising our entire back catalogue in text-only or whole-article PDF format.

Take comfort in the south, with lifestyle + travel.

Safe journey,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Myers', with a long, sweeping underline.

Peter Myers
Editor-in-Chief