

WESTIES UP FRONT OUT *there*

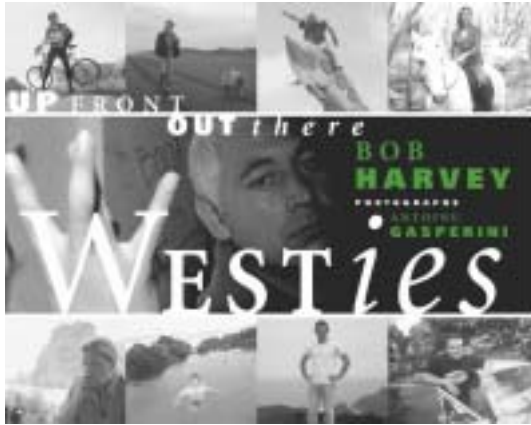
by **BOB HARVEY**
photographs by **ANTOINE GASPERINI**

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'Westie' – the word conjures up the image of a young male with long hair and a wispy moustache, wearing a black t-shirt and jeans with, perhaps, a can of Lion Red clasped in a hand that's spent time tinkering under the bonnet of a second-hand car. It's an image Ewen Gilmour immortalised in his hilarious comic television appearances. And, like most well-worn clichés, it's not altogether true.

In his new book, *Westies: Up Front, Out There*, born-and-bred West Aucklander Bob Harvey examines the 'Westie' phenomenon and considers why the area produces so many extraordinary characters. You can be a Westie simply by acting like one, he says, and many do. But more than this, says Harvey, it's a passion for living. To be a Westie is to truly enjoy where you live and who you

are. It's a trait shared by the 60 prominent and not so prominent people that Harvey profiles in his book. They represent a cross-section of people from many walks of life, from sports people to artists, singers, fashion designers, politicians, Maori and community leaders. All are amazing, unusual and very different individuals. They are people who don't fit the mould – people who in their time have made a significant contribution to New Zealand culture and society – and all of them have called West Auckland home at some stage.



Amongst them are individuals such as actress Lucy Lawless, architect and environmentalist Richard Priest, writer C K Stead, graffiti buster Kiri Teiho and thespian, raconteur and jailbird, John Yelash. There are the families – the Bethells of Te Henga and the likes of the Brajkoviches and the Babiches whose roots reach deep into West Auckland's settler heritage. There's Rama and

Urmila Patel, whose family, until recently, had owned the Four Square on the West Coast Road since 1945, and the people who have stayed in the West long enough to leave their mark before moving on, such as Tim Shadbolt. There are those who make the pilgrimage for their holidays like Sir Edmund Hillary and those who long to return such as singer, John Rowles.

In his introduction to *Westies*, Bob Harvey outlines some of the events and the people who in their time, helped to create that Westie mystique and attempts to identify what it means to be one today. He also acknowledges some of the icons that are synonymous with the region – the black t-shirt, Piha's Lion Rock, the Holden V8 and the Piha Life Saving Club. The text is supported by a large number of evocative photographs shot by Titirangi photographer, Antoine Gasperini, specifically for the book.

BOB HARVEY has just been re-elected for his fifth term as mayor of Waitakere City. A Westie all his life, he has made his mark as a businessman, politician and writer. His previous award-winning books about the West Auckland coastline, *Rolling Thunder* and *Untamed Coast*, were both best-sellers.

ANTOINE GASPERINI was born in Auckland but raised in Italy. He now lives in Titirangi with his wife. He is one of the region's most impressive young photographers. *Westies* is his first book.

BOB HARVEY IS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW



TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW OR TO REQUEST A REVIEW COPY PLEASE CONTACT:
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