



AUSTRALIA

72 "My interest in the Australian interior was inspired by a book given to me on my fourth birthday. The book was hard-covered and skinny, not more than forty pages. It had wonderfully detailed coloured drawings of men setting off to cross the continent with their horses and camels. They were full of ambition, hopes and dreams. As the journey wore on, one mishap followed another. The men and their beasts visibly deteriorated to the point where the men were in rags, the horses and camels died. Soon the men started to die. What type of country could be this difficult, so harsh? I had to see for myself. My wait would not be long." The book was Bourke and Wills.

EXPOSED

"In 1976 my parents decided to take my younger sister and I on an outback adventure to experience the country. This further fuelled my fascination with the interior. We flew into Alice Springs. From here we joined a twenty-two seat, four wheel drive bus, complete with driver, cook, eighteen strangers and twelve awkward canvas tents. The journey would take us from Alice to Broome and on to Darwin. I was nine years old."

"Our first night camping was preceded by an all day drive. 'are we there yet?' took on a whole new meaning for my little sister. When we finally stopped to camp it was dark. The steady rain had intensified to heavy, then torrential. We were on the Tanami Track, the camp was named 'The Granites', an abandoned mine which has since reopened. In ankle deep red mud our group of novice campers struggled to set up their tents for the first time in the dark. My father let fly with a flurry of exclamations that began with 'fancy paying some bugger for the privilege of doing this...' and ended with a series of words that I knew young people were never



Photography & Story - Jason Kimberley

meant to hear. I was sure that this was to be my first and last 'outback adventure'."

"The rains finally cleared and the darkness lifted. The country was revealed. It was almost impossible to take everything in. The light. The colours. The vastness. The changing of the land. The wonder. I was overwhelmed. Never before had I experienced a holiday where the destination diminished in importance to the getting there."

"Since then I have been able to take several six to twelve week Australian road trips. I had always dreamed of taking a year off to see Australia. My interests had now spread from the interior to the remote coasts and back to the deserts again. There is something strange about the desert. It is unique. The desert is silent. The desert is clean."


"So, to pack up your life for a year and fulfil your dreams? I was fortunate to be a part-owner in a successful pub, and my business partner managed it in my absence. The house contents were placed in storage and in November 1999, my wife Caroline

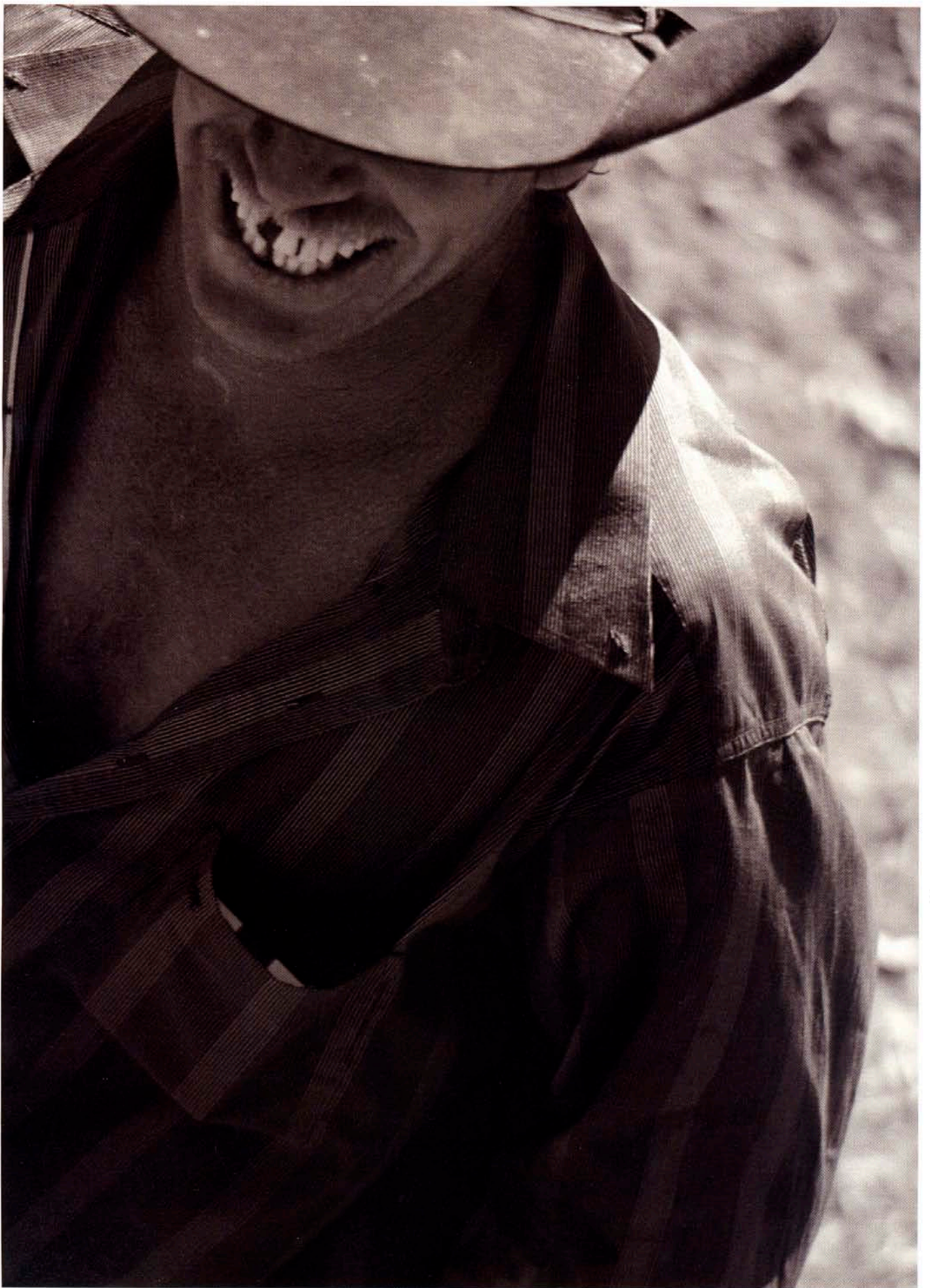
and I set off on the journey of a lifetime. "Our only plan was to have no plan. Caroline was great! She went with the flow. When I stopped the 4WD and went wandering with the camera, she'd pull out a book in the overhead console and read! Unless it was 45 degrees with no breeze, she'd tough it out! I was never usually longer than about half an hour. I'd just go off. When I'd come back! She'd ask, "Have you got it?" and "Are you finished yet?" Caroline's patience was the pillar of strength I needed to complete the task."

LINO thought it curious that the book doesn't acknowledge the Aboriginal community. "I did have a chapter on the Garma Festival in Northern Territory. I took some fantastic shots. I was negotiating with the land council and the guys in Darwin for the use of the photos. I sent them a copy of everything and a disclaimer to sign at the start to assure them the images wouldn't be used for anything other than what they were intended. Unfortunately permission was refused," explains Jason. The images Jason captured spanned the 'pretty' kids

down by the river to the tougher angle where, in some communities, it isn't fantastic. "I thought it would be intrusive to go either way without a trusting relationship with the communities and individuals to do a good job of it."

Now the book is published he would like to go back and show them, together with the unpublished chapter that he would love to have included. "Maybe later on," said Jason.

Jason Kimberley is a self taught photographer with a passion for travel, adventure and capturing all that is wonderful and unique about Australian landscapes and life, particularly life in the bush. His self-published book, *Australia Exposed*, is the result of his year long 4WD trip around Australia with his wife Caroline. All the photographs were taken with his beloved 25 year-old SLR 35mm camera which had been on loan from his mother since 1982. 



- **NO GROG**
- **NO GUNS**
- **NO WEAPONS**
- **NO DRUNKS**

NO FRED



