

RETURN TO THE WILD

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STUDIES.M

STUDY SNAPSHOT: 30 PROGRESSIVE YOUNG MELBOURNE MEN
THE BRIEF: PHOTOGRAPH 'COOL'
THE METHOD: CROWD INTERPRETATION



WHAT WE LEARNT

The guys recognise a basic human instinct in themselves - a desire to spend time amidst the natural world. Many feel dislocated from nature, as a result of their modern lifestyles, and are seeking to reconnect. As for generations before them, they appreciate the rejuvenating power and metaphoric meaning in the environment. They find being out amongst the great outdoors helps restore and inspire them.

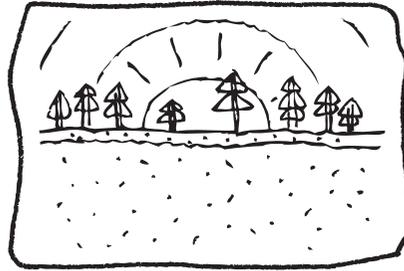
"Whenever I feel like I'm getting a little too caught up in the day to day requirements and challenges of modern life, I always go for a walk and concentrate on the minute details of nature. The colour of leaves after light rain, or the way a tree branch hangs. For me the beauty of nature puts everything into perspective." - Sam (25)

WHAT'S DRIVING THIS

They are conscious of and concerned that they are living an increasingly 'removed' existence. They find themselves shut away behind doors and screens, living in highly controlled, sanitised and virtual worlds. They speak of a strong need to unplug and get off the grid. The prospect of spending time out in the environment is regarded as the antidote to this deleterious modern existence - a balancing mechanism.



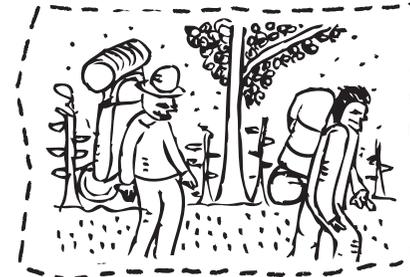
HOW THIS WAS EXPRESSED



UNSPOILT SANCTUARIES

It makes me feel happy to be alive...to take time away from the daily stress and appreciate the natural beauty around.' - Jereme (25)

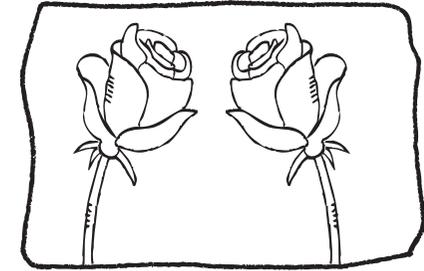
During times of high stress they seek out spacious, still surroundings to rediscover their equilibrium.



EXPERIENCING THE ELEMENTS

"In these crazy fast technological times, we like to keep in touch with nature. Keep ourselves grounded in the rawness of life." - Aaron W (27)

In this virtual age, they strive to experience something 'real'. Feeling the wind and rain or going for a surf helps these guys stay centered.



TRADITIONAL IDEALS OF BEAUTY & ROMANCE

"To be entirely honest ...flowers are really, really nice. I think a man who is comfortable being associated with flowers implies they're comfortable with themselves and their repressed/oppressed sexuality." - David (20)

It appears that the romantic ideals, such as sensitivity to the beauty and power of nature, are making a resurgence amongst these young men. No longer considered emasculating, it has flipped on itself to represent self confidence and strength of character.

HOW CAN BRANDS SERVE THIS TENSION



Brands can help them 'return to the wild' through featuring or referencing the qualities of the natural world. Physical touch points and visual cues can help bring nature within arms reach. For example, Patagonia's organic shop fit out means the adventure starts in store.

Brands can also act as enablers. Consider commuter motorbikes that enable riders to weave through city traffic giving a sense of freedom and exposure to the elements despite the surrounding congestion.