



Book Proposal – What do you do when it rains? What is the Book About?

Rare is the man or woman who hasn't thought about quitting their job and pursuing their dream. Rarer still is the crackpot who actually does it. *What do you do when it rains?* is about an otherwise normal man who has a dream and is hell-bent on turning it into reality. That's bad enough. To make matters worse, he does it in China.

What do you do when it rains? is about a challenge and a big adventure which raise the questions of what will happen next? – and will this mad man succeed?

It is a book about a personal desire to fulfil a dream but mostly about the people of modern China that he encounters along the way. Most of them help him. Some get in his way. More often than not, they make him laugh. On occasion, they make him cry.

The Mad Idea

Peter Schindler loves driving holidays. After living in China for fourteen years and having taken stabs at learning the language for twenty, he thinks it's time to see more than Shanghai, Beijing and the Great Wall. So why not go on a driving journey? How about 20,000km or so? Say from Shanghai, China's hippest city where the Yangtze flows into the East China Sea, to its source in the Tibetan highlands where the only thing he'll find is a Yak? And of course it must be an open-top car. What a dream: wind in his face; the scent of fresh dumplings at every stop; chats with people at every corner; in May, June and July, when the birds are alive, myriad flowers bloom, and the sun shines brightly.

Realty check: July temperatures that soar to 45 degrees Celsius and drop to -15 even in summer; floods, landslides, snow, and deserts; mountain passes that soar to 5,300m in elevation; the world's most accident-prone roads; car theft and petty crime running high; questionable maps; petrol stations that are few and far between.

If he was sensible, what would he want in a car for this sort of drive? High ground clearance, four-wheel drive, large wheels, big bumpers, a sizeable petrol tank, voluminous storage, various features of comfort and convenience – air-conditioning, power brakes, power windows, power steering, key-less entry. In other words, an 'M998 Series High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV, pronounced Humvee®)'.

Instead, his chosen set of wheels is the offspring of a 1950s British sports car called a 'Caterham Super Seven R300'. In all likelihood you've never heard of it. Never mind. Suffice it to say that it's a car as ill-suited for driving in China as a Humvee is for parking in central London. Caterhams have none of the desirable features for this journey, except 'key-less entry' because they don't have doors.

Why on earth did he ever choose a Super Seven? For one reason only: it makes people smile. He likes it when people smile. A friend put it best: "I've never owned a dog, nor had a child, but a Seven can outcute either."



He had this mad idea on January 14, 2005. On May 3 this year the journey began with three laps on the Shanghai F1 track. On August 12 he arrived back in Beijing. Somehow. *What do you when it rains?* is about what happened along the way.

Inspiration

Peter drew inspiration from two books: *Round Ireland with a Fridge* and *Propellerhead*. The reader of *Round Ireland with a Fridge* learns about a country and its people by reading about an unusual journey. Tony's fridge is his Super Seven, as out of place on the roads of China as Tony's fridge is on the roads of Ireland.

Learning to fly a micro plane, the story of *Propellerhead*, and driving a Super Seven through China: they both sound specialist and potentially boring, but they're not because they're about the funny things that happen when somebody clueless pursues a whacky idea.

Success in China

The car, affectionately named Miss Daisy, and the journey were sponsored by Nokia in exchange for Peter writing a daily blog using one of the company's latest phones. The blog and special Nokia campaign site were hosted by Sina, one of China's largest portals (comparable to Yahoo!). Over the course of the 100-day journey, these two sites generated 3.5 million page views from readers all over China.

During the journey, Miss Daisy's body collected signatures of the people Peter met. In September 2007, Miss Daisy was auctioned off at a gala charity dinner for the benefit of the China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF). The dinner was hosted by Mr. Yao Ming, the Chinese giant who is a star player in the NBA. Miss Daisy was acquired by a Mr. Lu Hao, the Commercial Manager of Mr. Yao Ming. Nokia has donated the proceeds of nearly £45,000 to the CYDF. In a heart-warming twist, Mr. Lu Hao went on to donate Miss Daisy to the CYDF as well such that they could use her as a crowd-pleaser in future fund-raising activities.

Beijing Olympics

On August 8, 2008, at 8pm, the Beijing Olympics will begin. Next year, China will be talked about more than ever, not only by historians and businessmen, but by the hundreds of millions who will follow the Olympic Games. While it is too late to have this book ready before the Olympics, a good-read book about China and its people should be more popular than ever.

Attachments

- List of Chapters
- List of Characters
- About Peter Schindler
- Photo Record of the Journey (see CD-ROM)