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The Southland Times

Unwind

A WINNING WALTZ
... Andre Rieu **D6**



Inner-panda: Cast member Jack Black attending the premiere of *Kung Fu Panda* in Los Angeles this month.

REUTERS

Keeping the dream alive

MATE
MARK WILSON



LAST weekend provided a chance for me to not only catch up with all the lads from the Beer Delivery, care of Jamie Munro's birthday, but also to reflect on how my trips to Dunedin have evolved.

For starters after spending a few years guzzling gas in a Subaru I was back in my old silver bullet — a 1989 Mitsubishi Lancer with dents on top of dents, no hub caps and 263,160km on the clock.

The slower trip allowed a few moments to reminisce cherished memories I have shared with this old soldier of a car and also compare the cost of the Queenstown/Dunedin trip between 2000 and 2008. A return trip and compulsory ice cream stop in Lawrence used to set me back about \$65 in 2000; this last trip with the ice cream and the petrol was almost double the cost — I was stung over 110 bucks. Fortunately, I was in the Lancer not the Subaru or chances are a kidney of mine would be on the market in Asia to pay for the gas. Upon my arrival I decided, before an impending weekend of excess, to drop by Moana Pool for a guilt-reducing swim. I was stoked to see Moana had stocked a selection of swim paddles as I was after a pair.

Unfortunately, the new generation of paddles were complicated. After a few minutes' struggling they were discarded faster than a honeymooner's underwear.

My weekend's abode was to be my sister's student flat but far from being the cold cesspit I had become accustomed to during my scarfie days, a heat pump was converting what is left of our valuable hydro lakes into glorious warmth with a kitchen stocked with a plethora of complimentary food cans.

Jamie's birthday shindig was great — a James Bond theme — a few short skirts, some inappropriate banter and cheap Speight's.

Upon the usual post-function stumble to town I unearthed a surprising mass of students around the Octagon drinking fancy borderline metro-sexual drinks in bars that would be more suited to downtown Auckland.

From my trip I can conclude Speedo's new swim paddles need more work than the Warriors' defensive line... prices even in the deep south have risen faster than at least my income and probably everyone else's... students are a far more civilised bunch who now have the resources to contribute to our carbon footprint through more than just couch burning and have also broadened their horizons to include cocktails and paninis with their staples of Speight's and two-minute noodles. The one reassuring constant in all of this was that most red-blooded male scarfies still use the library for what it was truly intended for — grabbing a sneaky peak at the scenery that tends to congregate there over exam time — good on ya lads, keep the dream alive.

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The real Jack Black

Actor Jack Black has finally found his inner-self in his new movie *Kung Fu Panda*. **David Germain** reports.

FINDING his inner-panda was not too much of a stretch for Jack Black. All it took was finding the essence of his inner-Jack. With Black providing the lead voice, the animated comedy *Kung Fu Panda*, which hits New Zealand theatres on June 26, spins the tale of an

unlikely saviour who finds that becoming the best version of himself is the true hero's path. For Black's Po the panda, a clumsy, tubby behemoth picked by destiny to become a martial-arts master, that meant playing on his strengths, such as using food as an incentive to learn his own variation of kung fu moves.

For chubby funny man Black, the unlikely transition from character roles to leading man required a similar effort to define his own voice and persona on screen.

Before his breakout role as a condescending record-shop clerk in *High Fidelity*, he had been more of a mimic than an actor, Black said.

His side gig as a member of the music duo *Tenacious D* changed that. "I was always trying to kind of imitate the actors that I liked. I was always kind of just doing what I thought the great actors would do," Black said in an interview at the Cannes Film Festival. "And then I kind of found my own voice when I

wrote songs and sketches for *Tenacious D*. I was just being me.

"I wasn't trying to be somebody else, like John Malkovich or whoever my favourite actor was at the time. And that came through with *High Fidelity* for the first time.

"It was just me doing my thing, and it's the same thing as this movie.

"Be your own hero. It makes a lot of sense and resonates with me, because I feel there's a lot of truth to that."

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