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Local News

by Rex Broekman

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Lonely Planet Visits Huaraz

Anxious days for restaurant and hotel owners last month, as Lonely Planet visited the city of Huaraz and its surrounding areas. Which businesses will be surprised with a notice in the book and which ones will be kicked out? Huge pressure on the shoulders of Kevin Raub, author of the northern sections of Peru (with exception of the Amazonas) for the Lonely Planet. Rex Broekman of The Huaraz Telegraph had dinner at El Fogon with Kevin and discovered some interesting information like: how does the selection process work, who's in & who's out of the new edition and has Kevin ever been bribed by people trying to get into, what some travelers call the 'Holy Bible of traveling'? Old-style journalism as there was no recorder present at the dinner table, Kevin could not remember ever having done an interview without his iPod or recorder. It was the amateur interviewing the pro, no matchsticks in the pasta this time (see first edition), a relaxed atmosphere and instead a very decent 'pollo a la brasa'.

Kevin Raub is a Brazil-based travel and entertainment journalist who grew up in Atlanta. He started his career in entertainment in New York, working for Men's Journal and Rolling Stone magazines and freelancing for men's magazines like FHM, Stuff and Maxim. He spent five years in Los Angeles as the senior writer for allstarnews.com, CDNOW's now-defunct groundbreaking online music news site.

Kevin Raub is one of the feared authors of the Lonely Planet Peru book who spent around two weeks in Ancash to cover the entire Cordilleras area. Thanks to his reputation as a recognized, well-established travel journalist, Raub obtained the opportunity of becoming a travel journalist for Lonely Planet. Kevin stressed that not everyone can work for the Lonely Planet as people need to have a journalism background to obtain the job. He had to complete a non-paid, extensive writing test of 2,000 words for Lonely Planet. He chose his neighborhood of Los Angeles which worked out very well as he has now visited 78 countries in his life due to his journalism career and counts Ecuador as the latest

one.
Hostels and restaurants will all want the spot of their rivals and will try whatever it takes to draw the attention of the Lonely

Planet but what is the correct manner of getting in the book? It all starts with the previous edition; the places mentioned in that edition will likely get a visit from the author. Some have closed, some have changed their address and some have dropped in quality. After doing extensive

Kevin Raub working on his laptop

internet and in-person research, it becomes a game of juggling space for each city or region in the book.

All authors also consider letters written by travelers with recommendations or criticisms. However, Kevin mentioned that most written letters were negative, meaning that people were complaining that facts were incorrect or that places had closed down. "All information is correct at the moment of writing. If El Fogon decides to increase their prices tomorrow, people will see that as my mistake. They forget that it will take up to eleven months to eventually publish the book because of research, editing and printing. In other words, it takes a very long time before travelers finally get a hand on the book," explained Kevin.

that are considered with what goes in and out. Kevin continued: "You can get a lot of work done visiting hotels, hostels, museums and attractions because they're always there and are normally open. Restaurants cause you to stay in a place a lot longer because you can only eat so many meals in a day. At the end of the day, we aim to put the best options across all budgets in the guidebook in order to give travelers the best experience and I think we usually do a pretty awesome job of sorting through all the local politics to get to that point."

I was also wondering having visited 78 countries in his life, which would be Kevin's favorite and which would be his least favorite. "It used to be Brazil, until I discovered its bad sides. I now like the 'lands', referring to Ireland, Scotland and Iceland but also Israel and India are fascinating if you forget the religious discussions going on there. Venezuela is not one of my favorites, at least not Caracas, where it can be very dangerous and unsafe. You constantly need to watch your back, especially if the Policia Metropolitana are behind you. However awesome restaurants and nightlife help soften that blow a bit. The rest of Venezuela, like Parque Nacional Caimana and Angel Falls, are astonishingly beautiful, but Hugh Chavez has let the country get out of hand. Honduras is also near the bottom of the list but the islands are nice!"

Does Kevin have the best job in the world, traveling the world and getting paid for it? "I have everyone else's dream job but it is not as dreamy as everyone thinks. It's seriously a lot of work and I often put in 14-hour days! Depending on the assignment and country this can last for five to nine weeks in a row."

"Of course, I get a budget for every assignment and could stay in five star hotels if I want to but when I spend more than calculated, I am the one paying for it. It's boom, boom! There is not much time to enjoy although it's an awesome job. Huaraz for example is an awesome base for mountaineering and trekking and it has a good tourist infrastructure plus there is a great diversity of food. I believe it's a beautiful spot," said Kevin who enjoyed 'pollo a la brasa' and a craft beer made in Huaraz. "I'm sitting here with you having dinner and I get paid but remember, it's still a job!"

During dinner I was informed that some local businesses will have to improve their service to reappear in the 2016 edition of the Lonely Planet, as they will not be included in the 2013 edition. I think that I will keep that a secret for now! For those who are wondering if their business is reconsidered for the next edition will have to wait until April 2013, when the eighth edition of the Peru Lonely Planet comes out.

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Kevin is strict because he also mentioned that when a business is closed during working hours, it makes it a lot harder to keep them in the book as he hasn't been able to try their food or services. He'll come back a few times to try again but often times people have jetted off on vacation, which would be really bad timing. But in the end, there are many factors