



ACROSS
NEW
ZEALAND
IN
140
HITCHES

by Clyde Macfarlane
ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIA MARTINECK

Very tanned fisherman, sails into the Pacific on weekends; jeep smells of petrol and fags, long downhill ride; young, ponytail; Swede with wispy beard; Caroline and Me-Ho, day off from fruit picking; overweight couple, Samoans, good banter; people carrier, mum with school kids; scuba diver with broken arm; Maori truck driver, listening to Joe Cocker; middle aged couple, hitched around Europe in youth; soccer coach, listening to drum 'n' bass; large Maori with moustache; barefoot student in vest; shellfish truck; man in shorts; man with trailer and builder's hat; stuck at traffic lights; kind woman, invites me to Christmas dinner in a few month's time; squat man with strange tick; laidback man with freckles; English young mum; elderly farmer; Adam from Wellington, inquisitive; pervy old man, goes to the Philippines; Czech couple in camper van; young woman, jogger; learner driver, puppy with wrinkles; young, acne, new car; sweaty woman, chatty; Fred, jolly truck driver; flirty art teacher; Catholic nurse; Tom and Isaac, laugh at everything; couple on vineyard tour, fast-food wrappers everywhere; back of pick up, hold on tight; young girl, short distance; hot brunette, hair all over the steering wheel; car full of party goers, free beer; curly haired man from Wellington with strange French girlfriend; dreadlocks, painted road signs for a living; couple from Hamilton; German couple, camper van; young, plays rugby, out for a drive; Californian girls going to music festival, fishy car; young boyish girl, late for a job interview; lazy fruit picker, aspiring DJ; fat, ginger, listening to dad rock; Richie, safe, cycled through Pakistan; disillusioned Californian hippies; woman with washing out, anxious it might rain; hippy with elbow length gloves, car muddy on inside; young, acne, cocky, rugby; tattoo covered man; crazy old man, fountain of knowledge; fast South African, few words; "pay him a visit", ex-army, posted in Northern Ireland; young Catholic girl, puppy; extremely nice man, checkered shirt, sheepdog; fitness freak, nice car, sinewy; London couple; jeep, stop for petrol; young, silent, wolfhead on gear stick; sunglasses, cool, wealthy; sun glinting off his bald head, hitched round England in youth; Kyle, free bed, terrible music; stocky drug dealer with rockers goatee; young man from Oregon, drives too fast; aspiring DJ, spilled his drink as I opened the door; volunteer fireman, safe pair of hands; mum with blonde kid; dirty jeep, funny fat man; very young lads, going to a car show; met in subway, also going to car show, listening to Rage Against the Machine; Zico from Algeria, graphic designer; car full of teenage boys, cocky; wise coach driver; farmer's wife, short back and sides; very old man at death's door; middle aged woman with Eeyore tattoo;

small, toadish old man, squeezed into front; very tired driver, three passengers all asleep; woman, fringe, trance music; marine biologist, ginger ponytail; sarcastic (but very funny) girl with dim boyfriend; shirtless man from Opotiki with baseball cap; fat supermarket worker; hostel woman, gas canisters in back seat; podgy brown mum with kids, kind smile; blunt woman, sunglasses, with silent mother; German couple in portable home; middle aged friends on tour, fishing rods; man goes to Bali, woman works in I Centre; hedge trimmer in vest, dogs in back; hippy counsellor, bunch of flowers; Geordie woman, sheep in trailer; crowded car full of teenagers, possibly hungover?; big red jeep, wounded Alsatian on back seat; pole dancing mum, crazy music, ducking down past police; young festival goer; disillusioned man with didgeridoo and yoga book, claimed smoking is good for health; wealthy couple with Merc, yacht and tan; fruit picking student, listens to David Bowie; Fred again, friendly as ever; female ageing smoker, fluent in Japanese from previous marriage; on the phone, trying to get his "patio sorted"; spotty, sunglasses, ear and nose ring; know-it-all business man, beige trousers; Swedish goths; strange man in vest; laid back man, 29 but apprehensive about reaching 30, nice car; silent type, no speedometer, listening to Dre; sun bleached surfer, flowers on dash board; Maori in towel, long wet hair, listening to Bob Marley; drug loving builder, beer under seat; very fat Polynesian couple, boy in back with muffin; builder in van with little girl, dog ate my sandwiches; Henry, Maori logger, took me to his Marae; muscular Maori with bad eye; Swiss couple in portable home; cool, big, cap; Maori couple, back of pick-up, took me in for a beef sandwich; German girl, dislikes Germans; forgetful old man with bad hearing; very fat Polynesian, strange accent; nature photographer, ice white t-shirt and shorts; mum with kids clothes everywhere; cook from organic café, very keen to stress organic; Maori fisherman, driving home from all-nighter, took me to his Marae; nice car, sold pornographic wallets for a living; Australian with cool diver's watch; shirtless computer nerd from Edinburgh; Danny, New Years resolution is to stop having stupid accidents; rich man in running gear, used to live in Canada; Buddhist sculptor; girl from Wanganui, touring NZ for first time, followed by rain; Bo, Baloo-the-bearish, rubbish car; man recovering from stomach cancer; Greenpeace girls in camper van; hungover guy looking for a job; very fast salesman, terrible music; genuinely interesting and knowledgeable, excellent last hitch. •

Clyde Macfarlane is a music critic and maths teacher. He lives in Portsmouth.