

The Traveller's Guide to the **Seven Deadly Sins:**



Lust in translation

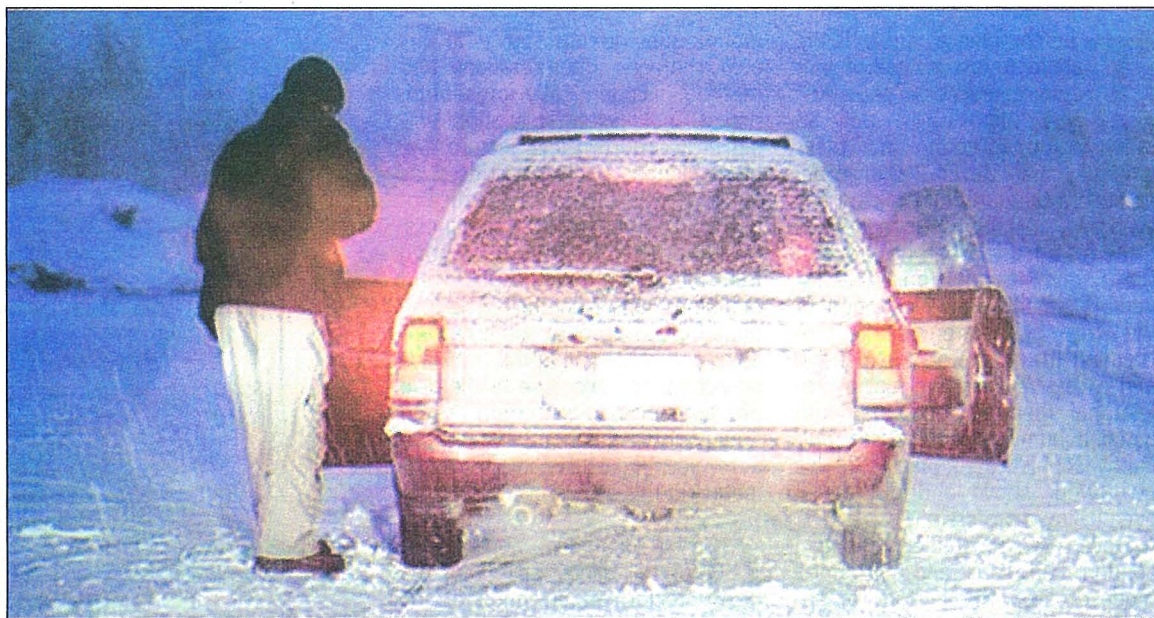
MENNA VAN PRAAG, hitchhiking her way along the West Coast, receives many interesting and obscene offers. What's a girl to do?

There are two types of travellers: 'seers' and 'doers'. 'Doers' travel because they love adventure, they are drawn to a backpack and the outback or anywhere else in the world where they can get down and dirty and experience life in other countries and cultures. 'Seers' just love seeing beautiful things. They will travel to the farthest reaches of the globe to view the Taj Mahal, the Grand Canyon, the Great Barrier Reef. I'm definitely a seer. Unfortunately I have the budget of a doer. Thus I found myself hitchhiking up the West Coast, picked up and stranded in the forests of Portland, Oregon. The rain was coming down hard and no one was stopping.

I was stuck in the rain, walking up the I-5 towards Portland. The city was fifty miles down the road and would have taken me days to reach on foot. I decided to sit down on the side of the road and wait for some kind soul to come to my rescue. Eventually a jeep pulled alongside me and slid down its window.

"Hey y'all, I'm heading for Portland if ya wanna ride," a dim-looking but friendly fifty-something cowboy called out to me. "Sure," I said. "That'd be great." I was sitting in his car before he could change his mind. I was not five minutes closer to my destination before the cowboy pulled out something and suggested that I might like to touch it. Recoiling at this offering, I opened the door and was out of that car before it had even come to a halt.

Unfortunately while hitchhiking



is gloriously free, it is not without its drawbacks. You run into your fair share of flashers, born-again Christian Evangelists and general crazed lunatics. I've been shown a variety of penises, told I'll be enjoying an eternity burning in the fires of hell and once was forced to vacate a vehicle when the driver offered me a peanut-butter sandwich and a marriage proposal.

Every now and again one has a travelling experience for which they are truly grateful. So cold and despondent was I at this point that when a multi-coloured van nearly ran me down I almost wept with gratitude and relief. I jumped aboard and stepped back into the seventies. Inside the van were painted psychedelic patterns,

swirled rugs and several spaced out hippies reclined on a makeshift sofa. I was introduced to Jim, Daisy and Wood-Nymph by Phoenix, the driver.

"Where're you searching for?" Phoenix drawled.

"Portland," I replied prosaically. "Cool, we're finding ourselves there soon; we'll be there by sundown."

"Sundown?" I said. "But the sun's already set."

"Tomorrow," Phoenix said slowly.

"Oh," I said, starting to worry a little. "So where will you be until then?"

Phoenix turned back to the road, losing interest in me and deciding it needed his attention. Then Wood-Nymph stirred from her beanbag.

"The Hot Springs," she said. "Where else?"

"I'm a visitor." I apologised for my total lack of local knowledge. "I'm from England."

Normally this statement induced enthusiastic enquiries from Anglophile Americans. The hippies, however, weren't interested. Wood-Nymph turned back to Daisy who started absent-mindedly fondling her breast.

"Oh," I said to myself and stared rigidly out of the window for the next hour or so until we came to a halt. The hippies bundled out of

the van. "Hey! Where are we going?" I called after the hippies who were rapidly disappearing into the night. The hippies had become silent on this matter and I was forced to follow them in silence. To my dismay this entailed slipping down a wet, muddy cliffside and through a forest of fallen trees, boulders and roots all of which were entirely invisible under the midnight sky.

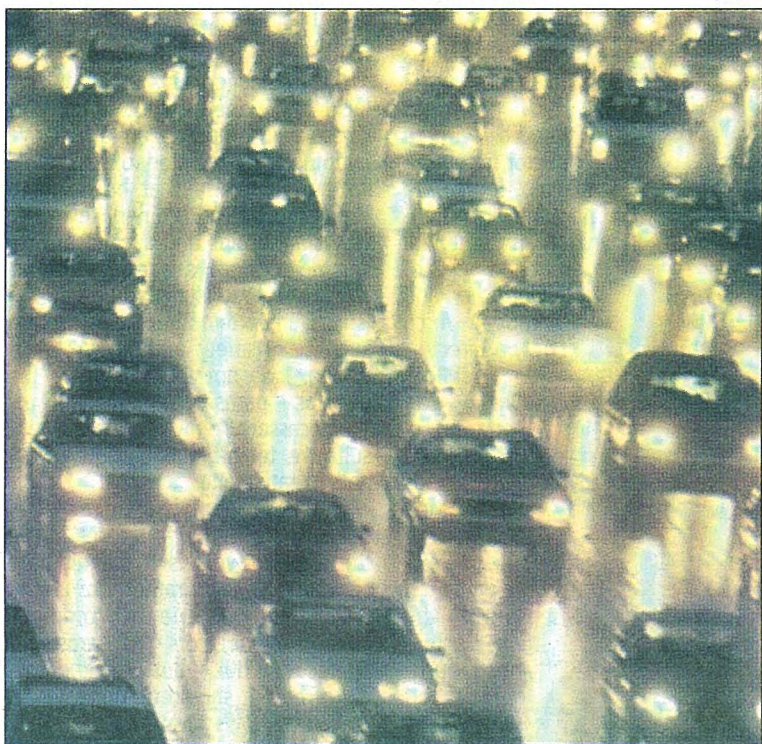
Finally we came to a clearing and, to my absolute horror, the hippies stopped and immediately started to disrobe.

"What the hell are you doing?" Daisy looked at me like I was more stoned than she was. "Going to the Hot Springs."

"We're going *into* the Hot Springs?" Apparently this question was so stupid it didn't warrant a response. Daisy threw off the last of her attire and skipped off towards the pools of steaming water nearby.

I stood rooted to the spot and watched the naked hippies frolicking in the water. Nothing on earth could induce me to strip off at -10 degrees.

Then it started to snow. Absolute humiliation or an icy death. I closed my eyes, flung off my clothes and jumped into the water. And so it was that I spent the night getting stoned under the stars sitting in a natural hot-tub as the snow came down.



I've been forced to vacate a vehicle when the driver offered me a sandwich and a marriage proposal

sloth - anger - envy - greed - gluttony - pride - **lust**