

In the wild-ridged mountains

By Gareth Evans

The place has been mentioned before. It was good to be there again after several years - there's a falling apart old farmhouse built about 1935 - only the fishermen have been using it for years and years. 1935 - life was essentially home-bred then, a way of life now becoming increasingly more scarce everywhere - a life one must travel far, and search hard for today - a life that shows how much we have gained materially and lost in contentment.

The place is right in the Drakensberg mountain range, on a trouty little stream that runs, I suppose, into the Umzimkulu.

So we stood on the old porch once again and had a drink, and then the truck was unloaded whilst I supervised. It was explained to the chaps that I was tired.

I was born tired and never got rested

The mountains all around were fabulous with the light and shadow of late afternoon. The Zululand University and Pietermaritzburg people came in later and we all sat around the fire. One of them was a girl with dark hair. We thought: "Not bad. All right in a pinch." But when I saw her next morning, try to forgive me, when I saw her next morning with her long raven hair down and not so much heavy clothing I thought: 'Ai, yie, yie-una chica muy linda!'

Later that day we fished a big, clear, bottomless pool of great beauty with ferns and Watsonia - we did well there and in the stream above. Light rain began as we returned triumphantly to the truck. Vaughn produced a bottle of Black and White. We sat there sipping out of plastic cups, in the growing dark with jackals calling.

The next morning everyone was off home on their separate ways, leaving reality for the absurd world of artifice - such partings really are a little death. The mountain fields were filled to the brim with cloud and the soft rain was green.

In that mist and rain there were crowned cranes calling.