

SIGNATURE

The Diners Club International Magazine

200 YEARS OF DISCOVERY

South Africa's
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from the MD



Welcome

Esh Naidoo
Managing Director

Having overcome many of the challenges presented to us as a nation, and as individuals during 2020, some of us may feel a sense of relief. Some may even feel optimism at the opportunities that still exist for us at the southern tip of Africa.

As a business, Diners Club recognises the challenges that our members face, and we strive to grow and innovate in an effort to provide the superior level of support that you have come to expect from being a member of the Diners Club family.

Our latest product – *Beyond* – is a testimony to this innovative spirit, that shows the way for a new

generation of Diners Club members, and introduces the bespoke world of travel, lifestyle and entertainment done the Diners Club way.

With a multitude of new innovations and products designed to respond to your needs wherever, and whenever you are in the world, *Beyond* showcases the best of Diners Club, while remaining true to our ethos of belonging.

As always, I invite you to take a moment to relax into this new edition of *Signature* magazine, and enjoy the best of the Diners Club experience.

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 **Diners Club
INTERNATIONAL**



Le coin Français



By Darren Badenhorst

CLASSIC & CONTEMPORARY FRENCH FUSION

The newest addition to the Franschhoek scene is a restaurant truly designed for Franschhoek. Both in concept and in name, the aptly named Le coin Français, the French derivative of Franschhoek, embodies the essence of the valley in heritage, cuisine, art, and wine. Featuring cutting edge methods that meet time-tested French elegance in cuisine, Le coin Français offers two structures of fine dining tasting menus for dinner – both with excellent pairing options – as well as an a la carte menu for lunch which enables people that are less adventurous (in mind and in pocket) to experience the same caliber and sophistication of cuisine in a more casual and approachable setting. Bookings are essential at least 2 weeks in advance, and can be made online at www.lecoinfrancais.co.za



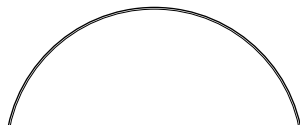




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GO THERE



SHOWCASE AFRICAN TALENT

Situated on the penultimate floor of Vib, Cape Town's newest, vibey hotel offering on the Atlantic seaboard, Jaffer Modern opened its doors to the public for the first time in December 2020. The latest addition to South Africa's contemporary art landscape, Jaffer Modern is the brainchild of its owner and director, Shafina Jaffer, herself a passionate, intuitive artist. Perched just below the rooftop, the spacious interior features an inspired use of natural light and boasts breath-taking sea views over Green Point towards Robben Island. With its stand-out architecture and location, Jaffer Modern promises art collectors, artists and visitors alike a world-class gallery experience. Follow Jaffer Modern on social media @jaffermodern or visit www.jaffermodern.com.

MAGNIFICENT MONTUSI

Nestled among glorious mountain backdrops and overlooking the Amphitheatre – one of South Africa's seven natural wonders – Montusi Mountain Lodge in the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg, is the ideal venue from where to enjoy the magnificence of the 'Berg. With plenty of fresh air and open spaces, and a mere 3.5 hours from Johannesburg (and 2.5 hours from Durban), Montusi offers a break from the city, in an elegant environment where one can socially distance from other guests. Enjoy a stroll around Montusi's manicured grounds, or read a book and soak up some rays at the nature-inspired pool. Head into the mountains for a private picnic lunch, and later watch the sun sink below the horizon while enjoying the view on horseback. Conclude the day with a locally-inspired, fairy-lit, fusion feast under the stars, followed by a nightcap on the patio of your luxury suite. www.montusi.co.za



A WHALE OF A TIME

Perivoli Lagoon House has opened outside Stanford on the Whale Coast close to Hermanus. The villa is available on an exclusive-use basis for up to eight, with flexible booking options and a choice of all-inclusive or self-catering. Owned by the philanthropically focussed Perivoli Trust, the secluded villa was designed by architect Gregg Goddard with interior design by Simoné Henckert. Perivoli Lagoon House offers four double suites with private bathrooms and terraces, and generous living areas that spill out onto sprawling wooden decks and a heated infinity pool. Geared to all-year round comfort, Perivoli is equipped with a wood-burning fireplace and efficient eco-friendly pellet stoves, as well as ceiling fans and insect screens. Situated on 140 hectares of soon-to-be-proclaimed nature reserve, Perivoli is a natural hideaway of wide-open spaces and breathtaking views. www.perivoliafrica.com

Unleash the hidden jewels of FRANCES BAARD

Renowned as the homes of the Diamond Fields, nestled in the north – eastern corner of the Northern Cape Province, a place of wide – open spaces, where golden savannahs stretches, a place of arid natural beauty, where resilient green cactuses and tenacious thorn trees fill the landscape. Five gushing rivers divide this landscape; the Vaal, Orange, Modder; Harts and Riet which gives life to the region and its inhabitants.



DISCOVER KIMBERLEY JEWELS:

The Big Hole & Kimberley Mine Museum

The largest hand dug excavation in the world, spectacular site to behold.

Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre

Visitors can view more than 400 preserved San engravings on a sacred hill, the centre also showcases a collection of contemporary San crafts, artwork and prints.

Flamingo View Estate

The estate provides visitors with an opportunity to admire the area's population of lesser known flamingos or "pink gems" from viewing deck situated next to Kamfers Dam. The estate also operates as an events venue with its pristine landscapes.

DISCOVER THE BARKLEY WEST JEWELS:

Barkley Iron Bridge

The first bridge built over the Vaal River, and it still stands as testament to the engineers and explorers of old.

Gong-Gong Waterfall

The unusual name is derived from the San word given to the area, the unique Gong-Gong Waterfall is hidden up the Vaal River.

Nooitgedacht Glacial Pavings

The fascinating slabs of rock were forged 250 million years ago when freezing glaciers spread over ancient rock formed by the Ventersdorp lava.

DISCOVER THE HARTSWATER JEWELS:

Ganspan Pan

The pan is home to numerous birdlife species to spot that includes 40 species of waterfowl. The pan is an ideal destination for boating and water sport activities

Poplar lane

On the side of the N18 road between Jan Kempdorp and Hartswater there are thousands of Poplar trees planted that gives the region a romantic country atmosphere. The lane is over 38km long, considered the longest of its kind in the world.

Hartswater Wine Cellar

This cellar was established in 1978 and produces a variety of award-winning wines. Enjoy wine-tasting and buy local wines bottled under Overvaal en Elements labels.

DISCOVER THE WARRENTON JEWELS:

Vaal-Harts Dam

Located on the Vaal River just east of Warrenton, this dam was built as part of the Vaalharts Irrigation Scheme. Today it's a popular fishing and boating destination and offers various recreational facilities.

Class 19D Train

Located on the Magareng municipal grounds, the 19D's were used as passenger trains travelling between Warrenton and Mafikeng and were also used as work shunters on various South African Railway systems.

Nazareth House Mission Station

The first Roman Catholic Church built in the area by missionaries who travelled from Kimberley by donkey -cart.



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TOMORROW'S CITIES TODAY

The Future of City Development

Every urban planner has fantasised about designing a city from scratch and luckily for some, this dream is morphing into concrete opportunities.

Imagine having a blank canvas on which to master-plan a brand new city; drawing its roads, homes, commercial and public spaces on a fresh slate, and crafting its unique urban identity.

Over the last two decades, new, master-planned cities have emerged from the ground up at an unprecedented scale, the majority of which have been created in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, with currently over 150 new cities in the making. This new type of urban development has shown to be particularly seductive in emerging markets, where they are sold as key parts of the strategy to leapfrog from agriculture and resource-based systems to knowledge economies by attracting foreign capital and boosting economic growth.

According to *Forbes*, “The new city building movement that we are currently in the middle of is one of the most under the radar and most misinterpreted social and economic developments happening in the world today”.

Dr. Sarah Moser, Professor at McGill University, Director of the New Cities Lab and leading expert on the topic, describes new city projects as an “attempt to create a new, relatively self-sufficient urban area that



BELOW: *King Abdullah Economic City*



BELOW: *NEOM City*



is geographically separate from existing cities, has its own name, and is governed separately from existing cities". In contrast to suburbs or offshoots of existing cities, they are purpose-built organisms that hold their own identities, presenting a clean slate with a number of opportunities that make them attractive to the private sector.

A distinct characteristic that unites this wave of new cities is their tendency to market themselves with their own brand, identity, and vision – not so differently than a start-up would pitch itself to investors. With its country clubs, gated communities and premium shopping malls, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC) markets itself as the region's key manufacturing and logistics hub and as the city of choice for the young elite who seek to invest in the new economy. Its website boasts "connected communities with access to the

pristine waters of the Red Sea", a residential district with "an 18-hole golf course", and a "luxurious Esmeralda health and leisure club". Along with four other economic cities, the \$100bn privately-run megaproject forms part of the Saudi Vision 2030, an economic diversification strategy to shift away from the country's dependence on petroleum. NEOM, the most audacious of the 4 projects, is a \$500bn Silicon Valley-inspired megalopolis (33 times the size of New York City) designed as a centre for renewable energy, biotechnology, manufacturing, media, and entertainment. Self-described as "an accelerator of human progress", it aims to be a living laboratory for technologies such as autonomous mobility solutions (including flying drone-powered taxis) and port logistics handled by artificial intelligence – all the while being fully powered by locally generated renewables.



LEFT: Songdo City

To facilitate the creation and development of these ambitious new ventures, NEOM and KAEC operate within Special Economic Zones (SEZs), where they enjoy business and trade laws that differ from the rest of the country. This is a strategy that has been replicated in many new cities around the world, as the combination of favourable legislation and tax incentives (in addition to the creation of real estate land inherent to the development of new cities) make them more conducive to foreign direct investment.

WHY NEW CITIES?

So, how did we get here in the first place? While there has been a marked increase in new city development over the last 20 years, building cities from scratch is not a new phenomenon. We've been building cities from the ground-up since the great cities of antiquity, and more recently, during the 1960s wave of modernist, purpose-built government seats like Brasilia and Chandigarh. But what is it about the last

two decades that has led to the latest wave of new city building? Moser explains this as a symptom of unique global conditions, including the emergence of real estate as an asset class, neoliberalism, and the deregulation of economies, as well as the growing role of tech companies in 'smart' urban development. This has made the creation of new cities alluring to multinational tech corporations such as Cisco, Google, Microsoft and IBM, all of which have shown a keen interest in their development. South Korea's \$40-bn master-planned 'smart city' of Songdo, one of the pioneers of the new city movement, provides an illustrative example. Built on a 600-hectare stretch of reclaimed land, the city serves as a testing ground for Cisco technologies, which has wired all corners of the city with synapses and aims to gather real-time data to optimize city living for Songdo's citizens.

The official rationale for new city-building is compelling as the projects are typically sold as opportunities for developing economies to

spark growth, gain a place on the world stage and even reinvent their national identities. From Norman Foster-designed Masdar City in the UAE to Eko Atlantic, Nigeria's "new Dubai", computer-generated visualizations depict utopian visions of smart, 'eco-cities' that hold promises of a more modern and prosperous future. However, the darker side of the entrepreneurial approach to city-making is that there appears to be a stark gap between stakeholders' official rationale and the reality of these developments - more often than not, they're conceived as investment magnets for the private sector and economic elite. Government officials and developers reap large gains by buying tracts of land which they can sell for steep prices (upon announcing the creation of the new city), opening the door for construction companies to receive their own slice of profit during the building phase. In other words, there's a lot of money to be made before anyone even moves in, and with many units being sold as investment properties, meeting occupancy

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goals is far from given. Putrajaya, Malaysia's "Intelligent Garden City", has managed to receive just over 90,000 of the 350,000 people they were planning on attracting.

This also raises questions about who these new master-planned cities are actually designed for. With their luxury condos, country clubs, and premium shopping malls, it becomes clear when looking at new city propaganda that they are synonymous with exclusionary plans aimed at the economic elite. We are yet to see a new city featuring mixed-income neighbourhoods and public schools. More alarming still are the forced evictions that have taken place to make way for master-planned developments like NEOM, which will be displacing at least 20,000 members of the Huwaitat Tribe, who have inhabited the region since before the founding of the Saudi state.

Considering this, does new cities' potential role as living laboratories that enable experimentation with new forms of designing, governing and running cities justify their creation? While it may be too soon to fully assess the impact of entrepreneurial urbanization, there is something to be said about the opportunities that building from a tabula rasa presents. As Moser and Cutts explain in their piece for NewCities, building cities from the ground-up enables us to learn from past mistakes, address the global

urban housing shortage, and 'hardwire' them with features that promote aspects such as walkability and social inclusion, all the while implementing practices that keep their environmental impact minimal.

It is also worth highlighting the unique potential for new cities to serve as national rebranding tools and as the means through which previously colonised countries can reclaim and define their own identity. By creating Yachay-City of Knowledge, Ecuador hopes to rebrand itself and ignite a national transformation from a commodity-based economy to one that exports knowledge and innovative technology on a global scale. Launched in 2012, the 4,500-hectare diversification project combines a planned 'green' city, a science park, and YachayTech, a research-oriented public university. In the words of the city's General Manager, Héctor Rodríguez, "we hope that this city will have a big impact on national development and culture" - only time will tell, but new city building could be the key to Ecuador rebranding its image as the 'Silicon Valley of the Andes'.

Looking ahead, what might the post-COVID landscape look like for new cities?

Considering the pressure that the pandemic has placed on governments' budgets, Moser anticipates that "countries and different levels of government will be enthusiastic about outsourcing many aspects of city-building to the private sector. This means that we could potentially see an unprecedented boom in new city projects, possibly even larger than the wave of new cities that followed the 2008 global financial crisis". Moreover, she predicts a growing demand from high-income classes for gated and securitized environments - located at a distance from the urban poor and unrest caused by a recession - which could lead to more opportunities for tech companies and developers to get involved in the creation of new cities. This raises a number of concerns such as cybersecurity issues, with governments in emerging markets likely to be more welcoming to tech companies looking to test out their digital infrastructure in contexts where privacy laws are less developed.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

With 68% of the world population projected to live in urban areas by 2050, new master-planned cities present compelling possibilities for experimentation in urban design and governance. While existing new cities highlight the importance of the private sector's role in mobilizing the necessary funding for tech and infrastructure investment, they raise concerns about the consequences of governments' willingness to give corporations a leading role in their development, as well as cast doubts on their real motives for building them in the first place. In the age of neoliberalism and tech giants, designing brand new cities as places that serve citizens of all socioeconomic levels - rather than as purely profit-making mechanisms - may be the biggest challenge yet. 🏙️



ABOVE: Putrajaya City

by *marianne sibaud* / photography by *shutterstock*



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Less than two hours' drive from JHB, you could have your very own private luxury lodge within Bakubung Bush Lodge, which is known as one of South Africa's iconic bushveld resorts and is situated in the stunning, Big 5, malaria-free Pilanesberg National Park.

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TWO CENTURIES OF DISCOVERY

Local Astronomers Leading the Way for Over 200 Years

South African astronomy has a long, rich history of discovery – and a promising future

The South African Astronomical Observatory in Cape Town is the oldest permanent observatory in the southern hemisphere: it turned 200 in 2020.

This observatory is a fundamental part

of South Africa's long history of astronomical research, which began when French academic Nicolas-Louis de La Caille visited Cape Town from 1751 to 1753. He undertook a careful examination of every square degree of the southern sky. This resulted in the first comprehensive sky survey ever made, in

either hemisphere.

The Royal Observatory, Cape Town of Good Hope (today the South African Astronomical Observatory) was established in 1820. It became – and remained for 150 years – the most important source of star positions in the southern hemisphere sky.



This was in terms of both accuracy and the number of measurements made. In the years that followed its foundation, the observatory's laborious work led to important scientific discoveries.

Cape astronomers were responsible for, among other things, the first measurement of

the distance to a star, the first photographic sky survey and the accurate measurement of the distance to the sun. They were at the forefront of developments in stellar spectroscopy. This is the detailed analysis of a star's light to find its composition and movement towards or away from the sun. They also determined the

earth's shape in the southern hemisphere and conducted the first accurate country-wide survey measurements of southern Africa.

MEASURING STELLAR DISTANCES

In 1543, the mathematician and



The Royal Observatory, Cape Town of Good Hope (today the South African Astronomical Observatory) was established in 1820. It became – and remained for 150 years – the most important source of star positions in the southern hemisphere sky.

astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus asserted that the earth orbits the sun. This meant that people should be able to observe the apparent shift in the position of the nearest stars from different points in the earth's orbit. But that had not been observed in the centuries that followed. The reason was, of course, that even the nearest stars are incredibly far away and the effect being looked for is very small.

When the Royal Observatory was founded in 1820, it was equipped with the most accurate star position measuring devices available. Eleven years later, Thomas Henderson used those devices to make the first believable measurements of this effect, known as “parallax”. By observing the angular “movement” of Alpha Centauri – still, the second-closest star known to us – and by knowing



the size of the earth's orbit, we could calculate the distance to the star by simple trigonometry.

A different technology, photography, would lead to more important astronomical discoveries at the Cape. All observatories in the 19th century made precise observations of star positions one by one and published catalogues of these. In 1882 the head of the Royal Observatory, David Gill, was surprised to receive a letter from a Mr Simpson, an amateur photographer in Aberdeen, a town elsewhere in the Cape.

Simpson had managed to photograph a bright comet that had just appeared. His photographic plates were sensitive enough to register stars in the background. This led to a "lightbulb" moment for Gill: he realised that the positions of stars could now be recorded in quantity on a permanent

medium, more reliably than any visual observer could ever hope to do.

He set up a special photographic telescope using the largest lens that he could find and set about making the first photographic star catalogue. This was called the Cape Photographic Durchmusterung after its much more laboriously compiled northern hemisphere equivalent, put together in Bonn, Germany.

But it wasn't just Cape Town that hosted an important astronomical site.

In 1903, the Johannesburg Observatory was established. It achieved its greatest success in 1915 when its director, Robert Innes, discovered a very faint star near Alpha Centauri.

He claimed it to be the nearest star to Earth on various grounds, although it took many years of investigation before this

could be verified. The new discovery was named "Proxima Centauri", meaning the nearest in the constellation Centaurus. Not only was it the nearest star, but at that time of discovery, it was the least luminous star ever discovered. Other dimmer stars have been found since, but Proxima still retains its nearest star status, and its distance has been thoroughly verified from space satellites.

DOUBLING THE SIZE OF THE UNIVERSE

In 1948 the private Radcliffe Foundation in the United Kingdom set up in Pretoria what was, for a time, the largest telescope in the southern hemisphere and joint fourth largest in the world. This is a title currently held by the Southern African Large Telescope.

Early on in the Radcliffe's existence,

FIRST PAGE &
PREVIOUS PAGE LEFT:

Square Kilometre Array (by www.photonwise.co.za)

PREVIOUS PAGE RIGHT:

South African Large Telescope (by Janus Brink)

BELOW:

Johannesburg Observatory (courtesy of the Gauteng Film Commission)

the then director, David Thackeray, and his colleague Adriaan Wesselink discovered, in our neighbouring galaxy, the Large Magellanic Cloud – a number of RR Lyrae variable stars that astronomers using smaller telescopes could not detect. These are stars that change their brightness in a well-defined manner over a cycle of a few days and whose average “wattage” is completely predictable.

By measuring the Magellanic Cloud stars’ average apparent brightnesses, and comparing them to other RR Lyrae stars at known distances, they determined that the cosmic distance scale originally published two decades before by Edwin Hubble and others, was underestimated by about a factor of two. In effect, they doubled the size of the Universe. This result was announced to great acclaim at the triennial

meeting of the International Astronomical Union in 1952.

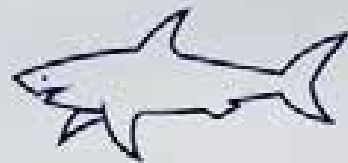
MORE TO COME

Today South African astronomy remains at the forefront of many initiatives and discoveries. It has become a leader in the field of radio astronomy with the MeerKAT telescope near Carnarvon and will, within a decade, be the host of an international project, the Square Kilometre Array.

This article is adapted from a piece that initially appeared in the South African National Research Foundation’s Science Matters Magazine 📖



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AUTHENTICALLY AFRICAN

Sharing the Passion of Executive Chef Brian Prinz

Mokuti Etosha Lodge's Executive chef, Brian Prinz, on his passion for serving, taking guests on a sense-of-place culinary food experience, and celebrating local flavour.

Being no stranger to hard work, Executive Chef at Mokuti Etosha Lodge, Brian Prinz, has had the honour of showcasing his culinary expertise by working at some of the most prestigious hotels and restaurants in Namibia, South Africa, China and the United Arab Emirates. Over the years, he has continued to refine his characteristic style, which involves using imagination and creativity to blend western techniques with local traditional dishes. His goal, he explains, is to create dishes that help elevate the importance of food experiences derived from local traditions.

Life in the kitchen started at home, as Prinz looked up to his parents as inspiration. His mother and father would often spearhead feeding schemes for the less fortunate, which fostered the spirit of serving in him.

Prinz began his career after attending the Hospitality Training Centre at the hotel previously known as Kalahari Sands (now Avani), where he practised and honed his cooking craft. He then attended the WITS

Hotel School, majoring in hotel management. He quickly absorbed the chefs' passion and creativity around him, and it was not long before he developed a reputation for his innovative twist on cuisine.

Having first started to work at Mokuti Etosha Lodge back in 2006, and for the following three years after that, he then went off to accumulate a diverse range of food knowledge around the world. Upon his return, Prinz was still drawn to return to Mokuti Etosha Lodge. What drew him back, he confesses, is that the lodge is positioned amid nature. Having worked in big cities for years, the peace and tranquillity that nature offers are entirely incomparable.

DINING AS A SPECIALTY

When it comes to dining, the lodge consists of two restaurants with a variety of offerings. While both are decorated with craft items and artefacts that promote an array of Namibian cultures to solidify your dining in nature experience, each restaurant still speaks to an individual ambience. The African Boma restaurant is set up similar to a traditional enclosure (referred to as a *kraal*

in the Afrikaans language) with an open fireplace and a *braai* pit in the centre. The Tambuti restaurant has more of a European influence that beautifully combines with flairs of a traditional Namibian interior.

The cuisine on offer across the restaurants ranges from an à la carte menu, a buffet-style option and a three-course set menu with various choices per course. Guests are also presented with the option of dining al fresco under the towering trees in the garden or at the pool bar and terrace, which is open all day and serves à la carte snacks, teas and coffees, as well as lunch. A makeshift speciality restaurant called the Ohambo is also available on request. Guests must make prior bookings for the Ohambo culinary experience, as only they will have exclusive access to the entire restaurant.

GUESTS ARE THE PRIORITY

As a response to the Covid-19 pandemic that the world is currently facing, Mokuti Etosha Lodge plans to implement a new service method. A family-styled concept is soon to be introduced, where the guests can serve themselves. Every offering from

the buffet will be available on each guest's table, making it easier and safer for them to indulge in their meal. By limiting the guests and staff's movement in the restaurants, the spread of the virus will hopefully be managed more effectively and ideally prevented altogether.

SUPPORTING LOCAL

With more people across the country following the movement to eat fresh and local, what might have seemed foreign then is natural now. Prinz expresses how he would like the whole journey from sourcing to consumption to be sustainable. The hope is for Mokuti Etosha Lodge to ideally only use locally grown produce from surrounding areas. Green schemes are currently in the works to achieve this. More than just a monetary driven business, the lodge strives to operate in a sustainable way to build the economy whilst providing the local community with employment opportunities.

ENTHRALLING EXPERIENCES

With an inhouse choir, marimba choir, Bushmen traditional dance group and a drumming team that involves the guests in their activities, Mokuti Etosha Lodge provides more than just dining. There is so much thought and passion that goes into creating every detail of the culinary journey on offer, and Prinz hopes that more guests will get a taste of his unique creativity.

Visit www.mokutietoshalodge.com for more information on Mokuti Etosha Lodge, or to make a reservation. 📞



Le chêne

By Darren Badenhorst



A PARTNERSHIP OF EXCELLENCE

Award-winning chef Darren Badenhorst, of Le coin Français, has added to his portfolio by piloting Le chêne in the Manor House, situated at the five-star Leeu Estates, part of Leeu Collection. Both titans of their respective industries, Leeu Estates and Chef Darren share a vision of creating something truly unique for their guests. Serving elegant French cuisine, guests are invited to enjoy the stunning scenery of Leeu Estates while delighting their palette with a vibrant and exciting dish created in the Le chêne kitchen.

CAPE OF GOOD WAVES

Cape Town's Top Five Ocean Attractions

While Cape Town is revered as one of the best beach cities globally, it is not as well recognised as a marine destination, as it is for the variety of other activities that the city hosts. *Signature* explores the five most popular aquatic activities one can enjoy in the Mother City.

With several Blue Flag beaches along the coast, Cape Town is consistently voted a top international destination. Even though it is a stunning city to travel to, and a trip to Cape Town is undoubtedly good for your social media clout, not everyone is keen on spending a day in the sand at the beach. Some would like to enjoy the ocean without having to, necessarily, swim in it.

Signature spent some time with Briony Brookes, Communications and PR Manager for Cape Town Tourism, and asked about the top ways one can enjoy the Mother City waters.

SURFING

Naturally, no list of ocean escapades

would be complete without the age-old art of surfing making the list. Cape Town has a massive surf culture, and there are excellent surfing conditions almost any time of the year. Whether you're looking for point breaks, beach breaks, or giant reef breaks, the Mother City has options galore for every level of surfer. If you've never been on a surfboard in your entire life, but you are keen to try, there are some top surf schools around Cape Town. NexGen Surf School in Muizenberg is a great starting point for the inexperienced, while this part of the coastline also offers more challenging conditions for surfing enthusiasts.

Go to www.surfnexgen.co.za for a taste of what you're missing.





STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING

Stand-up paddleboarding (or SUPing as it is colloquially known) has become more mainstream over the last few years, and is a fun and unique ocean experience. In the Mother City, this water experience can be enjoyed on the Waterfront canals or, if you plan to visit during the summer months, you can find board and paddle rentals on Clifton 4th Beach. Surf Emporium in Muizenberg is an accredited SUP school for those who wish to have lessons before tackling the big blue. Surf Emporium will even take you to Zandvlei up the road, for some flatwater lessons and excellent views.

Visit www.surfemporium.co.za for more information on this fun activity.



SHARK CAGE DIVING

If you're more of an adrenaline junkie, and you have no qualms to get up close with an apex predator, then shark cage diving might be just the ticket. Marine Dynamics up the coast in Gansbaai, is known to offer a top-quality shark cage diving experience while promoting ecotourism, research, and conservation and outreach projects. With this experience, guests can enjoy various shark sightings, including, hopefully, a great white shark too.

Go to www.marinedynamics.org for the experience of a lifetime. >>



“If the idea of lazing around on a sandy beach doesn’t appeal to you, or you’re just looking for new ways to appreciate the ocean, Cape Town has a tonne of different adventures for the entire family to enjoy.”



WATER BICYCLES

In the quaint enclave of Simon's Town in False Bay, there are many ocean adventures on offer, including riding the waves on an aquatic bicycle. From a water bike, visitors can take in the stunning views of False Bay, as well as encounter some of the friendly ocean animals that live in that neck of the woods...or ocean. These bikes are non-motorised, so if you're ready for a pedal, this activity – something that couples or groups can enjoy together – certainly should be considered. And, don't worry, the bikes don't emit emissions, nor do they pollute the oceans that you ride on. It is an eco-friendly way to enjoy the waters of Cape Town.

Visit www.capetownwaterbikes.co.za to book your next ocean cycling excursion.



KAYAK AROUND CAPE TOWN

Kayaking offers a great way to experience the ocean and its inhabitants up close, while enjoying some spectacular views of the city. A variety of kayaking tours can be booked online, that will take you around Cape Town. From Boulders Beach near Simon's Town, to a sunset 'cruise' around the Atlantic Seaboard along Mouille Point, Sea Point and Clifton, there is a Cape Town kayaking experience for all to enjoy. CapeXtreme's kayaking tour will take you past the SA Navy harbour, and to Boulders Beach to say hi to the penguins. *More information is available from their website, at www.capextreme.com*

If the idea of lazing around on a sandy beach doesn't appeal to you, or you're just looking for new ways to appreciate

the ocean, Cape Town has a tonne of different adventures for the entire family to enjoy. 🐠

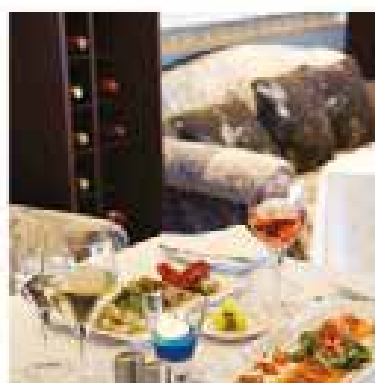
by **kelly fisher** / photography **supplied**

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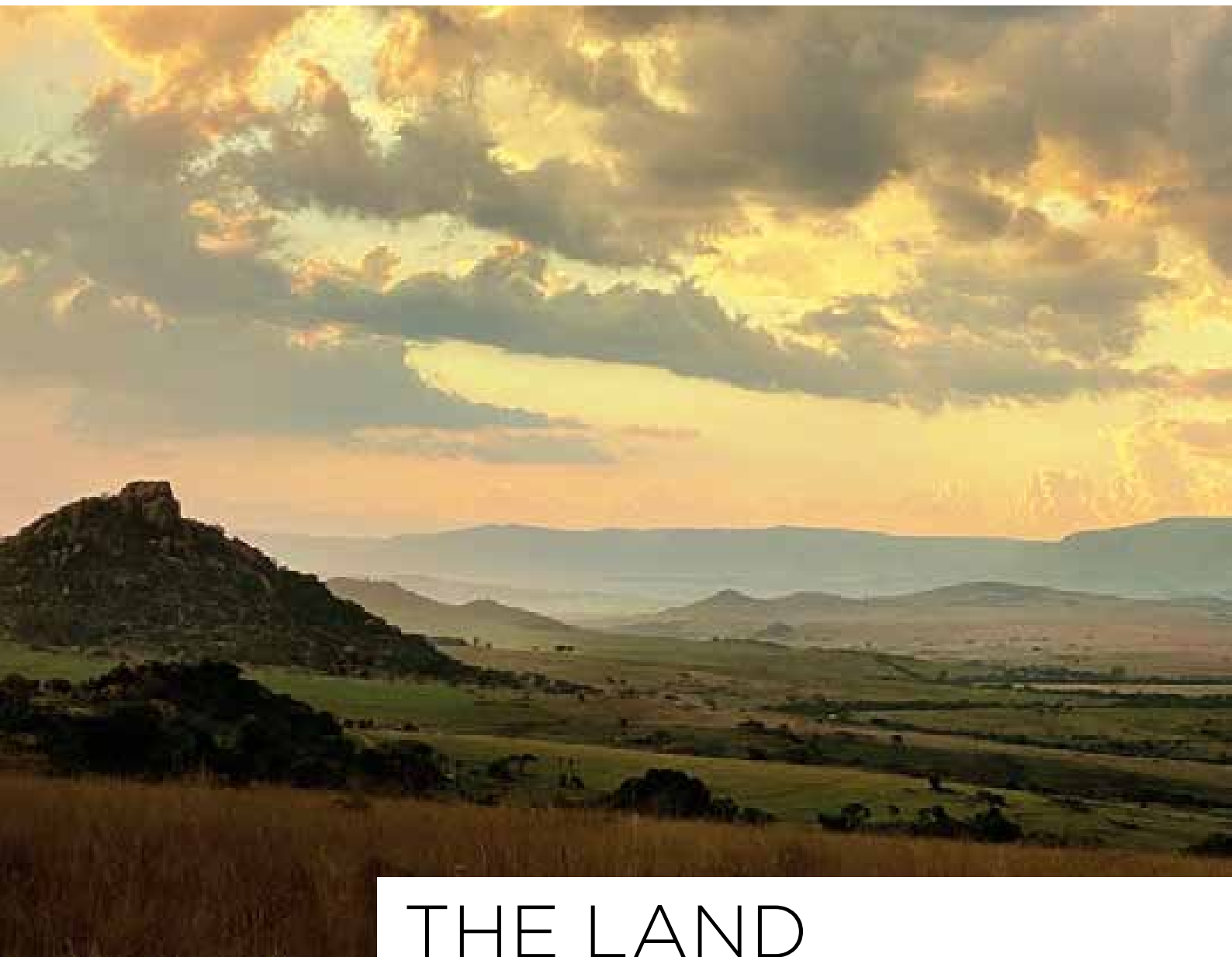
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THE LAND **THAT TIME FORGOT**

Exploring Nkomazi Private Game Reserve

There is something both irreverent and exciting about “going on safari” in an area that is not the typical grassland savannah that one would expect when on safari. Nkomazi Private Game Reserve breaks the mould in this and many other ways, promising a memorable break from the city.



With great deference to the American writer, Edgar Rice Burroughs, the undulating hills and outcrops of volcanic rocks of the Makonjwa Mountains outside of Barberton, form, in my mind, the ideal backdrop for his adventure tale, *The Land that Time Forgot While*, unlike Burroughs' story, this part of South Africa's beautifully serene Mpumalanga province is nowhere near the ocean, the Nkomazi Private Game Reserve with its luxe private tented camp is akin to Burroughs' island, complete with wild animals, extreme adventure, and a sense of living in a much simpler time.

THE SETTING

Perched above the banks of the Komati River, the Nkomazi glamping experience resonates perfectly with the greenbelt environment that surrounds it. Formed over millions of years and naturally manicured by the elements, the 14,000-hectare Nkomazi Private Game Reserve is a geologist's dream that effortlessly blends the region's grassland, wetland, and mountainous landscape into a dreamy safari destination.

To best experience the ancient landscape and its variety of fauna and flora, hop aboard at least one of the twice-daily open-vehicle game drives that frame the Nkomazi experience. Being out at sunrise is a magical experience here, as you witness the awakening of the veld, and feel the



energy of the wildlife as they take stock of the previous night's events. Or catch a late afternoon ride out to watch the day disappear into the orange glow of a Highveld sunset. Round off the evening drive with an epic stargazing opportunity, as the mysteries of the galaxy unfold through the lens of a high-performance Celestron telescope.

EXPERIENCE NKOMAZI

Recently refurbished and indulgently luxurious under-canvas accommodation is Nkomazi's signature. Fourteen luxury tents dot the campsite above the Komati River, two of which have been purpose-built to accommodate families or parties of four. Ten units have undergone a classical reimagining of the soft furnishings, while four are entirely new builds that incorporate composite decking made from repurposed timber and plastic, similar to what has been used for the camp's sprawling dining hall and outdoor deck area.

The tents, linked to one another and the main reception and dining space via a series of winding stone pathways, are set an ideal distance apart to ensure privacy, without

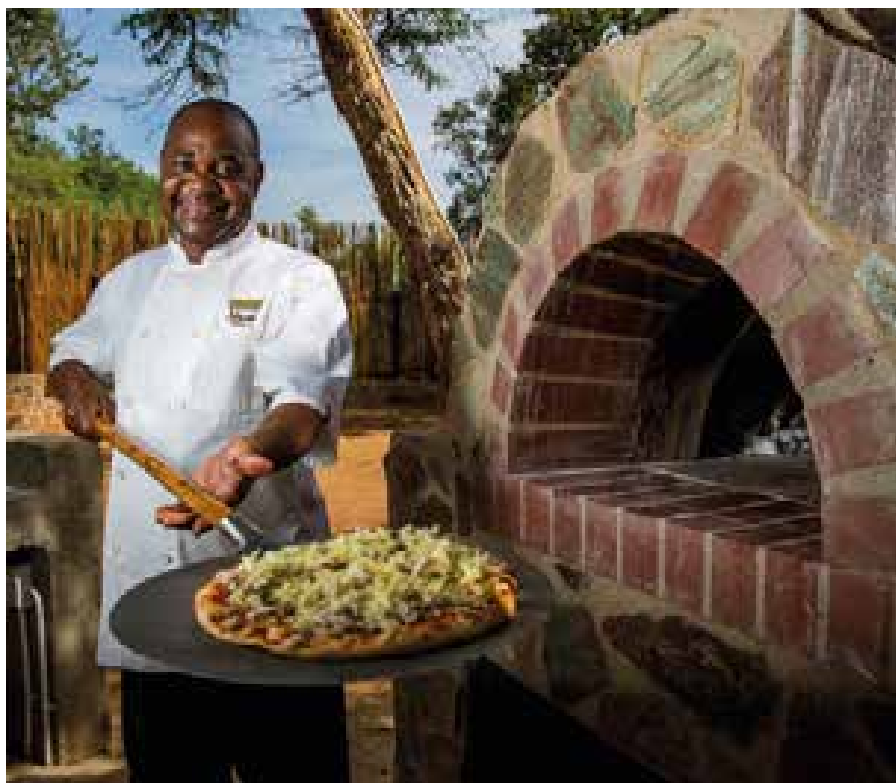
feeling too remote.

Although the décor is vintage "safari minimalism", with a relaxed character that exudes elegance and a sense of a glorious bygone era, each tent is equipped with air conditioning, an en suite bathroom, either king- or twin-sized beds, and an electronic safe.

Being in the bush means that it is a must to take in as much of the outside environment as possible – weather permitting, of course. Outside each tent complex, the private splash pool, outdoor shower and standalone Victorian bath round off the luxury experience.

When nature calls, Nkomazi obliges with a variety of open-air activities – from guided nature walks and birding safaris, to catch-and-release fly fishing, and, my personal favourite, a visit to one of the Bushman painting sites found on the reserve. Should your preference include a private pampering session, you can indulge in a rejuvenating therapy session at The River Retreat spa, or browse locally sourced crafts, body products, and branded merchandise at the cosy in-camp boutique.





“Formed over millions of years and naturally manicured by the elements, the 14,000-hectare Nkomazi Private Game Reserve is a geologist’s dream that effortlessly blends the region’s grassland, wetland, and mountainous landscape into a dreamy safari destination.”



RELAXED DINING

A day filled with such adventure is sure to work up a serious appetite, and again Nkomazi indulges guests with sumptuous treats in a splendid setting.

Nkomazi Private Game Reserve re-opened in late 2020, after a multi-million Rand refurbishment. The new-build dining tent in the main lodge boasts sliding glass doors that lead onto a generous viewing deck.

Mealtimes mean elegant tables set overlooking the surrounding mountains, as the formidable Komati babbles below. Dinners are also served in the open-air boma, where tales of the day’s sightings and activities are shared. Boma nights mean traditional South African fireside fare is served, while the kids may tuck into a pizza made in the newly built pizza oven – a somewhat unique feature at any reserve.

Chef Nyoka is the man responsible for curating dining experiences at Nkomazi, as he adds a touch of gourmet elegance to every meal served. When the weather co-operates, the team invites the afternoon game drive guests to a full-service alfresco long table “in the middle of nowhere” says Ashleigh Dunn, the camp’s general manager.

GETTING THERE

Nkomazi Private Game Reserve is a destination property that is reached from Johannesburg within a three-and-a-half-hour drive. Road transfers can be arranged from O.R. Tambo International Airport, or you can take a short, one-hour flight to Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport via Johannesburg or Cape Town. Nkomazi is equipped with a helipad, or if you’re planning to self-drive, guests in 4x4 vehicles and SUVs can drive directly to the lodge, while those in standard cars are collected from the main gate by prior arrangement.

To book your Nkomazi bush escape, or to arrange a conference or special event, call Newmark Central Reservations on +27 21 427 5900, email reservations@newmarkhotels.com, or visit www.newmarkhotels.com.

*by **bernie hellberg jr** /
photography by **nkomazi private game reserve***

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A NEW VIEW ON THE KRUGER

Kruger Shalati: The Train on the Bridge

Kruger Shalati: The Train on the Bridge. One of the most anticipated and exciting new offerings in the iconic Kruger National Park, South Africa. It is a perfect combination of Africa's most breathtaking natural splendours with well-deserved luxuries aboard a newly refurbished train that's reminiscent of African excellence

Permanently stationed on the historically-rich Selati Bridge above the Sabie River, Kruger Shalati offers bespoke luxury accommodation in a re-envisioned train, which pays homage to the guests who explored the park nearly 100 years ago while welcoming new explorers from near and far. Kruger Shalati celebrates where the first visits to the iconic park were allowed in the early 1920s; the train would park overnight in the exact spot where Kruger Shalati is positioned.

Offering 31 rooms, consisting of 24 carriage rooms and seven Bridge House rooms, all of which provide a profoundly visceral experience, tailored for immersive comfort. Whether you're looking for a one-of-a-kind adventure, an enthralling break, or to immerse yourself in earth's finest creations, Kruger Shalati looks forward to welcoming you on a journey of discovery with nature in the most extraordinary way imaginable.





The glass-walled, large train rooms allow for endless views along the majestic Sabie River's length, while the style of the train is a celebration of African design in collaboration with local art and crafting skills. High above the riverbanks, aligned with the train's floor level, lies the bespoke deck with pool, offering a swimming experience unlike any other – with crocodiles, hippos, buffalos, and elephants greeting guests mere meters

below – a vista unlike any other.

Thought-provoking, unique design is core to the Kruger Shalati offering. Still, the holistic experience is centred around our human-ness, our cultural nuances, the people involved in the making of every element, and ultimately the kindness with which Kruger Shalati receives its guests.

Visit www.krugershalati.com for more information.



Kruger Shalati: *The Train on the Bridge*

Kruger Shalati: The Train on the Bridge is located in one of the world's top game reserves and sits atop the Sabie River, giving guests unparalleled views of the river below and the animals that pop by to enjoy the waters. What you should know about the Train on the Bridge:

UNMATCHED VIEWS

Guests of the hotel are treated to a high vantage point that provides views from all over the hotel, including the spectacular bespoke lounge carriage with its opulent bar and deck. Perhaps one of the best views is from the pool that sits above and almost over the river below.

ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE POOLS IN AFRICA

Where else can you swim in a pool above the Kruger National Park or anywhere with a view comparable to what Shalati offers? Guests can view the animals in the river below while enjoying a swim in the pool, have cocktails pool-side, and swim – all while taking in a stunning African sunset.

EXQUISITE ACCOMMODATION

Guests can make themselves at home in their train carriage suites that feature all the creature comforts expected from a world-class hotel destination. Enjoy spectacular views from the comfort of your carriage suite – the only place in the world where this is possible.

DELICATE CUISINE

The team at Shalati regularly rotate menus to ensure that even regular guests will enjoy fresh new culinary offerings during each visit. With celebrity chef Andrew Atkinson as the team consultant, the menu consists of dishes that include venison wellington, chickpea mushroom croquet, prawn potato gnocchi, mielie meal malva pudding, local trout fish cakes and more. With world-class bar staff and only the best ingredients, guests at Kruger Shalati also have the opportunity to experience bespoke cocktails to be enjoyed while taking in the splendour of the Kruger National Park.

LOCALS PAY LESS

To experience this incredible hotel isn't as out of reach as one may think. Regular special offers are posted on



the Kruger Shalati website, with deals offered exclusively to South Africans. Depending on your choice, the rate may include accommodation, all meals, house beverages and a game drive with a drinks stop, or guests could opt for a bed-and-breakfast rate that includes accommodation and breakfast. 🍷

by *kelly fisher* / photography by *kruger shalati*



THE TEXAS TORNADO

Hennessey Venom F5

No matter what they tell you; there is only one reason for the unveiling of the production version of the ultimate Texas Tornado – the Hennessey Venom F5 – and that is to reclaim the “fastest car in the world” title for the speciality vehicle builder from America.

Hennessey Performance maintains that the successor to

the Venom GT (reckoned to be the fastest car in the world not so long ago but since then surpassed by the Koenigsegg Agera RS, Bugatti Chiron

Super Sport and SCC Tuatara) is “about more than just speed and power”, and was designed to be a “decathlete for the road”. Yet its name already gives



the game away...

The F5 is the most powerful category of wind in the Fujita Scale of Tornado Intensity, which identifies the greatest wind speeds as being between 420 and 512 km/h – the type of velocity John Hennessey and his team hope to reach in their quest to establish a new hypercar speed record.

The Venom F5 concept of 2017

marked a giant leap for Hennessey as it was the first 100 percent bespoke product in its history. The production car – developed under the guidance of ex-GM vehicle dynamics and performance engineer and racing driver John “Heinrocket” Heinrich – is priced at \$2.1 million (approximately R32.2 million) and only 24 ultra-exclusive versions will be produced, with deliveries starting this year.

SYMPHONY OF NUMBERS

According to CEO John Hennessey, the Venom F5 was developed as an all-round performer, blending high levels of driver engagement and outright performance to create a motoring

experience unlike any other. “The Venom F5 is engineered to be an unrivalled ‘decathlete’ among hypercars,” he says. Yet it is also the antithesis of the every day “soft and docile” hypercar – visceral, wild and thrilling, always an occasion to drive.

The F5’s statistics are a symphony of mind-bending numbers. At its heart is the Hennessey-developed rear-mid-mounted 6.6-litre twin-turbocharged V8 engine, named “Fury”, which delivers 1,355 kW (1,817 hp) at 8,000 rpm and packs 1,617 Nm of torque at 5,500 rpm – in a car that weighs only 1,360 kg. This equals a power-to-weight ratio of 1 kW/kg (1,298 hp/ton) – making the rear-wheel driven Venom F5 the most powerful production vehicle ever made.

Weighing only 280 kg, the bespoke, hand-built 90-degree push-rod cross-plane crank V8 features a cast-iron block and aluminium cylinder heads. The crankshaft, pistons, valves and connecting rods are crafted from high-grade metals, such as aluminium, titanium and Inconel, and the engine bay is treated with Cerakote to protect it from excess heat.

According to Hennessey, the engine has an extremely flat torque curve, producing high twisting force levels from low down in the rev range. Interestingly, the only option capable of transferring all this furious torque to the road was a specially designed single-clutch semi-automatic CIMA gearbox, longitudinally-mounted, with seven ratios.

The set-up features close ratios at the lower end for rapid acceleration, and the acceleration is, to put it mildly, prodigious: the 0-100 km/h sprint takes less than three seconds, and the 0-200 km/h run comes in under five seconds.

Longer higher ratios are used to achieve a top speed (on paper, at least) of over 500 km/h. The highest (7th) ratio is geared for a theoretical top speed of 534 km/h but, according to Hennessey, the team does not plan to hit this speed; it merely allows sufficient





scope to pass the 500 km/h mark (and hopefully the 508 km/h target set by the SCC Tuatara).

CORE ATTRIBUTES

At the core of the F5 is an ultra-lightweight carbon fibre monocoque that tips the scales at only 86 kg. The carbon chassis features an intricate herringbone pattern weave, and moulding the interior and exterior parts required more than 600 separate bespoke pieces of tooling.

Its rigidity is crucial, and the monocoque's 52,000 Nm per degree (38,353 lb-ft torque per degree) provides a solid base. According to Hennessey, this will give the F5 "more bandwidth" than other hypercars – making it capable of being driven easily on sweeping rural roads or at speeds

over 500 km/h.

Hennessey Director of Design Nathan Malinick explains that the F5 design journey started with the goal of making the fastest car in the world. "We worked hand-in-hand with our engineering team to 'skin the beast' with aerospace-inspired forms to create a machine that is highly capable technologically, but that is also beautiful."

The front is dominated by a pair of air intakes on the outer lower edges and two supporting pillars of the carbon diffuser, which appear like "fangs" converging below the newly-designed Hennessey 'H' logo. Behind the front splitter, the bodywork channels air under the flat floor towards the rear diffuser.

Two large ducts at either side of the front bumper force air towards the

brakes, and two subtle ducts separate the airflow, moving it away from the wheels to reduce drag-inducing turbulence. At 4,666 mm long and 1,971 mm wide, the compact F5 is only marginally larger than its spiritual predecessor, the Venom GT.

With a drag coefficient of 0.39 Cd, the bodywork wraps tightly around the forged aluminium wheels (19" front/20" rear), accentuating the low, speed-optimised stance. With a subtle spoiler just above the bodywork, the back is arguably the car's most attractive view. A "track pack" with a more aggressive front splitter and a rear-mounted wing, will also be available.

Opening the butterfly-door, the interior design evokes the spirit of fast aircraft cockpits with minimal distractions. There is raw carbon fibre



throughout, with hints of luxury from leather panels on the doors, dashboard and seats. The steering wheel is inspired by an aeroplane “yoke” and in the centre is a green switchable drive mode dial for Sport, Wet, Drag, Track, and F5 modes.

A 7.0” instrument cluster shows a different colour and content layout with every drive mode. The dash also features leather and aluminium inserts, and the door handles are accented by aluminium inserts with the Texas and US flags, displaying the F5’s proud American heritage. A 9.0” Alpine touchscreen infotainment system gives access to Apple Car Play and Android

Auto with satnav, stereo functionality and Bluetooth phone pairing,

TOP SPEED VALIDATION RUNS

Alongside aerodynamics, significant consideration was given to both unsprung mass and achieving a low centre of gravity. Carbon-ceramic brakes, forged aluminium wheels and lightweight Penske dampers keep unsprung mass low, making the F5 feel nimble and “alive”. The centre of gravity is kept low by the engine’s position and drivetrain deep within the car’s substructure.

However, with such immense engine

force, the transfer of power to the wheels while providing optimal traction under acceleration and cornering is a challenge. This is handled by an exact Motec controller, calibrated for optimum power and traction control, and huge Michelin Pilot Cup Sport 2 tyres (345/30/20 at the rear, 265/35/19 at the front).

As part of its validation and to underscore the Venom F5’s position at the peak of hypercar performance, Hennessey is targeting a top speed in excess of 500 km/h and vows to prove this during a two-way validated speed run later this year, using a production



“The F5’s statistics are a symphony of mind-bending numbers. At its heart is the Hennessey-developed rear-mid-mounted 6.6-litre twin-turbocharged V8 engine, named ‘Fury’, which delivers 1,355 kW (1,817 hp) at 8,000 rpm and packs 1,617 Nm of torque at 5,500 rpm – in a car that weighs only 1,360 kg”



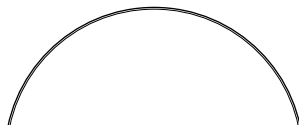
specification car. We will watch this effort with interest.

FINAL WORD

The F5 is the distillation of 30 years of expertise, knowledge, and engineering – the culmination of Hennessey’s innovation and success, and serves as a launch-pad for the next 30 years. As such, the F5 marks the beginning of a new era for the American performance engineering company. 🏁



by **ferdi de vos** / photography by **hennessey**



LIFESTYLE

KEKE COLLECTION

Keke Collection is inspired by luxury, grandeur and spirited scents for seasoned life enthusiasts, who work hard and enjoy money-can't-buy experiences. These individuals appreciate the power of their personal brand essence, demand superior quality, and innovative and uniquely tailored brands to complement their distinguished style. Keke Collection provides a bespoke experience through customised hampers and packaging for corporate clients,

groups and individuals. The Keke Collection Product range offers hand and body lotions to adorn your body, as well as shower gels, shampoos and conditioners for revitalising bath times, all complemented by diffusers and sophisticated scented candles to enrich your personal space. Distributed to exclusive hotels and spas, Keke Collection products make for unique luxury gifts and can be purchased online at www.kekecollection.co.za, and in selected upmarket retail stores.



EXPLORE WITH NESPRESSO

Inspired by the diversity of local coffee cultures, Nespresso set out to discover coffee preferences and rituals around the world. The result is World Explorations, a range of Lungo coffees that captures the sensations, the soul and the coffee tastes of some of the world's most admired cities, which you can enjoy from home, at the touch of a button. In a special tribute to South Africa, the world leader in portioned coffee has quite literally encapsulated the essence of the Mother City in its Cape Town Envivo Lungo, which forms part of the Nespresso World Explorations range. Cape Town features alongside five other cities in the collection, allowing coffee lovers to travel the globe through coffee, by providing the in-cup result of these cities' local tastes. The Nespresso World Explorations coffee range is available at za.buynespresso.com and Nespresso boutiques.

SWEET DISPOSITION

With people spending more time within their four walls than ever before, the need to feel good in our homes has become essential. Plascon, with its finger on the pulse, considered both this global imperative to “nest” as well as the need for something to look forward to when they developed 2021's favourite colour. Cue Plascon Golden Syrup (Y2-B1-2), a warm, sunny yellow that encapsulates positivity, confidence and joy. An embracing tone, Plascon Golden Syrup (Y2-B1-2) has the power to instantly uplift, nurture and illuminate. Embodying optimism, it's a feel-good hug in a paint tin that is tintable in all of Plascon's premium products. Plascon's Favourite Hue 2021 will inspire you to update your space, and, in turn, your renewed space will inspire you. For free advice on how to use Favourite Hue 2021 or any other Plascon colours, please email the Plascon Colour Advice team at ColourAdvice@kansaiplascon.co.za.





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FABRIC TECHNOLOGY

PERFECTLY TIMED PERFECTION

TAG Heuer & Porsche – Two Icons of Luxury Join Forces

Fueled by a common history with innovation and motor racing at its core, led by visionary families whose values of entrepreneurship, precision and performance propelled them to the forefront of their respective industries, TAG Heuer and Porsche join forces to unveil an extensive partnership that will set a new standard for brand integration.

Swiss luxury watchmaker TAG Heuer and the German sportscar manufacturer Porsche have announced their new partnership: an authentic alliance between two brands whose common DNA in motorsports and racing forges a holistic and long-term collaboration ranging from competition to product development. A new watch, the TAG Heuer Carrera Porsche Chronograph, is unveiled as first celebration of the iconic brands.

TAG Heuer CEO Frédéric Arnault says that the time is right for his brand's partnership with Porsche: "TAG Heuer and Porsche have common history and values, of course, but more importantly, we share an attitude. Like Porsche, we are disruptors at heart, always in pursuit of high performance. With this alliance, TAG Heuer and Porsche finally come together officially after decades of close encounters and will create unmatched experiences and products for customers and fans that are passionate about both our brands and what we stand for."

"The strong friendship of our brand with TAG Heuer exists since decades and I am more than happy that we are now taking the next steps in the frame of a strategic partnership," says Detlev von Platen, Member of the Executive Board for Sales and Marketing at Porsche AG. "We bring together what our customers love the most about both of us: authentic heritage, thrilling sports events, unique life experiences and the fulfilment of





dreams. We both strive to create some unique, magic moments for our communities. We now look forward to doing it together.”

TAG HEUER AND PORSCHE: TWO HISTORIES - ONE PASSION

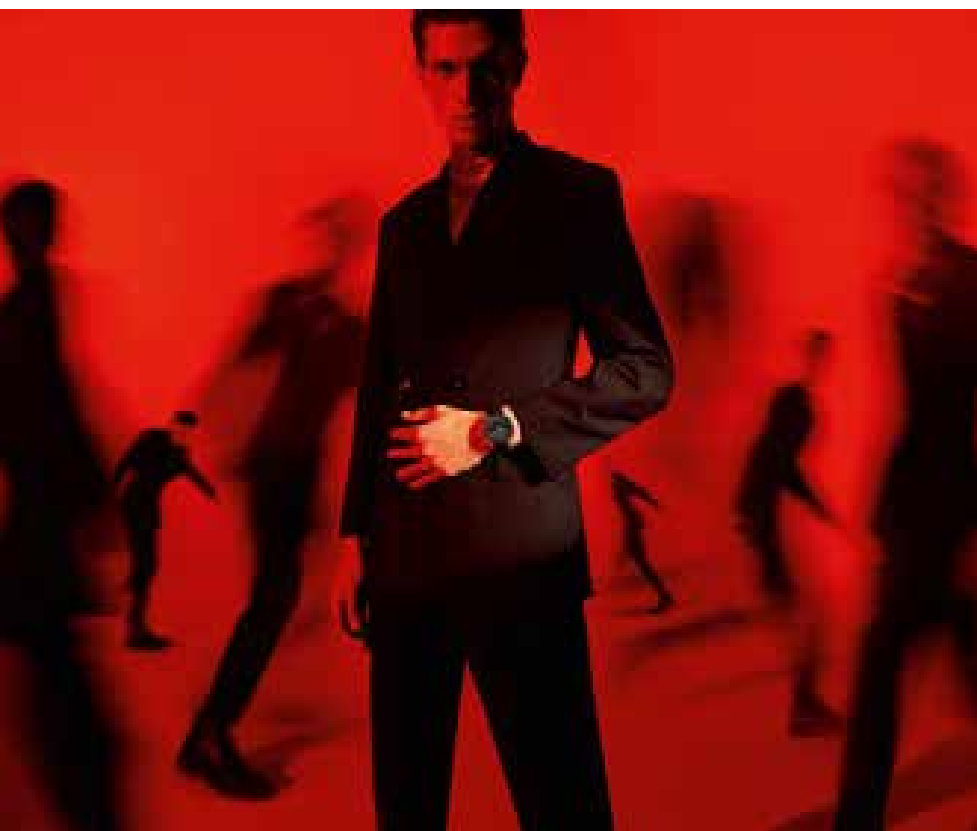
TAG Heuer and Porsche have a number of things in common, from their rich histories and reputations for innovation to cutting-edge technologies, powerful and independent mindset, and a knack for excellence in design. And for over half a century, their stories have intersected in intricate, intriguing ways.

Of course, the argument can be made that certain similarities of heritage can be traced all the way back to when both companies were founded by self-taught entrepreneurs. Edouard Heuer and Ferdinand Porsche were visionaries and pioneers whose creations changed their chosen fields forever. Heuer

was responsible for the first manufactured chronograph and Porsche invented an electric wheel hub motor. Both these accomplishments earned medals at World's Fairs held in Paris 11 years apart. Heuer was honoured in 1889 and Porsche presented the first Lohner-Porsche Electromobile with this innovation at the Expo in Paris in 1900.

A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP BEGINS - AND FLOURISHES

The true cornerstones of the new partnership, however, are descendants of the brands' founding fathers. Ferdinand Porsche's son, Ferdinand Anton Ernst or "Ferry", joined his father's engineering office in 1931 at the age of 22 and founded the car brand that bears the family name in 1948. Within a few years, the Porsche name would be associated with race track success all around the world - including a class win in the



Carrera Panamericana race of 1954. In honour of its successful participation, Porsche calls its most powerful engine 'Carrera'.

Edouard Heuer's great-grandson Jack led his family's company for decades. In 1963, he created the first Heuer Carrera chronograph, designed to let drivers tell the time at a glance in the heat of action.

This ground-breaking timepiece and Porsche's most powerful Carrera engine united Porsche and Heuer – for the first time – in the spirit of the 'Carrera' (or 'race'), which embodied ambition, speed and technical excellence.

TAG HEUER CARRERA PORSCHE CHRONOGRAPH

Carrera: an iconic name that has been associated with TAG Heuer and Porsche for generations – was a natural choice for the first creative product collaboration. A tribute to the heritage of two legendary brands, the new chronograph offers a first glimpse at what they can achieve together.

The TAG Heuer Carrera Porsche Chronograph is an exquisite example of coordination, cooperation and collaboration.

Based on TAG Heuer's Carrera Sport Chronograph design, with its distinctive tachymeter scale engraved on the bezel, it introduces a number of features inspired by Porsche's design essence. A compelling union of two icons of performance, quality, and innovation, this chronograph is a seamless blend of the Porsche and TAG Heuer universes, reflecting the excellence of both names without diluting the essence of either.

Porsche's engraved inscription is visible on the bezel and the unmistakable font is also used for the indexes. The Porsche colours of red, black, and grey – which also recall historic Heuer models – are incorporated throughout the watch, and on clear display through the transparent crystal case back is the oscillating mass, which has been redesigned in affectionate tribute to Porsche's celebrated steering wheel. It is printed with "Porsche" and "TAG Heuer". The dial's asphalt effect, created especially for this watch, perfectly expresses a passion for the road, while Arabic numerals suggest the numbers on the dashboard of fine Porsche sports cars.

This timepiece is presented either on a soft strap in luxurious calf leather and

innovative stitching that echoes the Porsche interior, or on an interlocking bracelet reflecting streamlined racing design. At its heart is the in-house Calibre Heuer 02 manufacture movement with an impressive 80-hour power reserve. The chronograph mechanism's vertical clutch and column wheel demonstrate the brands' unflinching demand for absolute precision.

Finally, the TAG Heuer Carrera Porsche Chronograph is a Special Edition watch in bespoke packaging, with colours and a style consistent with the remarkable watch inside. The black watch box features the logos of TAG Heuer and Porsche in white. Inside the box is a perfectly-sized black travel pouch with an unmistakably Porsche red interior.

The official partnership between TAG Heuer and Porsche may be on its starting line but it has been built on a remarkable foundation: the shared heritage and the common interests of two of the world's favourite and most dynamic luxury brands. It is a true collaboration developed over decades on some of the world's most challenging racetracks and on the wrists of drivers who were the very embodiment of Jack Heuer's motto, "Time doesn't stop. Why should we?"

TAG Heuer is available from boutiques at Sandton City (+27 11 784 7422) and V&A Waterfront (+27 21 4 21 8539). For more info call +27 11 669 0500, or visit www.picotandmoss.co.za

*by **picot & moss** /
photography by **TAG heuer***

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Karoo Arcadia (photo by Sean Ranger)

A SCULPTOR'S STORY

Nanette Ranger transforms simple shapes into objects of eternal desire

Finding inspiration in both the seen and the unseen, Nanette Ranger lives her dream of being a practising artist every day, creating a vision of fantasy that echoes in the reality of everyday life.

For many centuries, sculpture has been considered one of the most enduring and impressionable art forms known to humanity. An art form that holds strong ties to civilisation's historical and stylistic evolution as we know it. The development of Renaissance art, religious art, and the remarkable achievements of classical antiquity all see sculpture as a driving force. Sculpture has served to express and represent significant historical figures and events and reveal humanity's inherent connection to the natural world – the latter being a theme that artist, Nanette Ranger, has been exploring for years through her intricate work.

Growing up in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, in the 1970s and 1980s was an exciting time to witness how art was positively shaping the social, political and experiential landscape at the time, despite apparent setbacks in South

Africa. “Musicians, artists, writers and other creatives were rebelling against the political and social system at the time,” recalls Ranger. “Durban was a place abundant with art exhibitions, theatre and music. To be a part of that world was very enticing.”

As one of five in a family where both parents allowed the children the freedom to tackle projects that would inspire them to express themselves creatively, Ranger's natural desire to explore this world was encouraged from a young age. The children painted enthusiastically on their bedroom walls with their father and helped their remedial teacher mother with tie-dying, candle-making, and puppets' sewing. This encouragement extended into her primary and secondary schooling, and Ranger went on to study art at the University of the Free State, where she received an Honours Degree in Fine Art in 1993.

Since moving to the Western Cape in 1998, and living her dream

as a practising artist working in print, painting, drawing, pottery and sculpting, Ranger slowly migrated to solely working as a sculptor. Until roughly a decade ago, she worked mainly in modelling clay and firing the work in a ceramic kiln, but her journey since has taken her to model in clay and casting in a variety of materials such as bronze, cold marble resin, and cement. “The method enables me to create much bigger sculptures,” says Ranger. Her biggest to date being one of five meters. The main subject in her sculpture work is that of the human form, particularly the feminine. “As a woman, I relate to it directly, and it feels authentic to me. I love combining the female body with natural textures and forms: small creatures, birds, lizards, chameleons, and so on,” she explains. “I also like to use the human form in my sculptures because people and humanity have always interested and intrigued me.”



Icarus - Rethinking the Flight (photo by Jan Ras)

INSPIRATION & THE CREATIVE PROCESS

The artist finds inspiration in both the seen and unseen, the tangible and the existential. "I can be inspired by something political, or a dream, or something I have read, or simply, an emotion," she explains. "But often, I am inspired by things I see – an interesting shape in the natural world like a seed pod, a piece of dried out coral, or human form and its complex and beautiful shape." Once inspiration hits, she creates a pencil drawing, after which comes a quick clay 'sketch' of the sculpture she wants to create. This 'sketch' serves as a tool the sculptor uses to work out technical and logistical problems in the work they are about to make. "This differs from a maquette,"

she explains. "A maquette is a small version of the sculpture that one would create to show what the piece would look like when completed."

After planning, Ranger, together with her team, creates a silicone mould with a hard shell so that a certain amount of the editions of a particular sculpture can be cast from the mould. "For many years I resisted using this method because I thought that every piece should be unique and original," says Ranger. "I then came to the realisation that the design and concept of the sculpture are what is unique and original. It takes so much creative energy to produce a piece, that it doesn't make sense to go to so much trouble producing a ceramic original and then to sell it to a single buyer who

would put it in their home where it gets to be seen by a dozen people at most. By producing a body of limited edition works, each edition becomes like an ambassador to the original concept."

ART IN THE TIME OF COVID

As with the beginning of each new year, a fresh set of eyes is set on the future and what potential it may bring. The unprecedented world we faced in 2020 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic presented a considerable amount of challenges to humanity as a whole, and forced the international community into the wonderful world of the present moment – not knowing what the future might bring. As an artist, I wanted to share this feeling of the perpetual present with people through my social media," explains Ranger. "I opened the virtual doors to my studio and invited the public in to witness the processes behind my work. Through social media, I connected with people all across South Africa who were, like me, in lockdown. Out of uncertainty and isolation, came a sense of community. The art world became invigorated with artists using their social media platforms as visual diaries, blank canvases and gallery walls."

Fuelled by these tumultuous times, Ranger saw the hunger for culture and the importance of the messages conveyed by artists through their work. "Through my sculpture garden, I hope to create an immersive experience for visitors where they can wander through the curated garden to view my sculptures. In doing so, I hope to continue the ethos of inclusivity, creativity, conversation and community as we experienced it during the lockdown peak. I believe this kind of project is so important, not only to the message of my work, but to the

discourse around the role of art during this pandemic. As we find ourselves at the beginning of another year, I look to the future and see exciting prospects for art in South Africa.”

As well as working on larger-scale sculptures for gardens and public spaces, which includes her collaboration with Creation Wine farm – where Ranger’s work was on exclusive display – that explores the natural synergies and syntheses of art, food, and wine, the artist has been quite busy. “Earlier in 2020, I took part in the ‘Sculptures on the Cliffs’ exhibition at Gearings Point in Hermanus as part of the FynArts exhibition *Vertical Animal*, curated by Gavin Young. My sculpture, *The Hunt* created quite a stir in the news and on social media,” says Ranger. *The Hunt* depicts a nude human female with a festival headdress of a kudu on her

head. I have decided to explore further this theme of “Vertical Animal” and humanity’s connection and relationship with the rest of the natural world. I am currently working on a maquette of a human male figure (nude under his trench coat) with the head of a hyena.”

“I believe the role of art is to ignite life. With so many artists now creating their own platforms of expression, our lives are bound to be filled with the promise of beauty and meaning,” she concludes.

For more information, visit www.nanetteranger.co.za. 📧

by **julie graham** /
photography by **jan ras** / **sean ranger**



Photo by Jan Ras

THE CAR THAT SAVED PORSCHE

The Porsche Boxster at 25 Years Young

It may be difficult to believe now, but about 30 years ago, the iconic sports car builder Porsche was on the verge of bankruptcy. The manufacturer's annual sales had fallen from over 50,000 units in 1986 to 14,000 in 1993, and the company had to revert to contract work from other manufacturers to survive.

Among the most significant of the factors that caused Porsche's decline during these years, were the marque's ageing model line-up, a faltering world economy and a bloated production process – driving up prices at the worst possible time. It was clear Porsche needed a new, affordable model, and for inspiration, Zuffenhausen looked East – to Mazda and the success it was achieving with the MX-5.

The Porsche management team decided a relatively inexpensive mid-engine roadster recalling the 550 Spyder and the 718 RS 60 Spyder race car of the 1950s was what the company needed. The board also knew they had to find a more efficient way to build it, and in 1992, ironically, again looked East – turning to former Toyota executives and engineers to overhaul the company's messy and inefficient processes.

TOYOTA PROCESSES

The suggestions received from the Toyota team, based on "just-in-time" principles, and the improvements made to streamline the procuring

and manufacturing processes led to significant advantages and helped to improve the company's competitiveness (according to Porsche, the assembly time per car was reduced from 120 hours to 72, and the number of errors per vehicle fell by 50 per cent!).

Efficiencies were optimised by the intelligent use of carry-over parts, such as the water-cooled production flat-six engine and body panels incorporated into the 996 generation 911. The open-top two-seater 968 project made rapid progress, and the Boxster concept car was well received at the 1993 Detroit Motor Show.

The production version was launched in 1996 with hardly any changes in its visual appearance, and now, in its fourth generation, more than 357,000 units have been built. Now, to celebrate a quarter of a century of the roadster nameplate and pay homage to the car model that saved the marque, Porsche has commissioned an anniversary model: the Boxster 25 Years.

LOCAL PRICING

This limited-edition model – based







on the 718 Boxster GTS 4.0 with a 4.0-litre six-cylinder boxer engine delivering 294 kW and 420 Nm of torque coupled with either a six-speed manual gearbox or a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission – is restricted to 1,250 units worldwide. And while local pricing has been released, it is not yet clear how many will find their way here.

Locally, the Boxster 25 Years will be priced from R1,660,000 (nearly R170,000 more than the model it is based on) when it arrives later this year, regardless of the chosen transmission. Various options – including a Burmester surround sound system, adaptive sports seats plus, adaptive cruise control and ceramic composite brakes – will be available, and if the standard three-year Driveplan is extended to five years, the price will go up to R1,710,000.

The limited-run model pays homage to the Boxster concept car of 1993 with a reinterpretation of the colour Neodyme, described as

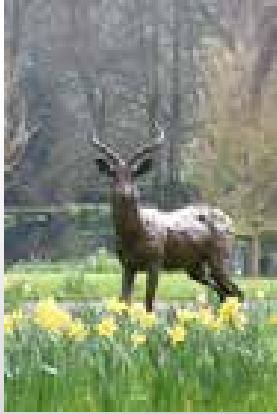
a “copper-like shimmering brown”, used on the front apron, the side air intakes, the lettering and the two-tone 20” alloy wheels.

The Boxster 25 Years is offered in GT Silver Metallic, although Deep Black Metallic and Carrara White Metallic are also available. The special model combines a Bordeaux leather interior with a red fabric convertible top (both available in black) and an Aluminium interior package.

Interior equipment includes electrically adjustable sports seats, door sill trims with “Boxster 25” lettering and a heated GT multifunction sports leather steering wheel. Other standard features include Porsche Active Suspension Management sports suspension (PASM), which is 10 millimetres lower, and Porsche Torque Vectoring (PTV) with mechanical limited-slip differential.



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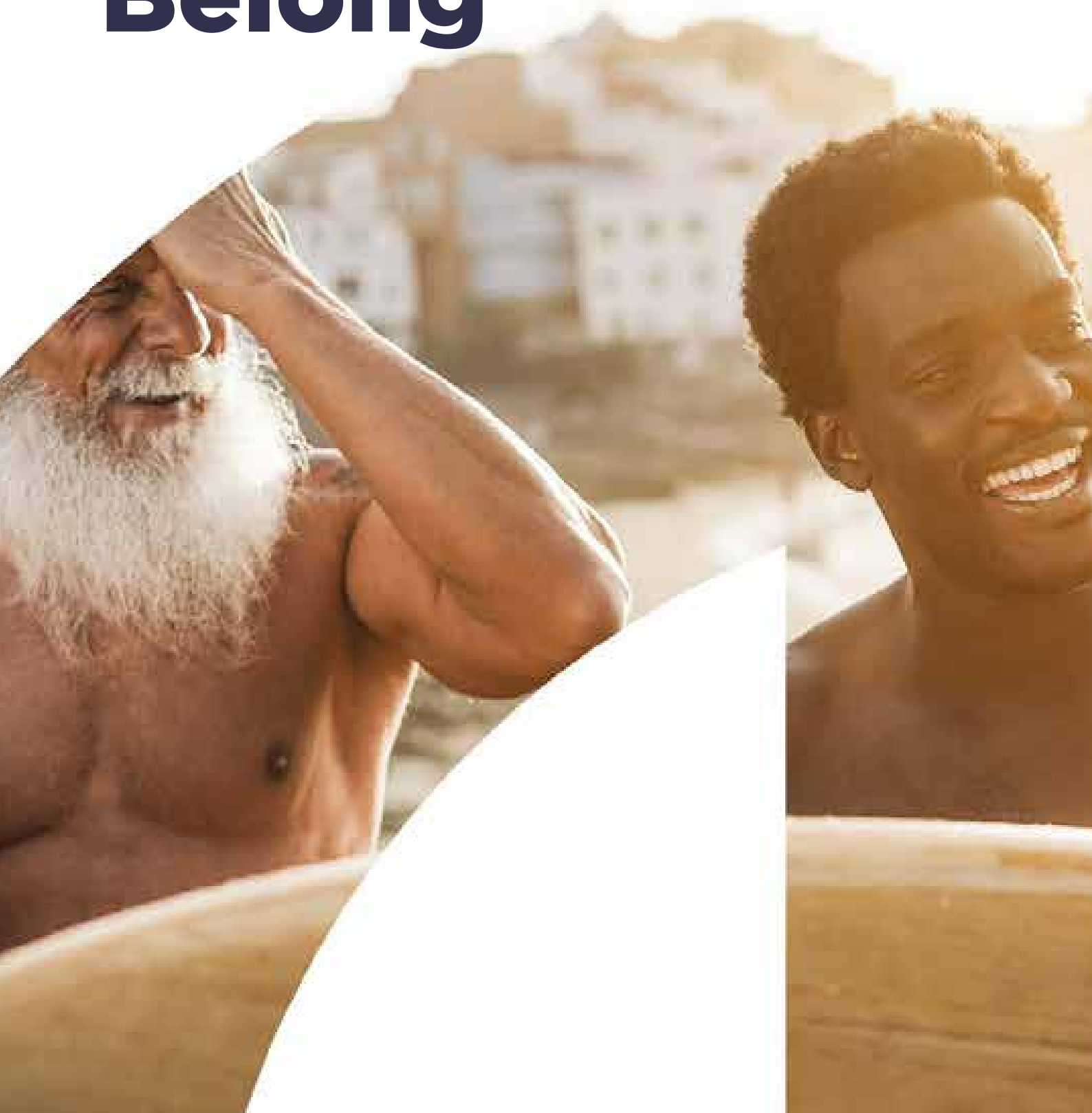
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REFLECTIONS & PERSPECTIVE

A Look at 2021's Design Trends by Kim Williams

True innovation often begins by looking to the past for inspiration. As we navigate our way through 2021, it is important to draw inspiration from the lessons that 2020 taught us to purposefully strive for pioneering design.

Few understand the need to draw inspiration from the past, better than Cape Town-based interior creative and behavioural specialist, Kim Williams. Kim believes that only by reflecting on our design influences can we ground our individual styles and lay the foundation for real innovation.

Signature has curated Kim's top design trends from 2020, and we show how they are likely to evolve in 2021.

BIOPHILIA

Studio Quincoces Dragó - Partners

(Image courtesy ITALIANBARK + SOMA)

Bringing nature into our spaces provides us with a kind of visual comfort. A lot more greenery in workspaces shows that the COVID pandemic has intensified our need to reconnect with nature in the professional world. The concept of biophilia embraces connecting with nature on all levels, from organic materials to earthy tones and colours; natural elements permeate our spaces as we try to recreate a connection with nature. One key aspect of this trend

is our relationship to our wellbeing. In Europe, the concept of biophilia is evolving to incorporate a mindful awareness of ourselves in our spaces as integral to our health. Biophilia will continue to evolve into mindful living. We will see the extensive use of natural and organic materials as a way to

make our spaces organically imperfect. Increasing and evolving awareness on our part, where we are very aware of every element in our environment, is likely to motivate more of us towards better choices concerning sustainable living and our impact on the environment.





MODERN RETRO

Private Residence – Porto Rotondo
(Image courtesy ITALIANBARK + SOMA)

The modern retro style is one of Kim's favourite styles to have emerged in 2020, especially how this style centres around incorporating nostalgic elements, which has always been a core tenant of her designs. The modern retro style has signature lovely, lush elements, like gold taps and classic patterns, that make spaces timelessly stylish and classic. More than that, the new modern retro puts an interesting twist on the idea of vintage as it draws inspiration from more recent decades, like the 1970s and the 1990s and takes inspiration from pop culture such as PC and video games. The beauty of the

old has evolved; we see the use of pattern and the return of velvet and classical elements of retro presented modernly. The new modern is relevant for the South African context given our outdoor lifestyle, as it embraces simplicity, brightness, and the line between indoor and outdoor living. Incorporating beautiful ceramics, more woods, and texture into our space, this style is an excellent guiding tool for creating simple, beautiful, and elegant spaces. It's a modern, clean, and fresh approach that will continue to evolve from wanting to connect with nature but in a simple, decluttered way.

NEW MINIMALISM

Matteo Nunziati – Architect (Image courtesy ITALIANBARK + SOMA)

At the beginning of the lockdown in

2020, there was an intense decluttering process many of us went through and our need to have less stuff and have more space in our spaces introduced minimalism into our everyday lives again. Organic, highly tactile materials that encourage us to engage more with specific objects in our homes make our spaces enriching environments to be in. Minimalism is built on sustainable, intentional living and an emotional relationship with your home. However, new minimalism is not sparse like its predecessor, but rather about reducing the number of material things we have down to what we need. Classical minimalism was about the absence of things, and new minimalism is about choosing what to retain in a space, speaking to how important mindfulness is in this new style.



MAXIMALISM

Seletti Studio Maison and Objet 2020
(Image courtesy ITALIANBARK + SOMA)

Ironically, in 2020 we also saw the emergence of minimalisms polar opposite, maximalism. Constructed around a ‘more is more’ mentality, this style uses every element of our space as an opportunity to make a statement, grab our attention, and entertain our mind’s eye so that every room becomes an experience rather than just a room. It’s a powerful style, full of colour, pattern and boldness, and it is certainly interesting that we have seen the simultaneous emergence of both sides of the spectrum. Kim believes that this is because, as individuals, we are becoming more appreciative of our personal style rather than merely following other’s choices.

COLOUR

Daide Buscaglia (Image courtesy ITALIANBARK + SOMA)

The importance of colour is hard



to understate. It will continue to play an essential role as we become more mindful of our colour selections. From soft hues to create a sense of comfort and connection, to very bright colours in modernism, playful living creates excitement. The beauty of bright reds combined with vibrant blues, harnesses the power of contrast to create impact. By mixing and matching objects from various decades, the effect is reminiscent of art deco trends and style. The use of colour will create those experiences and be very specific about how you design colour into your space. As a medium, colour is extremely powerful, and Kim hopes that we will see a lot more boldness, akin to what we saw in the 1980s, in 2021.

PLAYFUL LIVING

Vitra (Image courtesy ITALIANBARK + SOMA)

The evolution of maximalism and playful living invites us to mix and match bold colours, textures, patterns, and unconventional shapes. It is about what lies beyond functionality and invites us to explore and play in our spaces. It will incorporate pop culture from the ‘80s and ‘90s. Driven mainly by Instagram’s influence over our perspective on spaces and interior design, it is about evolving our thinking to push creativity and fantasy beyond the usual into an escapist realm, creating optimism and joy in our spaces.

THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

A move towards self-managed schedules, limited team meetings and smaller offices makes it imperative that we truly focus on the function we need our spaces to fill, as well as the emotions they induce in 2021 and beyond. What is clear is that people prioritise their happiness within a space, and that casual, playful, and flexible workspaces facilitate a sense of wellbeing, creativity and therefore, productivity. As we go into 2021, comfort, happiness and fluidity are set to be our guiding factors

RIGHT: *The Importance of Colour*
BELOW: *Playful Living*

as the lines between our homes and our offices blur.

RETHINKING OWNERSHIP

The new generation is not as materialistic as the generations past, and they are rethinking ownership. Kim predicts that we are no longer going to have a product-driven environment but rather a service-driven one. This is likely to present in design services, such as renting furniture and rotating it out as the seasons and styles change, rather than buying and keeping pieces. It will also be a way of embracing a more sustainable recycling perspective.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SILENCE

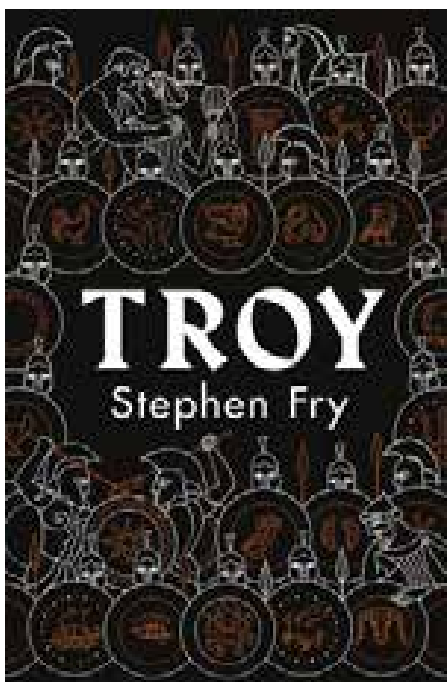
Another aspect of being in our spaces is that we have become very aware of noise given all the activity within the home context. For example, understanding the impact of white noise in a work-from-home model and how it affects your ability to work and relax. Even in workspaces, as we become more mindful, the need for silence will play more of a role in the way we design.

As we launch into an uncertain 2021, our spaces will need to be designed to provide us with many different sensations from relief to connection, relaxation to invigoration, which is a challenge that poses genuinely unique, and hopefully fruitful, circumstances for designers the world over.

For more about Kim Williams and to sign-up for her blog, visit www.kimwilliams.co.za. Follow Kim on Facebook and Instagram @kim_williams_design. 📱



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BY THE FADING LIGHT

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With curated experiences, professional support, and flexibility that prioritises your life, and your style, there's never been a better time to live your life... your way. To join the adventure and capture every moment with a card that thinks just like you do.

BEYOND CLUB OFFERS

As a valued Diners Club *Beyond* member, your new Digital Personal Concierge Assistant will save you time and money. Your assistant is on-hand 24/7, to assist give you



a hand when booking and planning your next holiday with friends or family.

Travel Awards are another unique aspect of the *Beyond* experience. Enjoy the journey with an array of travel benefits such as flight discounts, access to over 1,000 lounges worldwide, spa treatments, priority service, and more.

Beyond is by your side to enhance your lifestyle. Live beyond the mundane with world-class dining experiences, exclusive invitations to connoisseur events, golfing discounts, preferential

become a member

- Annual income of R250,000 or more
- Your South African ID (or passport if not a South African citizen)
- Proof of income
- Proof of residence not older than 3 months

rates – to name a few. And when the good times come calling, *Beyond* rewards you with discounts at all Tsogo Sun establishments, exclusive invitations to golfing events, and so much more.

Naturally, as a member, you have access to International privileges through the Diners Club International network.

BEYOND MEMBERS ALSO ENJOY

- 55 days interest free;
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- Real-time transaction updates and notifications;
- Online statements;
- 24/7 customer service;
- Quick and easy card replacement;
- No initiation fee charged for new card and loyalty programmes.

By thinking *Beyond* and joining the club, you'll get to live a life less ordinary and experience a world of endless lifestyle, travel and entertainment benefits that have been perfectly fashioned just for you. Your best life starts here. 🌍







CULINARY ART **IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Showcasing the Best of Fine Food Photography

Food photography is an ever-evolving art form that is the exclusive reserve of only the best photographers. Renowned local photographers, Maryna Cotton and Ryan Abbott, show *Signature* some of their most delectable work, showcasing the mouthwatering creations of two of South Africa's finest culinary masters.



Chef JC Wagener – Rosenhof Country House (by Maryna Cotton)



ABOVE:

"Pampoenkoekies" by Maryna Cotton

LEFT & OPPOSITE:

*Chef Darren Badenhorst – Le chêne, Leeu Estates
(by Ryan Abbott)*





ABOVE:

*Chef JC Wagener – Rosenhof Country House, Oudtshoorn
(by Maryna Cotton)*

LEFT:

*Chefs Pierre & Debbie Malherbe – Jemima's Restaurant,
Oudtshoorn (by Maryna Cotton)*



contact

Jemima's Restaurant

www.jemimas.com

Le chêne

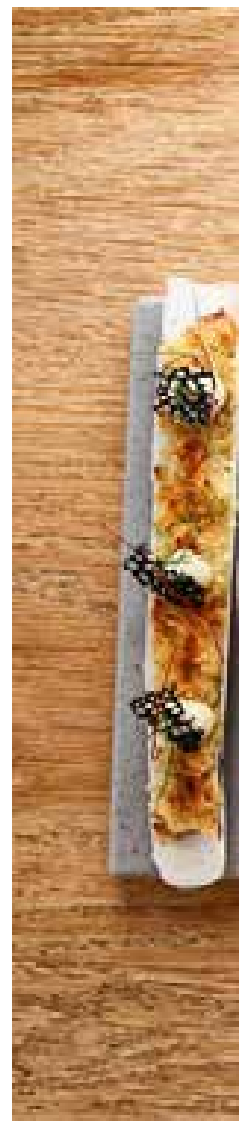
www.lechene.co.za/restaurant

Le coin Français

www.lecoinfrancais.co.za

Rosenhof Country House

www.rosenhof.co.za



RIGHT:
Chef Darren Badenhorst – Le chêne, Leeu Estates
(by Ryan Abbott)

BELOW:
Chef Darren Badenhorst – Le coin Français, Franschhoek
(by Ryan Abbott)



VIRTUAL WELLNESS

Three Ways Virtual Reality could Transform Mental Health

With one in four expected to experience a mental health problem at any one time, increasing access to treatment has become essential.



Improving access to treatment for mental health ailments can be challenging. Therapists require extensive training, and the most effective forms of therapy involve coaching patients in everyday situations, which is time-consuming and therefore costly.

Delivering psychological therapies in virtual reality (VR) may provide a solution. Here are three ways VR could transform mental health treatment.

1. “IN-SITU” COACHING

The most successful therapeutic interventions help people to modify the way they think, react, and behave in the very situations they find most challenging. This could be anything from getting on a crowded bus, to going to a social event, to simply leaving the house.

We tend to remember information best when we're in the same physical or mental state as we were when the memory was initially formed. This is known as state dependent learning. So for example, if we want someone to remember a technique that will help reduce their anxiety while food shopping, it's generally best to actually visit a supermarket during the therapy session in order to train and practise the technique.

Such active “in-situ” coaching can rarely happen in mental health services because of factors like cost and time.

THE CONVERSATION

This is where VR can help.

VR environments create immersive simulations of real world environments, allowing you to walk around and interact with the environment as if it were real. You can enter the situations you typically find challenging, and learn psychological techniques to overcome your difficulties alongside a virtual or real-life therapist.

Crucially, although we know the VR environment is just a simulation, we nonetheless respond as we would in the corresponding real-world environment, both psychologically and physiologically. As a result, any learning that's made in VR transfers to the real world.

In one study of 30 patients with severe paranoid beliefs, fear of real-world social situations halved after a single VR coaching session. Similar findings have been seen for a range of other experiences, such as fears of height and social anxiety.

2. FLEXIBILITY

Not only is VR more practical, but people are generally more willing to enter virtual versions of the situations they find anxiety-provoking because they know it's only a simulation. It's also easier to repeatedly try things out that are too scary or perhaps too embarrassing to try in the real world.

VR scenarios can also be graded in difficulty or even personalised for each person. In a VR study at the University

of Oxford on treating fear of heights, participants began in the virtual atrium of a ten-storey building and were then able to choose which floor to go to. The idea was to begin practising on the lower, less scary floors, and work their way up as they became more confident.

VR also allowed the researchers to make some of the scenarios more fun for participants – such as having tasks where you rescued a kitten or had to pop bubbles. This added flexibility in how participants were able to confront their fear may be one reason why their reductions in fear of heights exceeded those seen in traditional exposure therapy.

The flexibility of VR also means it can be adapted to help treat a range of mental health problems. VR treatments have been developed for many other phobias, such as spiders, as well as for other disorders such as PTSD, social anxiety, depression, eating disorders, psychosis, and addiction.

3. AUTOMATION

Perhaps the most significant advantage of VR therapies is that they can be automated. This means that in VR there can be a virtual coach with you who explains the therapy and teaches you the psychological techniques to try out.

For example, our team has developed a virtual coach named Nic, who is used in our ongoing research into VR for mental health treatment. Nic provides

encouragement to users and gives them ideas of psychological techniques to try during treatment.

Virtual coaches, like Nic, help guide therapy. gameChange/ Oxford VR, Author provided (No reuse)

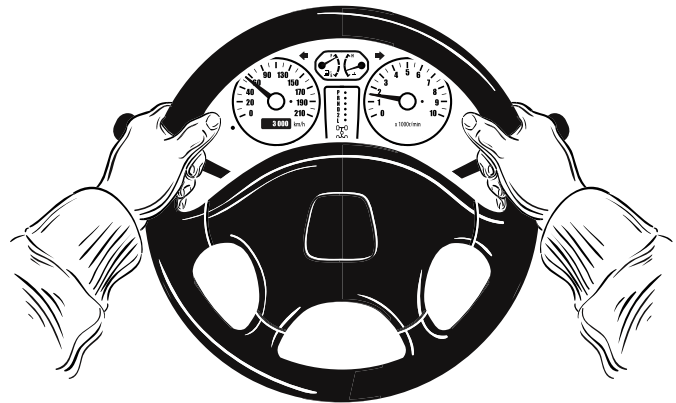
Virtual coaches like Nic can work like a therapist without a therapist actually needing to be present at every VR session. Instead, a graduate psychologist or peer supporter (such as someone who has lived through a similar experience) can lead the sessions with the user, providing support and guidance alongside the virtual coach.

Because there are many more graduate psychologists and peer supporters available than highly trained therapists, VR therapy can help ensure more people are able to access the treatment they may need, without delay. VR treatment is also likely to be more affordable for the same reason.

Continuous improvements to VR hardware mean it's becoming increasingly affordable and feasible to potentially use this technology in mental health services in the near future for the treatment of a range of conditions. While it would never replace therapists, it could improve the number of people able to access therapy. 🧠

THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Travel advice from behind the wheel



For the average man, the barman is the traditional dispenser of wisdom. Or even the local Italian barber. It's at the hands of these grizzled old gentlemen where the average man finds the answers to life's deepest and most vexing issues, such as where that one sock always disappears to in the washing machine.

But for the sports journalist, who is always travelling somewhere between hotels and stadiums, this vital role is filled by the courtesy car driver. I have received advice from various courtesy car drivers over the years.

Advice such as how to kill somebody, without leaving a trace. I once had a driver who used to work as a specialised security operative. I'm not sure how we even arrived at the topic, as I'm not in the habit of asking people advice for the perfect homicide. I can be a bit boring like that, focusing instead on questions around fatherhood and basic car maintenance. In any case, my personal fixer advised me as follows: If you ever need to shoot somebody, do it with a shotgun. "The pellets are much harder to trace than regular bullets," he said. Noted. It hasn't come in handy yet, but you never know.

Then there was the advice I received from a former Recce. I was told that if I ever found myself in

the situation of needing to catch a crocodile – as one so often does in this crazy mixed-up suburban life we all lead – it is best to approach said lizard from behind. "From the front, you are dead meat. But catch him from behind, and he is like a puppy in your hands," Rambo told me.

Another driver, a former police dog trainer and handler, said a dog without a job is worthless to itself and society. I have never been able to look at my sleeping, snoring, farting Labrador in the same way again. He also told me that training a police dog takes six weeks of dedicated and daily reinforcing of commands, and that you should never reward with treats only words of praise. I asked if this also worked with children?

I was once part of a group of journalists travelling from a golf tournament to the airport. Our driver didn't utter a single word for the entire two-hour trip. Perhaps because the two-hour trip was only meant to take one hour and 15 minutes. And maybe because he had no clue as to the directions to the airport. And probably because he only had petrol for a 45-minute trip at best.

After realising what trouble we were in, I took over the directions and managed to get us to the onramp for the airport before our minibus stuttered and died – tank empty.

Our good man had still not uttered a word, but simply let his head fall onto his hands on the steering wheel. We grabbed our bags and ran the rest of the 800 metres to the airport building, just making our flights. He taught me that the driver who says nothing can be as equally disconcerting as the one who tells you his life story before leaving the parking lot.

And finally, there was my driver in Shanghai. After picking me up at the airport, we confirmed the cost for the ride. Halfway to my hotel, he stopped the car and said I could walk the rest of the way, which was only slightly shorter than the entire length of the Great Wall of China, or we could agree on a "top-up" fee. This was said in extremely broken English which made him resemble Mr Miyagi, and who was now "Waxing Off" the money in my wallet. I handed over what was equivalent to a deposit on a Shanghai penthouse. He dropped me off at my hotel and handed me his card, saying with a smile that I was more than welcome to contact him should I desire to be ripped off on another trip.

Thoughts of that shotgun advice entered my head. 🚗

by *michael vlismas* /
photography by *istockphoto.com*

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