



# STORMY MOUNT KINABALU

NYNKE ONGENA

Nynke Ongena currently lives in India, after two postings in Malaysia (Bintulu and Kuala Lumpur). Most of her travelling time is spend with her two children and husband. But on this particular holiday it was still just the two of them.

Some people run up this mountain; we wouldn't, as we were already facing a big challenge to reach the hut with weather conditions far from optimal.

August 2001, we had only arrived in Borneo a few months earlier and were ready to explore the island. Our goal on this particular trip was to reach the summit of Mount Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Malaysia. It stands 4,095m tall. Mount Kinabalu is renowned for its unique flora; some of which are not to be found anywhere else in the world. (This is due mainly to the tropical surroundings at the bottom of the mountain and the different



climates as you go through as you ascend. Also the high levels of rainfall in combination with sometimes severe drought, has caused a special evolution in this region.)

In order to tackle this mountain we began in the National Park where we stayed in a hotel nearby getting ourselves ready. Weather conditions weren't looking that good, but since we planned this trip a little while ago, we would go ahead with it, and we weren't the only ones.

The first day of walking is very straightforward; you start from headquarters at 1,563m together with an allocated guide. From there it is a steady walk along plenty of steps going up. Along the

track we admired the diverse landscape and noticed the changes in the flora and fauna when we reached higher altitudes. Unfortunately the weather forecast proved to be right: it started with fog and then transformed into a drizzle. We had to stop to put on more clothes to keep warm and to protect ourselves from the torrential rain that was lashing our faces.

We were halfway, and had booked a night at Laban Rata (the hut) so we were determined to go on. The wind picked up, so there was no more time to take in the apparently amazing landscape, let alone taking any pictures of it. We had only one goal in mind now: stay on the track (the path was getting very slippery) and



Nynke and family at home

move on as quickly as possible. The wind had really picked up now and it was hard to stand up, as the gusts tried to blow us over! After hours of torrential wind and rain we finally reached the hut. Laban Rata stands at 3300m, and on this day it was swaying on its poles (wind speed of 120 km/hr). Once inside it was time to peel off the drenched clothes and switch on the heater. To raise the body temperature we also drank a lot of hot soup. After one hour the teeth chattering finally stopped.

Only my husband decided to try to head for the top of Mount Kinabalu. I remained snug in my comfortable bunk bed. He reached the summit in the early morning only to discover that he couldn't

see too far. In good weather conditions one can see the surrounding Indonesian islands.

A year and half later he tried again, now with a group of colleagues and this time the view was a huge reward. All in all Mount Kinabalu proved to be a huge challenge for us; it ended up being one of the worst weather conditions in 14 years! Still I can highly recommend climbing this beautiful mountain; it's a very rewarding two-day trip. Plenty of friends have reached the summit after us and took breathtaking pictures! But be very conscious of the weather!

# AH, THE FREEDOM TO SKI!

For those as yet unburdened by offspring but for whom procreation seems an inviting prospect, a suggestion: consider an alternative... like a dog, or a cat. No, not a substitute: an alternative.

**ANDREW RUDGE**

The advantages are enormous. For starters, they're easier to house train and the swish of the cat-flap or 'walkies' in the park is loads more appealing than changing nappies. Apart from the odd collar and lead, pets don't need clothes and they won't wake you at three o'clock on Christmas morning demanding batteries for their new toys. Nor will they have the

least interest in the latest X-Box® or dubious computer games. Aside from the odd obedience class, school fees won't arise and they won't bring their friends round to empty your fridge or, worse still, your booze cupboard. No phone calls in the middle of the night begging for a lift home from the other side of town, and no forking-out pocket money or the cash

for the latest Ipod®. Need a holiday? Take 'em to the kennels or cattery. Try that with the fruit of your loins and the neighbours will have the authorities around before you hit the airport.

Your pet won't say it hates you, or throw wild parties when you are out of town. And should a casual sexual encounter point to the patter of tiny feet, all your pet will demand is a warm and quiet corner in which to deliver little bundles of fur that you can hand out to friends and neighbours. If that's an uninviting prospect, for the price of a teenager's 'must have' trainers, or a couple of driving lessons, you can pop your pet to the vet for a quick and effective snip!

Not convinced, or already burdened by dreams of freedom? Look forward to a better life! One day the door will click shut and you can throw wide the shutters to let in a light that shines on you alone! But be careful how you handle the new relationship: see your progeny not as the dependants they were, but as the close friends they ought to be. You'd help-out close friends in a real emergency, but you wouldn't give them keys to your house, nor unfettered access to your drinks cabinet or bank account. So, change the locks and close all accounts at the Bank of Mum

and Dad. They'll thank you for your faith in their ability to cope unaided; not at first, of course, but eventually you'll become immune to their tears or they'll grow tired of begging at the door. If you can, move house, but make sure your new home is at least two kilometres further than the most persistent of your new close friends is prepared to travel - unannounced - for Sunday lunch, to get their washing done, or to get Dad to fix / replace whatever they've broken. For some that could be no more than three or four kilometres, but others might need the width of a couple of continents. If you can't make the distance, convert their room(s) into a gym, a shrine to obscure gods, anything that makes it less than convenient and easy to presume on parenthood.

If you really miss them, get a dog. How about a Great Dane that lollops around the park then sprawls over your favourite sofa and ignores your every word - like your gangly teenage boy? Or a poodle that isn't happy unless it's on its way to or from the grooming parlour? Or anything with 'attitude' that wrecks the furniture, offends the neighbours or hangs around with the wrong sort of mongrel?

When grandchildren add their cries and smells to the scene you'll need to move again -

to a point called 'Too Far for Free Baby-Sitting'. If you can't move, once again, a dog is the answer... "Love to look after Fabian and Fiona, but Fido has fleas and I'm so worried about the diseases they carry"; or, "I'm sure Fido will be much less aggressive with your little sweeties than he is with other toddlers". Hobbies can be at least as effective... "It would be wonderful, but one of Daddy's tarantulas has given birth and there are thousands of the vicious little devils running around the house, biting anything that moves".

Whatever the ploy, your aim is to create and maintain the space and time to focus on the only child that really matters: your inner child! Shopping, scuba, golf - do whatever it takes to have fun and SKI (Spend the Kids' Inheritance)!



PETS WON'T BRING FRIENDS TO RAID THE FRIDGE...



FRANCKA SULLIVAN

# SUSTAINABLE STYLE



Moving to the Netherlands in 2005 was a move instigated by Tytti's partner Adam, a PhD student learning the ropes at Global Solutions Amsterdam. At the time of writing he is considering staying or going to Aberdeen... in the meantime Francka Sullivan gets to know the creative half of this dual career couple.



Tytti at work

Tytti's got an eclectic CV: yoga instructor, midwife, draftsman, and sales manager. After a tumultuous period of intense soul searching she settled on pursuing fashion and graduated in 2003 from Manchester Metropolitan University with a BA (Honours) in Fashion.

Feeling a heavy presence of creativity I enter the fashionista's den. Three industrial sewing machines sit next to skins of supple colourful leather, luxurious swatches of Italian herringbone wool and jars of brass notions and zips. Meet Tytti Peltoniemi, the imaginative Finnish handbag designer behind 'PELTONIEMI MADE-TO-ORDER'. Tytti started the business on arrival and it has

grown tremendously since then. Her funky stained leather pouchettes were featured in the Amsterdam International Fashion Week in July of this year (in collaboration with popular Danish designer Claes Iversen), and she has received rave reviews in fashion blogs and press outlets such as *Blend*, *Elle*, *Het Parool*, *Holland Herald* (KLM in-flight mag) *Olivia*, *Vogue.com*, *Superfuture.com*, and now DESTINATIONS!

She has also hosted a number of quirky events to showcase her work such as a *Sex and the City Bubbles Party* with hundreds of chocolate-dipped strawberries to tempt clients; displayed her bags in a bakery, Kauppa (Finnish design concept store) and a museum.

But there's more behind this stylish story than a pretty face. In an age of sweatshops, fakes and unethical production practices, Tytti boldly rejects the concept by promoting origin-conscious needles, thread, leathers and paper. She does not use any chemical glues and chooses suppliers whom she trusts and knows support the same principles. In addition, every piece is individual, unique and absolutely beautiful to look at. It is an investment, a statement of your own personality and when Tytti openly admits she's a "sucker for good quality chocolate and pretty things"... I cannot help but envy her passion.

