

Into the wild with.... ROB SUISTED

Rob Suisted is professional nature and outdoor photographer with a 50,000 image library – several of which have graced the cover of this magazine. He's published seven books – his most recent, *Majestic New Zealand*, was released in November last year.

What's your favourite piece of outdoor kit? After a considerable amount of camera equipment that follows me quite closely, I'd have to say that the new generation of sumptuous sleeping mats are gold. I'm using an Exped downmat 7.

What's your most expensive piece of kit? Excluding camera gear it's probably a Macpac Olympus tent. Not fully taken with the latest model, having used three now – not as much room for a tall boy like me.

What do you pack for a typical trip? I don't have typical trips – a lot of it I just throw everything I might need into the Jeep and head for the South Island. The rifle often comes along to collect wild organic venison.

Where's your favourite place to escape into the outdoors? It's hard to beat the tussock tops in the Glaisnock Wilderness Area (Fiordland) – stunning scenery, challenging route finding, the likelihood of going where no human has grovelled before.

Is it the destination or the getting there that counts? It's the journey for me, absolutely. Just aiming for a destination tends to take us away from the present and our enjoyment lessens as a result.

Best food for keeping your energy up? I've just got into making my own organic venison jerky; it's making my saliva run just thinking about it.

Where would you most like to be right now? On top of Mt Durward in the Smyth Range in Westland. The place names – Scamper Torrent, Amethyst Ravine, Whirling Water, Glamour Glen, Moonbeam Torrent – named by a poet.

Who would you most like to go for a tramp with? Someone with shared love, enjoyment, and respect of the mountains, with a good sense of humour and who is an expert pancake chef and barista in small tents on pit days.

What's one outdoor adventure you'd like to put on your bucket list? Bouvet Island (Antarctica) would be a cracker.

What are you most proud of? *Majestic New Zealand*. I feel like my photography has got to a level of maturity that makes a book like this finally possible.

What does the outdoors mean to you? A place that I can be present. Worries of the world drop away and it's a rare time of clarity where you can watch your own mind at work. Simplicity and happiness comes from that. That sounds pretty zen; it's also the physical challenge that I love.

What's your top outdoor tip? Use your eyes and senses. Immerse yourself in the landscape and environment and always be inquisitive – don't just move through it.

Where's the best place to get away from it all? I love taking the Jeep around the south coast of Wellington. Whether it's sitting watching seals at Tongue Point, going for a dive, or climbing to the old WWII observation station on the hills above, it's a great tonic from the office.



What's the worst thing about getting into the hills? Packing and unpacking, and organising food.

Do you prefer to stay below the bushline or get above it? Above – you get stuck in the tent much more, but when the weather clears it's great for the soul.

Are you a GPS or a map and compass person? Both. I've always been strong at navigation with compass and map, and really enjoy the challenge. I sometimes carry a Spot satellite tracking beacon with the tracks live on my blog site (blog.naturespic.com) for people to follow.

What have you got going on at the moment? I have some technically challenging assignments pending, and I'm hoping to get over to Easter Island in a few months.



Special offer! Rob is offering Wilderness readers signed/dedicated copies of *Majestic New Zealand* on his website. Head to <http://bit.ly/MajesticWilderness> to make an order.