Travel: GoingGoing...Gone: Where I'd rather be Martin Strel, the Amazon swimmer

Interview by Maia Adams

What are you doing right now?

On February 1, I started swimming the length of the Amazon from Atlaya on Peru's Atlantic coast. I swim for about 10 hours a day and by the time I finish I will have completed 5,430km. I'm doing it to raise awareness of the need to preserve the Amazon rainforest because it produces more than 20% of the world's oxygen.

It's a risky venture, and to make it a success I have a big team accompanying me. I see fishermen pull in things that are swimming all around me and some of it is pretty frightening but the main problems are debris, such as logs, and sunburn. This week we'll be coming up to Rio Negro where the currents will be strong enough to overturn the boat. That may prove to be the biggest challenge yet.

Where would you rather be?

In two weeks time I'll finish my swim in Belem in Brazil. Nearby is a place called Santarem where I plan to celebrate.

What would you do there?

Mainly I plan to just lie down, relax with my team (who have become wonderful friends), have a drink and a barbecue and examine the experience we all shared.

What's so special about it?

The floating market sells local produce and is always fun to explore and the town has wonderful access to the jungle where you can see animals.

One of the primary reasons to visit Santarem is to see the "Wedding of the Waters" - a phenomenon that occurs when the Rio Tapajos joins the Amazon and the two run side by side for miles before blending together.

Who will you take with you?

My whole team plus other friends and family who will fly in to meet us.

Where will you stay?

In a hotel organised with my team. All I ask is that is has a comfy bed.

What's the one place you'd like to see before you die?

The north pole. I can't be away from water for long and to experience an environment almost entirely created from it would be incredible.