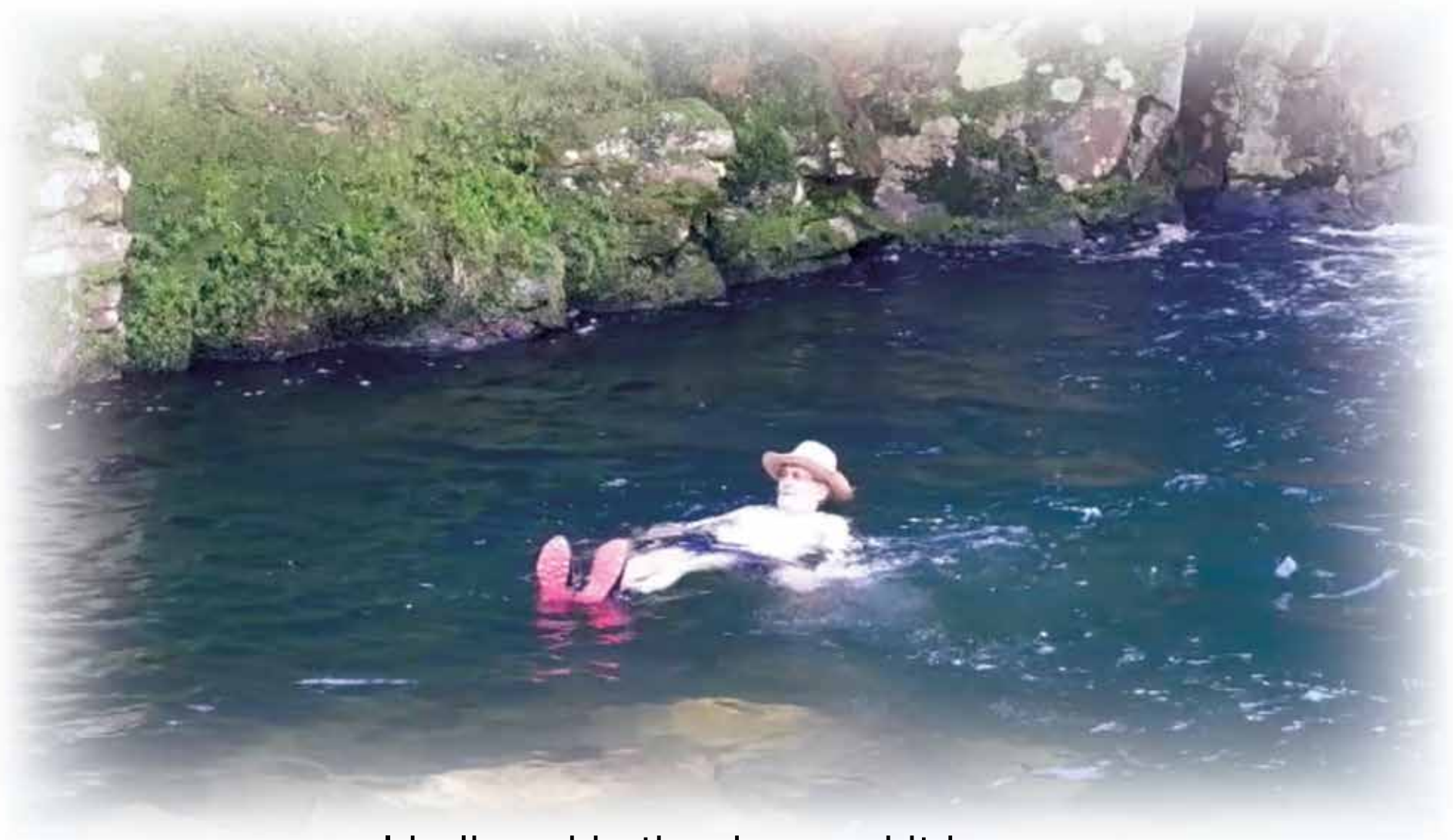




I believed in the river and it in me



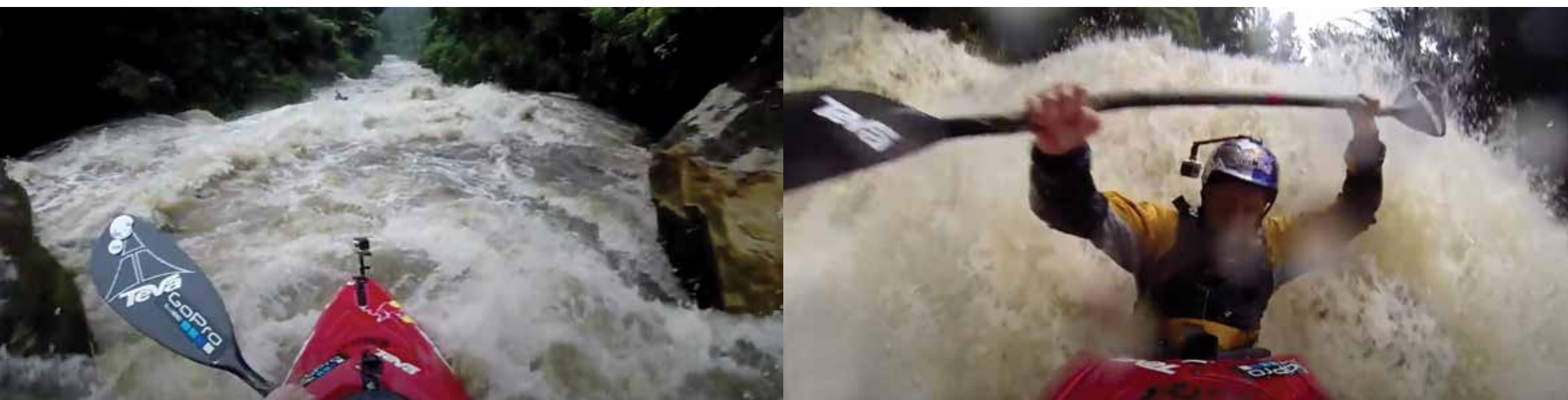
Between 1936 and 1957 the 400,000 hectare Kaimai forest was selectively milled by loggers with the large Rimu trees being brought out to the sawmill on tramways that followed gullies or hand carved through the steep slopes.

Paradoxically the axemen were so enraptured by the exceptional beauty and bird life around the river headwaters they made 30 hectares a sanctuary resulting in today's virgin forest and home to Rimu trees up to 700 years old.



When the big rains come: unpredictable summer and winter - quiet rivers turn into a torrent of malevolent fury, and are only to be braved with the lust for adventure or driven by the most extreme need to get to the other side. In full flood the farm's 7,000 kg tractor can't cross the bridge because it is pushed sideways (above 3/4 flood). A river obeys no laws other than it's own - errors are not permitted and it does not forgive - even descending a bank with river in flood can be dangerous - one slip and you are at it's mercy.

“ A lone river trip is an invitation into a very special universe. It can be full of privileged moments, especially when the elements fall into place to create a masterpiece. The idea of perfection which it embodies, can even lead to a wider metaphysical principle and even to religious and philosophical considerations. It's power of fascination is such that one finishes a trip by conferring a living identity to the river, lending it consciousness and divine intentions.



The Tuakopi 'stream' is regarded as one of New Zealand's best steep creeking rivers - not necessarily the widest or deepest, but it's one long wild downhill ride with no portaging needed. In full flood it's dangerous beyond imagining; it's only for the brave and or foolish and has a horrific casualty list.



Each and everyone of us possess a spirit via our ancestors or directly from the gods, or the cosmic forces. It can be retained if one proves oneself worthy of it, otherwise it is withdrawn. Recipients of the gift are expected to develop it and put it to good use.



Fortunately the river is not always so rampant and in summer albeit still cold, the deep pools are designed for wild swimming - pools of perfectly clear water: a jewel-like turquoise in the shallows and a dark cerulean deeper.

The gift contains protection against both danger and malevolent spiritual forces and must be reinforced by being attuned to all the wonders of nature and in this case showing a river deep respect. Sometimes a river can take it's time to show you it's secrets and the true meaning of the journey only becomes evident when one confronts one's destiny by positioning oneself so that the river either snatches you up, or is obliged to let you go.





It takes one on a journey into different parts of oneself; some expected, others unknown and some unwelcome. The fear of a powerful river and whether you will face dangers on it is a catalyst into opening the door to the self-truths; thoughts and beliefs not hidden behind subterfuge or fanciful thinking.



Prior to a trip, fears grow and one has to to wrestle and confront the monster heroically or flee to the city and meditate on what could have been.
It is clear that a person who puts his or her life at risk on a powerful river, must possess something setting them apart from common mortals.



Courage consists of dominating fear. One can wonder at beauty and perfection, but in the face of danger one must act.

Every ounce of your body incites you to make a choice.

Courage is the counterpart of fear, it is a state in which a man struggles with himself, seeking to conquer his mortal fears.

Doubt is the malevolent companion of fear.

Every man must sooner or later confront his deepest fears and once he has done this, fear no longer has a hold on him. A taste for risk is an essential part of a contemplation and testing of the real world. ”

ANON





15 kilometres down river the magnificent McLarens falls. In 1986 I rafted the downriver grade 5 stretch below McLaren falls. I have never kayaked the farm river, but have had many disquieting experiences including trying to ford a long flat stretch in flood and only just making it to the other side.



30 kilometres down the highway to the flat land, the river widens up and slows down where on a good day I net whitebait - an elusive New Zealand seasonal delicacy best eaten between two pieces of buttered white bread.

Only an exceptional destiny can lead a designer to push back the limits, coupled with a certain expertise and an uncompromising philosophy.

One must have courage, technique, style, ambition and drive: these constitute a designer's personality.

The basic principle is that a designer who wants to mark his generation must possess an assortment of those five qualities. He also depends on external circumstances such as luck, a strong economy, the support of a team, his impact on the press and public, his charisma, etc. The ideal is to possess all of these qualities in abundance if one wishes to achieve their desired dream.

It will reward a courageous designer's fidelity and confidence shown it and if you have faith in it, make the right choices - it will unfailingly do it's part.



WINDY RIDGE STUDIO

Kaimai, New Zealand