



GLOBAL ADVENTURER : Watch out, Indy! You're not alone in the scavenger hunt business.

The hunt is on for 50 would-be Indiana Joneses

Steady hand needed! Indiana Jones, above, prepares to outwit the Chachapoyan Warriors' trap protecting their priceless gold fertility goddess. It's part of that memorable opening sequence in 1981's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, starring Harrison Ford as Indy.

All of us - well, many of us anyway - have dreamed of roaming the world like the daredevil archeologist with the whip. And this fall 50 would-be Indiana Joneses will have the chance to follow, more or less, in his footsteps.

They won't be looking for a fertility goddess or a stone idol - or the Ark of the Covenant - and, hopefully, they won't be chased down a tunnel by a giant boulder, but still they'll be looking for treasure. . . treasure to the tune of \$50,000 U.S.

Here and There

MITCHELL SMYTH



That's the prize awaiting the winning team in a worldwide scavenger hunt called GreatEscape2001. It's the brainchild of Windsor, Ont.-born Bill Chalmers, a travel writer who won a similar scavenger hunt a few years ago. He now lives in Santa Monica, Calif.

The 50 contestants will be divided into 25 teams. They will leave Oct. 12 and they will be on the plane, flying toward Asia on the first leg of the journey, before they know what the first trophy will be. That will be the pattern throughout the hunt, which will take them across four continents, touching down in 18 countries.

Publicist Pamela Finmark wouldn't tell me what items the contestants will be expected to acquire. She did, however, give some hints: "Some will be culinary, like having their picture taken at a particular restaurant sampling local food. Some will be cultural, say a massage at a Buddhist temple in Thailand. Maybe a Turkish bath in Turkey. Perhaps scenery: a beautiful sunset, a beautiful beach. . ."

The contestants will each pay \$9,900 U.S. That will cover all air fares, all hotels and most meals. By the end of the hunt, says Chalmers, they will, collectively, have flown, walked, cycled, boated and ridden camels, elephants, oxcarts and rickshaws more than one million miles.

Finmark says the 50 people who will take part will be chosen after an elimination round which will involve in-depth conversations with the contestants to find the most "travel-savvy" people.

And when they arrive back in America Nov. 4, how will they prove they have fulfilled the terms? "That varies," says Finmark. "For instance we'll be issuing them with digital or Polaroid cameras, so a picture will be one method. Then at a museum, for instance, the admission ticket will be submitted. Other times it will be a specific scavenged item; we've a limit of \$10 for such items."

As well as the \$50,000 first prize, there are other prizes totalling another \$50,000. Profits will go to global charities such as Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF, CARE and Mercy Corps International.

Before they arrive in each city, the 21st-century Indiana Joneses will receive a sealed envelope containing riddles and cryptic passages which, says Finmark, "are clues leading to lost cities, temples, museums, bazaars, ruins. . ."

Says Chalmers: "We want to conduct an international event that restores the curiosity and adventure appeal that turn-of-the-20th-century travellers had. You're never more alive than when overcoming obstacles: not climbing Everest, mind you, but being challenged by multiple languages, public transportation snafus, cultural barriers and the fever of competition."

The cutoff date for applications is Sept. 4. Further information: 310-281-7809; www.GreatEscape2001.com