

True adventure

From icy Antarctica to Slovakia's hot springs, these new books follow roads less travelled

YOU can't go past the cover image: a man, naked but for his boots and gloves, trekking across the snow.

There's nothing too rude about it — just a back view — and in a sea of pretty travel photography books, it's the perfect way to catch attention.

Antarctica: A Different Adventure (Hardie Grant, rrp \$39.95) is Melburnian Jason Kimberley's second travel book and documents his 16-day trip tracing the steps of the great explorers in Antarctica, where temperatures dropped to -45C.

He travelled with New Zealand adventurer Peter Hillary (son of Sir Edmund Hillary) and friend Jason Veale, preparing for nine months before the trip.

The result is a book that functions on several levels: as a photography collection, adventure travel story and as a journey of self-discovery.

You know you're in for a treat from the start, when Kimberley opens the book with the words: "I hate the cold".

As he explains, he's the bloke most likely to be sitting outside under a tree, drinking a beer on a hot day.

But he has another thing coming when he starts the fitness campaign for the journey.

"I despise the gym," he says, but quickly has to get over it.

The book is not just about Antarctica. There are chapters on the trio's training camps to Falls Creek in Victoria and Mt Ruapehu in NZ; a fascinating account of the expeditions of early 20th century explorers; and on Punta Arenas, Chile, the world's southernmost town.

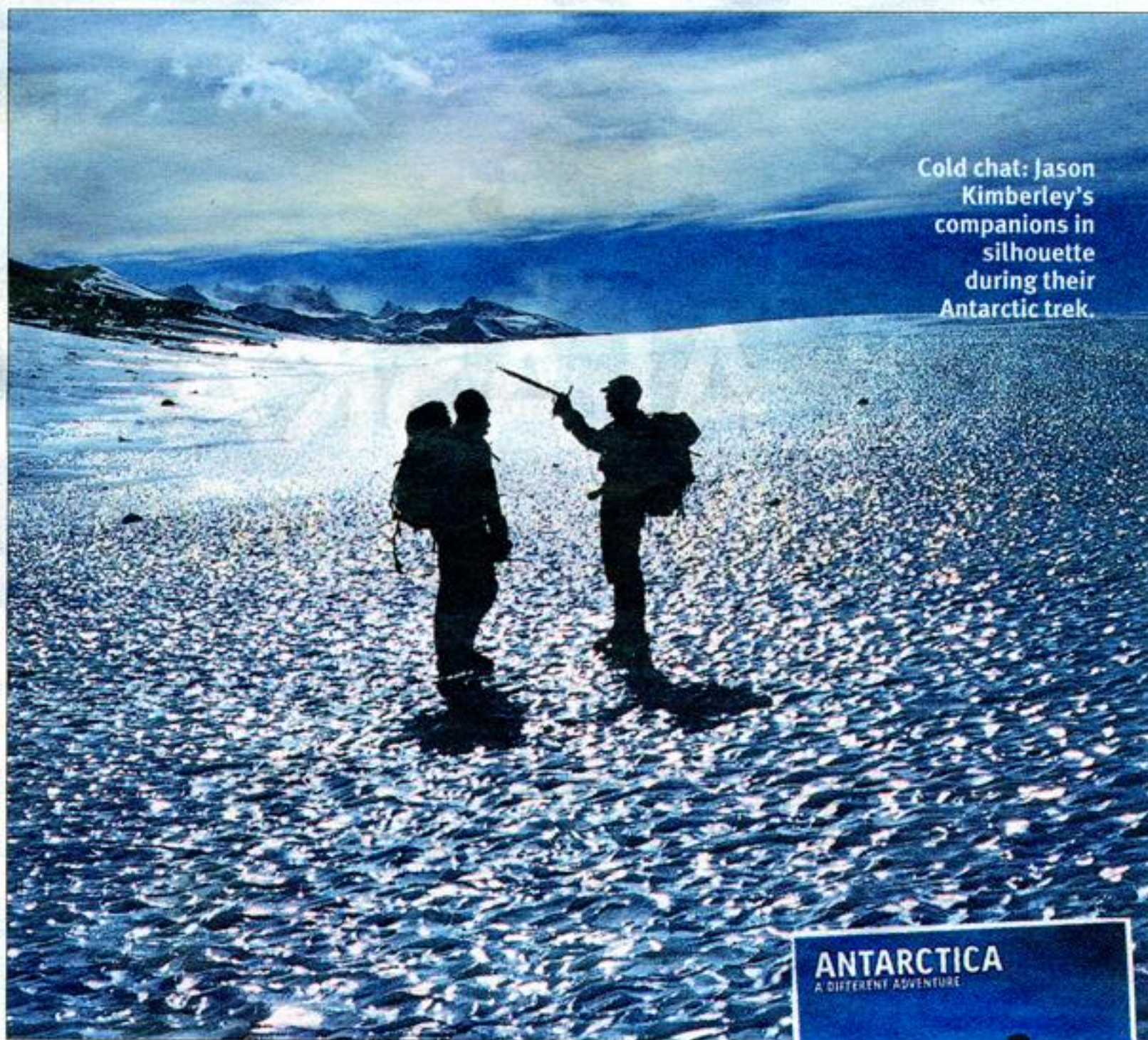
Kimberley also uses the book to publicise his environmental anxieties.

"Why can't Australia lead the world in renewable energy?" he says.

"Why can't Australia reward clean energy ideas and fund research? Are we so addicted to oil and coal that we can see nothing else?"

Though some of the issues Kimberley deals with are weighty, he never loses sight of his sense of humour. One of the strengths of the book is its light, easy-to-read style.

And it seems Kimberley likes getting his gear off — he's also pictured in just his



Cold chat: Jason Kimberley's companions in silhouette during their Antarctic trek.



"polypropylene underpants" in a section on equipment.

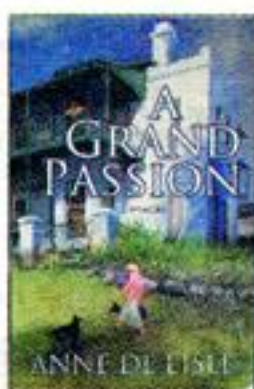
It's not about being a poseur, though. The look on his face says it all: "This caper is hilarious and I'm here to have as much fun as possible."

A HUMOROUS tone seems to be mandatory these days in most travel books.

How Low Can You Go? Round Europe for 1p Each Way (Plus Tax), by Tom Chesshyre (Hodder & Stoughton, rrp \$35), tells of the author's mission to go wherever the cheapest air seats take him.

Among the destinations are Poprad, Slovakia; Haugesund, Norway; Paderborn, Germany; and Tallinn, Estonia.

He goes to places well off the tourist map, places "no one else wants to go". After all, as he says, as a print media travel journalist, he's been to all the world's greatest sights — the pyramids in Egypt, Uluru in Australia, the Grand Canyon in the US, Petra in Jordan, the Grand Palace in Bangkok, the Great Wall of China. He's seen the lot.



And there really was a flight for one pence: it was to Szczecin in Poland (though, he admits, he had to pay almost \$60 tax on top).

Szczecin, as Chesshyre reports, is rudely described by Lonely Planet as "a work in progress", and by Rough Guide as an "important transport hub".

Before World War II, it was part of Germany and called Stettin, and was even mentioned in one of Sir Winston Churchill's speeches.

Chesshyre manages to make Szczecin and the other rarely written-about destinations in the book seem fascinating.

From a retro disco in Szczecin, where everyone is beautiful and he feels he has "stepped into a L'Oreal advert", to the world's biggest geothermal resort, in Poprad, this is urban adventuring at its best.

Like Jason Kimberley, Chesshyre, too, has an environmental message,



visiting the headquarters of Easyjet and Friends of the Earth and pondering whether we should be flying at all.

FROM its cover, novelist Anne de Lisle's non-fiction memoir *A Grand Passion* (Bantam, rrp \$34.95), with its line "she rescued a house, then the house rescued her", seems as if it might be just another of the many books about English people going to Europe and renovating houses.

But de Lisle is Australian and Baddow House is in Maryborough, Queensland.

Being a novelist, de Lisle knows how to spin a good yarn and this book gets you in from the start. It's a tale of new life: moving to a new place, bringing a house back to its full glory, starting a new relationship and leaving the past behind.

In its own gentle way, this lovely book is every bit as adventurous as those of Kimberley and Chesshyre.