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he magazine's inbox lit up after our cover story by Tim Baker, the 50-something surfer who wrote so candidly of his diagnosis with advanced prostate cancer, and the drastic side-effects of the treatment which he likens to chemical castration. "Men are not good at talking about this stuff," he wrote. But looking at the hundreds of reader responses to his story, many men have just been waiting for someone to start the conversation. I have published a selection of letters today, and expect we will run more in coming weeks because your generously shared experiences show other men and their families that they are not alone.

Christine Middap
EDITOR

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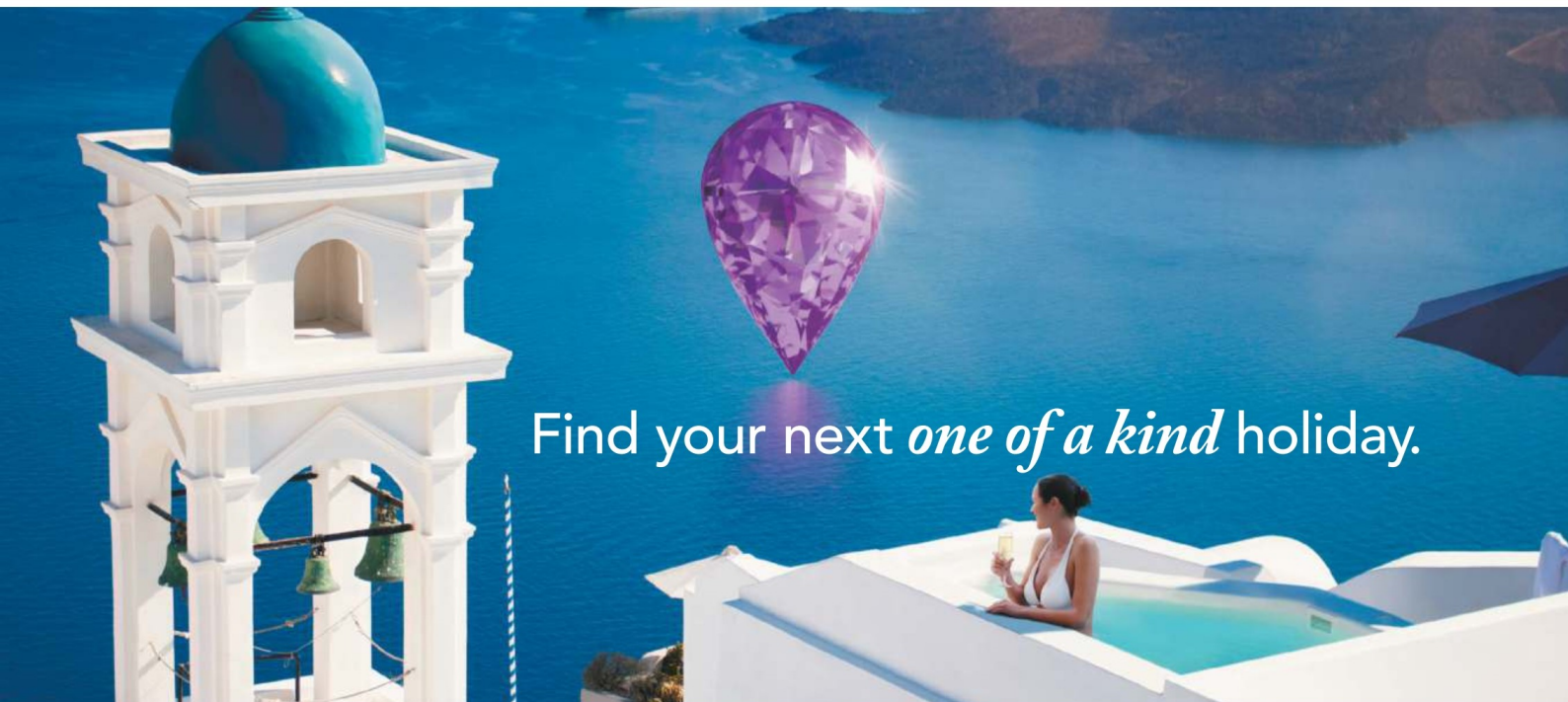
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Painful truths

Having been diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic prostate cancer, Tim Baker's article ("Farewell, old friend", July 30-31) resonated deeply. Months into my hormonal therapy the silence around the emasculating effects has been deafening. Nobody seems to own this space, leaving it to the patient to imagine a future where quality of life is severely compromised. Thank you, Tim, for your courage in exposing the grief, loss and fear felt by many men and their partners.

Stuart Auckland
Launceston, Tas



I was 79 and a widower when my prostate cancer was diagnosed in late 2012. My treatment included radiotherapy and a comprehensive hormone input. Loss of libido, body hair and subsequent nipple enlargement were the chief consequences. Today, some 10 years later, I continue to enjoy life. That would not have been possible without the medical intervention. I count myself fortunate to have survived and regard the loss of libido to have been a small price to pay for continued good health.

Derrick Mason
Boorowa, NSW

For several months post robotic prostatectomy I was prescribed a small dose of Viagra to keep the equipment in working order. The importance of getting blood into "it" pending recovery was much emphasised. I also had a vacuum pump and was taught how to self-administer

hormone injections directly. I'm glad to report it was all worth it. It can walk OK, albeit with a bit of a limp.

Allan Fenbury
Claremont, WA

I had prostate cancer four years ago and had surgery to remove my prostate. That was the easy part. The surgical scars, the ongoing incontinence, the great difficulty to get an erection, no ejaculation and loss of self-esteem and self-worth are all debilitating. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy.

Russell Disher
Brompton, SA

Several friends have suffered different cancers over the past few years and the common experience has been the lack of coordination between the various health care providers. When is the medical profession going to improve the consultation between disciplines to provide the best possible health care for patients?

Lynne Raw
Sunshine Coast, Qld

As a six-year survivor of prostate cancer following a prostatectomy and two courses of radiotherapy, I read the article with a little sadness. Tim blames doctors for "presenting men with the impossible choice to cease to be men or to cease to be". Unfortunately, life is full of difficult choices. The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia in its latest magazine describes the effective management

of sexual dysfunction associated with prostate cancer. I hope Tim's article will not deter others from seeking effective treatment.

Dr Frank Rosenfeldt
Melbourne, Vic

Thanks Tim for sharing your story. I work with 19 males, five over 60. Three of those five have various stages of prostate cancer. One is having his removed, another an invasive procedure and the other the hormone treatment you describe. His mood swings, hot sweats, dashes to the toilet – all better understood now. Tim, I will share this article at the next tool box meeting.

Ian Thompson
Mermaid Beach, Qld

There is a certain degree of loneliness with this disease; one would like to talk about it but there is a reluctance to admit you have lost your manhood. It is not ego at work here but our core being. Many men suffer in silence. Fortunately, I have a loving and supportive partner.

P.J. Hawks
Ballarat, Vic

Boy Wonder found?

I read with interest Robert Drewe's "On the trail of the Boy Wonder" (July 30-31). I have found out a little about

John Day – one article from 1877 is about a jockey of the same name and age who absconded after being charged with abduction. This may or may not be him. A second article from 1885 is definitely about him. It seems young John Day became estranged from his family and died of Addison's disease at a hospital in Inglewood, Victoria on June 10, 1885.

Robin Bottomley
Turrumurra, NSW

Gift horse

The story behind the gift of so much valuable art that placed Wollongong squarely on this country's art trail was a fascinating read ("The Gift", July 30-31). Whatever the background of the benefactor, he clearly lived out much penance and left the world a better place. Hopefully his cash legacy did go to aiding orphans.

Claire Jolliffe
Buderim, Qld

He starts my engine

Two Porsches and morning pancakes with Natalie Portman ("Sweet spot", July 30-31). Who misses Clarkson when Stephen Corby just keeps getting better every week?

Ian Hill
Mandurah, WA

WIN!

The writer of August's best letter wins a set of microwave dishware valued at \$299.95 from Anyday. cookanyday.com.au



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GPO Box 4245, Sydney 2001.
Letters must bear a full address and contact number and may be edited for clarity and length.