

Black Rock Gazette

The Naked Truth Since 1992

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New Press Papers BRC

BY POSEIDON REX

After being a two-paper town for years, Black Rock City this year offers five print-based news sources, with rumors of another publishing effort under way.

If you embrace the idea that the presence of a newspaper is a sign that a place has become a community, then Black Rock City should be bursting with spirit, given the recent surge in playa-produced print media.

For eight years, *Piss Clear* was the only print alternative to the *Black Rock Gazette*, now in its 11th year. Adrian Roberts, the *Piss Clear* publisher, said he sees his paper as “Burning Man’s reality check.” A 10-year playa veteran, Roberts has watched the changes to Black Rock City — more people, a greater police presence, and new rules. He feels his voice, and those of others, are needed both to criticize and to maintain the essence of Burning Man. In past years a pre-playa effort, *Piss Clear* is now produced on the playa, using a small offset web press to print 7,000 copies every other day.

I was greeted at the Spock Mountain Research Laboratories, home of the Spock Science Monitor, with the offer of a late-morning shot of Hyperwhiskey and the promise that if I signed

on as an intern, I could fetch papers and make the coffee — as long as I brought beer. According to the Monitor’s editor, Siduri, the paper’s mission is to keep the public informed in the areas of beverage science and leisure technology, a niche market that has a broad appeal in BRC. Spock Mountain intends to publish the Monitor through Monday with a daily circulation of 3,000.

Alice at the Oregon Country Fair Embassy is publishing a playa paper for fans of ancient technology. Using two typewriters and a mimeograph machine from the 1950s, Alice plans to turn out a daily edition of around 500 papers with a new mashead each day, hand drawn illustrations, news features, editorials, personals and barter classifieds.

Nambla the Clown, a long-time Burner profiled elsewhere in this issue of the *Gazette*, this year is reviving his Port-o-Letter, distributed via the potties. A Thursday edition was in the works on Wednesday. The effort is based at MASHcara in Isle of Avalon, 225 and Mainmast.

Little Shiva at the Big Puffy Yellow camp at 195 and Mizzen will be collecting writings and artwork for the Playa Edition of her Charlotte, N.C.-based *Queen Zine*. Information for obtaining a post-burn copy can be found at www.littleshiva.com.

Print is alive in Black Rock City. The community is growing.

Durgy, the publisher of the *Black Rock Gazette*, offers to throw down in *Thunderdome* with any of the rival publishers. ☞



Plane Crash on the Playa

BY JOTA

The excitement of Burning Man stretches to the outermost perimeters of the Playa and begins the instant you touch down in Black Rock City. Kerry Kruskal and his friend Ofir, both from Taos, NM, experienced this phenomenon at about 7am Wednesday as they arrived near BRC International Airport and skidded to a stop in a Bonanza with the landing gear still retracted. “I was very tired,” said Kruskal. “I was just so excited to be here that I forgot to put my landing gear down.”

The landing was actually 50 yards west of the Black Rock City airport’s runway as the pilot misjudged its location and came in outside the airport fence. Tiger Tiger, the airport manager, said this was the first real incident since the airport’s beginning in 1999, and we should all remember that we have an excellent record for a busy airport.

There are 20 to 25 landings or takeoffs per day early in the week, and up to 100 a day late in the week.

Pilots are generally proud of their flying skills and Kruskal was clearly annoyed with himself for committing this common but embarrassing aviation faux pas. The plane received minor but massively expensive damage. “I loved my plane,” he said, casting a wistful glance back at the belted Bonanza with a severely bent prop. “I have insurance, too.”

Investigating Black Rock Ranger on the scene Sea Dog, a pilot himself, said “This happens all the time at other airports, too. We have a saying in aviation, ‘There are those that have, and those that will [forget to put down their landing gear].’” The key here is that no one was hurt. Sea Dog doubted that the FAA would even come out. The pilot will have to file some reports, and it will likely be a royal pain in the ass, in addition to the obvious insurance deductible hit.

Ex-ranger Abe from Missoula, also a pilot, was returning from a sunrise walk and witnessed the landing, as did several other early risers. “Now there’s a missed approach,” Abe mused as he watched the plane come in. “We thought he was hot-dogging at first and then he just settled down.” “He did a perfect one point landing.”

Stray Kat, another witness, remembers thinking, “That’s not where the airport is!”

It’s possible Kruskal’s fatigue was due to recent tete-a-tetes with his Taos neighbor, Julia Roberts, although this could not be verified by press time. “We’re having an affair, and her husband knows about it,” quipped Kruskal, “but he’s okay with it because he knows she’s too much woman for just one man.”

Typical Burning Man, and galvanizing my experience as a reporter for the *Gazette*, I realized as the pilot walked toward me that I knew the guy! I moved away from Taos 13 years ago and had not seen Kerry since. Welcome home. ☞

Potty Talk

The state of the potties this year is generally good, but there are some alarming exceptions, the Department of Public Works said Wednesday.

DPW asked that citizens not put Baby Wipes in the potties - they turn into gelatinous blobs. Recreational Vehicle bags, although they may be labeled “biodegradable,” break down in landfills but will clog the potty truck sucker. Do not put baby diapers in the potties, either. Also, there have been clothes found in the potties, and we all know that ain’t right. Bottles and cans are also right out!!

A new development is the appearance on the playa of a kind of portable toilet.

It consists of a seat on a stand that contains a one-time use bag, and some citizens have been depositing these in the potties, creating an emergency situation, according to Ina of DPW. The potty cleaning equipment is entirely unable to deal with these bags.

If we lose our contract with the Washoe Wastewater Treatment Plant, we’re all up a creek. Protect our porta. Say “no” to MOOP! ☞

Picture This: Interesting Burners

BY EDITRIX ABBY

From center camp, the gallery beckons. Black-and-white images of grinning burners from years past hang on the walls, while John Brennan sits in the shade, patiently awaiting subjects.

For the past seven years (“It could be six,” John admitted) he has been at Black Rock City, photographing those who wander into his studio. “I only photograph people I find interesting,” he said. “If they’re not, they have to go away and get interesting.” Do people actually become more intriguing? I ask him. “Yes, and I hope they understand that it should be important to them, because it’s important to me, for the photograph to be memorable.”

“It’s hard to know beforehand what’s going to make an interesting photograph,” he said. Some people require coaxing to get them to move. It takes good communication.”

I watched as Brennan communicated with a couple who wandered in off the playa. Tigger and Star were admiring the work and were most accommodating when John asked them if they would pose. Brennan gently posed them embracing and within moments they were kissing. “Good, good, good,” he murmured, changing film backs from Polaroid to medium



Damiaen and Ariel pose for John Brennan.

format. “I like large enlargements,” he tells me, “and everyone gets a Polaroid.”

“I don’t shoot a whole lot of film, maybe four or five exposures of each subject.” He will go home with roughly 10 rolls of film. When the finished product is for personal use, as is all that shot here in his Black Rock studio, Brennan insisted upon touching every part of the process. “I’m a year behind with my printing,” he admitted.

In keeping with his old-school style, he also has not

cropped a shot in 10 years; all of his photos are full-frame views. “I never take anything out or put anything in,” he said. “It makes it simpler in the dark room. Either the shot is right and I print it, or it’s not.”

Black Rock City he said, provides a wonderful supply of subject matter: “Because I can photograph so many people in such a short time, I get a wide variety of people. Every 10 minutes is so completely new.”

The interesting people Brennan photographs, both at home and at Burning Man, “won’t just wander in,” he says. “So I go to where they are.” When he began the project, his goal was to have a controlled environment that could be taken anywhere—a mobile studio. “My first time I was woefully unprepared,” he said. “Enough food and water, but things were blowing all over.” Now he is fortunate enough to be plugged into the Burning Man power grid and his set-up is impressive.

You can find John and his Free Photography Zone studio/gallery in Super Snail in Center Camp. He sits there almost all day (and night, from what we hear). “If I get bored, I close up shop and have a margarita or maybe an Oreo.” It’s up to you to prevent Brennan’s boredom, so go forth and be interesting!

On Saturday, Brennan will give the photos to the returning Burners depicted. ☞

Ready or Not, the Temple of Joy

BY TECHNOMAD

Under his deadline to finish the Temple of Joy today, whether it needs much more work or not, David Best crosses the site, wearing shorts, a polo shirt, and cowboy boots—all either dyed or dusted Black Rock Desert grey—hauling empty pallets, picking up wood litter or whatever detail he notices, when he finds it more efficient to do it himself than to find a nearby volunteer or idle hand and explain what he needs.

For the past two years, Best has built structures on the playa beyond the Man. Two years ago, when a close friend died in a traffic collision shortly before Burning Man, Best reconsidered coming. Then he realized that he should come, build something, and in doing so find solace. In that tragedy he found the inspiration and reason to build last year’s Temple of Tears, a mausoleum and a memorial for that friend.

In April, pallets arrived in Petaluma for sorting and color-coding. Construction meetings jumped in tempo to biweekly in June and then weekly in July. On August 9, material and people began arriving at Burning Man Ranch and Black Rock City.

First came carpenter Michael Turner, along with a 45-foot flatbed trailer from Petaluma laden with sorted and color-coded Russian birch plywood—cut-out remainders of dinosaur puzzles. Two additional runs over the next few days

delivered pallets of similar color-coded panels, another trailer from Reno with 4,000 board-feet of new 2x4” studs and 2,000 board-feet of new 2x6” studs, and yet another run produced forty-eight 42’ trusses, ten 30’ roof trusses, six 40’ floor trusses, eighteen various additional trusses, and 1,400 lathe turnings.

A memorial to the daughter of Fireman Dave (a member of the construction team), signatures of Temple artists and builders, and the silver wings of an angel inscribe and adorn its steeple.

Laconic in manner, Best prefers to speak few words about his works and has thus declined invitations to speak formally, preferring simply to offer the Temple of Joy as a gift of healing. He dedicates a central altar to the memories of suicide victims.

For the first time this year, his family has come to Burning Man to

see Best’s work, some from as far away as Ireland. After this year, he plans a two-year hiatus from building Burning Man installations, partly to give others this rare opportunity in which he has found meaning.

After building finishes on Thursday, the Temple of Joy opens for inscriptions to be left in offering, all to be burned on Sunday at 9 p.m.



Photo by Henry Valenzuela

No Rub for the Rodent

BY JONNO

Five Burning Man stow aways in the form of mice left Denver aboard the HeeBeeGeeBee Healers’ camp truck, but only one survived.

When the Healers reached the playa and unrolled a carpet they had plucked from a dumpster, four dead mice dropped out. The fifth gray mousing scurried a short dis-

tance but soon stopped, having no clue to his whereabouts.

The lucky animal had fallen into good hands. The Healers’ specialty is massage. No rub for the rodent, but he’s living comfortably in a small cardboard box, munching on grapes and granola.

“We had to take care of him; we’re healers,” said camp spokesman, Felonious Asparagus. And since Leave No Trace includes mice, the Healers plan to release him next week, back home in Denver. ☞



Old Uncle Tio sure loves a parade, sheshully here in Black Rock City. All them crazy cars and trucks runnin’ round the playa makes this place real sheshul. So I figgered to give my truck, Ole Bessie, a bit of a clean and dress her all up fer the parade too.

First I put some o’that “duck tape” on all them dad-blastid rust holes (there goes my air conditionin’). Then I took a buckit o’water and washed her up real good. Next I got some purdy ribbons, all differ’nt colors, and tied ‘em onto Bessie. Like that wuzn’t enuff, I stuck one o’them purple dinoshore dolls on Bessie’s roof — some crazy critter named “Barney”. Then I got this doll named Barbie and stuck her on the hood. I had ta use lotsa glue on account of she’s kinda top heavy if n ya know what I mean.

Well now, no sooner did I git on the playa to go in one o’ them parades than some nice Ranger fella offered ta show me the way to some place called the Depart’mint o’Mute-tylated Vehicules ta git my “art car” sticker. When I showed up, all them DMV Hotties ran over and gave Uncle Tio a big old hug.

They took a good look at Ole Bessie an’ I think they liked her, cause they even took one o’them Pole-A-Road pictures. Then the purdiest hottie of ‘em all came over and told me Ole Bessie ain’t gonna be allowed ta cruise the playa durin’ Burnin’ Man.

Not that Bessie weren’t purdy, ya unnerstand, but that she weren’t radickly altered, like them other art cars. They suggestid that folks in Black Rock City might enjoy seein’ Bessie parked at my camp.

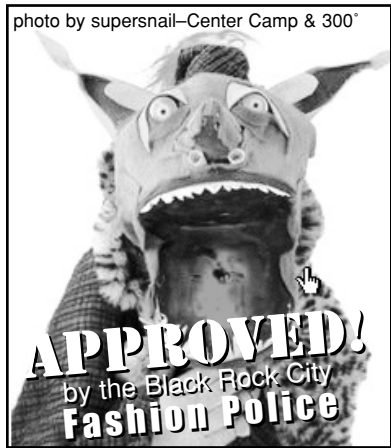
I guess I kinda see their point — we don’t want all that big city traffic, right? It’s way more fun ta walk and ride yer bike anyhow, git’n to meet all the fine folks in this city. Besides, Old Uncle Tio was plannin’ on havin’ some Sarsparillas later with my camp mates if n ya know what I mean. An’ I think we’re makin’ crazy tomato food t’night too — my favrit! ☞

Almost exactly at 12:58 p.m. today, the Sun will find itself looking down at Black Rock City from its loftiest point. After that, it will be all downhill, with of Sol hitting the horizon at 7:35 p.m. and the twilight's last gleaming at 8:03 p.m. There will be a dark time for about

three hours until the moon shows up at 11 on the dot, doing the waning gibbous thing with 63 percent of its disk visible. The first rays of dawn will peek over the mountains round about 5:55 a.m. on Friday, with the sun making its official reappearance at 6:23.

"When in doubt, chain smoke."
— Smaze

Creature Feature



Altered States are IN! Anyone willing to journey into the mystic and transform into another facet of their psyche is alright in our book. Explore (then express) the darkest corners of yourself, and you might just shed a little light. Let it all hang out brothers and sisters.

**Question of the day:
What sea creature do you most identify with? Why?**

- "Sponge, they soak up stuff." -Jenny
- "The grey whale, because I'm a fat fuck." -feog
- "Lampreys, because they suck." -Francis
- "Dolphins: pleasure, loving families." -Ali
- "Octopus—ink in the water" -Anonymous
- "Harbor seals—they are sweet." -Joe from San Francisco
- "Manatee—big and sweet." -Kristen
- "Puffer fish on a bike." -Anonymous
- "The Kraken, because it's mythical and Greek and oh, so special." -Tartar D.
- "Seahorse—wavey galloping spirals." -Spock!

BRC Travelogue

BY ENIGMA

I went to the Middle East and I got shot. The perpetrators call themselves "the cool guys." They're polite and always ask people for permission before shooting them. They live happily in the Middle East — of Black Rock City, at 90 degrees and Mizzen — in peace and harmony with their neighbors. When they're not squirting water guns, Tom and Jim operate a tiki bar. "We have a very nonviolent position. Even though we're squirting people, we're doing it in peace," Tom said. The neighborhood is also home to a trampoline, yoga classes, and jam sessions. Tom said he and Jim will likely be out squirting people again today. "It's a good neighborhood. Everybody here really works together." While the Middle East was fairly crowded, the Upper East Side— 135 and Mainmast — remains mostly unde-

Head Games Part IV

BY RICK-BOY

"So what's the deal?" asked Janice, who apparently overheard it. "Well, it seems old Doc here was planning to have you be in a ritual reenactment of their creation tale." "Do I get to play Hotu Matua's princess bride as he comes ashore at Anakena Bay?" Doc smiled. The two locals seemed stunned, as was I. "Yes," said Doc. "Cool." "I thought you wouldn't be interested," I said. "What? You idiot, that's what I came here for — to learn about the culture, to experience it first hand." "Really? Well, I had no idea." (Damn this might work, I thought to myself. Just let her think she's making the decision and I'm an idiot.) Janice turned pedantic: "These ceremonies are more common than you think. Jews, for instance, pretend that a prophet comes along to Passover dinners; we even pour him some wine. Or what about Christmas — a saint comes tumbling down the chimney? Fifty thousand American guys dress up as Saint Nicholas every year. On Easter Island they think it's King Hotu Matua." "Really?" "Yes... So what's the difference?" "Well my only experience with this kind of ceremony was at Burning Man last year, and boy it was something." "What are you talking about?" "Well before they burn the man everyone gathers around him and there are just thousands of people. There's a parade of sorts led by a giant metal bee that shoots fire out



veloped. Maybe it's the potties that make this neighborhood less-than-desirable, despite its location close to Center Camp — or, maybe there's something else restricting development. The area is home to Black Rock Meadows, which may be a sensitive habitat for the one-eyed, one-horned, flying purple playa frog or another endangered species. Or maybe the developers of Black Rock Meadows have yet to arrive. But, compared to the South Pole, the Upper East Side is positively overcrowded. If you camp at 180 degrees and Abyss, you might have almost the whole block to yourself. The quiet is pierced by the constant hum of engines and generators, and there would be a great view of the open playa if it weren't for the traffic. Beyond Abyss, a long line of cars slowly trickles in to Black Rock City. No travels around the playa would be complete without making that end-of-the-day pilgrimage to (Media) Mecca for cocktails.

from either side of its body. And the bee must be three or four feet across at least and on a stand eight feet high. "The bee is wheeled in and there's a drum band behind it whacking out some rhythm and there are these girls dressed up like they just came off a South Seas island with feathered boa looking tops and bottoms and boy could they dance: sexy hula like dances or real fast hip shaking hula like stuff. So I figure you gotta do something like that and I didn't know if you'd be up for that." "You could ask, clod." "Well, yeah, but I was trying to protect you." "I don't need your protection, and I can dance. I want to do it." (This was working better than I hoped.) "So it's a deal?" said Janice to Doc. "Yes," said Doc. "This is an off-season reenactment, it's not as big as the Tapati festival, but it has more local flavor." "And our return trip?" asked Janice. "We are having mechanical difficulties," said Doc. "After you do the ceremony, I'll see what we can do." Suddenly one of the Rapa Nui Inn waiters yelled, "They're here," and Doc skittered away as we turned to see what the excitement was. Two big charter buses pulled up and began to disgorge tourists. Fanny packs swinging on polyestered butts, they poured into the back room where a fabulous buffet had been set up for them. Janice, whose brain was ahead of her mouth for once, said, "I don't think we can count on Doc to get us off this island. We need a back-up plan." *To be continued.*

A Chat With Nambla

BY MISS CONNIE CHAMPAGNE

Year 2000 was my first Burning Man Playa experience. For years, my friend Ggreg Deborah Taylor (aka Playa-Icon-Superstar Nambla the Clown) had been pestering me to go. Alas, my New Year's resolution was to say "Yes!" to everything, so when Ggreg called, I agreed to join the amazing bunch of fags, dykes, bi-trans-pan-&-a-sexuals and radical faeries known as MASHcara Camp. It did indeed change my life (thanks Ggreg!) What follows is a rare interview with the Bald Man himself. **Tell us about your first experience with Burning Man.** In 1994 I arrived on the Playa with very close friends who'd had their first burn the year before. Back then there were only about 3,000 people on the Playa, and Burning Man felt like an alternative community rather than a party. **How did you come up with your nom de drag "NAMBLA"? I'm afraid I know what it means, but for our readers....** NAMBLA is the North American Man/Boy Love Association, an affiliation of pederasts. I created the drag name "NAMBLA the Clown" because of my black leather clown outfit, thinking to myself what's more horrifying to

straight society than the image of an overt molester clown. Very dark humor intended for a limited audience that appreciates irony; it's a name that offends as much as it amuses. **Yikes! Tell us about MASHcara Camp/Jiffy Lube — its history, what it means, and what we can expect this year?** M*A*S*Hcara started off as just a crew of friends with a thinly implemented, poorly contrived theme camp, and grew to be a larger predominantly queer community. JiffyLube was a new addition last year, intended to be the homo equivalent of Bianca's Smut Shack. I still look at it as a loosely knit sub-community where queers can feel more comfortable, especially now that Burning Man has more of a festival atmosphere and all the ilk that come with it. **Are there any misconceptions about NAMBLA &/or MASHcara you'd like to get, er, straight, for BRG readers?** Nah, our bad reputation is well earned, and I'm proud to fight to defend it. I love that our camp and my persona make many other Burners nervous. Some of my straight friends last year told me they were uncomfortable visiting JiffyLube. I LOVE that. God only knows Burning Man should be about new experiences, perhaps an errant finger...? **What is your best Burning Man memory?** Seeing a guy in a wheelchair bedecked in EL wire head-

Date Book

EUROBURNERS MEET & GREET Thursday, 5 pm Media Mecca [Center Circle]

Bernie's Index

- Amount of sleep the average American gets nightly: 6.5-7.5 (varies depending on source)
- Percentage of BM-goers who say they got less than 6 hours of sleep a night while at Burning Man: 57
- Percentage of BM-goers who say they got no sleep: 2
- Number of days those people would need to sleep around-the-clock to catch up if they spent a week at Burning Man: 4

— Suzanne Zalev

WHALE SIGHTING!

Spotted, in Unchartered Territory, what is believed to be a 72 foot sperm whale. The whale is believed to be circling the Floating World. Sightings of the Sperm Whale appear to be rare. As a result of the sighting, a whale watching tour has spouted and can be reached at 1-800-C-SPERMS.

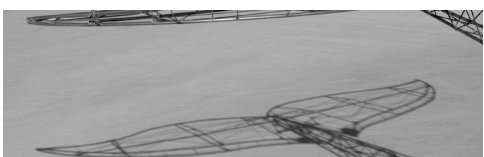


Illustration by Dadara



Kitten Caboodle from California asks: *I'm after a cute boy in our village, but he's also being pursued by two other boys. I think his preference is for the female form, but how can I be sure and also knock out my competition?* **The Playa Chicken says:** You humans and your barbaric mating rituals will never cease to confound and amuse me. You spend so much time trying to determine whether another one is worth chasing after that by the time you decide they are, they're long gone. In the barnyard, if we see a piece of trim that fluffs our feathers, courtship, coupling and break-up are commenced and completed in less than 18 seconds. So as you might guess, I'm not one for playing stupid time-wasting games. You need to make your move now before the other boys swoop in and claim their prize. Even if you're correct that Rico Suave prefers the hens over the roosters, you're going to be outnumbered two-to-one, and hell, even I'd switch teams if it meant doubling the pleasure. You first need to eliminate or at least slow down your competition. Go to their tent and tell them you want to discuss this Fabio situation in a civil manner. Speak in a low voice so they have to lean in close to listen. When the moment is right, peck their eyes out! As they writhe in agony and clasp at their hollow sockets, you can move to the next phase. Once again, dispense with all the time-wasting mumbo jumbo and get right to the chase. Find Mr. Pretty Boy, bind his arms and legs with duct tape and drag him over to Black Rock City Hardware. Have them fashion you a lovely little branding iron which you will then use to permanently tag Hottie Pants with your own mark. I recommend branding the hindquarters, but you should probably hit several other areas as well just to be safe. Finally, find one of those little blue huts that are scattered about the city and drag your new property in and lock the door. Spend the next three and a half hours engaged in hot sweaty porta-pottie love and you're as good as married. After you're finished, remove the duct tape and have him go back to camp to do the damned dishes.

LNT Seminar

The Bureau of Land Management has invited the Burning Man Community to visit its media camp, located behind Media Mecca. Visitors are welcome at any time, but particularly on Thursday at 3 p.m., when Joey and Dave, who are on the National Conservation Area staff, would like to brief audience members on their unit's activities as well as volunteer opportunities, Leave No Trace principles, hot springs, emigrant trails, and wilderness opportunities. Questions and comments will be welcome. The BLM is distributing pocket-sized, laminated LNT outdoor ethics cards.



ed across the playa toward the Man the night of the burn. For me, being on the Playa is about breaking away from what is expected; pursuing liberation in somewhat constricted conditions. **And your most embarrassing Burning Man moment?** In center camp I was puttering around on my little girl's bicycle in my black leather clown outfit and seven-inch platforms when I felt myself start to lose control of the bike. In what seemed like slow motion I rolled off the bike onto the ground, covering my velvet and leather in playa filth, not being able to stop myself in my ridiculous shoes. Immediately I was surrounded by a cloud of cameras to document the tragedy. It's good to know you have fans. **Final question—which Darren Stevens on "Bewitched" did you like best — Dick York or Sargent?** Those are two Dicks I can't tell apart, unfortunately.

Connie Champagne will be singing at the Bubble Lounge Thursday evening.

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• The views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the views of Burning Man or its principals. We try; but after all, we're volunteers. We make mistakes. And this is a camping trip. A big-gloss, trussed-up, kick-ass camping trip in the middle of the desert. Don't take this too seriously, just enjoy the ride...