

The sound of a duck at midnight

Quaaaaaack!!!! It was distinctive! Definitely a duck! So what's so unusual about that, i hear you cry? Well, apart from being in the middle of the night when most good ducks should be sleeping, it was heard while bathing in the hot bore baths of Lightning Ridge opal fields, western NSW.

Mind you, on a freezing night after a hard days work digging for that elusive opal gem, as your body luxuriates in the steaming underground water of outback Australia, there are many sounds to be heard. Some of them legible. Others quite muted.

Listen carefully and you will note groups of men and women at the perimeters of the round pool, chatting in the languages or strong accents of the countries they abandoned to search for opal in Australia. Russians, Croatians, Serbians, Greeks, Italians, Africans, Germans, to name a few. And it seems that the obsession with finding black opal has forced them to leave there old hatreds behind in Europe.

But the duck? Well...to tell you the truth, it was a fake duck! You see, the story is really not that important. Just belly bouncingly funny that's all. And it has to do with a good mate of mine, Roger, who prides himself in his ability to mimic Disney's Donald Duck.

The duck sound itself might have gone unnoticed, but my comical mate had to follow up the noise with a clear, although somewhat cheeky version of "ahhh shut up"..... Suddenly the pool became quiet. [laugh out loud] - Peter Brusaschi

Addendum: It's not very well known but people with all sorts of arthritic complaints make special trips to Lightning Ridge for the therapeutic qualities of this amazing water which belches out from the great Artesian basin beneath the Australian continent. You can find out more about this amazing outback town at: www.opalmine.com But sorry, there are no ducks in the pool!

'Opal Ridge' Australian outback opal fields Lightning Ridge

Peter Brusaschi is the author of the CD '**The ordinary Bloke's guide to opal**' and has sponsored the site <http://www.opalmine.com> with its opal chat forum, for the past 10 years. Peter has been visiting the Australian outback for the past 37 years and is an expert on the subject of opals, Australian outback travel, and ancient middle eastern history.