

## Naked truth

**"IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO YOU ARE.  
YOU COULD HAVE THREE HEADS  
AND YOU'D GET TREATED THE SAME"**

## DUDE, IT'S TOUGH BEING NUDE

**WHAT YOU CAN'T DO:** Persistent staring; voyeuristic positioning; any sexual acts or displays

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Casual walking at a steady pace; quick glances above the neck; frisbee

**WHAT YOU CAN'T SAY:** Unwanted advances, invitations, ridicule or jokes of a crude and sexual nature; comments about a person's body like "Look at his fat arse" are also banned

**WHAT YOU CAN SAY:** "Let's play an innocent game of volleyball"; "I love what you've done to your hair."

**WHAT YOU CAN'T TOUCH:** Anyone or anything without permission. This includes the only-too-common "presumptuous hug", unwanted massage, and anything else a judge might describe as a "familiarity".

Public fondling of a sexual nature will get you banned faster than you can say, "But this is how I always scratch."

**WHAT YOU CAN TOUCH:** Nothing, just in case

keys. Not to mention a pleasant breeze around the **FLOWERS! JUST THE FLOWERS.** As an overall sensation, it's in the same league as finding a parking space or getting a small amount of money in a birthday card. Pleasant, but hardly a lifestyle choice, is it?

Well, what a nice nude land it is. Further along the path are two middle-aged blokes in DIY mode (including risky use of a hammer) on a cabin roof, while on the river, pale people are putting up tents. A couple in their late 60s sit at the water's edge. She is bravely naked. He is in the kind of old blue suit that maths teachers wear when they abandon society for the classroom. It's a bit strange, in a David Lynch kind of way. What next – a laughing elf in a tree?

We give them a polite nod and wade on across the river. It's very pretty and quiet. The hills around look just steep enough to pose a challenge. Bet I could climb one in 20 minutes. Perfect for training legions of deadly mole men.

As I turn to watch my naked girlfriend crossing, I get my one and only insight into the cult of nudism. She looks great in this setting, like a timeless tribal girl, or Brooke Shields in *The Blue Lagoon*. Someone who doesn't even know what clothes are. I barely manage to avoid giving her a "presumptuous hug".

With the excitement of the walk and the distraction of a swim in the river, we fail to notice thunderclouds filling the valley. We only look up when the sun has disappeared. Through pure instinct, we make a dash back through the bush to shelter. Then we give it up. What does it matter if we get wet?

It starts to rain like a bastard. And it's cold. All of a sudden, I remember what clothes are for.

We emerge from the trees, and pass two blokes walking the other way. They are smiling, and carry small glasses of sherry. I feel my sense of reality

tilting. "You guys are going to get really wet," is all I can think to say. At least they agree and turn back.

We arrive back in time to see our neighbours drive off again – with Dennis and Sandra, of nude-pool fame. They're still dressed, I cannot fail to notice.

It rains hard, then harder, all the rest of the day. I worry we may not be able to get up the valley road in the slippery conditions. I could be stuck here. I think about the definitive book on nudism I will write when I return to civilisation, called, *It's All About Tiny Willies*.

As darkness falls, I peer through the rain and see an old man naked at his barbecue. I can tell he's of that old-fashioned generation, though, because he puts on a good shirt for dinner. Just the shirt.

Further up the hill I see others on their balconies, also nude. It's freezing and wet. These people are just being bloody-minded. They are hardcore. They are risking pneumonia to prove a point.

I finally meet my neighbour, Don, as we stand on our balconies. He is still dressed, I'm interested to note. He and wife Diane have been here nine times, which is an odd number to know. They found the place on the Internet, and have a young son they don't bring because it would seem "a bit funny".

Don is a normal, simple, friendly bloke, but he can't or won't explain why he and Diane spend their weekends bare. Diane, who nods in automatic agreement to everything Don says, doesn't seem to know, either. The point is, reckons Don, "It doesn't matter who you are. You could have three heads and you'd get treated the same. Everyone's really friendly."

In the evening, I sit in the spa for hours, mentally dressing people, while the bubbles do funny things to my **FLOWERS! A GREAT BIG BUNCH OF FLOWERS.** It's strange, I think, as I feel my skin wrinkle and fall off me. It's strange that the younger people are dressed, but the older ones are not. The few

under-35s are here as a group; they sit by the pool smoking and drinking, but blatantly not undressing.

I reach over and drink my beer before the steam gets to it. It's like a party at the Playboy mansion, only I'm drinking lukewarm Tooheys New, and I don't want to see the orgy room.

Don and Diane are out of their clothes, but when Diane leaves the spa she puts on a towel. "Isn't it great?" shouts Don. I don't know, but I say yes anyway. It's a question of logic: are all friendly people nudists or are all nude people friendly? Or are there camps full of unfriendly nudists I haven't yet met?

Faced with another clothes-off hike the following morning, my girlfriend mutinies. She is "over the naked thing".

"At first it was a challenge, now it's just a pain in the arse," she reckons.

This is not fair. Now I feel like that chimp, Cheetah, being taken for a walk by Tarzan. Instead of being a nude pioneer, my role is to do backflips and point out where the hunters are.

By the end of my weekend, I am bored out of my mind. If I have to sit in one more spa I'm going to shoot somebody. Hiking is OK, and so is pool. Occasionally. When I talk to other naked people it's still surreal, but not much. I feel like I'm in the middle of a child's dare. An ex-editor of nude bible *Health and Efficiency* said nudism was "a desire to see and be seen". I'll show you mine if you show me yours. Whoopee. People over 50 should know better. People under 50 obviously do know better.

In the warm pool I float past a bloke from Ecuador. He says he wants to be at one with nature. I ask him if he can't do it with boardies on. He just smiles. Maybe he didn't understand. Maybe I don't understand. Things will be much simpler when the mole men arrive.