## S I G N A T U R E The Diners Club International Magazine

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### from the MD



## Welcome

Esh Naidoo Managing Director

The phrase, "light at the end of the tunnel" describes how, though it may seem impossible to deal with negative situations in life, if we keep moving forward, we will ultimately come out the other side stronger.

This expression of hope has been in use since the 19th century and has been used by many writers across generations to symbolise the vanquishing of hardships and why hope, patience, and determination are the key to overcoming all challenges.

Diners Club embodies this spirit of overcoming whatever obstacles are placed on our path to success. As the Diners Club South Africa team, we maintain our unwavering commitment to be a partner to our members, a companion on your adventures, and a supporter of your hopes and desires. Be assured that being a Diners Club member, not only means that you belong to a winning team, it is also a symbol of determination and perseverance to succeed.

As we slowly begin to emerge from a period of global turmoil, I would like to encourage you to turn towards that light, and to steadfastly explore the new normal that has been thrust upon us. If ever there was a time to stay the course, that time is now, and Diners Club will be with you on that journey, every step of the way.

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### LIVING THE LEGACY LIFESTYLE

With more than 250 partners and 1.2 million members, Legacy Lifestyle is South Africa's largest open-loop loyalty programme. Recent enhancements to the programme make it easier and more affordable for South Africans to live, stay, and play at Legacy Hotels & Resorts, and spend their cash-back rewards at a vast range of partners. Since 2011, the Legacy Lifestyle rewards programme is free to join and offers cash-back rewards in the form of Lifestyle Rands (1 LR equals 1 LR) that can be earned at one partner and spent at any other. Lifestyle Rands can also be spent at Legacy Hotels & Resorts properties on accommodation, game drives, food, beverages, spa treatments and products, in-store or at **www.legacylifestyle.co.za**.



### **CULINARY SAFARI**

Set to depart in early April 2022, the Great Plains Conservation and Cape Grace Hotel's Culinary Safari, is an epicurean and safari experience packed with culinary surprises. Set in the beautiful Cape of South Africa, and the wilderness of the Okavango Delta in Botswana, this unforgettable eight-day Culinary Safari promises to tantalise the tastebuds while guests can enjoy beauty and nature. If you're eager to try new culinary experiences, and are craving an African adventure, this once-in-a-lifetime adventure will surprise and delight you. With only ten places available, this pre-arranged trip is suitable for individuals or a group of friends or family. With one set departure date (3 April 2022), guests will spend four nights at the Cape Grace, and three nights at Duba Plains in Botswana. Immerse yourself in a new culinary culture and reawaken your dormant senses in true African style. For more information, visit **www.greatplainsconservation.com**.



### THE GIFT OF TRAVEL

The good news for travel-hungry South Africans is that an innovative new travel registry, called Travel-It-Forward, has been launched, which allows people the chance to put money aside to afford their next holiday. The service also works like a gift registry where others can contribute towards someone else's adventure – perfect for wedding, birthday, anniversary, engagement, graduation, and Christmas gifts. The service combines a gift registry with an e-wallet, allowing would-be-travellers to save towards their own experience while also requesting contributions into their travel wallet from friends and family. The app offers a large selection of South African hotels and hospitality establishments and adventures and experiences such as helicopter flips, wine trams, and double-decker bus tours. For every R1,000 spent, travellers get 3.5% back in credit, which goes into their Travel-It-Forward wallet for their next adventure. For more information or to register, visit **www.travel-it-forward.co.za**.









## FRANSCHHOEK

Positioned in the most romantic valley on earth, Franschhoek Country House & Villas is an exclusive boutique hotel reminiscent of a village in Provence yet with an elegant Cape sensibility. Set in gardens of lemon trees, lavender and vines – with fynbos draping the nearby mountains – the original, charming country maison includes 14 standard and luxury rooms as well as the award-winning Monneaux Restaurant while the 12 Villa suites are havens of privacy & understated opulence. Swimming pools, a candle-lit cellar, a treatment room and sun-down verandas are all a traveller needs as you live la vie extraordinaire.



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## ON A DESIGN-HIGH IN THE DELTA

### Art and Nature Collide at Xigera Safari Lodge

Xigera Safari Lodge is a staggering integration of sublime setting, innovative eco-engineering, and the unleashing of imaginations. Occupying a magnificent concession in Moremi Game Reserve, it affords first-rate access to the Okavango Delta at its blissful best, and manages to exert itself as a creative tour de force.

ith every new superswanky safari lodge, there is the worry that it will be some sort of overblown wedding cake in the bush, a kind of Afro-Disneyland steeped in massmarket curios, animal skins, or – heaven help us – leopard-print face masks.

How do you go all-out without slipping into OTT territory? How, when money is no object and your objective is to create a place that celebrates the continent, do you avoid the slippery slope into cliché? How do you exude luxury and opulence without pandering to swagger and excess?

It starts, of course, by understanding why people go on safari, and by having cultivated a deep and intimate love of wilderness that you want to share with others. Knowing that, for many, this may be the holiday of a lifetime, their one opportunity to commune with Africa, to finally have that safari they've waited for their entire lives.

Apart from having that kind of skin in the game, you need a team that understands what is at stake. With that in mind, you gather architects, designers and conservation-minded safari experts and you explain your dream: create something extraordinary, you tell them, make it the very best.

### THE PINNACLE OF PLENTY

It is no secret that Xigera Safari Lodge, which opened at the end of 2020, is built on the site of long-standing earlier incarnation of itself. Eponymous Xigera Island, within a startlingly sublime pocket of the Okavango Delta's Moremi Game Reserve, is a magnificent concession streaked with water channels and reed beds, dotted with tall termite mounds and ancient trees, plains of long grass, and an unimaginably rich bounty of animal life – starting with leopards, lions, and elephants that you seem to see as a matter of course.



The idea for Xigera's new owners was not to compete with that natural setting, but to create a place inspired by it, somewhere truly worthy of its location. So, when Stanley Tollman and his family (owners of such places as the Oyster Box Hotel in Durban and Bushmans Kloof in the Cederberg) took up the opportunity to recreate the lodge from scratch, they decided to put every ounce of energy into the project – nothing short of the finest of everything would go into what would emerge as a living tribute to their love of the



continent, and their passion for the bush. And that is what they did.

Along with architectural designer, Philip Fourie, they hauled Cape Town architect, Anton de Kock, into the wilds and had him live and breathe Xigera, get a real feel for the milieu, imbibe its mysteries, its idiosyncrasies, and its wonder. Architecturally, the starting points were specific, but open to interpretation. Apart from the instruction to "make it extraordinary", the lodge he was to design had to comply with a daunting list of mandated eco-requirements. De Kock had to ensure that the entire lodge is, ultimately, impermanent. For that, the engineers came up with an innovative steel suspension super-structure on which the whole thing rests, so that it can be removed without a trace – in other words, no concrete, nothing to blight the land.

The real artistry, though, is what came to de Kock as he soaked up the environment. One day, while drifting through one of the channels on a mokoro, he witnessed a bird taking off. It's the kind of miracle you often see in this primordial setting, but for the architect it was a moment of inspiration. It sparked ideas for the design of the twelve suites that are essentially huge glass and wood pavilions on stilts, enclosed to conserve energy, but capped by tented canopies, their roofs undulating like the wings of birds in flight.

And while there are visual details inspired by its surrounds, what is most striking is the way it integrates with its environment, how it is designed to make you feel like you are harmoniously at





one with nature while being cocooned in luxury. The sprawling, open-to-theelements architecture features raised boardwalks that meander through ancient trees to reach distant suites, while the main lodge makes judicious use of terraced alcoves, shaded lounges, and elevated decks. Some are recessed under deep shade, while others extend over the waterways like manmade promontories. The effect is to afford a multiplicity of perspectives, ensuring a choice of views of the waterways, riverine forests, and tawny grasslands.

It is vast, too, meaning that even when Xigera is at capacity, you enjoy tremendous privacy – whether you want to soak up the sun at the pool deck or bliss out in the spa, or find a secret spot to watch elephants gambolling by. It is quite something.

### A UNIQUE SHOWCASE

While all these architectural elements alone are spectacular, Xigera has also been revolutionary in its approach to design. Eschewing anything cookiecutter or "done before", the idea has been to make the lodge a functioning showcase for contemporary African craft, art, and artisanship.

Overseen by design maven, Toni Tollman, Xigera's extensive collection is the culmination of an in-depth collaboration with Southern Guild, Cape Town curators and gallerists who have spent years scanning Africa for talent and craftsmanship that can stand shoulderto-shoulder with the best in the world.

They brought together over 70 of the continent's top talents - ceramicists, bronzesmiths, woodworkers, bead workers, weavers, and artists - and enlisted them to contribute to the practical and decorative requirements of the lodge.

It wasn't simply an exercise in prettifving or embellishing, though, Rather, the aim was to add to the sense of place, to add a narrative component to the aesthetic, and to visually pay tribute to the geography and ecology of the setting. Which is why, for example, the bar counter evokes the Delta's different moods and seasons, and - also on the bar - there are Ardmore lamps in which vou'll find a leopard hiding in the branches. In the adjacent sunken fire lounge - a huge lily-design hearth cast by Cape Town's Bronze Age Studio celebrates the flowers vou'll see when being poled through the water in a mokoro.

It is a paradox in many ways. An homage to nature created through technology and human imagination. A lens on a primordial world viewed from the most cutting-edge contemporary designs. It is wood shaped to sit on, metal beaten to look like lilv pads, steel cast to represent a baobab and transformed into a three-storey luxury "treehouse" that you can spend a night in, set adrift at the edge of a vast plain. It is the humungous "nest" woven from kooboo cane resembling the homes of weaver birds and set at the lodge's main entrance for guests to Ioll in. It is clay transformed into cups and saucers and plates, and paints and dyes and beads bringing dazzling colours alongside earthier hues like bronze and tan and brown.

The result is a capturing of Africa's creative spirit in a way never before achieved – a living, breathing gallery that showcases this continent's skill and imagination like nowhere else on earth.

Just about everything is a handmade, bespoke creation for Xigera – from terracotta seats on the main deck by visionary ceramicist, Andile Dyalvane, to ceramic side-tables by Chuma Maweni, and from the one-off "Techno Loafer" waxed steel chair by Xandre Kriel to mouthblown glassware by Ngwenya. There are sculptures by Madoda Fani; dining tables by Kenyan-born sculptural artist, Stanislaw Trzebinski; and, in the boma fire-pit, a totemic sculpture by blacksmith, Conrad Hicks. Even the ceramic coffee mugs (Chuma Maweni again) in the suites, the mealtime place mats (by Eswatini textile enterprise, Gone Rural), and the various bespoke ranges of crockery (by Cape Town's Mervyn Gers), are works of art.

This gathering of crafters and artisans wasn't only a boon for the lodge, establishing it as the biggest repository of contemporary African design on the continent, but also a great boost for the many artists and artisans who were sustained by their work for the lodge during the fierce pause of the pandemic. Many of the artists were brought to Xigera at huge expense, all the while navigating complicated guarantine logistics so they could work on site during difficult times. One woodworker. Adam Birch. spent seven months working at Xigera to transform fallen tree trunks into more than 150 sculptures, mostly organically shaped benches that have been placed throughout the lodge.

### LIVING AT THE LODGE

All this talk of design and we've not even peeked inside the suites. They are nothing short of palatial, and each is individually curated, and is decked out in custom-created furniture, fabrics, artworks, and mood. Each boasts a full lounge, bedroom, dressing room, and, in addition to a gorgeous bathroom, an outdoor shower on a huge private deck that includes its own gazebo.

Inside, apart from the exquisite detailing, bespoke this and fascinating that, the entire suite is designed to train your eye towards the immensity of floorto-ceiling glass doors and walls that let you peer out at the majestic scene outside. Nothing's been left to chance, either. The temperature is perfectly maintained, beds are ravishingly comfortable, linens a balm, and behind the doors of an enormous cupboard is everything you might need to refresh, restore, or spoil yourself between meals. There is even a watercolour paint set. should the muse take you. It is one of those spaces you step into and can't imagine ever wanting to leave.

But leave your suite you will. Because, despite the unmitigated stylishness and relentless comfort of your sleeping quarters, there is simply no resisting the opportunity to dive deeper into the wilderness that enfolds you. While you will no doubt see plenty of creatures traipsing around in front of your room and will have your eyes and ears pealed while eating lunch or when sprawled out at the pool or in the spa, there is just so much more of this labyrinthine watery wilderness to explore.

### VASTNESS OF THE DELTA

The Okavango Delta is evidence of Nature at the peak of her creative powers, and Xigera's rangers know how to reveal the very best of her. These expert guides will not only show you the extent of this paradise, but they make leopard- and lion-sightings seem almost unavoidable, and enhance the beauty of a tree with titbits of knowledge or make a bird's antics seem even more special with an infusion of scientific fact. You will, for example, be touched to learn that the word "xigera" in fact refers to the hovering action of a pied kingfisher when it's hunting above the water.

Whether you're driving across the island in a game-viewer, being poled through the clear-water channels in a glass-bottomed mokoro, are exploring by motorboat, or tracking animals on foot, you will feel the Delta getting under your skin. It is precisely that sensation – that feeling of falling in love with Africa all over again – that the Tollmans were hoping to evoke.



Xigera Safari Lodge is part of The Red Carnation Hotel Collection Accommodation is on an all-inclusive basis: all meals, beverages, safari activities (game drives, boat rides, mokoro outings, bush walks), and seasonal catch-and-release fishing, as well as a few other memorable surprises, are included. Private yoga instruction, spa services, gratuities and gift shop purchases are extra. It is recommended that you stay at least three nights. www.xigera.com

learn more



## BOATING On the **Canal DU MIDI**

Le Boat Barge Tours

"There's nothing-absolutely nothing-half so much worth doing as messing about in boats," said Rat to Mole in The Wind in the Willows, and he was on the money.

way to holiday, the epitome of the slow life. Picture the scene as you ease along the broad waterways of the lush Languedoc region in southern France, the Canal du Midi. It's late summer; a whiff of fermented grapes is in the air, and leaves are starting to turn. The scenery is gorgeous – an assemblage of antiquated castles, farmsteads, waterside cafés and rolling vineyards, something unique at every turn.

arging is a marvellous

The idea to build a navigable canal linking the Atlantic and Mediterranean was first bandied about by the likes of Charlemagne. Leonardo da Vinci was commissioned in 1516 to survey a possible route, but it was Pierre-Paul Riquet from Bèziers who eventually conquered the logistical challenges. It took from 1667 to 1681 to complete its 240 kilometres and 65 locks, making it the world's oldest commercial waterway and a spectacular feat of engineering. Our journey took us through prime wine





country with almost 700,000 hectares under vine.

### START A JOURNEY

My journey to the Canal du Midi began with three friends from Cape Town. We took the train from Paris, a glorious way to go, and four hours later pulled into Carcassonne on the River Aude. It's the most famous of France's few remaining 'walled cities', with three kilometres of defensive ramparts that encircle the perfectly intact old Carcassonne - La Cité - a UNESCO World Heritage Site that channels a Disneyesque castle at first glance. A stunning cross-section of Roman, medieval, and gothic architecture, it harks back to the fifth century, and to wander the ancient. cobbled lanes beneath the towering ramparts is a delight. During summer, the citadel buzzes with amphitheatre concerts. The Festival de Carcassonne takes place here annually, with the next

one coming up in July 2022, fortuitously in the middle of boating season.

We began at the Le Boat base in Trèbes, a ten-minute cab ride from Carcassonne. After the mandatory boating 101 delivered by the base manager (who clearly displays absolute faith in novice crews), we puttered off towards the first of eighteen locks populating our particular route that culminated at Narbonne on the coast, just fifteen kilometres from the Med. On a trip like this, travelling with the right group of friends is key. They need to be up for teamwork and get along well, because firstly the boats are quite compact inside and. Secondly, while the fun factor is ever-present, some moments require absolute concentration - such as when navigating through the locks, or easing into a parking spot. That requires a joint effort with all hands on deck, literally. At those times, you'll need to







Narbonne gate at the citadel of Carcassonne (Photo by Allison Foat)

hold on the chardonnay and focus, to avoid any mishaps.

### TIME TO LET GO

Boating is slow travel at its best. With a mere 53 kilometres to cover in seven days, the pace is unhurried, time is irrelevant, and spontaneity is the order of the day. A cycle path parallel to the canal is useful for the early morning croissant run and for exploring nearby villages and vineyards. Le Boat maps are also highly detailed, clearly denoting where to find those famous French fresh produce markets, do wine tastings, and visit historical buildings. At the end of each day, we'd moor beneath the plane trees that line the way, some of which were planted in the 1830s. One particularly exquisite memory was sailing off at dawn through a veil of diaphanous mist hovering just above the water. There was absolute quiet, the boat engine barely audible, and as the sun rose, the light pierced the vapour that gradually dissipated in the warmth

of its rays, a sublime moment.

Some locks like Puichéric offer something unique, with little delis selling craft beer, cheese, well-priced wine, and delicious local fare. At Aiguille, lock keeper Joël Barthès has made quite a name for himself over the past thirty years with his guirky sculpture installation on the bank, all fashioned from upcycled iron and wood found in the forest. From Homps, one of the Le Boat bases, we cycled to Olonzac, lured there by the weekly market (open Tuesday mornings only). It's an atmospheric, bustling community space, known for artisanal delicacies like homemade pistachio nougat, sunflower honey and cloudy olive oil.

A unique way to explore off-deck is in a classic convertible Citroën 2CV – for hire at a canal town called Paraza in the beautiful Minervois region. From there, it's a 20-kilometre drive to Minerve, a hamlet located on a rocky outcrop above a deep canyon. Dripping in middle age siege drama, it surprises with its own Michelin





star restaurant, Relais Chantovent, a must for travelling foodies.

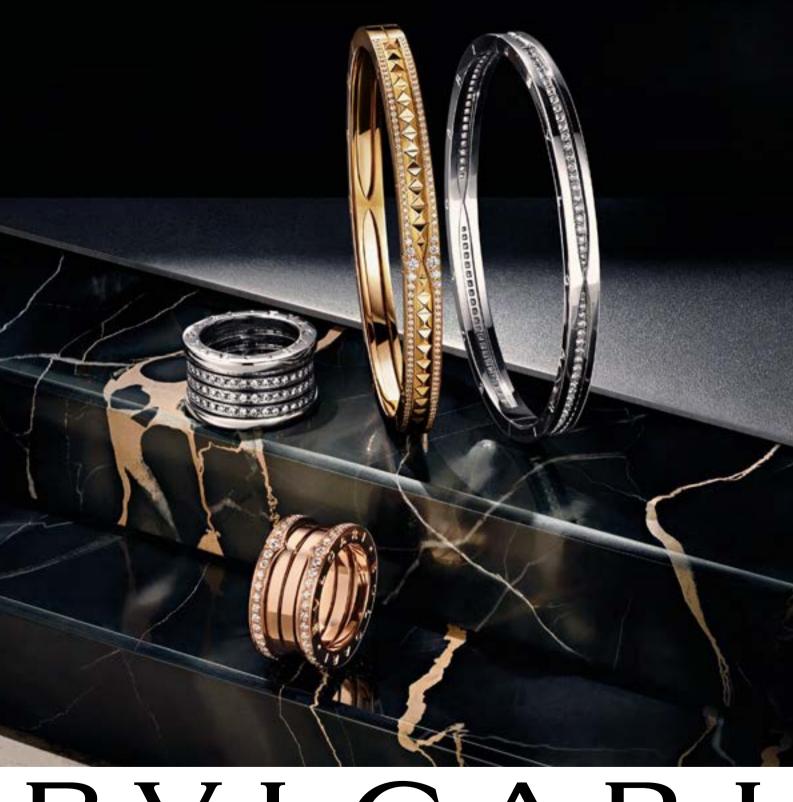
The old harbour of Le Somail warrants a longer stay. It has loads to see, such as the famous grocery barge and the Le Trouve Tout du Livre bookshop, stocked with more than 50,000 books from rare editions to paperbacks. Between Le Somail and Argeliers is the Embranchement de la Nouvelle - the junction where boaters can opt to leave the Canal du Midi, and sail in a southerly direction towards the Mediterranean, along the Canal de la Robine. Narbonnes is a spectacular city and a stunning finale to the trip. There's a lot to see too: from the vast Les Halles indoor market, to the Archbishop's Palace, and the gothic Cathédrale St-Just. The proximity to Spain, and the fact that it lies within a region that was once part of Catalonia, means the Spanish influence (in the architecture, language, culture, and cuisine) is very prevalent throughout Narbonne.

For South Africans feeling the pinch of the Rand against the Euro, hiring a boat on the Canal du Midi offers the opportunity to pool resources and enjoy a stint of recreational boating through one of the most glorious parts of France, if not the world.





by allison foat / photography by allison foat, justin fox, le boat



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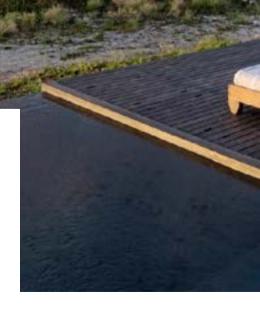




## PARADISE FOUND

The Secrets of Perivoli Lagoon House Uncovered

In a pocket of the Overberg secreted away within its own nature reserve, Perivoli Lagoon House is precisely the sanctuary we need right now – stylish digs overlooking a shimmering estuary, enfolded by looming mountains. And just down the road, a huge stretch of unblemished beach sheltered by tall dunes and washed by the Atlantic.





ugged mountains, hardy fynbos, and clouds as thick as cream - some were

gigantic bruise-coloured cotton balls dangling in the sky, others charcoalblack and ominous, reminders that in this beauteous wedge of land near the tip of the continent, the elements are mercurial, the weather prone to fierce mood swings.

But, yes, right on cue, there it was... Just as we turned into Stanford, a gap in those menacing clouds that ripped the sky apart, flooding the world with broad beams of sunlight.

Head through town and down the back-country farm road known as Wortelgat, and you're soon lost in a time-warp wormhole, the dirt track delivering you ever deeper into bucolic backwaters. It's only when you arrive at Perivoli's entrance – via a maze of tangled trees – that you're transported back to the 21st century.

Although set within its own 140-hectare fynbos reserve, overlooking the Hermanus Estuary, and steeped in panoramic views of the Klein River Mountains, Perivoli's immediate reckoning is of something architecturally novel – you're struck by the undulating, wave-like roof, the solidity of the structure, and the expansiveness of its floor-to-ceiling glass walls.

Its contemporary design is marked not so much by excess but by having been built to grapple with the environment, to fend off the elements while harmoniously fitting in and drawing your focus back to the astonishing nature scenes all around.

It is designed to help you soak up the tranquillity, absorb the views, commune with what's outside. Stepping into this house is like a gigantic sigh, a loosening of the belt, a relaxing of your shoulders, an inhale breath delivering clean oxygen to the brain.

#### MORE THAN STYLISH

With just four suites and a huge open-plan living area comprising kitchen, dining area and a lovely kick-back-andrelax lounge, Perivoli is kitted out for every imaginable need and convenience. You will want for nothing, and yet if it's nothing you're after - quiet, stillness, calm - you'll find that here in abundance.

Simoné Henckert, who manages the property with her Namibian husband, Marcelino, doesn't only oversee the dayto-day running of the villa, but is also the creative hand behind the décor. From textured wallpapers and towels you won't find at any hotel, iconic portraits of Nguni cattle, and a variety of armchairs, sofas and nooks decked out with plump cushions and comforting throws, she also went to great lengths to hand-pick artefacts, artisan-crafted knickknacks, and artworks with meaning (like the vintage Africa maps and the charcoal drawing of the mountains beyond the estuary).

There are cowhide rugs on the pale timber floors, fabrics with patterns borrowed from nature, terracotta bowls bulging with succulents, trunks of wood carved into elegant totems, and woven baskets set against the walls. She's put it all together with a museum curator's eye: Her goal, evidently, is to create an aesthetic that's simultaneously African and contemporary; thus achieved, the handsome house evokes a mood that's sensual and homely, sensuous without feeling cold.

You discover, though, that while the entire house is a work of harmonious theatre, it's all been put together to help bring your attention to the natural elements outside. As much as there is to admire inside, you're drawn again and again towards the vast wooden deck out front. Once there, you're powerless to resist the reach of infinity, concentrated on that jewel-like estuary and the



mountains marching across the horizon.

That connection with the outdoors continues in the suites, where the inroom entertainment comes from folding open the enormous glass stackable doors that grant instant access to your own stretch of paradise. While these rooms have everything you need - large wardrobe areas, wonderful bathrooms (with fabulous kikois by Mungo, all-natural Wild Olive bathroom products, wooden hooks, and bamboo towel racks), and one of the most comfortable beds you'll ever find yourself in - it is also what they don't have that speaks volumes. There are no TVs (there's one in the lounge should a big game beckon), for example, because you'd be mad to spend your time channelsurfing when there's so much beauty to behold out there, just beyond your toes.

#### EXPLORE A WORLD BEYOND

You would be forgiven for being tempted to simply remain housebound in this stylish sanctuary, draped across a sun lounger or curled up in the swinging nest on the deck with its heated rim flow pool. When you are moved to move, however, there is plenty to do and see. Marcelino, an experienced bush ranger with great sensitivity and an infectious love of the outdoors, is also a deft hand at mixing gins and tonic on the beach just before the sun goes down. He'll happily bundle you into the 4x4 for an outing to the dunes or lead you on hikes through the reserve to pick out animal tracks, spot birds flitting between the blooms, and learn about weird and wonderful fynbos adaptations.

He's also adept at putting together adventures for children, and will make even the most ardent screen-addict fall in love with the world outside – boating, fishing, and canoeing on the estuary are all possibilities. Also possible are long beach walks, dips in the ocean, or contemplative hikes through Walker Bay Nature Reserve that culminate in a picnic in a private spot with an incredible view.

What's more, Stanford – with its wellpreserved Cape Victorian and Edwardian





buildings - is just minutes away; while decidedly intimate and charmingly unspoiled, its main road is full of places that embrace quirkiness and manage to merge the best of countryside charm with funky ideas. It has a good range of delis, restaurants and vintage shops, and a creative buzz. Its three weekend markets are a good source of artisanal food, fresh produce, and - if you hit Saturday morning's Stanford Junktique curiosities and collectibles.

Or tuck in for a wider exploration of the Overberg. You could venture to the relative bustle of Hermanus, or sign up for fullblown ocean-going activities in Gansbaai.

### RELAX, YOU DESERVE IT

Back at the villa, there's enchantment to be had simply by exploring Perivoli's immediate environment. Staring at that estuary from the heated rim flow pool as the golden-hour sunlight glints off the lagoon and sets the entire valley ashimmer, is like witnessing a miracle. Naturally, the kind staff will feed you, anticipate your caffeine needs, and generally go to all lengths to quietly provide you with VIP treatment – service (should you enlist a full staff complement) is attentive and thoughtful, always ahead of the game.

In every respect, this is not a hotel. There is nothing by-the-book or forced – instead, everyone who works here seems to be motivated by genuine passion and kindness. That, in itself, is a genuine treat, and yet, as much as every whim and expectation is attended to, what ultimately makes this such a soul-restoring sanctuary is the way it carves out space for you to spend quality time with those nearest and dearest to you.

Everything about Perivoli helps you hit the reset button, helps you reconnect with yourself and with those closest to you. Friends will cherish time spent here, and family will relish the special memories, made together. And isn't that what we're all looking for right now? Time and space to savour the ones we love. • From R20,000 / night, selfcatering, Perivoli's four bedrooms are yours to share between friends or for your family to take over for the ultimate retreat. Alternatively, opt to include the services of a top-notch chef – your kitchen will be stocked with exquisite produce and local wines that ensure your experience is always next-level. It's worth knowing that your stay

check in, change the world

will help benefit youngsters in need – and the environment. The house was established exclusively to help fund the philanthropic Perivoli Trust, which is dedicated to conserving natural habitats and improving the quality of education particularly of nursery school children in sub-Sahara Africa. All profits go to these causes.

www.perivoliafrica.com



## HAVE A BLAST ALL YEAR ROUND

### Winter or Summer, Afriski Mountain Resort Has it All

Perched above the African plains in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, Afriski Mountain Resort is Africa's most thrilling winter destination. But don't be fooled; during the summer months, Afriski transforms itself into a green fields adventure zone for young and old alike.

friski Mountain Resort's name conjures playful images of snowcapped peaks, whooshing down powdery pistes, and sipping red wine by an open fire. Yet, there is more to this mountainous wonderland than just skiing.

### SUMMER AT AFRISKI

If you have never considered Afriski as a summer destination, then you're missing out on half of the fun that this favourite destination has to offer. Warmer weather may melt the snow and replace its blinding white with a green grassland carpet, but it also leaves behind a network of trails that link the peaks and valleys of the surrounding Butha-Buthe's waterfalls and views.

The great outdoors doesn't get any better than this, and the views from one of Africa's highest resorts are genuinely spectacular. During the summer months, you can tackle the terrain on foot, on a mountain bike or Enduro bike, or in your 4x4, whichever way you choose, you'll find that the Maluti Mountains will inspire you to rise to the occasion.

### JOIN IN THE FUN

Afriski offers fun activities for everyone. Whatever you're into, the mountains during summer offer daring thrill-seekers, as well as the less adventurous, the experience of a lifetime. The trails, cliff faces, lakes and winding mountain roads add up to an unbeatable outdoor playground. Get better at doing what you love and create new memories with your running, riding and adventure buddies.

Fun is a serious business at Afriski, and their outdoor guides are always on hand to ensure that you get expert advice on the best trails and most challenging sections. They even operate the resort's 1,000m T-Bar lift all summer long (when 10 or more persons book, on specific weekends, and weather permitting) to get you and your MTB to where you want to be.

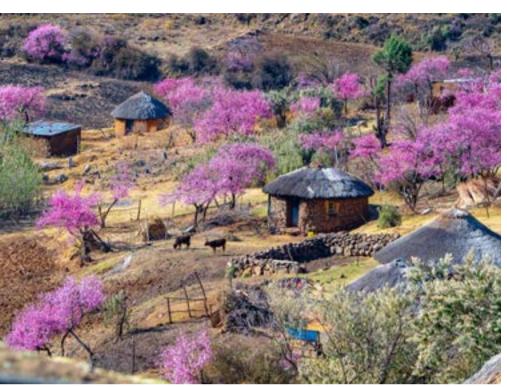








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Along with plenty of opportunities for adrenaline-charged adventures, there are also more relaxing (but no less rewarding) ways to enjoy life at 3,222m. Spend a few quiet hours fly-fishing, or hike to one of the viewpoints for panoramic vistas of the Mountain Kingdom and beyond.

#### GEAR UP FOR WINTER

When the seasons turn, and the sun makes her annual retreat, it's time to dust off the skis, haul out your snow boots, and suit up for three months of snow-fueled fun on the slopes of Southern Africa's number one skiing destination.

Whether you're a seasoned pro or new to the wonderful world of skiing and snowboarding, Afriski's thrilling winter sports menu has something for every level of ability. For beginners, all you need is a sense of fun and the expert guidance of Afriski's professional ski instructors. The intermediate and professional Afriski slopes offer an even more rewarding experience if you're more proficient on the slopes. skiing, snowboarding and, well, just the snow experience in general, is the motivation behind everything at Afriski. To ensure that the Afriski experience matches what is on offer in other countries, the Afriski team has visited most of the world's top ski resorts, to bring home the lessons that they have learned, and to adapt them to the unique circumstances in Lesotho. The result is a world-class ski village, with a distinctly African feel.

By day, skiers and revellers bring the Afriski slopes to life, with first-timers and seasoned pros making the most of the daylight and snow gear rental during their stay. Activities for kids are just as important as those for adults, and Afriski's Pudi Club lets your kids have just as much winter fun as everyone else. For kids, the day begins with a Pudi Club welcome for parents and kids in the Sky Restaurant. Pudi (the world's only mountain goat on skis) and the Pudi Club team will keep your kids entertained for as long as you're on you're own adventure. in the dead of winter, Afriski has added modern African snowmaking facilities. Designed to give Mother Nature a bit of a helping hand, the giant snowblowers ensure that all visitors to Afriski can enjoy a full day of fun on the slopes between 9 am and 4 pm.

World-class ski lifts, experienced instructors, and even trained paramedics who are on standby to ensure every day remains serious incident-free, make it possible for you to enjoy the kind of experience for which you would otherwise have to travel overseas.

Once the boards and skis are packed away for the day, it is time for some Après Ski activities - the ice-cold mountains (and some ice-cold Maluti Lagers) setting the scene for new friendships to be formed and new memories to be made.

For more information on Afriski Mountain Resort, or to make a reservation, visit www.afriski.net.

### MORE THAN A RESORT

Being passionate about all things

**KEEP IT FRESH** 

As snowfall can be unpredictable even

by **bernie hellberg jr** / photography by **afriski mountain resort** 

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# UNDER THE APPLE TREE

Reconnect with Goodness at Le Pommier

Le Pommier is located on Helshoogte Pass, the main route between Stellenbosch and Franschhoek. The perfect base to explore this unique and most breathtaking region. e Pommier - meaning 'The Apple Tree' in French - was once an apple orchard, and formed part of the 300-year-old Zorgvliet farm during that time. Today, you will still find a couple of these apple trees scattered on Le Pommier. In 1692, Casper Wilders, an Austrian mercenary soldier who served in the Dutch East India Company, was granted the Zorgvliet farm, which sparked the beginning for Le Pommier.

The history of Le Pommier includes a lengthy list of owners since the 1600s. The restaurant – a shed for animal feed, back in 1916, was also a chicken run after that, while the guesthouse – now Le Pommier's Country rooms – was the farm's original homestead.

— www.dinersclub.co.za —



### ACCOMMODATION

Le Pommier Lodge boasts six suites, seven country rooms, and one self-catering unit. The first business here was a coffee shop known as "Die Banhoek Kombuis".

In 1986, André Grobler (who owned Le Pommier at the time) and Glen Arum, built worker accommodation next to the dam; today, these are the Le Pommier Suites.



Le Pommier's family self-catering unit was home to about six families, and is known as the "drie deur huis". The building was on the farm when André Grobler purchased it from Dr Piet le Grange. While under the ownership of Dr Piet Le Grange, this building was a pig farm, and came to be known as 'Yew Tree'.

A wedding, conference and function venue was added in 2019, and true to Le Pommier's style and brand, this was created to resemble a farmyard barn. The venue has 90-degree glass panels and sliding doors, to maximise the stunning view of the Simonsberg mountains.

Two additional hectares of Malbec and Cabernet Franc vineyards were planted in the surrounding areas of the new venue in 2020.

### WINES

Pop into the wine tasting room to sample Le Pommier's award-winning wines. You will find all the wines are made from grapes grown on the farm. The Le Pommier Jonathan's Malbec was named after a very mischievous bull. Jonathan broke through a fence and into the vineyards in 2012 and consumed most of the Malbec harvest, connect with le pommier

Call: +27 21 885 1269 WhatsApp: +27 64 642 3676 Email: gm@lepommier.co.za Website: www.lepommier.co.za Twitter: @LePommierWines Facebook: facebook.com/ LePommierWines Instagram: @LePommierWines illustrating his excellent taste.

Another favourite is the Le Pommier Angle Peur Cabernet Franc. The name "Angle Peur" pays homage to the history of the Banghoek area, and the influence of the French Huguenots who arrived in 1688. Banghoek or "scary corner" was also known as "De Bange Hoek". The old pass that ran through this area was dangerously steep, and was home to lions, leopards, and other wild animals. In 1972, the pass was rebuilt into the more scenic, winding road that it is today.

Le Pommier's "Mac" Cabernet Franc & Malbec blend pays homage to Mac van der Merwe, previous proprietor of Le Pommier wine farm. A lovely Le Pommier Sauvignon Blanc is also available for tasting, and is an excellent accompaniment on a hot summer day. The Le Pommier Rosé is a favourite among guests, and boasts several awards to prove the point.

Le Pommier offers several interesting pairings that are subject to change. Le Pommier also offers wine tasting, including three Le Pommier wines; Sauvignon Blanc, Rosé and Mac - Cabernet Franc/Malbec blend. Jonathan's Malbec and Angle Peur Cabernet Franc are not available for tasting, as they are limited releases, but are available for sale online, at the Le Pommier wine shop, or at the tasting room. Pairings for kids are also available.



The wine tasting area is open seven days a week, excluding Christmas day and New Year's Day.

## RUSTIC DINING AT LE POMMIER

Le Pommier Restaurant is a cosy dining establishment specialising in traditional Cape cuisine. The a la carte menu offers something for everyone. Delight in a lingering breakfast, or enjoy a leisurely lunch on the terrace. For





something a bit more special, why not take in the rustic ambience over dinner in one of the restaurant's intimate nooks? During winter, you can enjoy your meals next to a cosy fireplace. The restaurant is child-friendly and boasts a kiddies' play area outside.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Celebrate a special birthday, anniversary, or baby / bridal shower with beautiful scenery as your backdrop. Le Pommier Wine Estate is the perfect choice for a party with stunning views, great food, and superb wine. Le Pommier caters for both formal and informal events, conferences, weddings, and other celebrations.

The team at Le Pommier is wellknown for their hospitality and friendly service, with some members having been part of the family for more than 30 years. Le Pommier invites you to enjoy all that this gem of the Stellenbosch Wine Route has to offer. <sup>(1)</sup>

by nicola du toit (edited by bernie hellberg jr) / photography by le pommier wine estate





# A SNIFTER OF **LOCAL** SPLENDOUR

Musgrave Copper: Refreshingly Different

South Africa is renowned for its exceptional pot-still brandy. Double distilled in copper pot stills and aged in oak barrels is the way it's been done for over 300 years. Considered a status symbol in many parts of the world, much like Cognac, no drinks trolley is ever complete without a bottle or two of the finest XO. For centuries brandy has captured the imaginations of many with its secret language and mysterious ways in which to drink it, making its pretentious nature limiting when trying to appeal to a younger audience.

outh Africa has been making brandy since the late 17th century, which is roughly when Cognac made its debut in France after the Dutch first introduced it to the Cape. But what many people don't know is that brandy is an ancient category, and the distilling process has been experimented with since the Middle Ages, and quite possibly even as far back as before the birth of Christ.

Traces of its production can be found in all corners of the globe, from California to Peru and even far-flung vineyards in Cyprus, Georgia, Canada, Mexico, Armenia, and Israel. Wherever one found a vineyard of fermented grapes, plums, berries, pears, apples, pineapples, and cherries, there would be alchemists, physicians and scientists experimenting with the distillation process. This included boiling, vaporisation and cooling the mists of the fermented wine, which would result in crude high alcohol spirits and possibly a type of brandy, as we know it today. Some of the first practitioners of this mysterious art are thought







to be of Chinese and Indian descent. The use of pot stills is also an ancient tradition. They were often used for spiritual pursuits by alchemists in their search for magically powered potions or pathways to ether, and for medicinal elixirs to relieve common ailments such as dyspepsia, arthritis and tooth and gum maladies.

## IS COGNAC ALL THAT?

Over the years, a lot of fuss has been made about Cognac, and connoisseurs of the liquid gold will tell you while all cognacs are brandy, not all brandy can be called Cognac. But as history might reveal, France may not be the birthplace of ancient brandy after all. While they may have formalised its practice, and legally claimed the name due to the region where it's produced, there are many other brandies in the world that have taken centuries to perfect, that one should be getting excited about.

This is especially true for South Africa. The French began producing brandy in the Cape around the time of Simon Van Der Stel, who found conditions like that of Cognac in France, only that South Africa's wine-producing regions are warmer and dryer than Cognac, resulting in much higher sugar levels in the grapes used in the base wine for distillation. Cognac's base wine usually contains around 8% alcohol by volume (ABV) versus the 10% to

— 2021 / edition three –



12% ABV in South Africa. And roughly 95% of the wine distilled is made from Chenin Blanc or Colombard grapes, two varieties that are naturally high in acidity. Since sulphites can't be used to preserve wine intended for distillation, the high acidity helps protect the wine from spoilage.

#### BUSTING THE STEREOTYPE

Even though South African brandy has been proven to be as good as any cognac, it still struggles with stereotypes and perceptions. That is, however, until the release of Musgrave Copper in 2018. Until then, the sector had little in the way of innovation to excite newcomers and to help change perceptions. What was once thought to be cheap and only for men, or best taken with cola, has been turned on its head. Founder of Musgrave Spirits. Simone Musgrave, partnered with South Africa's largest brandy producers. Distell and Van Rhyns, to create two innovative, infused pot-still brandy blends -Musgrave Copper Vanilla and Musgrave Copper Black Honey.

It's finally the shake up the sector needed, introducing a new genre that remixes the brandy category to play where Cognac has feared to tread and crafted to be the "Bourbon" of brandy.

Younger brandy drinkers have been looking for innovation, and Copper certainly delivers. It's luxurious, disruptive, infused and made to mix. It's a flavourinfused brandy with subtle flavours and a distinctly African palate. Musgrave Copper is more aligned to the Cognac drinker than to a traditional brandy drinker, using the finest pot-still brandy with the added excitement of flavour infusion. It attracts a consumer who exists beyond the preconceptions of their gender, age. or race; they seek out the new. Musgrave Copper embraces a "remixing tradition", bringing together some of the African continents most celebrated ingredients. With access to winter honey, collected by local communities within the national parks of Zambia, and vanilla from the Indian Islands around the coast of Africa. the blend makes for a sumptuous infusion that has elevated Musgrave Copper to the next level.

Pushing boundaries of tradition also appeals more to a daring and sophisticated female market. The 2021 Platter's Wine Guide awarded Musgrave Copper Vanilla with four stars, while the Musgrave Black Honey received fourand-a-half stars – a massive feat for a product that just launched.

Simone describes Musgrave Copper as the brand that aims to "Act like cognac, talk like whisky, drink like brandy, spend like champagne, boom like gin, sell like vodka."

For more about Musgrave Copper, visit www.musgravespirits.com or follow them on Instagram @musgravespirits. 0

by musgrave spirits





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# LIFESTYLE

# SINGLE MALT WITH A VIKING SOUL

Early in the 9th century, Viking longboats left the shores of Denmark and Norway to navigate uncharted waters in search of new lands to conquer. They soon came upon the remote islands of Orkney, scattered off the extreme north coast of Scotland below the Arctic Circle and were swept up into a vast Viking kingdom ruled by a succession of Viking Earls. The Viking spirit continues to live on in the proud, adventurous, and fiercely independent taste of Highland Park single malt Scotch whisky. Highland Park is the only single malt produced in Scotland that's still made in the traditional way, with all five keystones of production remaining the same. Worthwhile things take time, and they test your worth, and if you can appreciate that, then sit back and pour yourself a Highland Park, and raise your glass to what's in it. Available at leading outlets nationwide.





# STYLE THAT MAKES YOU TICK

Italy is regarded as the world's fashion and design capital. Taking their inspiration from this European country, Antony Morino – a refined South African watch brand – produces top-quality, luxury watches with a fresh and minimalistic feel. Wearing a unique, beautifully crafted, and 'priceless' Antony Morino timepiece is a measure of your success. With eye-catching dials that evoke the classic feel of Italian craftsmanship, and by taking inspiration from up-to-the-minute modern design trends, Antony Morino timepieces are the embellishments that will make people notice you. The result is a truly contemporary art piece that will appeal to those who want to make a statement. Exquisitely crafted, Antony Morino watches are made of the highest quality stainless steel and laser IP plating, and are built with precision Japanese moving parts. Follow your dreams, and look good while doing it. Antony Morino timepieces are available online from **www.antonymorino.com**.

# **KLIPSCH VS MCLAREN**

As the official headphone and portable audio partner of the McLaren® Formula 1 team, Klipsch introduces the T5 II True Wireless ANC McLaren Edition earphones. They feature accents of McLaren's signature papaya colour, real carbon fibre, and a co-moulded outer shell that mimics the tread pattern of Formula 1's intermediate racing tire. Charge wirelessly using the included dual-position wireless charging pad, any Qi-compatible charging pad or use the included USB-C cable. With NuCurrent wireless charging technology, the T5 II True Wireless ANC McLaren Edition earphones case will charge twice as fast as anything else on the market. Klipsch T5 II True Wireless ANC McLaren Edition earphones are exclusively available in South Africa from Homemation. www.homemation.co.za



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# FORM AND FUNCTION AT ITS PEAK

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# HEDONISTIC Sustainability

The Rise of Conscious Design

The seismic shift that coronavirus catalysed across every facet of life – including where and how we choose to live – has had profound implications for the property developer, bringing with it new opportunities – as well as responsibilities.

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he design of homes is typically a response to

the needs and lifestyles of consumers," explains Jacques van Embden, Managing Director at urban property development firm, Blok, "and as such, it tends to evolve gradually over time, in line with societal shifts."

"That is, until a pandemic takes hold."

With such a rapid and staggering change to our way of living, Van Embden believes that the developer has a responsibility to interrogate the role of design within this emerging new paradigm, and it is this very step change that he believes will lead to a rise in what he dubs, human-centred or 'conscious design.'

These sentiments have been echoed across the global industry. "The pandemic is testing everyone - it is been challenging, but it shows that well-planned places with holistic management that have been thought through ...are really attractive," says Robert Evans of United Kingdom-based developer Argent.

"Pandemics have a history of disrupting and altering life in cities and communities," adds Nels Nelson, a senior planner at international design company Stantec, in a four-part series that covers the impact of COVID 19 on urban design around the globe. "Though being destructive in themselves, they have led to great improvements for the life of city dwellers."

## ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

"As South Africa begins the long path to socio-economic recovery, the needs and priorities of consumers have changed. COVID 19 and lockdown have taken a toll on the collective emotional, physical, and financial wellbeing of people, which has led to us reassessing what is truly important to us," explains Van Embden.

While 'wellness' and 'self care' have been buzzwords long before the pandemic, they now dovetail with an increasing emphasis on community. "The community plays a key role in the holistic health of consumers, as social interaction contributes to our overall wellbeing. The social distancing required as part of the management of COVID 19 only served to heighten the importance of these interactions."

What seems to be the hub of these communities? Cities, it appears. A new

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by kyle solms / photography supplied



RIGHT: Jacques van Embden (MD at urban property development firm, Blok)



report from international law firm Withers Worldwide recently pegged suburbia as being less well-positioned to accommodate the resurgence in demand for community, caused by the increased amount of time spent at home over the past year.

The report also identified other key considerations that were driving a shift in development as the increased demand for a more flexible living space, a heightened aspiration for community, and a greater focus on the locality of a home.

Van Embden believes that as the world slowly emerges from the pandemic, people will seek this sense of community both inside and outside their buildings. "Urban or city living is, in general, less isolated than suburbia or estate living, providing more opportunities to interact with others."

He believes that developers need to carry this same awareness through to their design. "We should be thinking about creating unique spaces within buildings that facilitate social connection among residents, while enabling them to connect with their broader neighbourhood community outside their homes."

# AMENITY CALAMITY

This also calls into question the need for a wide array of amenities, and Van Embden believes that developers need to reassess, streamline, and simplify their value proposition. While consumers still prioritise attractive amenities – especially those that support this increasing emphasis on wellness – he believes that developers should not make assumptions about what is important to consumers, and rather conduct in-depth research.

"Developers may find that their audience would prefer a desirable location over a plethora of building amenities, as the right location will allow them to fulfil these needs outside the home."

He cites Sea Point as an example. "It is a highly popular investment location because of the lifestyle it offers. It might be that a fully-equipped gym in an apartment block is not as important to someone who is looking to buy in



the area, as they have access to the promenade and a number of fitness centres on their doorstep."

After a year of being told to stay at home, people now want to be outside their home, believes Van Embden, and he anticipates that they will be out in droves, the minute it is safe for them to do so. "We, as developers, need to look at how we can accommodate this trend towards living outside the home, and how we acknowledge and incorporate this into our design."

## BEYOND SUSTAINABLE TO PLEASURABLE

'Hedonistic sustainability' is a term coined by Danish architect Bjarke Ingels, which means the integration of sustainability into our cities, while creating pleasurable environments for people. As Ingels says, "The only way you can make sustainability win is if you make it more desirable than the alternative."

He believes that the arrival of biophilia as a health and wellness aspect of a city is important, and "we are going to see much more of it in the future."

Van Embden agrees. "Developers need to have an immersive understanding of where they are developing, and should be looking to the natural resources within the immediate environment, considering how they can harness, complement, or enhance these through design. • Van Embden believes that as the world slowly emerges from the pandemic, people will seek this sense of community both inside and outside their buildings.

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# **PINNACLE** OF **PACE**

Driving the Jaguar F-Pace SVR

Following closely on the heels of the recently refreshed F-PACE range, the new Jaguar F-PACE SVR flagship model – the pinnacle of the performance SUV range – has been elevated to another level thanks to the latest enhancements by the Jaguar SV team.

he new F-PACE SVR - now the fastest, most dynamic, and most refined Jaguar SUV ever - shares the revised exterior styling, beautifully crafted new interior, and the latest generation Pivi Pro infotainment system with its lesser siblings, affording it a cleaner, more assured presence.

Inspired by SV's motorsport experience, the SVR has enhanced airflow and aerodynamic benefits, delivered through new apertures and vents, for improved aerodynamic performance, including a 35% reduction in aerodynamic lift, while drag is cut by 0.01Cd to 0.36Cd.

A new sculpted bonnet with a wider power bulge and smoother, more precisely defined surfaces, contributes to a more striking finish by reducing the number of shutlines on the front of the SVR. Jaguar's heritage logo-inspired 'diamond' detailing can be seen on the enlarged grille, and the side fender vents now feature the iconic Leaper emblem.

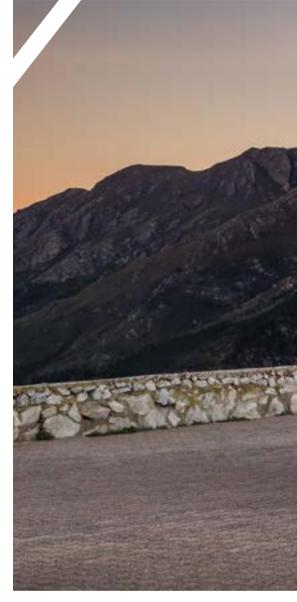
The front bumper receives redesigned air intakes, and dark mesh details for a more assured dynamic presence. New, super-slim all-LED quad headlights with Adaptive Driving Beam capability and 'Double J' Daytime Running Light (DRL) signatures (available with optional Pixel LED technology), deliver increased resolution and brightness in order to optimise visibility.

New slimline taillights feature Jaguar's double chicane graphic, and a revised rear bumper adds to its more purposeful aesthetic. A Black Pack option, complemented by optional 22" gloss black-finished wheels, is also available. This includes gloss black finish applied to the grille surround, bonnet louvres, front bumper apertures, sill trims, rear valance, and rear badges.

### FASTER, MORE EFFICIENT

Yet, it is the updates under the SVR's self-assured façade that makes difference. Jaguar's 5.0-litre the Supercharged petrol V8 engine. exclusively available in the F-PACE SVR. still produces 405 kW of power. At the same time, peak torque delivery has increased by 20 Nm to 700 Nm enhancing performance, with the SVR now capable of accelerating from zero to 100km /h in four seconds, threetenths faster than before.

This figure, as well as its top speed



of 286 km/h, compares well with the performance prowess of more powerful (and more expensive) rivals such as the BMW X5 M Competition (460 kW and 750 Nm; sprint time of 3.8 seconds; 290 km/h top speed) and Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 S 4-Matic (450 kW and 850 Nm; sprint time of 3.9 seconds; 280 km/h top speed).

How has this been achieved? Well, incremental tweaks to the transmission and dynamics systems, including an uprated Dynamic mode with unique timing, and a new Dynamic Launch

by ferdi de vos / photography by jaguar south africa



feature also uses driveline inertia from the All-Wheel Drive with Intelligent Driveline Dynamics system to maintain power to the wheels during gear changes, contributing to the SVR's sharper acceleration times.

The powertrain now features the same torque converter used in the Jaguar XE SV Project 8 super sedan to withstand the higher loads produced. Besides improved torque and acceleration, the engine's CO2 emissions are reduced from 281 g/km to 275 g/km. Fuel economy is also now down to 12.2 I/100 km (in combined road conditions).



— 2021 / edition three ——



The steering system is enhanced with a new electronic power-assistance system that delivers greater immediacy and a more focused and honed driving experience. Modified tuning of the adaptive damping provides a more refined ride at low speeds, further improved by revised chassis bushes.

Jaguar also maintains the brake feel in the new F-PACE SVR has been improved, with the 395mm (front) and 396mm (rear) two-piece disc brakes now supported by a new Integrated Power Booster. Improved cooling and aerodynamics of the vehicle also improve the performance of the brakes, giving the driver even greater confidence.

The powerful 5.0-litre V8 Supercharged petrol engine with its ominous growl and throaty soundtrack (when the Variable Valve Active Exhaust is selected) is paired with a smooth-shifting eight-speed automatic transmission which delivers rapid gearshifts for effortless performance, while Configurable Dynamics enables the driver to set up the vehicle to their personal preferences. A stopwatch, G-Meter and pedal graph also help the driver to monitor performance in Dynamic mode.

# CRAFTED, CURATED CABIN

The interior of the new F-PACE SVR is comprehensively redesigned, with materials enhanced to heighten the dynamic character of the cabin and its controls. At the heart is a centrally mounted 11.4" curved-glass HD Pivi Pro touchscreen in an elegant magnesium alloy casing.

New finishes, including standard aluminium or open-pore carbon fibre as an option, can be found in the upper door insert and full width 'Piano lid' that forms across the width of the instrument panel. Other inserts are finished in Alcantara, with elements such as the central cubby and leather midroll wrapped in Windsor leather.

The 12.3" HD Interactive Driver Display is wrapped in Alcantara with ebony stitching, and (optional) slimline semianiline leather sports seats with diamond embroidery across the front shoulder section feature a unique perforation across the backrest. The same pattern is used on the leather on the seatbacks, and an embossed SVR logo on the headrests adds a final flourish.

The new Drive Selector, finished in dimpled leather with heritage logoinspired detailing and debossed SVR logo, has a more performance-focused feel. The new SVR split-rim steering wheel is finished with tactile zinc-alloy shift paddles, for manual gear changes.

The new F-PACE SVR also features the advanced technologies found in the

latest F-PACE core models, ensuring it is always connected and always up to date. Besides the Pivi Pro infotainment system, this includes over-the-air update capability, Active Road Noise Cancellation, the latest advanced driver assistance systems, and optional wireless device charging.

With a starting price of R1,835,700 (including Jaguar's standard fiveyear/100,000 km Jaguar Care Plan and warranty), the new, faster and more refined F-PACE SVR is well positioned within the luxury performance SUV segment when compared with its immediate rivals.

Even with optional extras like special exterior paint, the Black Pack and a towbar (tallying around R200,000) thrown in, the dynamically more competent Jaguar flagship SUV still represents good value compared with the BMW X5M Competition (R2,775,658), the Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 S (R3,007,440) and its Range Rover Sport SVR stablemate (R2,654,862). •





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# **IQWEQWE** BY MADODA FANI

# An Exploration of Pattern and Movement

Southern Guild presents a new collection of carved ceramics by Madoda Fani, titled iQweqwe. The patterned incisions that have defined Fani's work to date become an all-encompassing 'skin' in this series of 12 hand-coiled works.



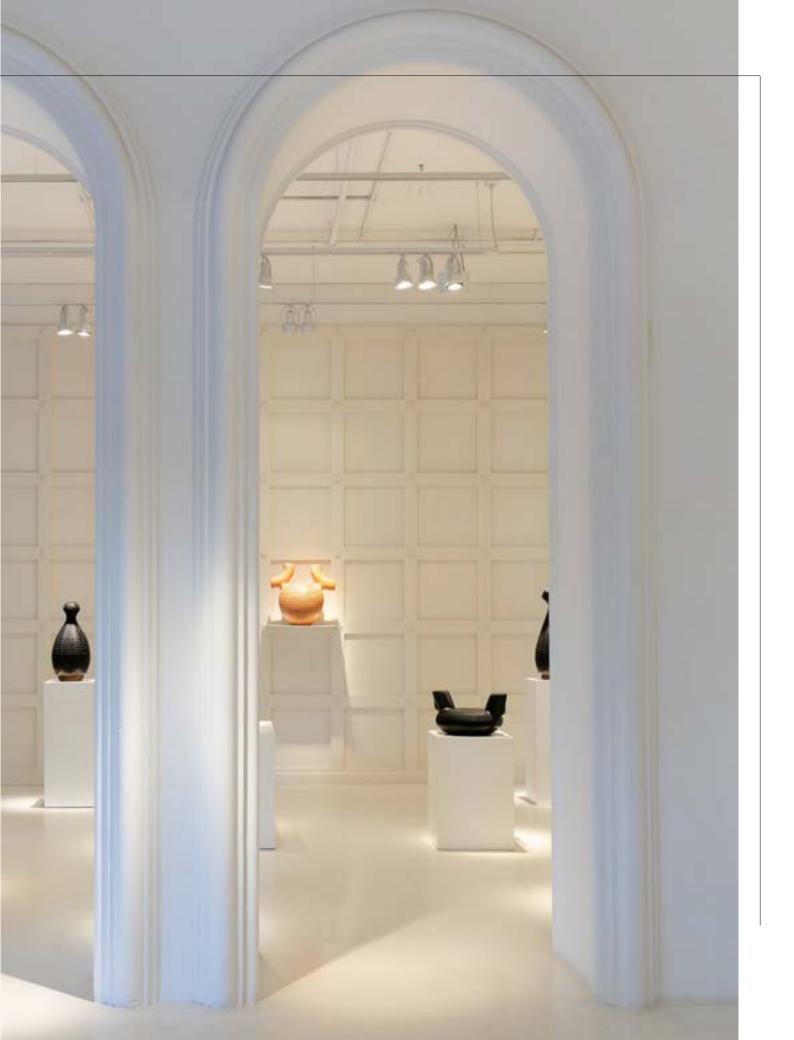
ani Madoda's latest show's isiXhosa title can be translated as "crust", referring to insect exoskeletons, a central fascination for the artist. Fani's work is gaining significant international attention with a recent acquisition by the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the United States earlier this year.

The iQweqwe collection features both functional and sculptural works, in which Fani explores unusual new forms, including vessels with tall, conical lids; a bowl supported by a large, four-legged stand; a two-handled pot; and an oval canister. Their contours are articulated by concentric lines carved into the clay, finished with detailed markings and studded protrusions, whose repetition lends the surfaces a mesmerising rhythm.

Veering from his usual blackened finish, Fani has left three of the pieces in their original terracotta state, signifying a kind of "stripping back" and returning to one's roots - much like an insect shedding its skin. This purity of form and earthy colour

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ART



gives the works an ancient, artefact-like feel. Combined with their pronounced armour-like exteriors, they appear concurrently timeless and futuristic.

Growth and the natural progression of things are recurring themes in Fani's work. He likens creating a piece to that of pregnancy: a process of varied phases of development and change, before the birth of the final, fully-formed product that is then named. Fani rarely plans his pieces, beginning with a loose idea and then surrendering to the clay, allowing it to lead him: "I let my work take me where it wants to go," he says.

His evolution as an artist has brought him full circle, seeing him return to one of his original inspirations – insects – only this time, instead of painting them, he is now moulding and carving them from clay. "The work that I'm doing now, is more of a revisiting of that old work, except now I'm using different materials," he explains. The medium of ceramic yields other surprising characteristics: when gently tapped, the works produce a similar sound to that of a shell or exoskeleton being tapped.

# COLLABORATION WITH BMW

The illusion of movement in Fani's iQweqwe collection becomes a largerthan-life reality in a custom-designed car wrap, that the artist collaborated on, with BMW South Africa. He adapted his signature incised patterns into line drawings that are applied as a twolayered wrap to the body of a BMW X7. The iridescent sheen of the car echoes that of an insect carapace, against which Fani's intricate patterns come alive.

"It's exciting to see my work take on a different form and to collaborate with such a recognised brand like BMW. The fact that the car is going to be driven around Cape Town means that people who are not familiar with my ceramics will now be able to see my work," explains Fani.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in 1975, Fani grew up in Gugulethu township in Cape Town and studied graphic design at Sivuyile College. To earn money to further his studies, he worked as a ceramic painter in a pottery studio for over eight years, during which his love for ceramics was born. Over time, he developed a unique style and started producing his own





pieces. When asked, "why clay?", he simply answers: "Clay chose me. I did not choose it."

In 2000, his work was selected for the Salon Internationale de l'Artisanat de Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. There he met acclaimed ceramicist Simon Masilo, who introduced him to traditional smoke-firing. A decade later, he moved to Johannesburg and began to deepen his craft under Masilo's guidance, and then later at the Kim Sacks School of



Ceramics. He learned how to burnish clay with a stone from Jabu Nala, the daughter of legendary Zulu beer-pot maker Nesta Nala, and mastered smokefiring techniques under the guidance of Nic Sithole. He credits all these artists as significant influences in his development as a ceramicist.

Although he uses traditional techniques, Fani's curvaceous, coiled forms and hand-carved embellishments are entirely distinct. He works on a large scale, building organic-shaped vessels whose smooth surfaces are punctuated by intricate, repetitive patterns that give them a scaled, insect-like appearance. He enjoys challenging himself, often branching out to experiment with different shapes and forms, yet always maintaining that signature patterning that has become the essence of his distinctive work.

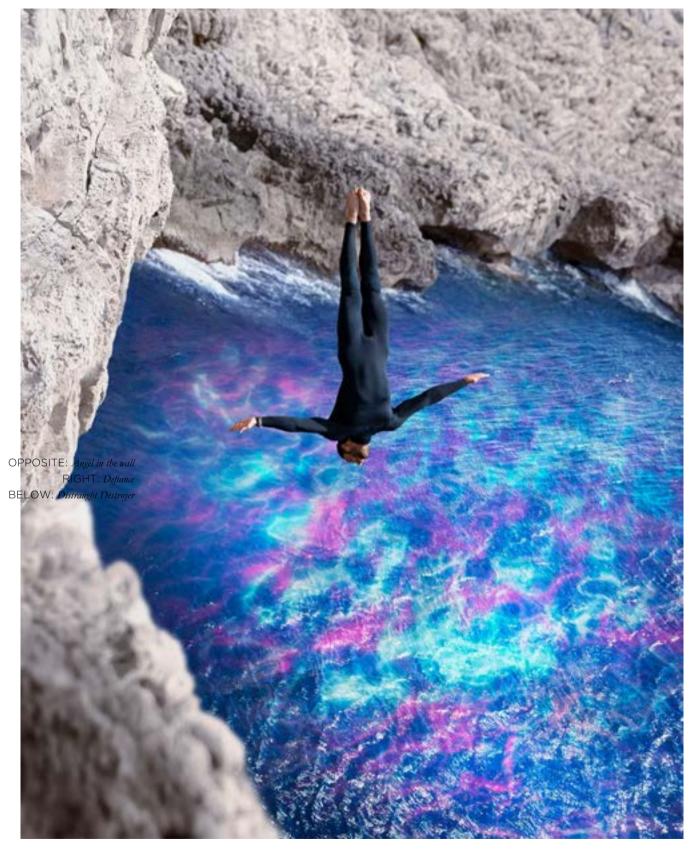
"When you perfect a form, you tend to fall in love with it, creating it over and over. One needs to force oneself to move away from that, something I try my best to do," says Fani. "My signature is always there, though. Certain things may change, but you'll always be able to recognise it's a Madoda Fani piece." His work with Southern Guild recently has seen him branch out into furniture, carved wood and bronze sculpture, a challenge he relished.

Southern Guild has exhibited his work at Design Miami, at The Salon Art + Design in New York, and at the Christie's London annual design auction. Fani has joined residency programmes in Argentina (2009) and France (2013), received first prize at the 2016 Ceramics Southern Africa Exhibition, as well as the Ndebele Milling & Mining Premier Award at the 2015 G&W Mineral Resources Ceramics SA Gauteng Regional Exhibition. In 2021, the Philadelphia Museum of Art acquired one of Fani's functional ceramic pieces, iTafile III.

For more information, visit www.southernguild.co.za. 🛛

by **the guild group** / photography by **southern guild** 

FASHION



# BEYOND THE EDGE

TAG Heuer Aquaracer Is Back!

TAG Heuer goes beyond the edge with the Aquaracer Professional 300, a luxury tool watch that connects us to the seas and continues a legacy that began more than 40 years ago.

AG Heuer's goanywhere luxury tool watch, loved by active, style-conscious watch lovers who push their limits, explore the seas and go beyond the edge, emerges with a bright new look, new materials and a new lease of life.

### **HIGH-WATER MARK**

The new-generation model is called the Aquaracer Professional 300. Bold and yet elegant, highly functional and versatile, it's a highly robust watch with a luxury feel that goes beyond the edge and sets a new high-water mark: for ergonomic, extreme-performance mechanical watches. Designed for work and play, and to soak up nature's harshest challenges, it's a pure symbol of TAG Heuer's fearless, avant-garde spirit.

With its striking, instantly recognisable aesthetic, epitomised by the Aquaracer's signature 12-faceted bezel, and its high specifications, Auqaracer is wholly contemporary, while it recalls a legacy that TAG Heuer began more than 40 years ago.

The legacy began with the Heuer Ref. 844, a divers' watch released in 1978. It had a striking dial design with a red 24hour scale, prominent lume-filled hour markers and a rotating divers' bezel with a crystal-clear minutes scale for safely timing dives. It set the standard for reliable diver's watches and was adopted by professional and recreational divers worldwide. In the four decades since the watch was launched, TAG Heuer has continued to push the limits of divers' watch design and performance, through celebrated pieces such as the Night Diver (once worn by the world's most famous secret agent) and the 1000 and 2000 Series models, while the Ref. 844 has become a collectors' favourite.

Frédéric Arnault, TAG Heuer CEO, said: "TAG Heuer has been making bold, high-performance, stylish, luxury tool watches for more than four decades. The Aquaracer Professional 300 picks up a much-loved story and moves it on with the most significant step we've taken to develop our Aquaracer collection in many years. Pushing the limits, high functionality, a bold and unmistakable aesthetic, and the promise of going with you, even to the extremes - the Aquaracer Professional 300 is a watch that will take you beyond the edge. This is, after all, the place where we truly find ourselves."

#### **BEYOND LIMITS**

During the conceptual phase, TAG Heuer's designers also recognised that, as well as being a reliable instrument; the Aquaracer Professional 300 needed to



be adaptable to multiple environments. More and more wearers are turning to divers' watches for their robustness and versatility, while at the same time wanting a watch for both work and play.

With this in mind, they evolved the Aquaracer's overall form to be thinner and lighter. The case, bezel and metal bracelet have all been slimmed down, without compromising the watch's core performance features, such as water resistance to 300 metres (30 bar), while also improving durability.

The new watch's lugs are now shorter, while the case edge has been chamfered and polished to give more harmony to the watch's visual impact and add refinement. As a result, the watch now has a more sophisticated profile on the wrist and is lighter and more ergonomic.

To complete the Aquaracer Professional 300's look and feel, the designers returned to the famous scaphander diving suit that first appeared on the Aquaracer case in 2004. The familiar, authoritative motif continues to underline the watch's value to its users, who are the latest in a long line of underwater explorers who chose the Aquaracer.

Reflecting the facets that become the new design's fil rouge, they made the diving helmet more angular and added a 12-faceted faceplate. Behind it sits a repeating hexagonal motif. The case back will now also always be square to the case so that the scaphander sits upright.

As a result of these technical and aesthetic upgrades, the new Aquaracer Professional 300 is both a nod to the past, and a contemporary design that is ready for the future.

## **DIVING BACK IN TIME**

TAG Heuer is also introducing a highly collectable limited-edition version of the Aquaracer Professional 300 at launch to complement the core collection and salute the design's incredible heritage. It's called the Aquaracer Professional 300 Tribute to Ref. 844, and, as the name suggests, it picks up on the story of the fabled Ref. 844 divers' watch, introduced in 1978.

In creating this beautiful watch, TAG Heuer's designers mixed a high-tech Grade 5 titanium case with several visual elements from the archive piece. The flat black dial carries the Ref. 844's red 24hour scale, which was initially intended as a quick conversion chart for on-thefield professionals reporting the time against the 24-hour clock.

The watch also has a vintage lume and a black perforated rubber strap based on an original design that allows water to swiftly pass between the watch and the wearer's wrist. In keeping with the watch's repeating-facet design code, those perforations are octagonal.

Only 844 examples of the Aquaracer Professional 300 Tribute to Ref. 844 will be made.

#### THE WORLD BENEATH THE WAVES

All eight references in the new Aquaracer Professional 300 collection are powered by TAG Heuer's Calibre 5, an ultra-reliable Swiss-made, automatic mechanical movement that drives hour, minute and seconds hands, and a date, which is now positioned at six o'clock, in keeping with the design codes of the new generation of TAG Heuer watches. Every model has a solid case back and provides water- resistance to 300 metres (30 bar).

## JUST THE BEGINNING

The introduction of the Aquaracer Professional 300 collection marks a new chapter in TAG Heuer's luxury tool watch story. Bold, refined, highperforming – these are watches for a new generation of divers, adventurers and urban explorers who want to go beyond the edge and push their limits, bringing them to the place where they find themselves. And this is just where the story starts.

The TAG Heuer Aquaracer is available from premium jewellery stores and other outlets nationwide. Visit www.picotandmoss.co.za for more information.







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# POWER & **PASSION**

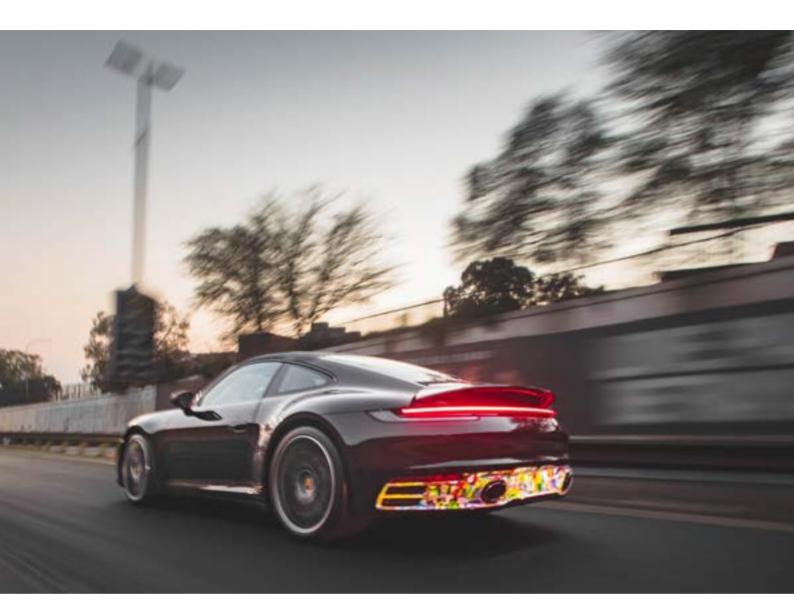
Introducing Nelson Makamo's Porsche 911

911. Three numbers that instantaneously evoke joy and respect in motoring enthusiasts around the world. Since 1963, Porsche's rear-engine sports car has remained the brand's iconic model, evolving over eight generations, from only one body type to a variety of different models, including the revered Turbo, as well as the unsurpassed GT models. Today, the 911 range offers a wide selection of models to thrill any passionate driver.





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icture South Africa back in the 1980s. The form and flow of Porsche's most iconic model catches the eye of a creatively gifted child from rural Modimolle in the Limpopo Province. Young Nelson Makamo decides there and then that owning a Porsche 911 in his adult life will be one of his goals. Nelson never doubted that he would eventually succeed in realising his dream, on his terms and in his own inimitable way.

Fast forward to 2021. Nelson Makamo is a world-renowned visual artist with an impressive list of clients, including international celebrities and private collectors. One of his works featured on the cover of TIME Magazine under the banner 'The art of optimism – 34 people who are changing how we see the world.'

After a residency in Franschhoek in the Western Cape Province, a modern day Porsche 911 in the town streets catches his eye, transporting him back to the moment he first saw its earlier evocation. Mesmerised by the evolutionary design of the 911 over the decades and now being in a position to fulfil his childhood dream, Nelson realises that the time has arrived.

A conversation follows with Porsche South Africa, fuelling the concept of creating his own customised car. Not just through Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur, but by personally transforming his new vehicle into a moving canvas featuring selected hand painted elements. As a result, Nelson Makamo will become not only the proud owner of a Porsche 911, but literally, the owner of automotive art. Instead of celebrating his milestone alone, Nelson Makamo decided to use his very own 911 as a motivational artwork.

### PARTS AT THE HEART OF THE ART

It is a daunting task at first, but Nelson painstakingly creates the individual elements for his latest art installation, hand-painting selected parts of the car at his studio in the heart of Johannesburg. These parts are then taken back to



Porsche Centre Johannesburg to be lacquer coated and assembled, ready for the private unveiling.

The Porsche 911 - affectionately called "My Life in Motion" by Nelson Makamo - is an eye-catching, Jet Black Metallic Porsche 911 Carrera Coupé, featuring the artist's signature accents, which include a hand-painted rear bumper panel, as well as side mirror covers, seatbacks and interior trim panels.

## INSPIRATION FROM OTHERS

Nelson strongly believes that each person's success results from a community or collective working together. He attributes his personal success to the various people he has met throughout his life, either through everyday interactions or through his work as an artist and of course, the diverse people he has met through his travels around the world. He says; "Your existence is not only a blessing to your family, but it's a blessing to a whole lot of communities."

This project encouraged Nelson to

reflect on his personal journey, recalling the various individuals that had an impact on his life. Doing so, he was able to portrav his belief in community through the depictions painted on the vehicle. This community has no race, age, gender or geographical origin, representing an international collective of individuals. "What better way to summarise my journey through life than by putting it in a form of collectives. We are at a point in time in the world where we are slowly moving into one culture because we care about each other as people more than anything. I want you to see yourself on the car" Nelson says looking at the rear bumper panel featuring a large crowd of people. "This 911 is meant to inspire anyone to believe that they can succeed through their passion".

The left side door panel insert subtly bears the inscription "Mma", purposely only visible when the door of the 911 is open. These three letters mean "Mother" in Nelson's home language of Sepedi and are a dedication to his mother, the first artwork on which he has ever mentioned her. With this subtle, yet deeply meaningful acknowledgement, Nelson pays tribute to his Mother who supported him throughout his life, inspiring him to believe that success through art is possible, despite many challenges.

From building wire toy cars as a child, to owning a customised Porsche 911, Nelson is humbled by his success. "I always knew I was going to own a Porsche, I just never knew that my relationship with the brand would start this way – and it's only the beginning." The project took weeks to complete, and Nelson declared that he enjoyed every moment. There was no brief – it was entirely Nelson's story to tell; the story of a young man who chose to believe that he can succeed.

Toby Venter, CEO of Porsche South Africa, says the project has provided great motivation: "Working with Nelson has been inspirational and this commission is on a level we've never seen before. This is a truly bespoke art installation worthy of any gallery. In addition, it illustrates the lengths Porsche South Africa will go to; the creativity and flexibility of our team to accommodate a request as personal as this. Porsche customers already have a virtually endless array of options available through Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur to make their car completely individual, but then, when a unique customer such as Nelson chooses to do something extraordinary, we are delighted to accommodate his wishes."

Nelson also finds artistic inspiration from the wide-eyed innocence of children. He is particularly drawn to children in rural South Africa, believing that they embody peace and harmony we all strive for in life.

This unique vehicle is both a representation and celebration of what can be achieved when you combine talent, resilience, hard work and the unwavering support from family to reach your goals. Nelson wants his 911 to spark the imagination of the African child, to help each young girl and boy see that it's possible to find success through their own passion.

by porsche south africa

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# **BIGGER IS BETTER**

Skyworth recently launched the biggest Android TV South Africa has ever seen. The 86" SUC9500 isn't simply a TV; it's your home's entertainment hub and one that you can control from up to 5 m away. The Hands-Free Voice Control means no more fussing with a remote when you're in the kitchen, in the room next door, or you simply don't feel like getting up off the couch to find the remote. The TV's Boundless Screen makes it easy on the eyes, whether it's on or off, so no more trying to hide your TV in a cabinet or with a piece of art - it's a work of art in itself. Other features include unlimited Google Play Store access, the latest Android 10 Operating System, Super Hardware Configuration, Dolby Vision and Dolby Atmos, Two-Way Bluetooth Transmission and Castplay, to name a few. The 86" SUC9500 is available at all leading retailers for a recommended retail price of R34,999. For more information, visit www.skyworth.co.za.



# LOUIS XIII THESAURUS

The world of LOUIS XIII cognac is steeped in time, tradition and craftsmanship; named after the French king who protected the Cognac region, LOUIS XIII was created by Paul-Émile Rémy Martin. In an effort to quantify the work of generations of cellar masters spanning 147 years, professor of modern literature, historian, and *Vogue* contributor, Farid Chenoune has done so in a stupendous art book. Three hundred pages divided into thirteen sections, the Thesaurus is an immersive coffee table book that brings LOUIS XIII cognac to life through a series of stories and anecdotes – some real, some fictional. Alongside authentic materials from the archives, the book features a series of imaginary tales from the past, present and future, written from multiple viewpoints, each retaining the essence of LOUIS XIII at the heart of the story, and supported by original illustrations and impactful photography. The LOUIS XIII Thesaurus is available nationwide from **www.janonline.com**.

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# SEE THEM ROAR!

Signature Celebrates World Lion Day Through the Lens of Acclaimed Photographer Beverly Joubert

As civilisation expands, the African Lion – subject of legends and a symbol of strength – needs conservation intervention more than ever before. Dereck and Beverly Joubert have dedicated many years to this cause, and we celebrate their dedication as we look at these majestic animals through the camera's lens.

he award-winning filmmaker duo and *National Geographic* Explorers and

wildlife conservationists, Dereck and Beverly Joubert, have been filming, researching and exploring in Africa for over 30 years. Their mission is the conservation and understanding of the large predators and other key wildlife species that determine the course of all conservation in Africa.

Lions and big cats in general have been a passion for the Jouberts for thirty years, and their work has followed the conservation of lions via films, books, National Geographic articles and a range of other work. It was when they became Explorers in Residence at National Geographic that they looked back at their life's work and realised that inspiring people about the beauty of big cats was not having a big enough effect. They approached National Geographic with their startling findings after sifting through the numbers. In 50 years, lions have dropped in number from 450,000 to around 20,000. Leopards have gone from 700,000 to about 50,000 and there are fewer than 7,000 wild cheetah.

As a result, Dereck and Beverly started the Big Cats Initiative with *National Geographic* as an emergency action plan to reverse that trend within five years. The BCI has so far issued grants to 150 projects in 28 countries and continues to search for innovative projects that can substantially change the way lion conservation is carried out.

World Lion Day was co-founded by Dereck and Beverley Joubert, along with *National Geographic*. The date – 10 August – was chosen for its significance as the birthday of Keith Joubert, brother to Dereck, and celebrated wildlife artist whose sculptures and paintings of lions form the bedrock of his contribution to the cause of lion conservation. *Signature* proudly marks World Lion Day 2021 with an exclusive tribute to the photographic brilliance of Beverly Joubert.

Find more information on the Jouberts' lion conservation efforts at www.greatplainsfoundation.com/lions, or view Beverly's fine art photography at www.beverlyjoubert.com.





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# **A GUT** FEELING

# What Exactly is 'Gut Health'?

If you walk down the supermarket aisle, you may be tempted with foods marketed as good for your gut. Then there are the multiple health blogs about improving, supporting or maintaining your "gut health". But what does "gut health" mean? Is it the absence of disease or bloating? Or is it something else entirely? And how strong is the evidence "gut health" products actually make a difference?



looking your best, and while proper hydration is essential, wrinklereducing injections and dermal fillers are two other liquids that can leave you looking great. Even if you're not keen on needles, Skin Renewal offers multiple no-downtime treatments that deliver brilliant results, whereafter you could easily go straight back to work, and nobody would be the wiser that you've just had an aesthetic treatment. They might notice a gorgeous glow, but only you will know that you have just invested in your skin.

here are many secrets to

As we explain in our article recently published in the journal Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology, even researchers have not quite nailed a definition of gut health, but here's what we know so far.

#### WHAT DOES THE SCIENCE SAY?

We know the gut is essential for our overall health and well-being. And, when we say "gut", we usually mean the large intestine, the region of the gastrointestinal tract where most of our gut microbiome lives.

Our gut microbiome is our gut's resident microbes. Evidence is emerging that this affects everything from how our body

by amy loughman: senior research fellow, deakin university & heidi staudacher: postdoctoral research fellow, food & mood centre, deakin university / www. theconversation.co.za / photography by www.unsplash.com

processes the sugar in our diet to our risk of cancer, depression and dementia.

But there's no explicit agreement on what "gut health" actually means. Researchers don't use the term in the medical literature very much, and when they do, they seem to refer to it indicating no:

- unwanted gastrointestinal symptoms (such as pain or diarrhoea)
- disease (such as Crohn's disease or colon cancer), or
- negative gut features (such as inflammation, a deficiency of specific molecules or an imbalance in the microbiome), which are almost impossible to diagnose precisely.

Nowhere do researchers or gastroenterologists (doctors who specialise in the gut) mention any aesthetic perks, such as a smooth, flat belly or glowing skin, despite what magazine articles might suggest.

#### SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

There are two main problems with products or lists of foods that claim to be good for "gut health". Firstly, such claims are not backed by strong scientific evidence. Secondly, these claims are simplistic.

While a healthy diet is undoubtedly an essential contributor to good health, including of the gastrointestinal system, it is dietary patterns and overall habits, not individual foods, that shift the dial.

#### LET'S TAKE FIBRE AS AN EXAMPLE

Fibre is one dietary component heralded as a gut health hero. Indeed, there is compelling evidence showing the health benefits of a high-fibre diet for the gastrointestinal tract and, more broadly (for instance, reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes). Yet, most people in Western countries do not eat enough dietary fibre.

However, the little-told story is that foods contain multiple types of dietary fibre, each withdifferent effects on gut function (and its microbiome).

We don't know if all types of fibre are essential or beneficial. At least in animals, too much of certain fibres might affect the large intestine, causing inflammatory disease.

So yes, eat high-fibre foods (including wholegrain cereals, fruit, vegetables, legumes and nuts). But do so as part of a varied diet, not by overloading on just one or two foods or commercial products claiming to improve your "gut health".

#### WE ARE ALL INDIVIDUALS

The optimal diet for your gut as well as your overall health is likely to be highly individual. What is best for one person may not be so for the next.

Extensive human studies show the gut microbiome may be the primary driver of this individuality, responsible for some variability in how different people metabolise food. However, as we have written about before, it isn't yet possible to define the perfect microbiome or how to get one. What is clear is that any one product is unlikely to achieve this anyway.

#### SO WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?

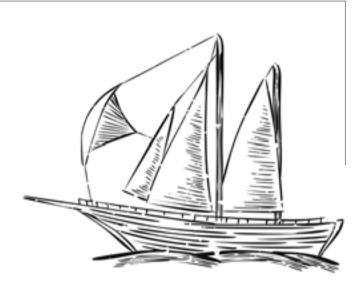
If we accept the concept of "gut health" has many nuances, what next?

There is good evidence the health of the gastrointestinal tract and its microbiome is vital for overall health, and certainly, the absence of pain and disease boosts our well-being. But rather than focusing on one food, the evidence for what's best for our gut tells us we'd be better off looking at improving our overall diet. Healthy eating guidelines universally include advice to eat various foods, including those high in fibre, and avoid drinking excessive amounts of alcohol.

General principles of a healthy lifestyle apply too: avoid substance abuse (including smoking, off-label prescription drugs and illicit drugs), exercise regularly, take care of your mental well-being and manage your stress. These combined are likely to be more helpful for gut health than the latest superfood or boxed cereal...



— 2021 / edition three –



# ANCHORS AWAY!

The subject of boats came up the other day. It reminded me of my all-time favourite boat name: "Never Again. 2."

have never ascribed to the saying that the happiest days of a man's life are the day he buys a boat, and the day he sells it. A Jeep has made me feel like this. So too the bird cage that once housed a rabid budgie that could've easily been in a Stephen King novel. We relocated the budgie and sold the cage. Such an exceedingly happy day.

But, I have loved every one of the boats I have owned.

My entry into the aquamarine world was like many, except Russian oligarchs of course, through the ubiquitous rubber duck. She was previously a racing craft of note, I suspect. The big black "7" on her motor gave her away. But when I bought her, her horsepower was more of a horse purr. She was blue. Of course, the Afrikaans side of my family wasted no time christening her, "Blou Job".

I loved that boat. My wife and I practically changed our son's nappies during languid days bass fishing on that boat. Although we did get off to a rocky start. On our first outing, I took my dad along. We launched and there was now the great moment of starting her. I pulled on the engine. It turned, but nothing. I pulled again. Same thing.

Again. Nothing. By now we had drifted from the jetty and were heading for some reeds. And as every boat owner knows, a moment like this would be nothing if there wasn't an audience to accompany it. On the bank sat about 50 families watching me struggle. Some had turned their chairs to get a better view. Others were telling their children to keep quiet so they could focus on Captain Clueless out on the water.

After pulling on the start cord until my arm was about to fall off, I stood up in exasperation. My father had that look on his face that said, "My son has bought the Titanic". I put my hands in my pockets to catch my breath. And I pulled out the key.

"What's that?" asked dad.

"The key," I said.

"Shouldn't that be plugged into the engine?"

I put the key in and yanked the cord once more. Old number 7 roared to life. But with all the false starts, she spat out a plume of blue smoke that gassed the nearby mother duck and her five ducklings and had the children on the bank crying in fear. But we tore out of that blue cloud at a furious pace and had a delightful morning further. I eventually sold that boat to a fantastically friendly bunch of Malawian fishermen, and I upgraded to a cabin boat. She was just as beautiful. She had a yellow hull with chrome railings. Alas, I had to sell her when we moved. A guy drove through the night from Pongola to buy her. For a few weeks thereafter, he sent me photos of him and his dad fishing with the words, "This is the best boat ever". Eventually I had to block him as I'd run out of tears to cry.

I've been on other boats as well. I have a friend who once took myself and my, then, two very young boys out to sea on his boat. He sped across the ocean like some kind of Marine Mad Max and we bumped around so much I think I suffered mild concussion, while my boys were hysterical. Speed boats do nothing for me.

But give me my simple cabin boat, and the gentle rock on the water, and I'll show you a very happy boat owner indeed.

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

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