



Jamie Mushin at work in his beachside bungalow.

Consultant Jamie Mushin headed to an island paradise in Thailand to spend six months writing a new book on how to quit smoking. **Danny Gocs** reports.

SPENDING six months at a beachside bungalow on one of Thailand's idyllic holiday islands seems like the perfect way to write a book.

That's what personal-development consultant Jamie Mushin opted to do when writing his self-help book *Quit For Life*, which has just been published by Penguin Books.

Mushin, 43, has been finetuning the technique of mindfulness ever since he quit smoking in 1995, but it was in 2009 that he decided to write the book.

"I have helped dozens of people quit smoking. I always considered writing a book about it, but never got around to doing it," he said.

"I left Melbourne to move to Israel to spend a year or two there to experience life, but after a few months I found it hard to settle down and get a job.

"I felt the time was right to write my book, and decided the best place to do it was in Thailand. I have been travelling to Thailand for more than 20 years and have a lot of friends there, so I headed for the island of Koh Phangan to spend six months living in a bungalow on a hill overlooking the beach."

While Koh Phangan is popular with young travellers from Australia and Israel who join thousands of local and overseas revellers at the Full Moon Party each month, Mushin said he stayed in a remote part of the island well away from the party action.

"There were not too many distractions and I was very disciplined. Each morning I would be up early and work on the book until lunchtime, and then take some time off to sit on the balcony and watch people walk past," he said.

After six months Mushin completed the first draft of *Quit For Life*, and then travelled back to Israel before returning to Australia.

"I submitted the manuscript to a dozen publishers who accepted non-fiction writing, and Penguin expressed interest in publishing it."

Mushin began smoking at 18 when he began studying at university, and before long he was smoking 20 cigarettes a day.

"I called myself a social smoker. I never saw myself as a smoker. I never told people that I was a smoker ... I even hid it from my parents," he wrote in *Quit For Life*.



Jamie Mushin. Photo: Prue Lewington

It was in 1995, when Mushin was in London after more than a year travelling and working in Europe, that he decided to enrol in a two-and-a-half-day, personal-development course.

"As soon as I signed up, I noticed a change in my mood. For the first time in six months I felt a spark of life in within me, a renewal of myself."

Then he had one of those "lightbulb moments", where he had a clear understanding of his smoking story and knew it was time to quit.

"My little epiphany had allowed me to understand why I was smoking and what I needed to do to stop," he wrote.

"As I write this book, it has been 15 years since I last smoked a cigarette. Not even a puff. And just as importantly, I have not missed it."

Mushin emphasised that his book is not intended to convince people to stop smoking, but offers an alternative to anyone who has been unable to quit smoking through other methods.

He described this as "mindfulness" – a mental application that overcomes the smoker's link to cigarettes.

"It provides a simple and stress-free approach to help you let go of cigarettes forever," Mushin explained.

His brother is well-known actor and director Pip Mushin – who is directing the JYM theatre company's production of *Avenue Q* in Melbourne in May – and the two worked together many years ago on productions for the Jewish theatre company, Saltpillar.

After Mushin stopped smoking, he developed a stop-smoking program called Smoke Free for Life, followed by one-on-one coaching on general life issues, academic training with postgraduate students, working with long-term unemployed, and he then moved into the corporate world as a consultant in the areas of leadership development, communication and emotional intelligence.

"I always had it in my mind to write a book to help people stop smoking, and now I have done it," he said.

*Quit For Life* by Jamie Mushin is published by Penguin. \$19.95 (rrp).

## Bridging the divide

SMADAR PERI

**JERUSALEM** – Beirut-born conductor George Pehlivanian's first concert in Israel in 1996 was under traumatic circumstances – it was the day Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Centre was hit by a devastating terrorist attack.

Pehlivanian recalled how he had to urge the distraught orchestra members to continue the performance.

And he also insisted on performing in Israel during the Gulf War and the Second Lebanon War.

Pehlivanian said that he felt that every time he visited Israel, something bad had happened and that it was the orchestra's job to change the sombre atmosphere.

Pehlivanian, 47, resides in Paris and is currently visiting Israel to conduct the Israeli Opera in its rendition of Leos Janacek's *Jenufa*.

He visits the Tel Aviv Opera House once a year, in addition to conducting the Philharmonic Orchestra.

Pehlivanian said Israel is like a second home to him. His last trip to Israel was kept quiet, due to a planned visit to Beirut after 35 years of absence.

On the trip back to Lebanon, he was followed by a camera crew making a documentary of his life.

Pehlivanian said he would also like to conduct the Beirut Philharmonic Orchestra in a concert.

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Conductor George Pehlivanian.

Win a double in-season pass to *Simon and the Oaks* at Classic

Win



The new Swedish film *Simon and the Oaks* – a beautiful coming-of-age story set during World War II – is showing exclusively at the Classic Cinema from March 1.

Simon, a small, dark-haired and bookish young boy, enjoys an idyllic rural childhood in Sweden, as the shadow of World War II descends over Europe. Although raised by loving working-class parents, he feels he is different. Despite his parents' reluctance, the intellectually gifted Simon seeks an education beyond the confines of his social standing.

Then he meets Isak, the son of a wealthy Jewish bookstore owner. Bound together by their shared differences, they grow up together and their families' lives become entwined in a complex tapestry of friendship, politics and history against the sweeping background of the war and the Holocaust. Based on Marianne Fredriksson's international best-selling novel.

The Australian Jewish News and the Classic Cinema have double in-season passes to give away to *Simon and the Oaks*, valid for the duration of the film's duration at Classic.

For your chance to win this prize log on to [jewishnews.net.au](http://jewishnews.net.au) and follow the links.

Competition entries close on Monday, March 5 at noon.

For a complete list of terms and conditions please go to the competitions page.

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Win

Show us your best Purim costume



Hadar

As we get ready to eat hamantaschen and dress up, The AJN is looking for the best Purim costume.

You could go in the running to win a prize from the new Hadar Judaica store, located on Jewish Melbourne's most visited shopping strip opposite Glick's and Danelli's, Carlisle Street.

Seeking to benefit the greater Jewish Melbourne community, Hadar Judaica has a great array of Judaica, books, kids' toys and all other general Jewish needs, also specialising in gift registries for any simcha. Working to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere, Hadar Judaica has cut back on the cost of Judaica for the consumer, maintaining a high standard of customer satisfaction.

As yet another good-will gesture to the community, Hadar is offering a great prize to the winner of the Purim competition: an age-appropriate mixture of games, books, kids' cookbooks to the value of \$100.

Visit Hadar Judaica at 275 Carlisle Street, Balaclava, or call (03) 9527 3462.

For your chance to win this prize, send a photo of you in your Purim costume to [purimcostume@jewishnews.net.au](mailto:purimcostume@jewishnews.net.au). Competition entries close on Monday, March 12 at noon. For a complete list of terms and conditions please go to the competitions page at [jewishnews.net.au](http://jewishnews.net.au).

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