

# BREAKFAST AT BROMO'S

MIKE SMITH CONTINUES HIS JOURNEY THROUGH 'WONDERFUL INDONESIA!' ENJOYING AN EARLY BREAKFAST AND A TREK TO THE STEAMING VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN OF BROMO IN EAST JAVA.



The alarm went off at 1:00am. Dressing quickly I gathered my camera gear and headed to the lobby of the Bromo Cottage Hotel for a cup of coffee before leaving for Mount Bromo in East Java, Indonesia to witness sunrise.

## SEMI-ORGANISED CHAOS

One and a half hours later we were still waiting in the freezing cold lobby, tightly wrapped up in jackets, waiting for our jeeps. Finally they arrived and clambering into the back we were soon on our way, accompanied by music blaring from a speaker the size of a spare tyre for the hour or so journey!

It didn't take long to realise that we wouldn't have Mount Bromo to ourselves as we joined a cavalcade of perhaps 300 jeeps

all speeding to the drop off point on a rather narrow road lit only by vehicle headlights. Piling out of the jeep we dodged vehicles doing three point turns so they were ready for the downward journey. There were herds of motorbikes touting to take passengers to the viewpoint on Mount Penanjakan. Then we started walking in the darkness. Crazy but fun!

## SUNRISE AT BROMO

The semi-organised chaos continued as we tried to find somewhere to stand at the cramped viewpoint and keep warm along with hundreds of other folk as we waited for sunrise.

Suddenly the sun appeared, daylight broke and we got brief clear views of a smoking Mount Bromo, one of Indonesia's most active volcanoes.

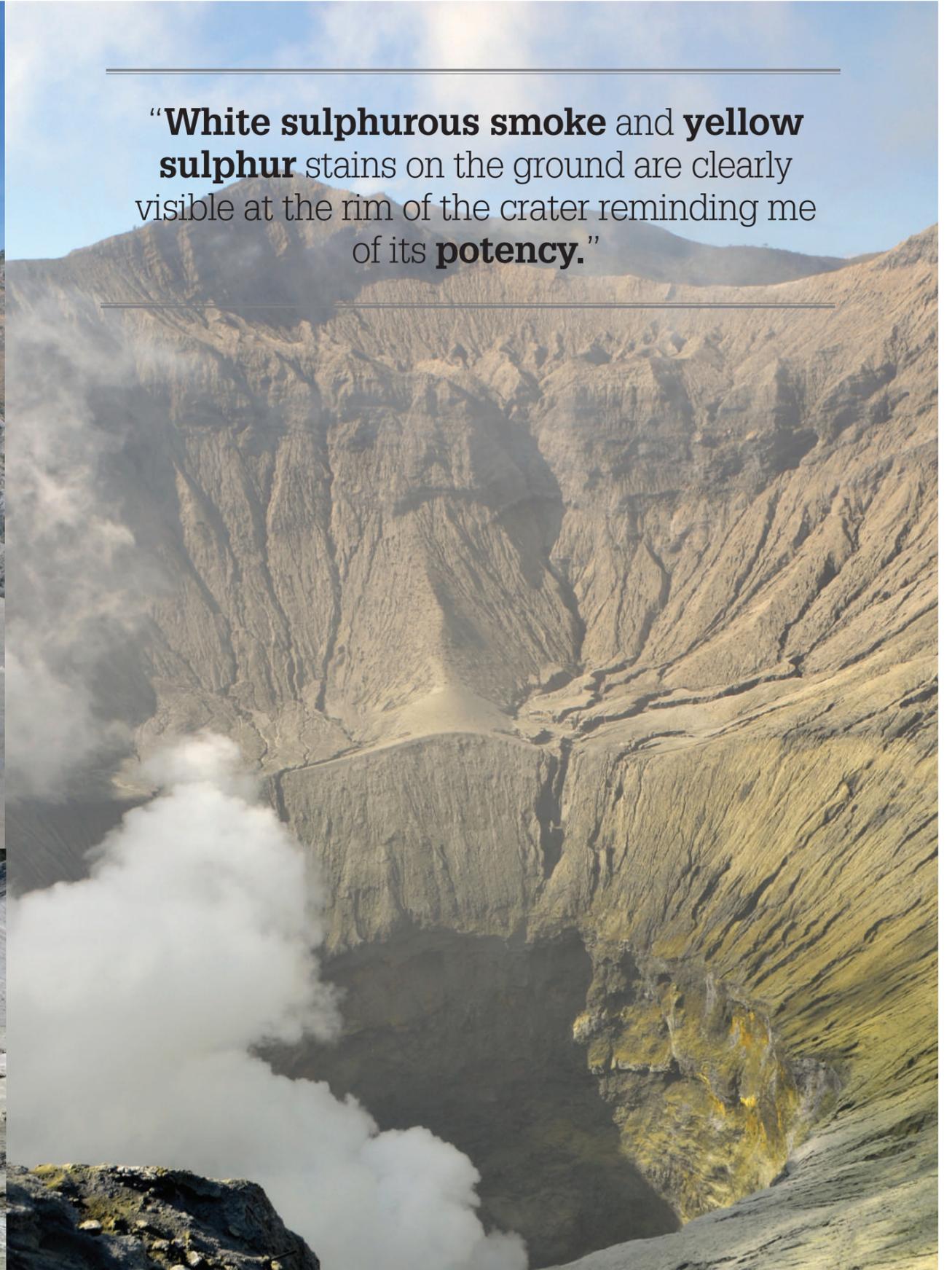
Mount Batok is at its side and the majestic Semeru Volcano in the background. Then clouds and smoke engulfed the scene.

Of course I would have preferred a perfect view, but nature still delivered a wonderful performance. We avoided the crowds, once it was daylight, by scrambling down a slippery slope at the right of the view point to a small, grassy plateau to continue the experience in virtual solitude.

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It wasn't quite Tiffany's, but breakfast at Bromo's was still pleasant with hot coffee, instant noodles and sandwiches. In addition, the temperature was rising and we were no longer shivering!

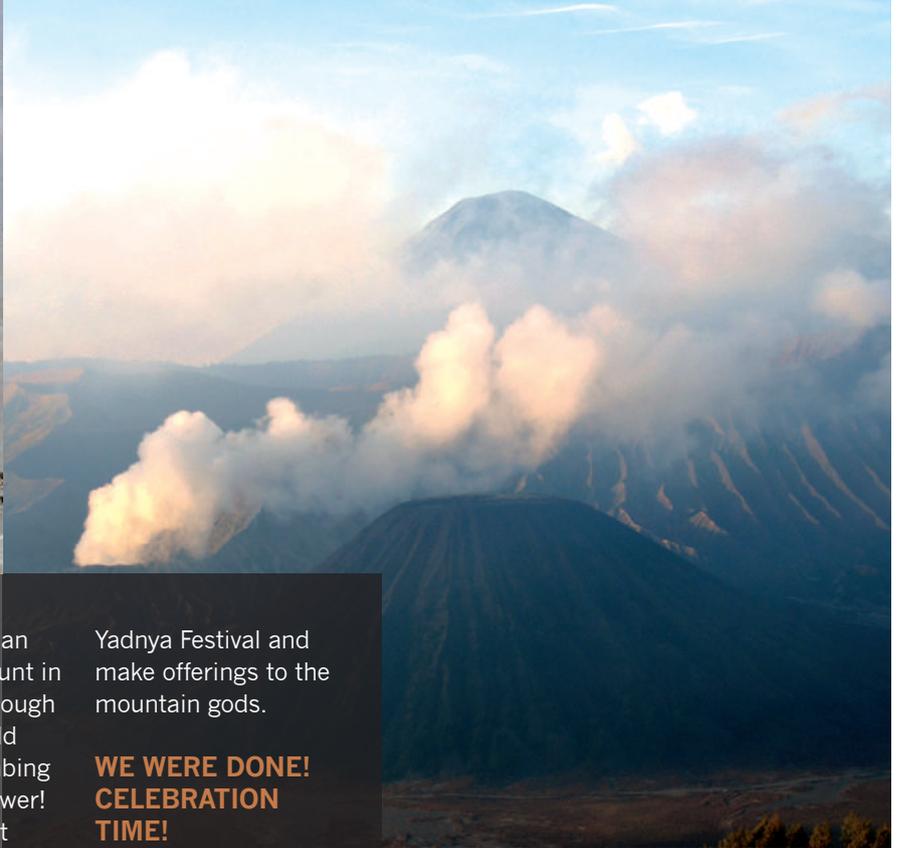
We were one of the last groups to leave the viewpoint and few jeeps remained at the



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parking area. Our next stop was the “Sea of Sands” and a climb up to Mount Bromo’s Crater rim.

“Lewis Hamilton” was driving our jeep and was determined to give us an adrenalin buzz as he stormed across the Sea of Sands at break-neck speed, racing his pal in the adjacent vehicle. Volcanic sand and dust was flying everywhere in our wake as we grimly hung on in the back of the jeep. Parking in military formation we were immediately surrounded by dozens of horses and their masters eager to lead us up the crater.

### HORSING AROUND

I don’t like riding horses and felt very insecure as we plodded across the plateau and even more so as we started to climb, but realistically it was the only sensible way to get there so I soldiered

on. I was more than relieved to dismount in one piece even though that meant I would have to start climbing under my own power!

I forgot to count how many steps there are to the rim of Mount Bromo, at 2329 meters above sea level, but there are a significant number! White sulphurous smoke and yellow sulphur stains on the ground are clearly visible at the rim of the crater reminding me of its potency. The signs warning of poisonous gases are not there for fun.

The way down, on a different horse, was much more comfortable for me and no doubt for the horse too! There is a small Hindu Temple at the foot of Mount Bromo called Pura Luhur Poten, made from volcanic rock, which is important to the local Tenggerese population. Each year they celebrate the

Yadnya Festival and make offerings to the mountain gods.

### WE WERE DONE! CELEBRATION TIME!

Finally getting back to the plateau and the jeep, our day at Mount Bromo was over and it was still only 9.30am! It began with music in the jeep and ended with a dance on the “beach”.

Mount Bromo is a special place and had long been on my ‘Bucket List’. It is both beautiful and serene, yet sometimes explosive, dangerous and deadly. Frequently, access to the crater rim is restricted due to increased volcanic activity so check that out before embarking on a trip. The easiest way to get there from Singapore is to travel to Surabaya by air and arrange for a driver or tour to the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park which is about four hours away.



## Pocket Guide



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Hotel Mount Bromo  
Bromo Cottages Hotel Pasuruan,  
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