

## Writer's Biography – Derek Grzelewski



Derek was born in Poland in 1964 and grew up behind the Iron Curtain, with mountaineering and books as his most formative experiences. At 22, he escaped the Communist regime by climbing over the mountains into Slovakia, making his way to Austria, then the UK and New Zealand.

New Zealand provided a fertile soil for Derek's many passions, especially his writing. He began writing in English and quickly established working relationships with several magazines. He also worked as a high-rise window cleaner, professional diver and a freelance film cameraman specializing in 2<sup>nd</sup> unit footage (stunts, underwater etc.)

In 1993 came his first big break: an assignment for *New Zealand Geographic* magazine which, upon publication, was picked up by the *Reader's Digest* and distributed worldwide. Derek has been a contract writer and photographer for the magazine ever since completing some 40 major stories to date, indulging his polymathic interests, from ceramic arts to cave diving, from wildlife to flying a single-engine aircraft. Close work with several excellent editors had honed the style of his prose.

His Geographic work led to many overseas assignments, notably for *Australian Geographic*, *GEO*, *Reader's Digest* and the *Smithsonian* providing him with a passport to travel the world. The best of his natural history stories have now been collected into a book *GOING TO EXTREMES, Close encounters with eccentric creatures*. At the same time, following a newly-found passion for flyfishing, Derek became a professional guide and for several years led successful trout safaris, before passing the business to a fellow guide. A result of these experiences is his collection of flyfishing stories called *THE TROUT DIARIES, A flyfisherman's year in New Zealand*, which will be published in 2008 by David Bateman.

In 2002 Derek began writing fiction and found a fresh avenue for his story-telling. His first novel *THE MALÉ SYNDROME* is a biotech thriller drawing on both the high-tech genetic science and the Eastern esoteric traditions. His second thriller *THE 99<sup>th</sup> MONKEY*, currently in its outline stage, will be a story of love and spiritual quest set against a global mind-control conspiracy.

Derek lives near Wanaka, on the edge of Mt Aspiring National Park and, when not writing or reading, he flyfishes for trout, enjoys backcountry skiing and long walks with his Airedale named Mops, all of which provide ideal mind space for dreaming up new stories. As a hobby, Derek plays a flamenco guitar which, according to various audiences, is not *too* hard on the ears.

Contact: Glenys Bean, Writer's Agent, P O Box 60 509, Auckland 1230, New Zealand  
Phone + 64 9 812 8486 Fax + 64 9 812 8188  
Email [g.bean@clear.net.nz](mailto:g.bean@clear.net.nz)