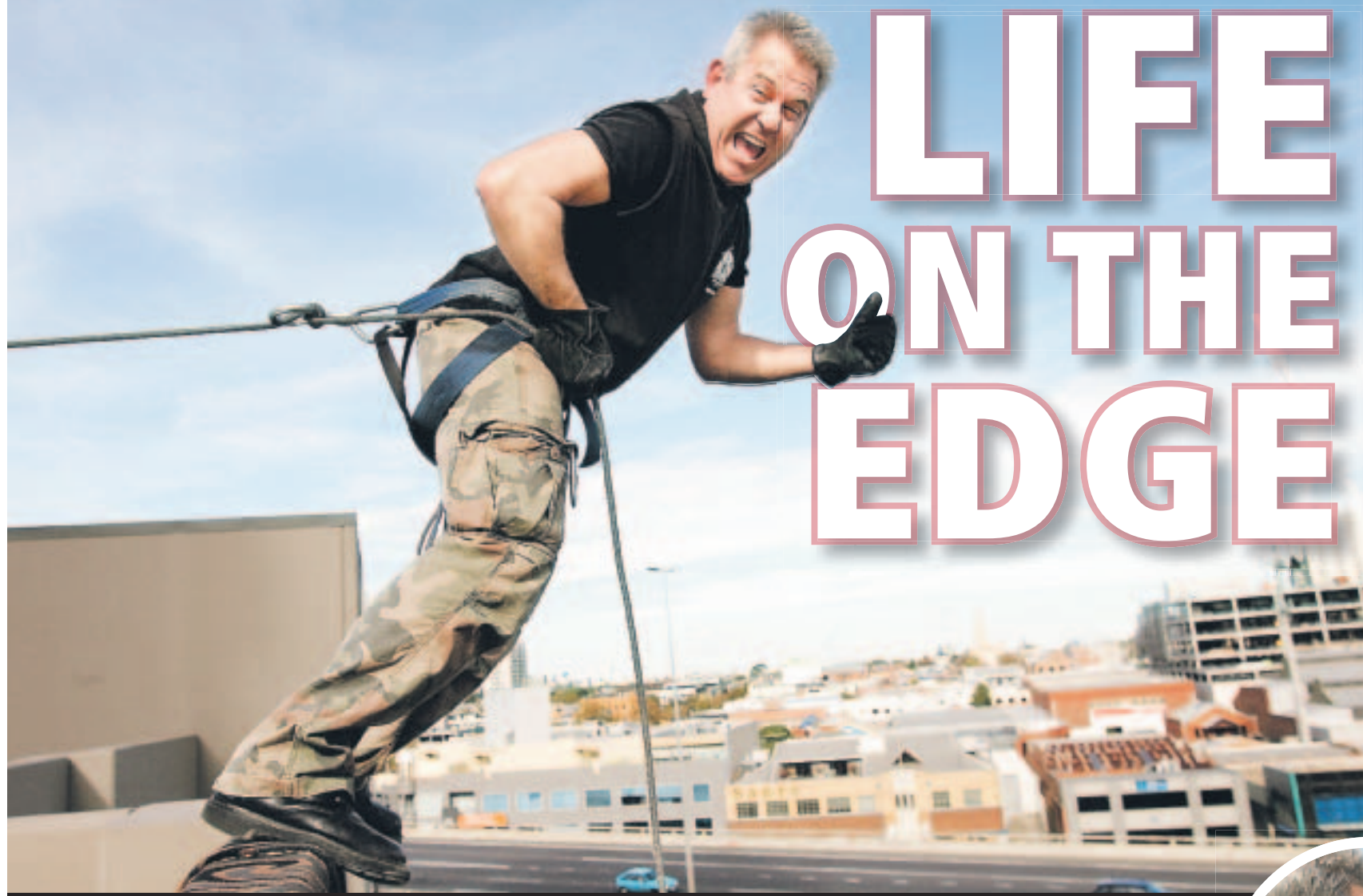


PETER 'MACKA' MACKAIL



LIFE ON THE EDGE



MACKA AND ASSISTANT PAUL EVANS

One small step for one man but a giant leap for thrillseekers. **GREG HACKETT** goes out on a limb.

I DIDN'T realise there were so many construction cranes on the Melbourne horizon ... it's amazing what you see from the top of a six-storey building in the city. They say never look down, but I didn't really have a choice. This is rap jumping and it's all about facing your fear head-on.

Described as "forward abseiling with a pulse", rap jumping involves a controlled descent while facing forward and is part of a worldwide boom in adventure travel. Under the guidance of former SAS soldier Peter "Macka" Mackail, jumpers take the plunge from the top of the 25m, six-storey UrbanCentral Accommodation building on City Rd, near Southbank.

Peter and his assistant, Paul Evans, from Florida in the US, provide plenty of reassurance that all is safe.

Jumpers are securely attached to several ropes. Peter, perched on top of the building, controls a guiding rope while "brakeman" Paul, on the ground, can also halt the descent at any time.

Unfortunately, there's no one to provide courage - that's up to you. But it's only one small step and a quick slide to hero status with your family and friends. It's a huge buzz. There is no shortage of jumpers - and onlookers - as UrbanCentral is "backpacker central".

Peter pioneered rap jumping in the army, where it is known as carabina rundown, in the early 1980s.

He left the army and started commercial rap jumping in north Queensland in 1990, chalking up more than 30,000 jumps.

After a break for the past few years, he wants to again put rap on the map and plans to expand to

Sydney, the Gold Coast and Cairns.

"Safety is our priority," Peter said.

He uses equipment similar to that of the SAS.

"And this building is not too high, but perfect to do your first jump. It's also easily accessible by tram," he says.

"We've got the backpackers raring to give it a go, but really anyone can do it. Children aged 12 years and over are welcome, under guardian supervision.

"We also hope to attract corporate groups and sports clubs for team building."

An interested onlooker this week was former Western Bulldogs footballer Peter Foster, who promised he would return and do it "when I'm more suitably dressed".

Not so hesitant were Altona couple Jose and Gloria Estrada, who joined

RAP JUMPING EQUIPMENT



GLORIA ESTRADA



Other challenges for adrenalin junkies

SKYDIVE NAGAMBIE
Kettels Rd, Nagambie
5794 1466, 1800 266500, www.skydivenagambie.com

A tandem skydive over the Nagambie lakes makes an exciting gift for friends, family or yourself. Following a 15-minute briefing, leap from Victoria's largest skydiving aircraft at 14,000 feet, or 4km, then freefall at more than 200kmh.

GO JUMP

The Parachute School
87 Mountain View Rd, Montmorency
9432 2419, 0413863 929, skydivingassoc.com.au
Go Jump - The Parachute School started 24 years ago and has several skydiving locations, with the main training facility at Euroa.

AUSTRALIAN ADVENTURE EXPERIENCE

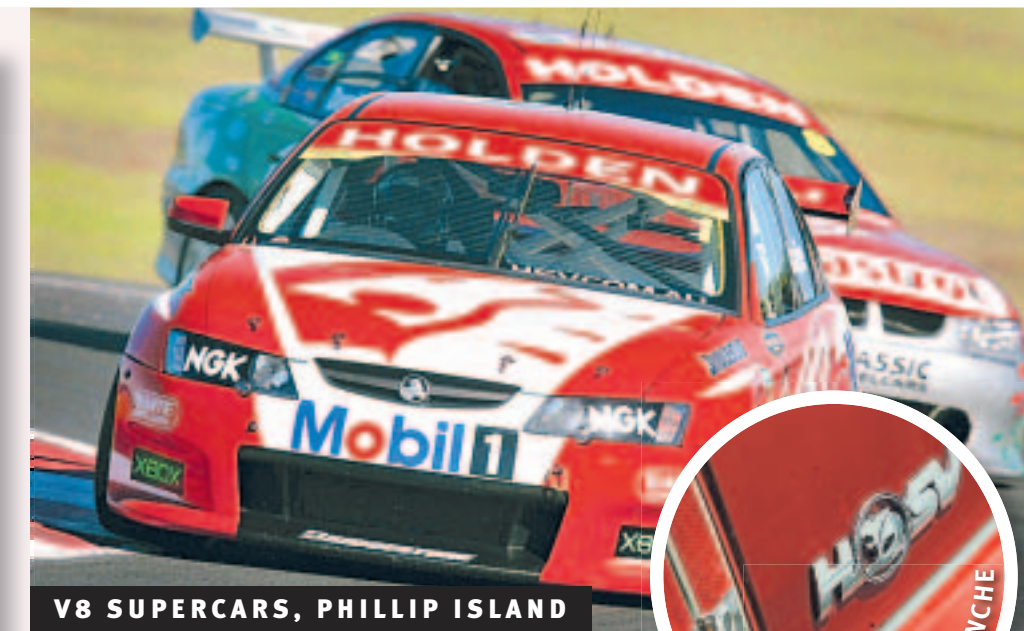
761 Crystal Creek Rd, Alexandra
0500 599 499, 0417 028 004, www.ausadventures.com
"Mild to wild" adventure activities is the slogan. Test yourself with white-water rafting, kayaking, canoeing, rock climbing, abseiling, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, cycle tours, gentle guided bush walks, four-wheel drive trips and environmental interpretation days.

AUSTRALIAN JET ADVENTURES

Ballarat
5339 2769, www.austjetadv.com
Would you like to be a top gun for a day? Be decked out in a flight suit, hop in next to the pilot and streak across the sky in a Strikemaster jet (from \$1895) or a propeller-driven, ex-Russian Air Force YAK-52 (from \$495).

HSV HOT LAPS

Phillip Island
5952 9400
Buckle up for a triple-lap lightning ride around the Phillip Island motor racing circuit with an experienced race driver in a high performance HSV V8. Cost \$199, \$299 for two, \$349 for three.



V8 SUPERCARS, PHILLIP ISLAND



TANDEM SKYDIVE, NAGAMBIE

UrbanCentral manager Jason Whiting to be first to go over the edge.

Gloria said it was thrilling. "It was the scariest thing I have done - besides getting married," she said.

Cost: \$66 for two jumps, \$15 extra jump; \$55 for UrbanCentral guests. More: 9693 3704, 1800 631 288, urbancentral.com.au, rapjumping.com.au

The Edge at Eureka Tower

A little further down City Rd is The Edge at Eureka Tower where up to 12 people stand in an opaque glass box that slowly projects out of the building, unattached and relying on balance, 285m up on level 88 Skydeck terrace. The glass then clears, providing a hair-raising 360-degree view of Melbourne.

Cost: Skydeck admission \$16.50 plus \$12 to ride The Edge.



SAFE AND SECURE



JOSE ESTRADA



JOSE AND GLORIA

COUPLES, here's your chance for the ultimate bonding experience. Escape and UrbanCentral are giving double rap jumps to 10 couples (valued at \$112 a couple).

To enter, go to heraldsun.com.au, click on Coffee Break and then Competitions. One entry per reader. Entries close midnight Thursday.



To save on airport parking, we'll take care of it.

\$69
7 Days
Long Term

Parking at the Airport is much cheaper than you think. With 4 car parking options we have a solution to suit any budget. Parking at the airport has never been so easy and convenient. To see how much you can save use our online parking calculator at melbourneairport.com.au



Sail into The Great Singapore Sale!



Cruise the waters of South East Asia onboard the SuperStar Gemini. Discover ports of call that offer memorable experiences and exotic cultures. Shop till you drop with the Great Singapore Sale which runs in June and July. Or, just sit back and put your feet up.

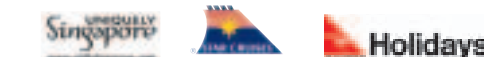
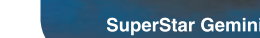
STRAITS OF MALACCA

Includes: Return economy airfare to Singapore • 1 night at the Copthorne Orchid including breakfast • 7 nights Straits Adventure cruise • Onboard meals and entertainment • All transfers included

Ports of call: Singapore - Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang) Penang - Krabi - Phuket Island - Langkawi Island - Singapore

Cruise sailing dates: 10 & 24 June, 29 July, 12 Aug, 16 & 30 Sep, 14 Oct

8 nights from \$2775* pp



CONTACT ONE OF OUR TRAVELLERS CHOICE CRUISING SPECIALISTS:

BALNARRING TRAVEL SHOP BALNARRING
Ph: 5983 9988
CHELSEA CRUISE & TRAVEL CHELSEA
Ph: 9773 1900

DA VINCI WORLD TRAVEL SCORESBY
Ph: 9764 0533
EAGLEHAWK TRAVEL EAGLEHAWK
Ph: 5446 1888

STAR TRAVEL BACCHUS MARSH
Ph: 1800 142 662
WARRANDYTE TRAVEL WARRANDYTE
Ph: 9844 2477

CONDITIONS: *An additional 1.4% applies to amounts paid by credit card or charge card. Prices are correct as at 16 May 2007 but may fluctuate due to changes in surcharges, fees and taxes. All packages are based on low season airfare ex Melbourne (23 Apr - 20 Jun, 16 Jul - 19 Sep, 15 Oct - 14 Nov 07) flying with Qantas Airways. Selected cruise sailing dates and prices are per person twin share. Prices are based on inside cabins, deck 3-4, category DB. Prices do not include any charges or taxes payable directly to third parties. Some agents may charge a service fee. Offer ends 20 October 2007. Limited availability. Packages are non-refundable. Other conditions apply - ask for details. Licence Number: 97A1389 ABN: 59 138 565 067