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The Southland Times Unwind

FASHION WEEK
 Joss Stone is starstruck **D5**



A shot of danger

During the filming of *Fool's Gold* the cast and crew were faced with deadly creatures on land and in the water. **Peter Mitchell** reports.

MATTHEW McCONAUGHEY lost a giant python in his rented Queensland home. Kate Hudson feared she would drown in mountainous seas somewhere between Port Douglas and Cairns.

Hollywood director Andy Tennant, responsible for romantic comedies *Hitch* and *Sweet Home Alabama*, was almost stung by Australia's deadly Irukandji jellyfish on the Great Barrier Reef while New York-born actress Alexis Dziena was lost on the streets of Surfers Paradise during the Gold Coast Indy.

Sit down with Hudson, McConaughey, Tennant and Dziena to talk about the new \$US80 million (\$NZ102.76 million) movie they shot in Queensland last year, *Fool's Gold* — which is now playing in Invercargill — and the quartet has plenty of death-defying tales to tell.

The stories are so good they could have been inserted into *Fool's Gold*, a part romantic comedy, part adventure film, with Hudson and McConaughey playing modern day treasure hunters searching the Caribbean's turquoise waters for 40 chests of priceless jewels lost almost 300 years ago.

Hollywood studio Warner Bros and Tennant planned to shoot the film in the Caribbean, but with the region's hurricane season likely to halt production, they opted for Queensland.

Port Douglas was transformed into Key West, the popular United States tourist town at the southern most tip of Florida, and Lizard Island became a pristine Caribbean island owned by a rapper turned gangster, Bigg Bunny.

The cast and Tennant soon discovered Queensland may not be so prone to hurricanes, but it made up for it with deadly creatures on land and in the water.

"I found a funnel web spider in my house in Port Douglas," Hudson proudly says during the interview, which took place in a Santa Monica hotel overlooking the California coastline.

The studio spared no expense for its A-List stars Hudson and McConaughey and director Tennant, renting houses for them in Port Douglas and other plush accommodations when the shoot schedule moved to Lizard Island, Hamilton Island, Airlie Beach, Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Hervey Bay.

McConaughey says he has a Port Douglas story that tops Hudson's funnel web yarn.

"I had an eight foot (2.5m) amethystine python in the coconut tree in my backyard of my Port Douglas house and a six foot (1.8m) garden python in my shed," the actor said.

"I kept an eye on them.

"They were cool. But, then I came home after three weeks away and the garden python was gone. I was freaked out.

"I didn't close my windows or doors or anything while I was away so I went through all of my closets.

"I couldn't find the python.

"So, every time I got into bed I had to have a good look."

Tennant and Dziena think they went one better.

The director lives by the philosophy that if one of his actors has to jump into a potentially dangerous situation for a scene, he should join him or her.

When 23-year-old Dziena, who plays a Paris Hilton-like teenage daughter of a billionaire, had to jump into the ocean where box jellyfish were known to live, 52-year-old Tennant put his togs on too.

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Dangerous times: Actors Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey played with killer creatures during the making of *Fool's Gold* in Australia. REUTERS

Sevens heaven

MATE
 MARK WILSON



THE first week of February has now become, for many of us southern rugby fanatics, a chance to venture boldly north via any means necessary to spend a few hectic days and nights watching, in all honesty, mainly the crowd at the Wellington Sevens.

For me it was going to be a bit harder than your average fan as only a week before I had checked out of hospital after an ankle operation and was sporting a now-rapidly deteriorating plaster cast.

This event for me doubled as a reunion for the Speight's Great Beer Delivery, so on arrival in Christchurch to change planes, I bumped into Big Rig Lindsay Gilbert, who I hadn't seen since we said our goodbyes in Panama four months earlier.

We shared an interesting flight, which was slightly delayed after three people including myself were allocated the same seat by the booking computer. Despite my offers to sit on the lap of the air hostess we finally got things sorted and I, unfortunately, got my own seat.

The rest of the Beer Delivery lads were waiting in Wellington and after a few handshakes and high fives we hit the Ale House for a great night of revelry. As is so often the case we were out of the gates far too quickly and the morning of the actual sevens was a battle especially as it was 25degC and I had to crutch 40 minutes to the stadium. It would be fair to say I lost a lot of gravy on that trip, most of which ended up contained in my Buzz Light Year outfit.

The event itself was a boomer, great weather 90 percent of the time, stunningly inappropriate outfits adorning very appropriate female bodies and a raucous atmosphere to boot. I bumped into a bunch of 17 lads up from Invers who had travelled the whole way up via mini van, they were dressed as convicts and had a special photo shoot at the aptly known Milton Hilton Prison on the way up. They had one major problem though, no ride home!

Apparently, they had a little too much fun on the way up and the rental company had confiscated their van! Slightly inconvenient but one of those moments that make the story and the memory that much better in years to come.

Good on you lads.

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