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Letter from the Editor

ALL WE NEED IS A MIRACLE

By Dave Charles

“So here we are, another trip around the sun completed and the festive season once again brings hope of a better future ... just like last year and the year before.

And so again we embrace the season with glitter, jingling bells, fake snow and Boney M, although if the truth be told, we really don't expect what follows to be any different to what followed last year and the year before.

“O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant... Deck the halls with boughs of holly, falalala la la la la... Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.”
Peace on earth – now that's something worth fighting for, hey?

Forgive me for sounding a touch cynical, but isn't the definition of madness doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result?

But maybe next year things will be different. All we need is a miracle.

Actually, I do believe in miracles. When my little grandson smiles at my attempt at a sea shanty and that small hand reaches for mine, my cup runneth over with joy and gratitude. He was born with a congenital heart condition that required major surgery. I asked for a miracle then and now, look... How could I not believe?

No one knows what the future holds but what we have in our lives right now that is good is a blessing worth celebrating. Of course, nothing lasts forever, and this too shall pass. But right now, if you have someone to love and who loves you, treasure that and remember the message that Max Ehrmann left us in the words of his poem, Desiderata:

“... whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labours and aspirations in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams; it is still a beautiful world.

Be cheerful.

Strive to be happy.”

**Dave Charles presents the Afternoon Drive -
3 - 6pm Monday to Friday on 88FM Radio Life & Style - The Voice of Ballito

Actually, I do believe in miracles. When my little grandson smiles at my attempt at a sea shanty and that small hand reaches for mine, my cup runneth over with joy and gratitude. He was born with a congenital heart condition that required major surgery. I asked for a miracle then and now, look... How could I not believe?



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MANA MAGIC

By Steve Bolnick

“**Across** the vast continent of Africa there are a handful of places whose names evoke an almost spiritual awe and a deep desire to visit. Think of Kilimanjaro, Kgalagadi, Okavango, Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Ruwenzori . . . and Mana Pools, perhaps less known but every bit as deserving!

Strike-up a conversation with an experienced safari-lover anywhere and before long the discussion will turn to Mana Pools, accompanied by sighs and superlatives. What is it about Mana Pools that evokes such passion and veneration?

Mana Pools is situated in the far north of Zimbabwe, on the Zambezi River. The closest settlement is the slovenly border town of Chirundu, fueled and littered by the never-ending stream of trucks careering along the “Great North Road” traversing the routes between Zimbabwe and the Zambian copper belt or the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Just 70km South of desperate Chirundu lies Mana Pools, one of the most beautiful and pristine wilderness areas in Africa.

The word “mana” means “four” in the local Shona language. “Mana Pools” refers to the four permanent pools in the National Park. Contrary to popular belief, these pools are not filled by the flooding of the Zambezi River but rather by the annual summer rains; they do, however, punctuate an ancient course of the Zambezi. The largest of these pools is aptly named “Long Pool”. Despite its dull name, Long Pool is magnificent, stretching over five kilometers in length and fringed with huge Tamarind, Natal Mahogany, Sausage and Wild Mango trees.

The one feature that is definitively Mana are the Albida forests without which few of the other unique features of Mana Pools could endure. *Faidherbia albida* is an extraordinary tree which takes on magnificent and fantastical shapes in its old age; it appears to have leapt from a Tolkien manuscript page. One of their common names, “The Winterthorn”, best describes these trees and alludes to their ecological value. Counter-intuitively these deciduous trees lose their leaves in the rainy season and then flower before the new leaves sprout. The extremely nutritious fruits ripen late in the dry season, providing vital food when little else nutritious is available. So, the Albida forests really are the lifeblood of Mana Pools. Their leaves are the irresistible bounty which entices a handful of Mana Pools elephants, the best known of which is the giant “Boswell”, which rear-up on their hind legs to reach beyond the common browse line. They also attract baboons that scramble through the canopy noisily and carelessly collecting fruits, many of which fall to the ground below, where they attract opportunistic elephants, impala, waterbuck and kudu.

Aside from their vital ecological role, the Albidas contribute in other ways to make Mana Pools an exceptional destination. The area is famous for its mysterious blue light that lends a dreamlike quality to the already astounding backdrop, and much like the Blue Mountains of Australia, this light is believed to be caused by native trees, in this case the Albidas.



The elephant Boswell standing on his hind legs - pic Mark Jacobson



Steve Bolnick discussing an interesting biofact - the remains of an elephant skull - pic Mark Jacobson

This characteristic light is marveled by wildlife and landscape photographers. But the Albidas have another generous gift – they create beautifully textured natural but geometric frames which add an exceptional dimension to photographs of any animals. The Albidas scatter the light of the rising sun, especially late in the dry season when there is more dust in the air, and produce golden halos around the trees and animals, bathing them in translucent light. Throw all of this together in a visit to the Albida forests at sunrise when the music of the birds and hippos punctuates the silence and reality has not yet awoken, and the soft-focus compositions are plentiful, exquisite, surreal and other-worldly. This is the origin of the term “Mana Magic”.

Mana Pools is situated on the banks of The Zambezi River, which must surely be one of the most beautiful of the great rivers of the world. As it passes through Mana Pools the river is wide and meanders gently around the myriad of islands scattered along its length. Home to hippo, elephants, waterbuck and crocodiles in abundance, the opposite side of the river reveals a magnificent backdrop: the northern Zambezi Escarpment. Sunsets on this section of the Zambezi River are legendary and are best described by quoting the great contemporary African explorer and best-selling author Tim Butcher when he wrote: “Here crocodile and buffalo, waterbuck and waterbirds, impala, baboon and a backing chorus of other animals dance a dance as old as the river, a distant mercury seam below a skyline framed by the Zambian escarpment”. In other words, . . . the scenery in Mana Pools is simply jaw-droppingly beautiful!

The Albidas are not the only trees in Mana Pools that provide a botanical incentive to visitors. The Middle and Lower Zambezi is home to the astounding Zambezi Fig (*Ficus bussei*), majestic trees that stand up to 20m high with canopies far wider, spreading 35m and more! With their huge broad horizontal branches, they appear to have been designed as divans for lazing leopards, and while they are surely regularly used in this fashion, they are unfortunately seldom seen doing so!



“Mana Pools offers exceptional opportunities for walking safaris – exhilarating!” - pic Anthony Zwi

For many, however, Mana Pools delivers also as a famed destination for spectacular walking-safaris. Zimbabwean Professional Guides are justifiably proud of their reputation as Africa’s best and Mana Pools lends itself to exploration on foot. In fact, anyone can walk in Mana Pools, provided they have obtained a permit to do so and have the experience and nerve to match.

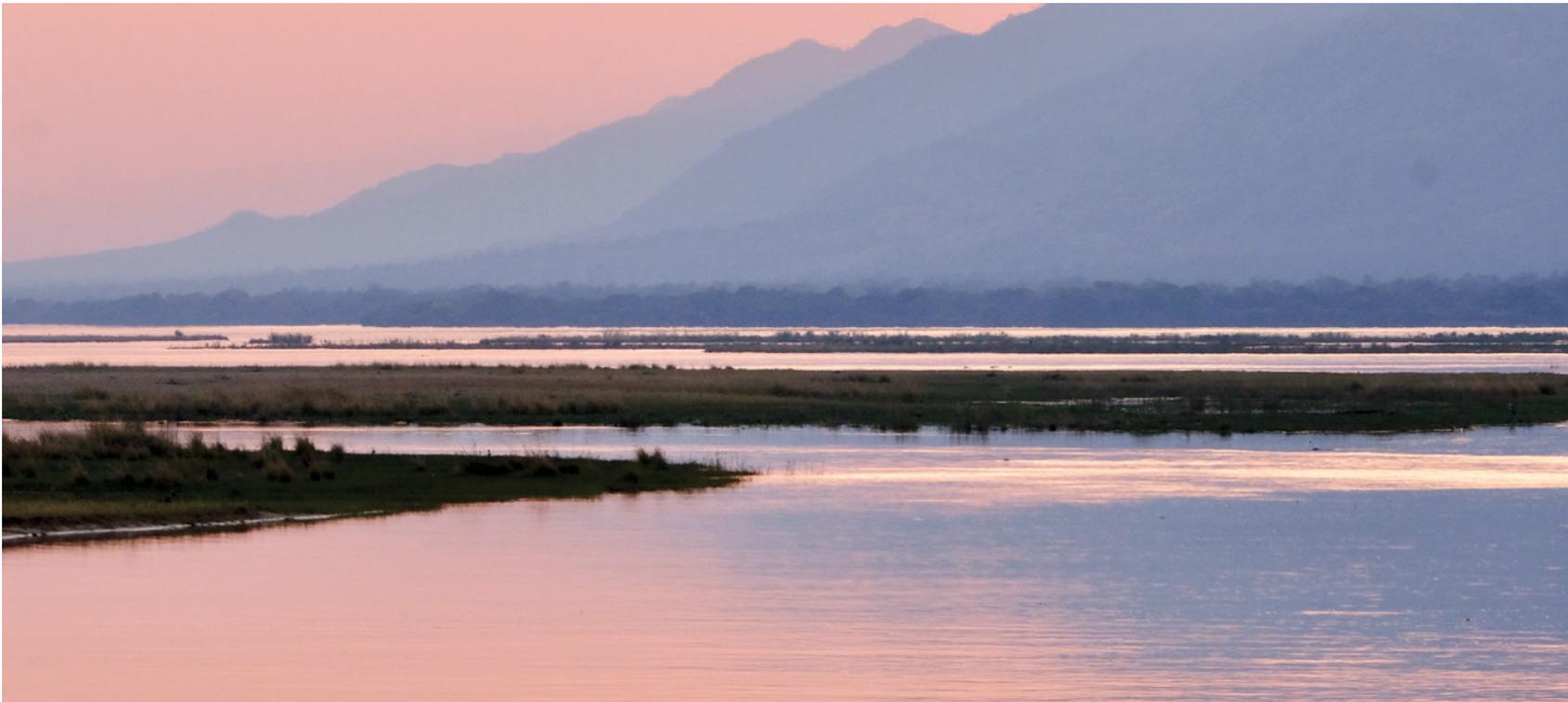


Birding in Mana Pools is remarkable and offers specials such as these graceful Carmine Bee-eaters - pic Anthony Zwi

However, a safari cannot comprise only of beautiful scenery and spectacular trees. Wildlife is necessary for any safari-with-boasting-rights, and Mana delivers generously in this regard too. The Mana environment is home to a small number of extraordinary elephants (Boswell and Fred among a few others) who have mastered and fine-tuned the technique of standing on their hind legs to reach the highest leaves and branches, unavailable to any of the other elephants. No matter how many times you may have heard about, or even seen, photographs of this phenomenon, nothing prepares you for witnessing a 5,000+ kg elephant effortlessly rising up on his hind legs to pull down a nutritious branch of leaves.

In addition to Boswell’s acrobatic antics, he is also celebrated for his immense tusks. Until 2020 these beautiful tusks were perfectly symmetrical, and he resembled a woolly mammoth of old. Sadly in 2020 he broke his left tusk and lost about 25 cm on that side, but he remains one of the great tuskers of Africa. He is not alone and there are several other large tusked elephant bulls and cows who call Mana Pools home.

Mana Pools was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site on account of the remarkably large numbers and diversity of animals that gather on the terraces and floodplains along the Zambezi River. The animals here seem to be at ease, relaxed and tolerant adding to the dreamlike atmosphere but also providing exceptional



The Mana Pools sunsets are spectacular with the Zambezi in the foreground and the Zambian escarpment in the background - pic Anthony Zwi

game and bird-viewing viewing opportunities. This is possibly the best place in Southern Africa to see Painted Dogs and in the dry season it is not unusual to see lions on more than one occasion daily.

There are also several feathered-animal specials to attract dedicated birders and twitchers. These include species endemic to the Zambezi River system or restricted to only the middle Zambezi or just spectacular birds that are found here and are difficult to locate elsewhere. A favourite is the Lillian's Lovebird, with its outrageously bright colours and bulging teddy-bear eyes. When a large flock of these birds lifts off from feeding on the ground it appears as if the baize of a snooker table is being shaken-out and it sounds like a party. In September as the temperature rises, the carmine bee-eaters return to nest in the sand cliffs of the riverbank. Like squadrons of ripe strawberries with glider wings, they broadcast a melodious chant and delight all who are privileged to see them.

The other birding specials found here, sometimes requiring considerable effort and good-luck, include the Western Banded Snake Eagle, Böhm's Spinetail, Bat Hawk, Three-banded Courser, Eastern Nicator, Collared Palm Thrush, Narina Trogon and the African Pitta during the rainy season. That said, the holy grail of Mana Pools birding is undoubtedly the diminutive and lively Livingstone's Flycatcher.

The scenery, flora, animal and birdlife are hard to beat. Beyond just seeing them, the action-packed days at Mana Pools offer still more. The stretch of the Zambezi

River at Mana Pools has been described as the best canoeing safari destination in Africa, providing a very beautiful, different, albeit at times scary, perspective of one of Africa's iconic wilderness areas.

For many, however, Mana Pools delivers also as a famed destination for spectacular walking-safaris. Zimbabwean Professional Guides are justifiably proud of their reputation as Africa's best and Mana Pools lends itself to exploration on foot. In fact, anyone can walk in Mana Pools, provided they have obtained a permit to do so and have the experience and nerve to match.

There is little to beat the Mana Pools themselves, the shores of the Zambezi, the multitude of animal, birds, and plant-life, the spectacular sights and sounds, and the opportunities to get up close to the wildlife in this magnificent wilderness.

If experiencing the Mana Magic is not yet on your bucket-list, it undoubtedly should be!

MANA MAGIC

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Photography: Mark Jacobson: @drjakeny \ Anthony Zwi: @antzsyd_wild



"It is not unusual to see lions on more than one occasion on a given day" - pic Mark Jacobson



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THE JFK ARCHIVE

By Shannon Devy

“I remember vividly the 11th grade history lesson where I first learned about the conspiracy around the assassination of John F. Kennedy. My history teacher, one Mr. Harris, was a dramatic type, and in his shirt and tie, he re-enacted the events on the grassy knoll that fateful day with gusto, complete with throat-grabbing and slumping, hi-res pictures of Jackie’s dive for the skull fragment and a chalk diagram explaining the miraculous path of the “magic” bullet, which appeared to defy physics and pointed to something altogether more nefarious than the official story of the assassination. It all seemed terribly American, infused with the most exciting kind of fiction-feel, and when Mr. Harris told us that the records were sealed until 2017, I knew a hell of a plot was afoot. For 15-year-old me, 2017 was a lifetime away, but I could wait. There would be clues and I was going to follow them. I was determined to find a smoking gun.

Update: I did not find a smoking gun.

What I did find is, I think, in many ways far more interesting. In 1992, the U.S Congress passed the rather wordy President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act, mandating that all documents relating to the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy be collated in a single collection in the National Archives for total release to the public no later than October 26, 2017. While 88% of the collection has been available to the public since the 90’s in various states of redaction, approximately 50 000 newly declassified documents were released between July 2017 and April 2018, all of which can be accessed through the National Archive and Records Administration website at any time. If you fancy yourself, like I do, an avid armchair detective, spending a few hours browsing the collection is well worth your time.

During my own brief stint as a silhouetted detective I found the assassin’s widow Marina Oswald’s application for state-funded “Survivor’s Insurance Benefits” dated two months after her husband Lee Harvey Oswald’s death. I found record of a phone call between Kennedy and Frank Sinatra. A list of federal salaries. Secrets and stamps, illegible handwriting. Oswald’s military records and a list of wire taps carried out in the hotel rooms of Martin Luther King. I found a cast of thousands of strangers, each attached to a presumably full human life. What happened to these people? Spies, gangsters, strippers, defectors, soldiers and clerks, confidential informers. A mobster dismembered in an oil drum. There are five million pages in this collection, and you could explode a story out of every single one.

At times, the contents ventured into the absurd. Here’s an example. In document 157-10002-10004 I found a number of photostatic copies of index cards created in June - July of 1975. They outline the CIA’s various plans to kill Fidel Castro, a pursuit known as Operation Mongoose. Richard Helms, a high-ranking agent, testified that the pressure to eliminate Castro after the Bay of Pigs disaster was so intense it led to several “very nutty schemes”.

OCURRENCE:

Depilatory: A chemical depilatory (Thallium Salts) was procured and tested for surreptitious use on CASTRO. The plan was to “dust Thallium powder into CASTRO’s shoes when they were put out at night to be shined.” (13) on a trip outside CUBA; the powder would be absorbed into his skin causing his beard to fall out and thereby destroying CASTRO’s image. (13). 13 Ray Treichler recalls this scheme; Henry Bertner recalls something about Thallium Salts.

The capitalisation lends a real petulant tone to the whole thing.

OCURRENCE: Aerosol attack on radio station: A scheme was discussed at CIA to “contaminate the air of the radio station where CASTRO broadcast his speeches with an aerosol spray of a chemical that produces reactions similar to those of Lysergic Acid (LSD).” (10) “Nothing came of the idea.” (10). REDACTED, of TSD, remembers the discussion and discouraged the scheme “because the chemical could not be relied upon to be effective.” (10). Others who may be knowledgeable 1. REDACTED (TSD) recalls general experimentation with psychic energisers.

OCURRENCE: DR. EDWARD GUNN, Chief, Operations Division, Office of Medical Services, has annotation that on 16 August 1960, he received a box of Cuban cigars to be treated with a lethal material. (21). He understood them to be CASTRO’s favorite brand. (21). GUNN’s notes show that within the next month he contacted REDACTED of TSD, (Sept. 6, 1960)and gave him the box of cigars. REDACTED recalls “that he did contaminate a full box of 50 cigars with Botulinum Toxin, a virulent poison,” (21) which would kill the intended victim upon merely putting it in the mouth.

In order to more effectively kill CASTRO, the CIA collaborated with a high-ranking Cuban official who had political ambitions of his own. He was to become the highly confidential source, codename A.M.LASH/AMLASH. Apparently, during a meeting in Copenhagen between AMLASH and REDACTED on August 10, 1962, “the term ‘assassinate’ was used in the discussion of A.M. LASH’s future role in Cuba and it visibly upset A.M. LASH, who preferred the term ‘eliminate’”.

At times bizarre, always infinitely interesting, the JFK archive offers a wild insight into a fascinating time in American history. For history buffs, it’s well worth a gander, and you can access it online for free.

1) In the first conversation Regis originally told us that he looked through an autopsy photo book after receiving permission to do so. Later, during that same conversation, when asked from whom he received permission to look through the autopsy photo book he denied having said he received permission to look through the book and stated that he at no time received permission to look through the autopsy photo book. Both Gary and I distinctly recall him telling us at the outset of the conversation that he looked through the book only after receiving permission to do so.

2) In the first conversation Regis told us that he was alone in the security room when he saw the book on the window sill and decided to look through it. However, when asked during the taped recorded conversation whether he was alone when he looked through the autopsy book he then stated that there were people present in the room when he looked through the autopsy book but that he cannot recall who they were. Once again, both Gary and I clearly recall him telling us when we first spoke with him that no one was present when he looked through the photo book.

at the outset of the recorded conversation Regis told us that he had spoken to his superior and neither he nor they had any objection to the conversation being recorded.

Signature: [Handwritten Signature] Form #5

This file is of an unusual nature because it deals with an incident involving a CIA employee and this committee. It has not been logged into our system by agreement with the CIA.

Lance Swindson
Director of Security
[Handwritten Signature]



This activity concluded the pre-Bay of Pigs phase of the plots. The 1967 IGR does not document any attempt to administer the pills to Castro.

The 1967 IGR relates that after a period of apparent dormancy, Bissell directed William Harvey in approximately November of 1961 to reactivate the CIA-Mafia plots. Bissell therefore introduced Harvey to Roselli. During this phase, the CIA decided against using Giancana or Trafficante; instead, a person referred to as "Mongoose" entered the plot as the person who would help provide Castro contacts. In addition, the plots still utilized the Cuban exile (also known as "Mongoose").

Even though the plots no longer included Trafficante and Giancana, the CIA admitted that Roselli most likely kept them informed. The 1967 IGR that "it would be naive to assume that Roselli did not take the precaution of informing higher-ups in the syndicate that he was working in a territory considered to be the private

The 1967 IGR does not mention the Bay of Pigs or the Cuban exile (also known as "Mongoose").

According to Richard Bissell, who was the CIA Deputy Director of Plans at the time, he was aware of discussion of plans within the Agency concerning the possible assassination of Patrice Lumumba and that "a case officer was directed to look into the possibilities. He reported back in a matter of weeks and convinced me that this was probably unfeasible, and probably an undesirable course of action. According to the case officer, who is now retired, Bissell asked him to go to the Congo and there murder or arrange for the murder of Lumumba, and the case officer said that he told Bissell that he refused to be a party to such an act.* Bissell said the Agency had nothing whatsoever to do with the death of Lumumba.

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THE CALL OF THE WILD

By Steve Honeysett

“Some say that the winds bring change and as we now move into the change of season, that would seem to be the case. The rains are on their way and everything in the great outdoors has begun to change.

It is time to get some of those senses in tune when you are out and about, as all those insects and reptiles that we do not see during winter have re-emerged and we will come across them in our travels.

So far, there is a definite increase in insect movement and where there is insect activity there are spiders and webs stretching out to try to catch some dinner – reason enough to keep alert. When walking, many people walk with their heads down for fairly obvious reasons but this does not give you a clear view up ahead and will result in a spider in your face as you stare at your feet.

Here are some simple do's and don'ts when on a trail in the summer months:

- **Keep looking ahead, scan for movement in the bush and on the ground.**
- **Stay on the path, do not take short cuts as this causes damage to the environment.**
- **Let someone know where you are walking.**
- **Be prepared and plan your walks no matter how big or small.**
- **Make sure you carry only what you need.**
- **If you encounter a wild animal, always give it space and slowly move away.**

There are lists and lists of recommended carry items, but it boils down to what you might be doing out on the trail, and to be safe, consider the following which I deem essential items:

- **Water**
- **First aid**
- **Communication**
- **Sun protective clothing**
- **Comfortable shoes**

If you are alone, always take security to heart and avoid isolated places where the risk is high. Try not carry valuable items on you. A cell phone is an acceptable risk but exclude expensive jewellery as it will be the first thing that thieves will target. I recommend putting your phone into a waterproof bag in case you get wet. I fell victim to this recently, forgetting that the cell phone was in my backpack and, while crossing one of our local rivers, the phone was destroyed when I lost my footing and fell into the water. When walking on the beaches, remember the sand gets very hot and the rocks can get slippery, so prepare accordingly.

Summer is a great time to experience the great outdoors, but you need to be more aware than in the winter months. There is plenty of daylight now and that means more time to spend doing these activities. Whatever exercise you choose, make sure to prepare and plan and if you need anything, there are plenty of shops in town that can supply just about everything you will want to carry along. Enjoy the summer and stay safe.

**** Seaweed Steve presents the Daily Surf & Weather Report on 88FM Ballito**



- Bike riding from Tugela River to Salt Rock on the beach, 38km stopping at Grumpies Beach Bar for breakfast. Took just over 4 hours on an amazing part of the coast.

AUNTIE KATRINA’S DOGS

A KAROO MAN WHO WRITES OUT SPEEDING FINES
BY DAY, AND HIT SONGS BY NIGHT.

Words: Julienne du Toit
Photography: Chris Marais

Boeta Gammie is a bit like that Portuguese white wine everyone used to quaff at summertime lunch tables: singing, dancing, shepherding, guiding, inspiring, snake-catching and traffic-fining – sometimes all at once.

His songs are catchy tunes in the Nama folk music genre, but his words are all carefully crafted messages. As he played *Ant Katriena, Die Honne Byt My* (Aunt Katriena, the dogs are biting me), an old Willistonian said to us:

“That’s the biggest hit of the Hantam this year.”

Calvinia is one of our favourite little Karoo towns, in part because there seems to be a certain ease between the various groups living in it. We are headed for an address in Calvinia West, and an appointment with Akkedissie, who pitches up like a dust-devil in a pink shirt. We can see this is not going to be a sit-down-and-chat kind of interview. It’s going to be done on the run.

He leads us in his VW hatchback (with personalised plates) to a little house at the edge of Calvinia West.

“This is where the Akkedissie thing began – at my late father’s house,” he says. “About six years ago, when Dad was still alive, I spotted a fat-bellied skink sunning itself on a stump in the front yard. I wanted to catch it, but it wriggled out of my grasp.”

He was horrified to find the skink’s detached tail twitching in his hand. “I thought I’d killed it. Then someone said no, the tail just comes off naturally and it grows another one. So I put out more sunning rocks for the lizard, caught flies for it to eat and set aside a little plate of water in case its throat was ever dry.” The lizard thrived.

The Wonderkroon Violin

But let’s roll back the past, as they used to say in the old Movietone newsreels. Little Jan Isaacs is a farm worker’s son who grew up in the Hard Man’s Karoo, where working the land is sometimes classed as an act of insanity.

“I was born in the Sutherland area and grew up with seven brothers and sisters. My father sold his labour on a lot of farms, and I remember each one: Nuwerus, Jakkalsfontein, Kapgat, Kookfontein, Dwingdrif, Bloemhof, Diepdrijf, Vlakfontein and Kreitsberg.”

This child became a cheerful veteran of the local farm school system and, by all accounts, a very chatty and interactive boy. Jan played his first guitar chord at six. “I was also dead keen on the violin, but I couldn’t lay my hands on one.” He had his eye on the perfect soundbox though. It was a tin full of Lennon’s Wonderkroon Essence – a popular digestive medication. So little Jan emptied the contents into a large jug and drilled holes in the tin so his dad couldn’t refill it again – then took his hiding like a man.

“I added a stick, fishing gut and some hairs plucked from a horse’s tail. It worked well.”

He stands in the street outside the family home and scratches out a tune on his childhood fiddle, which he’s kept intact all these years.

Jan had to walk more than eight kilometres to school at times, and often those walks would turn into trots. Which, in turn, made him a fearsome marathon runner.

Gammie and the Riel

As a teenager, Jan Isaacs arrived in Calvinia, entered his name in a draw for the first RDP house in town – and won. Now he needed a job. Soon, he was the most cheerful refuse removal man Calvinia had ever seen. Then he became a blockman in a local butchery before becoming a traffic cop, but it was the fat lizard with the detachable tail that launched his music career.

“I wrote a song called Akkedissie. It became a hit. And that was the beginning.” It was probably the last time he was popularly known as Jan Isaacs. Moonlighting as a DJ on the local Radio Kaboesna late one night, he liked to feature a song by the late Tolla van der Merwe called Boeta Gammie. It became his nickname. And Akkedissie became his performing name.

Now we’re back down the dirt road lanes, heading to the house of Johanna Jooste, whom most folks in Calvinia know as the Queen of the Nama Riel.

Within minutes, the local speed cop is crouched in the road, playing his guitar while a jubilant Tannie Johanna is dancing the Nama Riel on a speed bump in the road outside her house.



- Boeta Gammie in his shiny suit, among Calvinia’s spring daisies.



- Boeta Gammie leading the Riel and thrilling the crowd.



- Gammie and one of his favourite Riel dancers, Johanna Jooste of the Calvinia Sitstappers.

This marvellous dance is deeply entrenched in Nama culture. It forms part of a courting ritual, in which the man entices the girl towards him with his moves and mock-fights with rivals. Somewhere along the way a feathered hat is thrown to the ground. If the girl accepts, she picks it up and places it on her paramour's head. There may even be a kiss. But throughout this dance 'jy moet die stof voor jou inloop' – the dust must rise before you.

Tannie Johanna, who thinks the world of Boeta Gammie, is part of the local Calvinia Sitstappers, and they win dance awards all the time. She is delighted to show us her steps.

A Human Dynamo

Then we meet Gammie's lovely wife Audrey and their little boy, AJ Lee. Also, his brace of German Shepherds, Roevis and Mieke. It turns out that in addition to being a radio DJ, choirmaster, traffic cop, singer, player, story-teller, father, husband, lizard wrangler and dog trainer, he's also the local SPCA man. Oh yes, Gammie also takes tourists on flower excursions through Namaqualand and drives a funeral hearse on weekends when he's in town.

It seems the only thing this human dynamo is incapable of doing is sitting still in one spot for longer than five seconds. We glimpse Gammie again at the Williston Winterfees of 2018, the ultimate showman and the focus of every eye with his unmistakable hat adorned with a jaunty plume.

There is hardly standing space left around the arena, thick with the rising dust, hats thrown to the floor among the driving rhythm, the velskoen shoes, the doeks on the heads, the swirling skirts and the smiles.

Road Music and Lockdown

Fast forward again to 2021, and another visit to Calvinia. We call up Gammie. Is there any chance the authorities will allow him to be photographed wearing his traffic officer uniform with a guitar on a dirt road?

"I'll ask. I think I'll say yes," he responds. We are baffled.

Later that morning, as he pulls his guitar out of his car on the dirt road to Ceres, we find out that he is the only person still working in Calvinia's traffic department. With no hesitation, the Hantam mountains behind him, Gammie launches into a song we'd never heard before, one he says was inspired by a friend who is going through a bad divorce.

The title is Mama Ek Sal Nie Weer Trou Nie (Mama, I won't ever marry again). Spread the Light

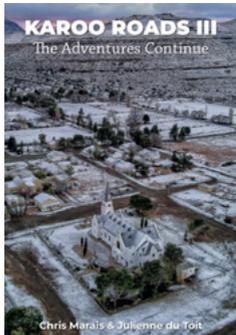
We are invited to Gammie and Audrey's house that afternoon, for a special performance from their beloved son AJ Lee, now a pre-teen.

The sound system is rigged up. AJ takes the microphone. Neighbours gather at the fence, because they know what's coming. And then, from the doorway of this compact little house flows a nearly perfect rendition of I Will Always Love You. Dolly Parton and the late Whitney Houston would surely approve.

Later that morning, as he pulls his guitar out of his car on the dirt road to Ceres, we find out that he is the only person still working in Calvinia's traffic department. With no hesitation, the Hantam mountains behind him, Gammie launches into a song we'd never heard before, one he says was inspired by a friend who is going through a bad divorce.



- The Isaacs family outside their home in Calvinia West.



KAROO ROADS III

This is an extract from Karoo Roads III – The Adventures Continue, by Chris Marais and Julienne du Toit. For more information on this popular series of Karoo lifestyle and travel books.

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julie@karoospace.co.za
[@karooroads](https://www.instagram.com/karooroads)



- Calvinia has only one traffic officer – the most musical one in the Karoo.

SEATON ESTATE CELEBRATES FIRST TRANSFERS

Mid-October 2022 saw Seaton Estate's streets abuzz with activity in celebration of the first transfers taking place for Precinct D. Future residents for this one-of-a-kind development were treated to food and live music in honour of this mammoth milestone that marks the beginning of a great legacy.

Further marking the importance of this event, each invited family planted a tree symbolising their family's growing legacy and the figurative planting of their roots in this truly remarkable estate. ***"It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that we welcome the first homeowners to Seaton Estate. This is a significant milestone to the already rapid progress being made on the Estate. Recent progress on the estate includes the beautifully designed Gatehouse which has a unique design that balances people's needs, along with aesthetics and the exquisite natural topography of the area,"*** shares Murray Collins, of Collins Residential. Collins Residential being the main developers for Seaton Estate have also made significant headway with the infrastructure and roads. One of the most pivotal projects undertaken by the team at Collins Residential is the construction of a new interchange adjacent to Seaton Estate.

The interchange will provide residents with convenient access to and from the development. Construction will commence in early 2023 with completion earmarked for the same year.

With over 1000 opportunities starting from R1,9 million on this ocean-side estate, there are multiple home options to choose from. All of which will seamlessly integrate with the rehabilitated grasslands and lush coastal forests, massive valleys of green areas, 26km of running and cycling trails and even a world-class equestrian facility. Spoilt for choice with a myriad of lifestyle facilities, a superb multi-sports facility known as Seaton Country Club, residents will also have access to the spectacular residents-only Seaton Beach House situated in close proximity to Christmas Bay. Furthermore, Seaton Estate residents will also have reciprocity and access to additional facilities in the neighbouring and more established Zululami Luxury Coastal Estate.

Seaton Estate is in a class of its own with unprecedented beach access and frontage to the pristine 1.1km stretch of Christmas Bay beach on Kwa-Zulu Natal's north coast. Recognising the inimitable beauty, lifestyle and location benefits of Seaton Estate - great care has been taken by the developers, Collins Residential, to rehabilitate the grasslands and forests in the estate to their former glory from over 100 years ago.

Local north coaster, Pat Lambie, has chosen Seaton Estate to call 'home' and his family are true ambassadors of living a 'life inspired'. Through their experiences



One of the most pivotal projects undertaken by the team at Collins Residential is the construction of a new interchange adjacent to Seaton Estate. The interchange will provide residents with convenient access to and from the development. Construction will commence in early 2023 with completion earmarked for the same year.

documented on "Life with the Lambies" you'll see first-hand the natural beauty and premium facilities that Seaton Estate has to offer residents and investors alike. ***"Nothing like this has been seen in the last three decades. Imagine being able to just walk from your home to the beach every day?"***, explains Lambie.

This unique oceanside development was purposefully designed around the natural assets located here while factoring in the KZN outdoor lifestyle that people aspire to. ***"Seaton presents a lifestyle that is unprecedented and is an example of how we are truly transforming living in this region. I believe that Seaton Estate is a dynamic catalyst for the new normal, set to unfold on KZN's prestigious north coast,"*** shares Murray Collins, of Collins Residential.

SEATON ESTATE
www.seatonestate.co.za



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Considered a closely guarded treasure of the North Coast, Seaton residents have direct access to over a kilometre of pristine beach frontage on the treasured Christmas Bay. This combined with the fragrance of country grasslands and lush coastal vegetation invites you to lose yourself in this premium coastal estate.

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Matthew Smith:

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LIFE WITH THE LAMBIES

IT'S ALL GOOD JEREMY LOOPS

By Dan Charles

“Constantly listening and re-listening to Jeremy Loops’ latest album for this cover story has caused a major disruption within the sombre and sardonic echo chamber that has been the recent state of my Spotify algorithm. Right from the start of the perky synth stabs and syncopated reggae-pop rhythms of the opening track “It’s All Good”, I could picture the perplexed-looking streaming-service-avatar of Elliot Smith looking up to me to ask: “Really? Is it all good?”

As someone who routinely listens to a curation of songs tailored to hurt my own feelings, it comes as no surprise to me that I would meet a song called “It’s All Good” with a great deal of resistance – shielding myself from its unbridled optimism with a callus of cynicism that is grown when one bestows an imbalanced amount of reverence towards art that tends to eclipse any hint of earnestness with a veil of anguish or irreverence. However, to completely succumb to one’s cynicism would be to wholly disqualify the courage that is shown when an artist puts in the work to allow themselves to be earnest and vulnerable in what they create.

Much like the meticulously stitched album cover created by the masterful embroidery-artist Danielle Clough, Heard You Got Love is an immaculately crafted folk-pop offering with a rich sonic tapestry that is bolstered by an impressive ensemble of collaborators such as Ed Sheeran and the incomparable Ladysmith Black Mambazo. But the beauty of this record lies within the core values woven within the songs – the importance of human connection and the fragility that comes with growing into and accepting one’s self, all tied together with a golden thread of Loops’ unbridled optimism.

Loops’ ability to process the things in life that force us to grow as people – pain, disillusionment or the collective trauma of the 2020 pandemic – is what has propelled his colossal trajectory as a performing artist, amassed him a devoted global following and enabled him to sell out multiple headline tours across the world. Because the best art has the ability to impart meaningful lessons that can teach us how to live or, at least, how to aspire to live, but this can only be done effectively when the art is presented earnestly and devoid of any cynicism.

In an essay written about watching Carly Rae Jepsen performing live in 2016, poet and music journalist Hanif Abdurraqib wrote: “This is the difficult work: convincing a room full of people to set their sadness aside and, for a night, bring out whatever joy remains underneath; in a world where there is so much grief to be had, leading the people to water and letting them drink from your cupped hands.”

This is the work that artists like Jeremy Loops do and why so many people continue to congregate at their concerts and carry their songs with them in their algorithms: because it’s important to be reminded that, sometimes, it is all good.

"I don't think the lockdown shifted my perspective so much as reinforced it. I've always written music as a soundtrack to people's lives but with the purest experience of it being live in concert. So I was grateful for the extra time to write music that the pandemic gave me, but, at the same time, it reaffirmed there was no way I'd release an album I couldn't perform live to the folks who love this music"





The album cover for your latest release “Heard You Got Love” was embroidered by the incredible Danielle Clough. What is the significance of utilising a more tactile artwork such as embroidery for the album artwork?

I think the embroidery is symbolic of a few things. One, it’s the beauty of doing this slowly and by hand. Tactile processes of work. It would have been way quicker to rely on photography and graphic design to get this art over the line, but the result would have been very different.

Similarly, the threads in the album represent strands in our lives. The continuous threads we make through passage of time and through the connections we create with each other. And that metaphor, especially during COVID when we had those natural overlapping threads interrupted, spoke to me.

It helps, of course, that the artwork itself is so dangerous! Just so incredible! I guess I could’ve just given that as a short answer.

The album was initially slated for a 2020 release but was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As an artist who is particularly known for your electric live performance and whose songs are most realised when performed in front of a live audience, did the global lockdown shift your perspective on the way you produce and view your own work?

I don’t think the lockdown shifted my perspective so much as reinforced it. I’ve always written music as a soundtrack to people’s lives but with the purest experience of it being live in concert. So I was grateful for the extra time to write music that the pandemic gave me, but, at the same time, it reaffirmed there was no way I’d release an album I couldn’t perform live to the folks who love this music.

Your single “Better Together” was written by another accomplished loop-based songwriter, Ed Sheeran, who you connected with during a Q&A session ahead of his Cape Town stadium show in 2019. Was being recognised by a prolific and influential figure such as Sheeran particularly validating in any way? Was there anything in particular that you learnt working with him and how do your writing processes differ coming from your backgrounds as acoustic loop-based writers?

Being acknowledged or recognised by peers is also something special, especially someone of Ed’s stature, for sure. I think, more than anything, working with Ed reaffirmed that I knew what I was doing. It’s that thing of playing team sports against the best athletes in the world, and still holding your own. At the same time, I was impressed by his relentless pursuit of great melodies. In our sessions, we came up with tens of brilliant, brilliant riffs, but the two that really stuck were the ones we came up with for Better Together and another. Had we just settled on the earlier melodies, which I think maybe other songwriters would do, we wouldn’t have even gotten to the great ones that we did. So that was a great lesson to learn – just added patience because gold was somewhere around the corner.

Your single “This Town” featuring the incomparable Ladysmith Black Mambazo is a standout track on the album. What was the thinking behind having them on this particular track and what was the experience of working with a group with such an iconic legacy within the realm of South African music?

"Being acknowledged or recognised by peers is also something special, especially someone of Ed’s stature, for sure. I think, more than anything, working with Ed reaffirmed that I knew what I was doing. It’s that thing of playing team sports against the best athletes in the world, and still holding your own. At the same time, I was impressed by his relentless pursuit of great melodies"

“This Town” is a story of hope in a place, a town, of hopelessness. Who’s seen and experienced and vocalised the transition from abject despair to something a bit more hopeful and perhaps even eventually prosperous more than Ladysmith Black Mambazo? Yes, they’re wonderful musicians, but I see them as orators of history. Vessels of time, of the best of humanity. And that was the experience, the surreal experience I had of working with them.

In a way, they’re bigger than music, if you think of what they’ve meant to our country, and if writing “This Town” and inviting them to collaborate with me on it was a lengthy excuse just to hang out with them, it’s the best excuse I’ve ever made.

As your international profile as a performer and a songwriter continues to grow to more impressive extents with every tour and album cycle, do you feel a growing responsibility to champion South African music abroad and help pave the way for more emerging local artists?

I’ve never felt the pressure to champion South African music. I’ve never felt it as a ‘growing responsibility’, so to speak. Since the very beginning of my career, I’ve screamed from every hilltop that I represent South African music. I chose not to move to LA or London when all our international partners said we should for the betterment of my career because I felt it crucial to show myself and ourselves as South African musicians that we could do it on the global stage while still living here at home.

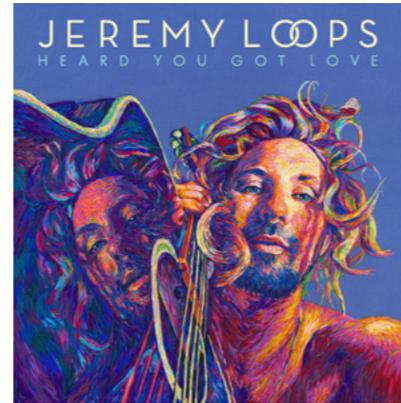
So no, there’s no added pressure. This is what I’ve always been about. It’s just with a growing platform, my voice is more effective. You know, we even had all of our walk-in music at our shows in Europe being exclusively South African acts. So between my set and our openers’ sets, the 40,000 or so people who came to our shows were hearing South African music. If just a small smattering of them Shazam a song and find something that moves them, we’re making progress.

The album deals with a lot of themes revolving around growth. Are there any songs apart from the singles that hold any particular sense of significance to you and your own growth? Have there been any notable shifts in your own personal perspectives on growth from before you started the record to now?

“Mortal Man” is probably the album’s centrepiece, while “Head Start” is the album’s driving narrative. Something quite beautiful happens when you understand the urgency and the fragility of life. It moves us to be less wasteful with our time and more grateful to our companions while we’re here.

And “Head Start”’s narrative is that we can’t grow too fast! Don’t dwell on growing up! Just go with it. You’ll mess up anyways – that’s the folly of youth – but when you learn that to be the folly of youth and you stop obsessing about growing up, magical things happen in one’s life.

“This Town is a story of hope in a place, a town, of hopelessness. Who’s seen and experienced and vocalised the transition from abject despair to something a bit more hopeful and perhaps even eventually prosperous more than Ladysmith Black Mambazo? Yes, they’re wonderful musicians, but I see them as orators of history. Vessels of time, of the best of humanity. And that was the experience, the surreal experience I had of working with them”



Jeremy Loops – Heard You Got Love

JEREMY LOOPS

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The MARKET



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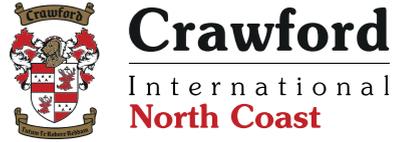
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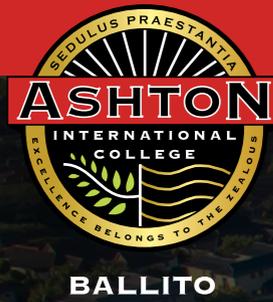
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Students electing Civil Technology as a subject, return better results during the first two years at tertiary level when studying Engineering than students without this background, giving them a noticeable advantage.

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Photo credit - Barry Bowditch

METAMORPHOSIS THE CITY OF PRAGUE

By Stefan Naude

“**One** morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin.”
Franz Kafka, The Metamorphosis

So starts the novella written by Franz Kafka in Prague and first published in 1915. For some reason, the comical scene described in the opening of *The Metamorphosis* has always stuck with me ever since I read the book in my early twenties. In later adaptations of the novella, the insect is commonly depicted as a cockroach.

“His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked.”

I actually wished for many legs (or arms) as I scuttled onto a bus with one too many bags, heading towards a train station on my way to the city of Prague. My imagination began to wander as I remembered pictures I had seen and tales I had read by previous visitors to this majestic city. But none of them could have prepared me for what I was about to experience. As it turned out, I also needed more eyes to take in all the surrounding beauty.

As I emerged from the underground, I was overwhelmed by what could best be compared to a CGI recreation of an ancient city with all mod cons. Almost untouched by hundreds of years of weather, war, and artistic ambition, this city is a perfectly preserved living relic with ancient cultural blood pumping through its veins. As luck would have it, Prague is one of the few cities that survived the second world war with minimal damage compared to the total destruction of many other cities at that time. What little damage it suffered was caused by a bombing raid by the US Army Air Force in 1945 which, according to American pilots, was the result of a navigational error.

Prague is the capital city of the Czech Republic and is bisected by the Vltava River. Nicknamed “The City of a Hundred Spires,” it’s known for its Old Town Square, the heart of its historic core, with colourful baroque buildings, Gothic churches, and the medieval Astronomical Clock, which gives an animated hourly show. Completed in 1402, the pedestrian Charles Bridge is lined with statues of Catholic saints.

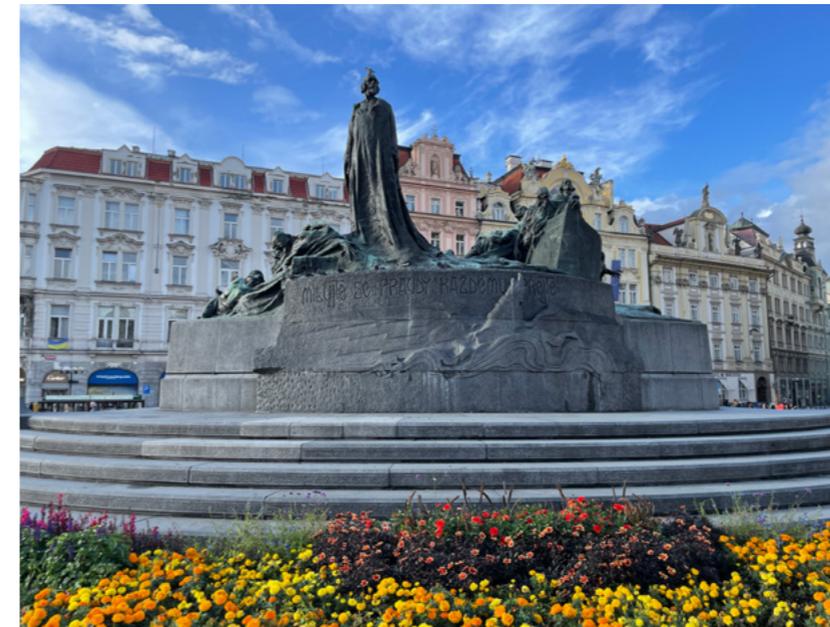
Just walking through the city is an emotional experience. The city is spotless, and everything works. You only cross the road at the marked crosswalks when the robot turns green. Compare this to the local chaos that we call pedestrian culture in South Africa. The citizens of Prague are proud of their city and its heritage but despite the beauty it has had a few dark moments of its own.





I actually wished for many legs (or arms) as I scuttled onto a bus with one too many bags, heading towards a train station on my way to the city of Prague. My imagination began to wander as I remembered pictures I had seen and tales I had read by previous visitors to this majestic city. But none of them could have prepared me for what I was about to experience. As it turned out, I also needed more eyes to take in all the surrounding beauty.

From its ancient roots, the region was settled as early as the Palaeolithic age and claimed to have been founded as Boheim in c. 1306 BC by an ancient king, Boyya. It survived many hostile takeovers during the Middle Ages as well as both world wars, the Cold War and, most importantly, the military occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Russian Red Army in 1968. Its most recent upheaval came with The Velvet Revolution in 1989 where riot police beat back a peaceful student demonstration that ultimately led to the independence of the Czech Republic with Prague becoming its capital city.

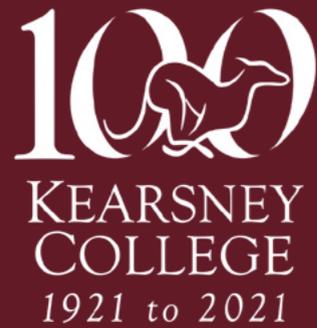


The city boasts many famous cultural icons and thinkers who have lived and walked through its inspiring streets. Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, Alphonse Mucha, Albert Einstein, Milan Kundera, Che Guevara, Martina Navratilova, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Mick Jagger and my personal favourite Frank Zappa (the avant-garde musician and composer who was appointed Special Ambassador to the West for Trade, Culture, and Tourism by President Havel barely two months after the downfall of the Communist regime) have all enjoyed the splendour of this city.

Exchange wise the country runs on the Czech Koruna (Euros are accepted). Currently, one South African Rand equals 1,37 Czech Koruna. This is good as the beer is plentiful and cheap and the food and accommodation is pretty much on par with what it costs in South Africa. Generally, the quality of life here is exceptional. While some of the local cuisine like the hard-boiled pork is a bit bland, there are plenty of cosmopolitan restaurants catering to everyone's taste. Another bonus is that most Czech citizens speak English and are very welcoming to foreigners.

Personally, I would highly recommend this as your next travel destination. A cultural overload of European excellence.

KEARSNEY COLLEGE



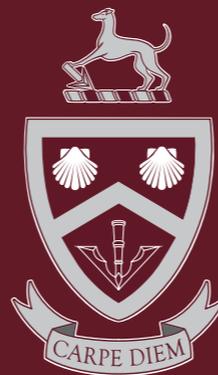
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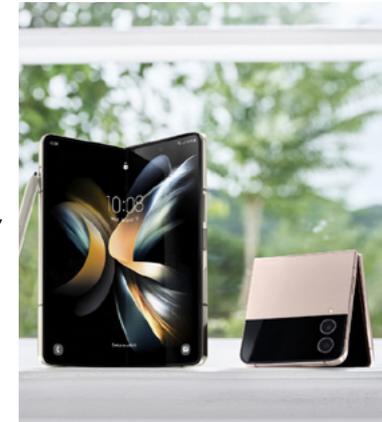


TV'S AND SOUNDBARS:

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- We have a range of sound bars to suit all our customers' needs & requirements.

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- The tablet range is popular with students as we are living in an age with technology, this allows students to take down notes using tablets instead of books and pens.



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- We can assist customers to turn their houses into homes with our wide range of appliances we have to offer
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- Our fridge range consists of you basic combi fridges right till the premium Bespoke range, which will allow you to change colour panels on your fridge to blend with your kitchen. All our fridge's are frost free
- Our dishwasher and microwave ranges can be selected based on your specific requirements.

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Reflective glass and mirrored surfaces perfectly compliment the lushness of the seating - brushed brass finish metal twinned with clear bevelled glass, adding a touch of classic style. Centre stage is the decadent coffee table, evoking the seductive style of the seventies. A retro rug with contemporary appeal graces the floor. TV unit custom made by OLALA INTERIORS with timber panelling from the top of the unit to the ceiling with wall panelling in smokey mirror with brass strips alongside.



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AWARD WINNING DESIGN

By Stephanie du Preez

THE OLALA INTERIORS TEAM HAS ONCE AGAIN SECURED A TOP INTERNATIONAL INTERIOR DESIGN AWARD AT THE AFRICA & ARABIA PROPERTY AWARDS.

The Africa & Arabia Property Awards are the largest, most prestigious, and widely recognised awards programme throughout the regions. The Awards are in their 29th year and cover over 45 different residential and commercial categories.

Competing against design professionals across the African and Arabian regions, the OLALA INTERIORS team were awarded the highest scoring **5*Star Best in South Africa** for the category **RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR PRIVATE RESIDENCE** for their Project Elwandle.

WINE & CIGAR LOUNGE

The midnight blue velvet upholstered bar stools bring Mid-Century Modern style into the home. Bar and somelier accessories from a local South African creator of functional art, is proudly displayed together with hand-cut unleaded crystal decanters. All cabinetry and furniture designed and manufactured by OLALA INTERIORS.



EXTRAORDINARY ENTERTAINING on the lower ground floor level. Sumptuous leather, statement lighting, highly polished marble floors and mirror clad columns, combined with delectably sheer window treatments all create an elegant space. Hand made kitchen by OLALA INTERIORS.



This three level home, literally a stones throw from the beach certainly lives up to its name - Elwandle - The Swazi word for at the sea. The brief was straight forward: create a luxurious, elegant space to entertain and accommodate visiting family and friends. OLALA INTERIORS definitely delivered - specifying, designing, commissioning and manufacturing the whole enchilada!

Situated in the much sought after Dolphin Coast on the KwaZulu Natal North Coast, this fantastically proportioned home provided the perfect canvas to create layer upon layer of rich and textured velvets, fabrics, soft underfoot rugs, specially commissioned South African art and luxe wallcoverings combined with coveted contemporary furniture and custom-made pieces. As the home is right on the beach, it was important to incorporate natural elements alongside highly polished, contemporary pieces, ensuring cohesion with the natural surrounds. Using exceptionally high-quality materials, with superb design selection and attention to detail was a pre-requisite from the client.

With an absolute love of black and white - it was easy to insert pops of colour into the schemes. The client also specified textured window treatments in all areas - all rooms have double treatments with plenty of block out - very necessary unless you want to greet the rising sun each morning!

Because the clients travel extensively, specially selected silk flowers and plants were carefully curated but with the exquisitely realistic versions available today, this was not a hindrance! The house always looks dressed. The flowers were specially selected and hand arranged to suit each area.

All floors are marble or solid wood. Beautiful lush hand-knotted wool and bamboo silk rugs add warmth and timeless appeal to all living areas. At the same time carpets unify interior spaces, reduce noise levels, and protect floors. Grey and bronze mirror cladding, wooden slats, high end veneers, solid and polished woods, as well as man-made surfaces cleverly integrated with functional design is evident throughout the house.

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POWER IN THE BLOOD

By Kim Wilson



“**You** can think of your blood sugar levels like the waves in the ocean. What you should be aiming for are the calm, gentle waves rising and crashing slowly and leisurely, almost kissing the shoreline. You want to avoid the surfer’s paradise of quick-rising, heavily crashing waves as much as possible!

Blood sugar balance is very important for long-term health. The alternative, chronically high levels, can result in permanent damage to many parts of the body including your eyes, nerves, kidneys and blood vessels. Setting these long-term risks aside, elevated blood sugar levels can result in chronically elevated insulin levels.

Insulin is often called a “storage” hormone as its primary function is to remove excess blood sugar from your blood vessels where it can cause harm and take it into storage (mostly in the form of muscle and liver glycogen, and fat). Having chronically high insulin (because of excess blood sugar), can therefore result in unwanted weight gain. Also, because of its storage function, insulin switches off fat-burning whilst elevated. Fortunately, there are many nutrition and lifestyle factors that can help us achieve balanced blood sugar levels.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES FOR BETTER BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL:

EXERCISE

How active are you, really? Many of us lead sedentary lives working at our desks, especially if working from home, with little movement unless we actively seek it out. A fantastic place to start for better blood sugar control is to add a little (or a lot) of movement into your day wherever possible. Exercise increases insulin sensitivity, making your body more efficient at lowering your blood sugar levels when needed and preventing both excessive blood sugar and insulin levels.

STRESS

Both physical and mental stress may trigger the release of adrenaline and cortisol (stress hormone) into the blood. These in turn can cause blood sugar levels to go up. It’s almost impossible to avoid ALL stress, so rather be aware of your common stressors and have mechanisms in place to help you cope.

FOODS TO EAT

Diet plays a major role in maintaining healthy blood sugar levels. Some foods, like those high in added sugar or refined carbohydrates, contribute to blood sugar fluctuations, whereas others can help optimise your blood sugar control and improve your health at the same time.

GREEN VEGETABLES

Broccoli, broccoli sprouts, and kale all can be considered “superfoods” for blood sugar control. Broccoli contains a compound called sulforaphane which has blood-sugar reducing properties, and broccoli sprouts contain concentrated doses of glucosinolates, which have been shown to increase insulin sensitivity and reduce blood sugar levels. Kale, on the other hand, is packed full of antioxidants such as quercetin and kaempferol, which have potent insulin sensitising and blood sugar lowering properties.

NUTS AND SEEDS

Nuts and seeds are packed full of healthy fats and proteins, both of which help to slow the release of sugar into your blood stream. They also contain fibre which performs the same role. Some of the best to consume for blood sugar control include pumpkin seeds, flax seeds, chia seeds, and raw tree nuts.

FERMENTED FOODS

Fermented foods such as kefir, kimchi and kombucha contain health-promoting probiotics, minerals and antioxidants. Research has shown that their intake is linked with better blood sugar control and greater insulin sensitivity.

BERRIES

Berries such as strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries are full of fibre, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Research has shown that berry intake is associated with better blood sugar control and improved insulin sensitivity.

AVOCADO

Avocados are full of healthy fats, fibre, vitamins and minerals and make a great addition to a blood-sugar balancing eating plan. Intake of avocados is associated with reduced blood sugar levels as well reduced risk for a number of other chronic health conditions.

FIBRE-RICH FOODS: OATS, BEANS AND LENTILS

These foods are all rich in fibre, particularly soluble fibre. Soluble fibre intake helps to significantly reduce blood sugar levels. Beans and lentils also contain other nutrients such as magnesium and plant-based protein which also help lower blood sugar levels.



SUPPLEMENTS THAT CAN HELP

Supplements can never replace a high-quality diet and active lifestyle. That being said, a number of supplements have been, and continue to be, tested to determine their benefits on blood sugar control.

SPICES: CINNAMON & TURMERIC (CURCUMIN)

Whilst we do recommend using these in your cooking, supplements contain concentrated doses that would be difficult to achieve through diet alone. Cinnamon is associated with lowering blood sugar levels in those with diabetes, and it may help improve insulin sensitivity. Turmeric's active compound (Curcumin) has been shown to decrease the level of glucose in the blood.

HERBAL EXTRACTS: BERBERINE, AMERICAN GINSENG & GYMNEMA SYLVESTRE

Berberine is the bitter compound extracted from the roots and stems from plants such as goldenseal and phellodendron. It helps improve insulin sensitivity and enhances the uptake of blood sugar into your muscles. It may interfere with some medications however so check with your doctor before taking it. American Ginseng works in a similar manner by increasing both insulin secretion and insulin sensitivity. Take note however that it interferes with warfarin. Finally, Gymnema Sylvestre helps reduce sugar absorption from the gut, and promotes the uptake of sugar from your blood into your body's cells. If you're using insulin, you need to check with your doctor before taking Gymnema.

ANTIOXIDANTS: GREEN TEA EXTRACT & ALPHA LIPOIC ACID

Green tea is a potent source of antioxidants that fight inflammation and stress in the body. Research has shown that ingesting green tea extract reduces blood sugar levels. Another potent antioxidant, Alpha Lipoic Acid, has been shown to both improve insulin sensitivity and be protective against the damage caused by chronic high blood sugar levels.

VITAMINS AND MINERALS: VITAMIN D, MAGNESIUM & CHROMIUM

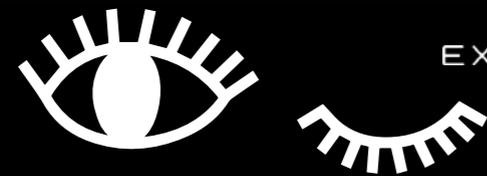
Vitamin D supplementation has been shown to improve blood sugar control in diabetic patients. It may improve the function of your pancreas (which makes insulin) and improve insulin sensitivity. Magnesium deficiency has been shown to be common in those with blood sugar dysregulation (particularly in type 2 diabetics). Supplementing with magnesium in turn was shown to improve blood sugar control. Magnesium is involved in normal insulin secretion, so it makes sense that it improves insulin's actions in the body. Chromium has been one of the longest studied minerals when it comes to blood sugar control, and has been shown to help lower blood sugar levels. It is suspected to work by enhancing the effects of insulin and support the activity of the pancreas.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Always start with your diet and lifestyle changes, as these will improve not only your blood sugar balance but all aspects of your long-term health. Then, if you have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes, diabetes, or simply elevated blood sugar levels, it is worth considering some of the supplements above. Try one new supplement at a time and then check your blood sugar regularly to monitor any changes over a few months. This way you can determine the impact each one has.

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A DOG'S LIFE

By Mia McCarthy

“I’m going to start this story with a detail that is best gotten out of the way sooner rather than later: my dog was carried off by an eagle. My father was recently awarded sole custody of the family dog, Juno, a plucky Chihuahua-Jack Russell mix. Juno must be about fourteen years old. She is the last surviving childhood canine companion shared by my brothers and me. She has come to live out her golden years with my father in Somerset West, a town which Dad has aptly christened Zimmer-frame Central.

Juno was born in the boarding house of the boys’ school that my brothers attended when we lived in Johannesburg. When the family who ran the boarding house appealed to us to take one of the unplanned mongrels off their hands, my father was adamant that a lapdog would never pass the threshold of our home. He dreamed of bringing home a Mastiff, an inclination which was (thankfully) quashed by the increasingly threatened welfare of our cats.

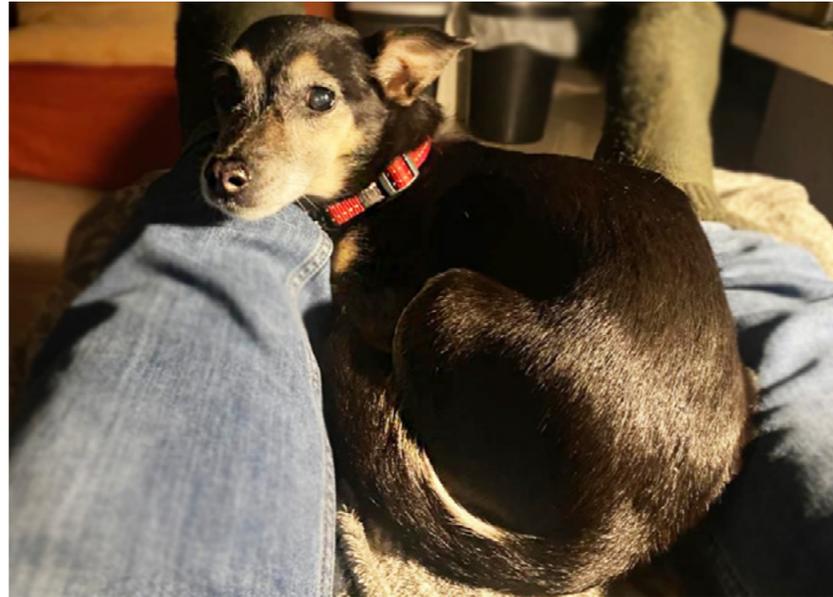
Anyway, Dad lost the battle. We brought Juno home when she was still a mewling, palm-sized runt. It has been heartwarming to see how fond my father is of Juno now, considering the unpromising start to their companionship so many years ago. He walks her faithfully on the beachfront every morning. He feeds her premium supplements and softened meat treats. She doesn’t have a dog bed because she sleeps with him under the covers.

When I tell people this story about Juno, who has recently travelled from Gauteng to the Western Cape in the passenger seat of my father’s Toyota Fortuner, they marvel at the trajectory of her life. “Yes,” I agree, “she has had an interesting life.” Then, the inevitable pause. “She was carried off by an eagle once.”

This is a true story. While I never saw the event itself, there is plenty of evidence to confirm the event. Let me set the scene: at the time, we were living in Kloof, an area of Durban known for large properties and purebred horses. We were in possession of neither. We were renting a lovely house with a truly enormous garden (really, the size of a small conservancy) from a family who was living closer to town.

Kloof lands between the city centre and the rural outskirts of Kwa-Zulu Natal, so it’s not uncommon for gardens to be crawling with all sorts of fauna. Snakes slithered, fruit bats flitted, and squirrels and tree hyraxes skittered through our lawn. Flocks of trumpeter hornbills used to land heavily in our sprawling litchi tree and liberate its flimsy branches of the sweet fruit. Yellow-billed kites and Martial eagles circled overhead daily.

One day, my mother was spooked by a ghostly white apparition which appeared alongside her car as she was mosing up our driveway. The spirit turned out to be a juvenile crowned eagle. The crowned eagle, or Stephanoaetus coronatus, is the



most powerful eagle species on the continent. Before they mature into adulthood, the babies are shockingly snow-white in colour. We affectionately named our new resident Snowy. Sometime after the first sighting of Snowy, Juno was delivered to me in a dreadful state. She was caked in mud and deteriorating rapidly into a state of serious physical shock. When I noticed that she was bleeding very slightly from some puncture wounds in her flank, I feared the worst. My dog had been bitten by a snake.

We rushed her to the vet in town. I was convinced that her fate was to die on that cold examination table from a tragic encounter with a black mamba. While I sobbed in anticipation of her untimely demise, the vet looked up at me quizzically and asked, “Do you guys live in the upper highway area?”

Shocked by his audacity to play clairvoyant while our dying dog lay in his arms, we told the vet that yes, we lived in Kloof. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. “I think your dog was carried off by an eagle.”

Apparently, this happens often enough to small dogs in the upper highway area that local vets can diagnose Failed Raptor Rapture with ease. Juno was likely picked up by the inexperienced juvenile crowned eagle and dropped from a safe height. Apart from some bruising and superficial puncture wounds, she was unharmed.

This story quickly became an essential piece of family lore, though many questioned its veracity. If I were not there myself and if the feathered beast hadn’t come for Juno again, I would never have believed it myself.

Snowy appeared once again in our garden weeks later, accompanied this time by an adult parent. It was an exquisite sighting for a family of twitchers. So enamoured were we with the fearsome pair that we scarcely paid attention to Juno, who was going berserk over the return of her airborne assassin. As she raced closer to the tree which housed the eagles, though, we were torn between growing concern and crippling laughter at the sight of this canine bullet orbiting a pair of bemused eagles.

Concern quickly overtook amusement as the juvenile eagle dropped like a thunderbolt from his perch. I shrieked Juno’s name and flailed my arms in a weak attempt to deter the eagle from its target. My mother was paralysed by laughter or terror, or both. I howled with despair as the fearsome bird descended, pale wings flung wide, like the angel of death. Was Juno to be remembered forever as a to-go for a trainee apex predator on the fly?

Suddenly, Snowy veered upwards, and Juno launched her unharmed little body into my arms. In the recesses of the garden, the piercing cry of the juvenile eagle sounded. Juno lived to see another day. And another, and another. As you read this, she is likely curled up at my father’s feet, chewing on a treat with the satisfaction of a dog who has lived a full and happy life.



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COLD STEEL

By Dave Charles

“Isn't it strange that in this virtually connected digital unreality that we call home, the knife industry is booming? The global knife market was valued at USD 3.81 billion in 2021 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 6.0% from 2022 to 2030.

If I haven't lost you already, consider that this is not the household cutlery market we are talking about. Of course, the chef's knife range of carvers, filleting knives, cleavers, boning and paring knives makes up a substantial number of these sales but it's the sporting and hunting knives that attract most interest. Even a cursory glance online at the vast selection of deadly weapons on offer will reveal how big this market is.

As a young television producer, I was responsible for a show called Police File which at one stage had the biggest viewership of any programme on SABCTV. People loved the shock-horror of the real crime stories that we brought into their living-rooms every week. The more gruesome the images, the bigger the viewership, and we had a constant battle with management over what was considered appropriate for sensitive South Africans to see. As far as I could tell from the stats, there was no such thing as a sensitive South African. That was a long time ago, but from the evidence in circulation today, we haven't evolved much as a species.

The point is many of these horrible cases involved the passionate use of the blade. Multiple stabbings were not uncommon, and I battle to understand what kind of madness could drive a human being to plunge a blade repeatedly into a victim, long after the initial impetus had waned.

Maybe we have a genetic bond with cold steel.

Some time after my television career ended, we relocated to the Battlefields region of KZN where I spent many hours guiding visitors through spectacularly dramatic settings where cold Zulu steel had prevailed over vastly technologically superior British ordinance during the battle of Isandlwana. Part of this territory includes the stronghold of the Mabaso people, descendants of the dreaded steel smiths who forged much of that Zulu steel. The Mabaso were renowned throughout the old Zulu kingdom for the superior quality of their steel. Their trade secret was the addition of the correct quantities of carbon to transform the molten iron ore into the steel from which their blades were fashioned. The blades were believed to possess the souls of those whose blood and tissue – the best carbon – had been used in the forging process.

Today, blade makers in South Africa can forgo the joyful process of necromancy to imbue their creations with strength and precision. They are in fact spoiled for

choice with ample availability of commercially forged carbon, stainless and Damascus steel to create the perfect fit-for-purpose blades.

And here in Ballito, you can have a knife custom-made to your specifications and budget. I am the proud owner of a beautiful little biltong knife given to me as a gift by Kevin Cunningham, a talented local knifemaker with a passion for cold steel and beautiful craftsmanship.



The biltong knife that he made for me has a reverse blade with my name engraved on it. I must admit that as far as gifts go, this one is right up there with the best. If you would like one, or something more suited to your style and personality, talk to Kevin. He'll make you something sharp, bru!

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You'll need: Popping Candy, Vanilla Icing, Vanilla Vodka, 1 Bottle of MCC, Sprite

METHOD: Place the pop rocks on a plate and spread evenly. Rim champagne flutes with vanilla icing, then dip them in the pop rocks. Pour a shot of vanilla vodka into each glass, top up halfway with MCC, then finish with Sprite.



MERRY CITRUS COCKTAIL

Fresh and festive is the name of the game here. If you're a fan of big citrus flavours, this one's for you.

You'll need: 60ml Vodka, 15ml Elder-Flower Liquor or Syrup, 1/3 cup fresh squeezed Clementine or Blood Orange Juice, Ginger Beer to top, Pomegranate seeds for garnish. A sprig of fresh Thyme or Mint, to taste.

METHOD: Fill a tumbler with ice. Add vodka, elderflower liquor, and fresh juice. Top with ginger beer for a lovely fizz, then add the pomegranate seeds and the mint or thyme sprig to finish.

GINGERBREAD WHITE RUSSIAN

Forget the dessert, serve this wonderfully sweet and decadent White Russian instead!

You'll need: For the Gingerbread Syrup: ¼ cup honey, 3 tablespoons of molasses, 1 inch of fresh Ginger, sliced, 2 Cinnamon sticks, 1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract

For the Gingerbread Russian: ¼ cup of Vodka, 2 tablespoons Kahlua, 4 tablespoons Gingerbread Syrup, 4 tablespoons Heavy Cream. Cinnamon sticks and Gingerbread Cookies to garnish

METHOD: To make the syrup, combine 1 1/3 cups of water with the honey, molasses, ginger and cinnamon in a medium-sized pot. Bring the mixture to boil over high heat for 3-5 minutes, then remove. Stir in the vanilla and allow to cool. This mixture keeps in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.



Time to assemble your Russians! Fill a glass with ice. Add your vodka, Kahlua and gingerbread syrup. Stir the mixture gently, then add the cream and stir to combine. Garnish with cinnamon sticks and cookies, and enjoy!



CHRISTMAS COSMO

Citrusy, sweet and sour, the cosmopolitan is a classic cocktail that is simple to make and super to sip.

You'll need: 45ml Vodka, 15ml Triple sec, 30ml Cranberry Juice, 10ml Lime Juice, Ice, Orange zest for garnish

METHOD: Shake all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice and strain them into a martini glass. Twist a strip of orange zest, squeeze it into the glass, then drop it in and let those lovely orange oils do their work!

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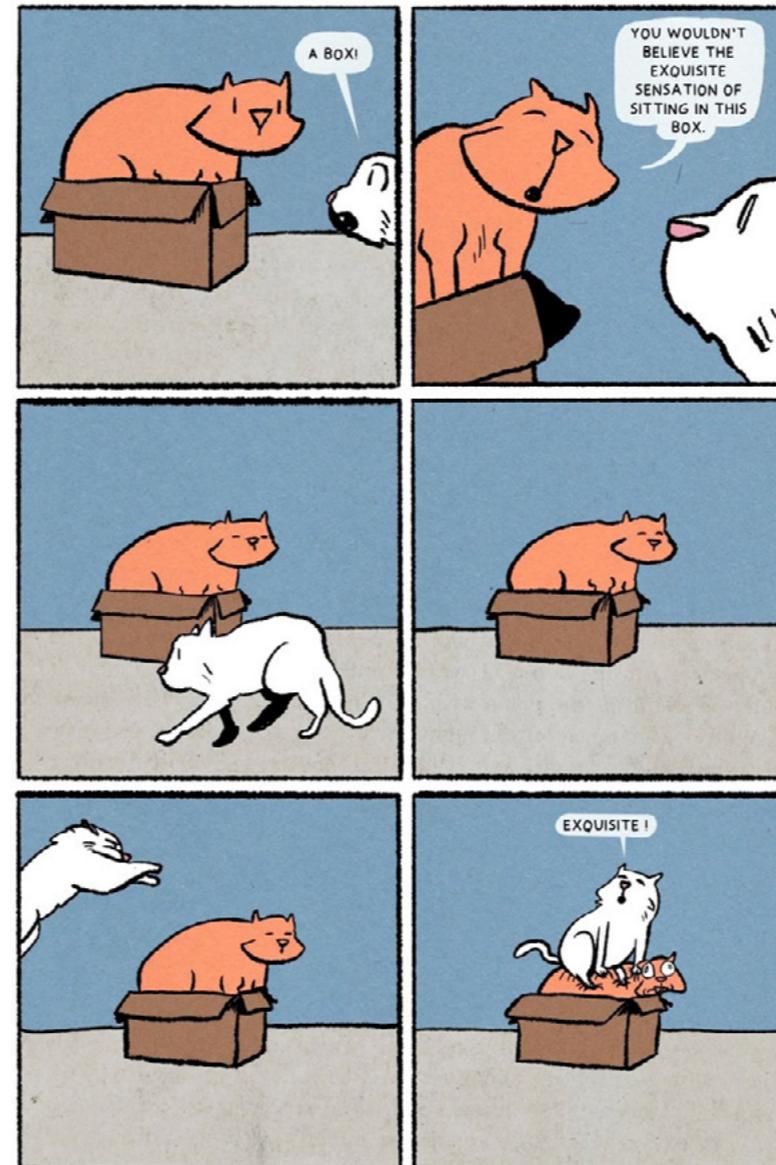
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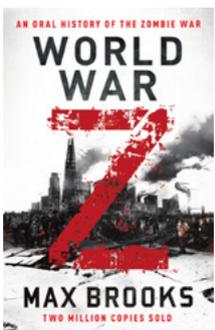
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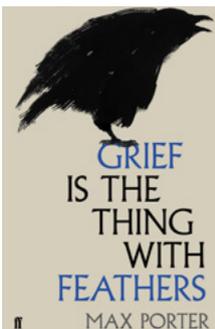
THIS MONTH'S BOOK AND MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

"If you're looking for something new to read or something fresh to listen to, we've got just the ticket! Here is a collection of some of our favourites.



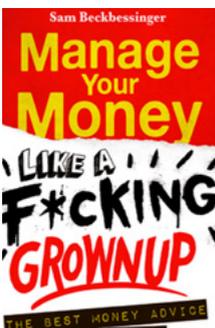
World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War by Max Brooks

We know, we know. You saw the movie and it was terrible. Also, zombies? Really? Why on earth would you give the book a shot? Well, dear reader, trust us on this one. Max Brooks delivers an absolutely gripping thought experiment on what would happen should a zombie outbreak overcome the earth. From having to develop entirely new warfare systems to implementing "The South African Plan" to save humanity, "World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War" is possibly one of the smartest, most engaging books ever to enter the fantasy genre, brilliantly written and endlessly interesting.



Grief is a Thing with Feathers by Max Porter

A wonderfully experimental, infinitely moving story about grief and healing, this book by Max Porter is as poetic as it is immersive. One day, a giant crow arrives at the door of a London flat shared by a grieving widower and his two small sons. Antagonist, trickster, healer, babysitter, the bird won't leave they no longer need him. Well worth a read.



Manage Your Money Like a F*cking Grownup by Sam Beckbessinger

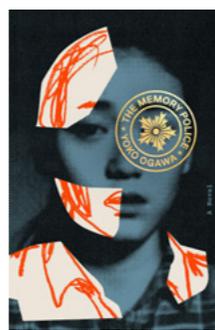
South African author Sam Beckbessinger's fantastic money management book is a must-read for young (and some older) adults at any stage of their financial journey. Covering everything from investing to getting out of debt, this is a funny, helpful, easy-to-understand book about money that somehow manages to make saving seem ... fun? You'll be left inspired, and infinitely better informed.



The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot by Robert MacFarlane

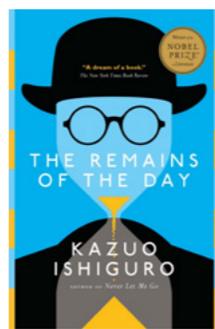
MacFarlane is an absolutely exquisite writer whose rich, lyrical and masterful style will keep you reading long into the night. This is travel writing of a kind you've never seen before. Thoroughly enjoyable.

"Folding together natural history, cartography, geology, and literature, Robert Macfarlane sets off to follow the ancient routes that crisscross both the landscape of the British Isles and its waters and territories beyond."



The Memory Police by Yoko Ogawa

A surreal, beautiful novel by Yoko Ogawa. On an unnamed island, everyday objects sometimes disappear. First hats, then emeralds. Perfume, then roses. The inhabitants learn to take these disappearances in stride – their memories of each disappeared object fading within hours. But the island's Memory Police use brutal methods to make sure whatever has disappeared remains forgotten. When a young novelist realises her editor is in danger of being taken away by the Memory Police, she hatches a risky plan to hide him.



The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro

It's the summer of 1956. The great English house of Darlington Hall has been sold to an American, and, facing a week or so of rare leave, the long-standing butler, Stevens, decides to take a motoring trip through the English countryside. But what begins as a little holiday becomes a journey into the past and towards a missed love. Winner of the Booker, this novel by Nobel Prize-winner Ishiguro is exceptionally written, beautifully rendered and deeply moving.



Figuring by Maria Popova

If you've never stumbled across Maria Popova's brilliant blog, The Marginalian, we recommend you give it a look. It's a thoughtful, wonderfully written and meditative collection of fabulous articles linking life to art in interesting and surprising ways. "Figuring" is a new book by Popova, and it is a triumph. Exploring the complexities of love and the human search for truth and meaning through the interconnected lives of several historical figures across four centuries, Popova's effervescent intellect shines in the delightful connections and juxtapositions she draws which move the reader along a shining thread of ideas.



"Pollinator" by Blondie

Released in 2017, "Pollinator" marks the 11th full length studio album from the legendary group. Packed with the bubblegum-punk sensibility that made them big in their heyday, Blondie has not lost any steam on this fabulous release. Our favourite single is "Long Time", give it a listen!



"Cosmic Dancer" by Valerie June

Originally written and released by T.Rex, "Cosmic Dancer" has been widely covered, with everyone from David Bowie to Nick Cave putting out brilliant versions of the song. This version by Valerie June is truly spectacular, with a lush, dreamy arrangement that sounds like nostalgia.



"Night Speak" by Lo-ghost

Local alt-pop duo Lo-ghost have bagged yet another South African Music Award nomination for their third full-length album, "Night Speak". We loved their lush sonics, smart songwriting and powerful vocal performances. Local is indeed very lekker!



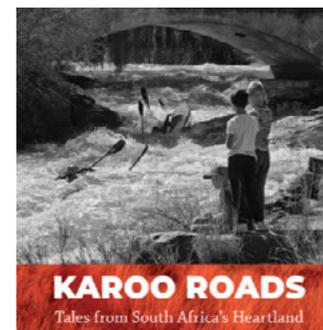
"Live at Montreaux 1976" by Nina Simone

There is no upper limit to Nina Simone's genius, and no moment where it is more apparent than in her live performances. Her 1976 set at the Montreaux Jazz Festival is hailed as one of the greatest of all time, and here it is, captured for the ages. It's an astonishing listen, with stand-out tracks "I Wish I Knew (It Would Feel To Be Free)" and "My Baby Just Cares For Me".



This is Actually Happening (Podcast)

This wonderful weekly podcast features uncanny, extraordinary, true stories of events that have dramatically altered the lives of ordinary people. The stories are absolutely fascinating and told by those who experienced them. You'll soon be totally hooked!



Karoo Roads: Tales from South Africa's Heartland (Podcast)

The companion podcast to the Karoo Roads Book Series, this new podcast from Life & Style Media brings to life Julienne du Toit and Chris Marais' quilt of magic stories from across the legendary Karoo. The Karoo Roads books features a collection of more than 60 outstanding Karoo stories in three books, gathered over 20 years of rambling on dirt roads and forgotten highways, in snow and sunshine.



Wild Things: Siegfried and Roy (Podcast)

Illusionists Siegfried and Roy were Vegas' biggest earning act of all time, bringing in over \$1 Billion in ticket sales over their near 40-year run. But in 2003, Roy is attacked by one of the famous white tigers featured in the act, and he barely escapes with his life, suffering critical injuries. "Wild Things" is a fascinating investigation into the infamous incident. Featuring detailed interviews with ex-stagehands, dancers and other people who were there that fateful night, the series offers gripping insight into the strange world of the iconic duo.



How's Work? (Podcast)

Renowned therapist Esther Perel turns her attention to a space which dominates more than half of our lives on this new podcast series – the world of work. The format is the same as her iconic couples therapy series, "Where do we begin?", with once-off therapy sessions recorded in full, but this time, Esther helps brings a new perspective to the invisible forces that shape workplace dynamics, connections, and conflict. Listen in!

UNDERLAND

Review by Shannon Devy

“Robert Macfarlane is not your average travel writer. In his work, the spirit of exploration is harnessed to craft astonishing insights into what it means to be human. In *Underland*, Macfarlane takes us down into the worlds beneath our world, where we can think in more interesting ways about time, history and humanity itself. From the intricate cave systems of the Mendip Hills in Somerset, to the labyrinthine catacombs below Paris, Macfarlane drops us, blinking, into each subterranean space in a way which delivers a palpable sense of wonder and delight. We explore alongside him, transported to places we would never find alone. It feels like a gift.

UNDERLAND: A Deep Time Journey by Robert MacFarlane

Characteristic of his work is the overall elevation of the travel writing genre into something closer to philosophy. “For nearly two decades,” he writes, “I have been writing about the relationships of landscape and the human heart.” One gets the sense that this connection between place and person is at the heart of what drives his quest. This is a very lived kind of journalism. Macfarlane is an experienced explorer, and as he squirms through a crack in an underground cave, we are right there with him, rock pressing against our temples, scraping at our backs and shoulders.

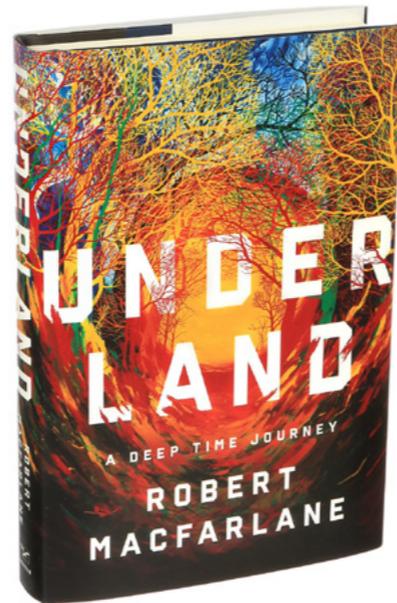
“The entry is awkward,” he writes of entering a cave in the Mendips, “– a body-bending downwards wriggle before a drop into a pot that feels locked, a closed cylinder or space...Sean leads and is off. I watch his twitching legs slowly disappear, and when his feet have gone I drop to join him. Face forced into wet gravel, moving along by squirm, a sense of the rock as a hand pressing down first on the skull, then the back, then the whole of the body, a moment spent briefly in its grip – and then I am out and with Sean at the top of a twelve-foot notch where a waterfall has run for thousands of years, cutting this narrow channel to the rift below.” We are not spared the claustrophobia, the swooping sense of daring, and through this approach the book delivers the kinds of thrills that will satisfy any armchair explorer.

Macfarlane is as at home gorgeously conjuring sweeping landscapes as he is discussing the granularities of particle physics in a subterranean lab, or the intricacies of geology. His work is deeply researched and presented in a way which sparks a magnificent sense of awe at the world we call our home, with all its mysteries. Rarely does one find non-fiction so lyrical, beautiful and deeply enjoyable. Macfarlane’s style is tight, poetic and rich with imagery. In a deep cave in the Mendips, he writes, “Time is starting to play tricks. Movements that have been stilled for thousands of years seem as if they might recommence without warning. My nerves tingle as

I pass between the hanging waves of stone.” In *Macfarlane*, we are lucky enough to enjoy a masterfully skilled writer with a keen eye for what makes the world interesting, delivered in a way that is accessible enough for anyone to enjoy.

Throughout his work, Macfarlane seeks out the places and spaces which move him, and then unpicks the complex reasons for why they move him, and why they should move us, too. It is a remarkably effective approach, and after reading one of his books, you might find, like I did, that the wonder-effect lingers, and you start to look at your own world with new eyes, seeking patterns, hauntings, mysteries and interest in the everyday. It’s an inspiring way to move through life, a way of looking that reinvigorates what it means to be alive.

“My nerves tingle as I pass between the hanging waves of stone.” In *Macfarlane*, we are lucky enough to enjoy a masterfully skilled writer with a keen eye for what makes the world interesting, delivered in a way that is accessible enough for anyone to enjoy.



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From fresh starts to exciting new chapters, Renishaw Hills is the perfect setting to enjoy what ought to be the summer of your life. Set on the pristine Mid-South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, a home in our village gives you the chance to live the holiday, whilst celebrating the best of indoor/outdoor living, just as Mother Nature intended.

As part of the highly-anticipated and newly formed Renishaw Coastal Precinct, our village is part of a much bigger picture that works seamlessly to deliver the height of coastal investment, lifestyle, and convenience.

Be part of our ever-growing family of happy residents who have found their new beginning at Renishaw Hills. Take a scenic drive and join us for a private tour and a closer look at our award-winning home types when you email sales@renishawhills.co.za. Can't visit us just yet? Take a virtual tour: renishawhills.co.za/house-tours/



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Renishaw Hills
THE START OF A NEW ADVENTURE

FAIRVIEW ESTATES

“**Few** places on earth can offer the kind of freedom that comes from living in harmony with nature, and the peace of knowing that your family is safe in a community of like-minded and good-natured folks. Fairview Estates is one of those places.

More and more families are moving away from the hustle and bustle of city life in favour of a slower, more conscious way of life which is kinder to the Earth and kinder to our kids. Set in the rolling emerald hills of Durban's North Coast, Fairview Estates offer ample space for pets and young children to roam carefree, the way it ought to be.

The estate itself is home to a sprawling expanse of running, hiking, horse-riding, and mountain biking trails for you to explore. Residents can also enjoy fishing at one of our two dams, which also feature picturesque picnic sites for your family to enjoy. Sundowners overlooking the water, anyone?

Living at Fairview Estates offers city-dwellers the unique opportunity of learning and living an authentic farm life. Our Macadamia Co-Op offers new farmers the chance to enjoy small-to-medium scale commercial farming under the guidance of an experienced Farm Manager.

Fairview farmers can live off the grid and enjoy the fruits of farm-to-fork labour by growing and harvesting their own produce from their smallholding. You'll be part of a supportive community that encourages trade exchange and a diverse, small-scale farming ecosystem. It truly is a return to a much slower, more authentic, and traditional way of life.

Fairview Estates blends authentic farm living with wholesome, nature-based living, sustainability, and a strong sense of community. Part of the ethos of Fairview Estates is protecting the safety and security of our community members. After all, the freedom of boundless living can only be fully enjoyed with peace of mind. The 480-hectare estate is surrounded by a best-in-class security fence and protected by access control at our 24-hour manned gatehouse.

Our central location also means that you can enjoy living off the grid without giving up direct access to essential local amenities including retail, healthcare, education, and recreation. Fairview Estates is a mere fifteen minutes away from King Shaka International Airport, so the world truly is at your doorstep!

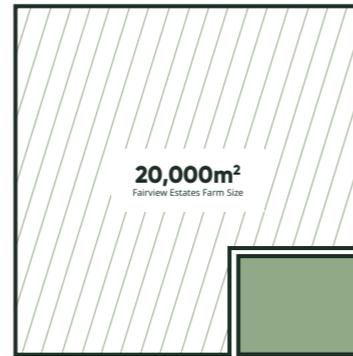
Now is the perfect time to move to a secure farming estate in Ballito, the fastest-growing town in South Africa. We estimate that, by the end of 2023, 24 farmers will be living of their Fairview smallholdings. Some farmers have already established themselves as a part of our community, and others are well underway with building their homes here. Our limited supply of 2-hectare smallholdings is in high demand. Join these families in securing your legacy before the opportunity passes.

Fairview Estates represents the pinnacle of artisanal living. Here, we celebrate authentic farm living. It's more than a lifestyle; it's a legacy. Live your legacy. Live Fairview Estates by registering your interest on our website, www.fairviewkzn.co.za



HOW MUCH SPACE?

Here is a size comparison between our smallest farm and an average plot size within the surrounding estates.



* This is a visual representation and not based on actual measurements.



15 MINUTES FROM THE AIRPORT



10 MINUTES TO THE BEACH



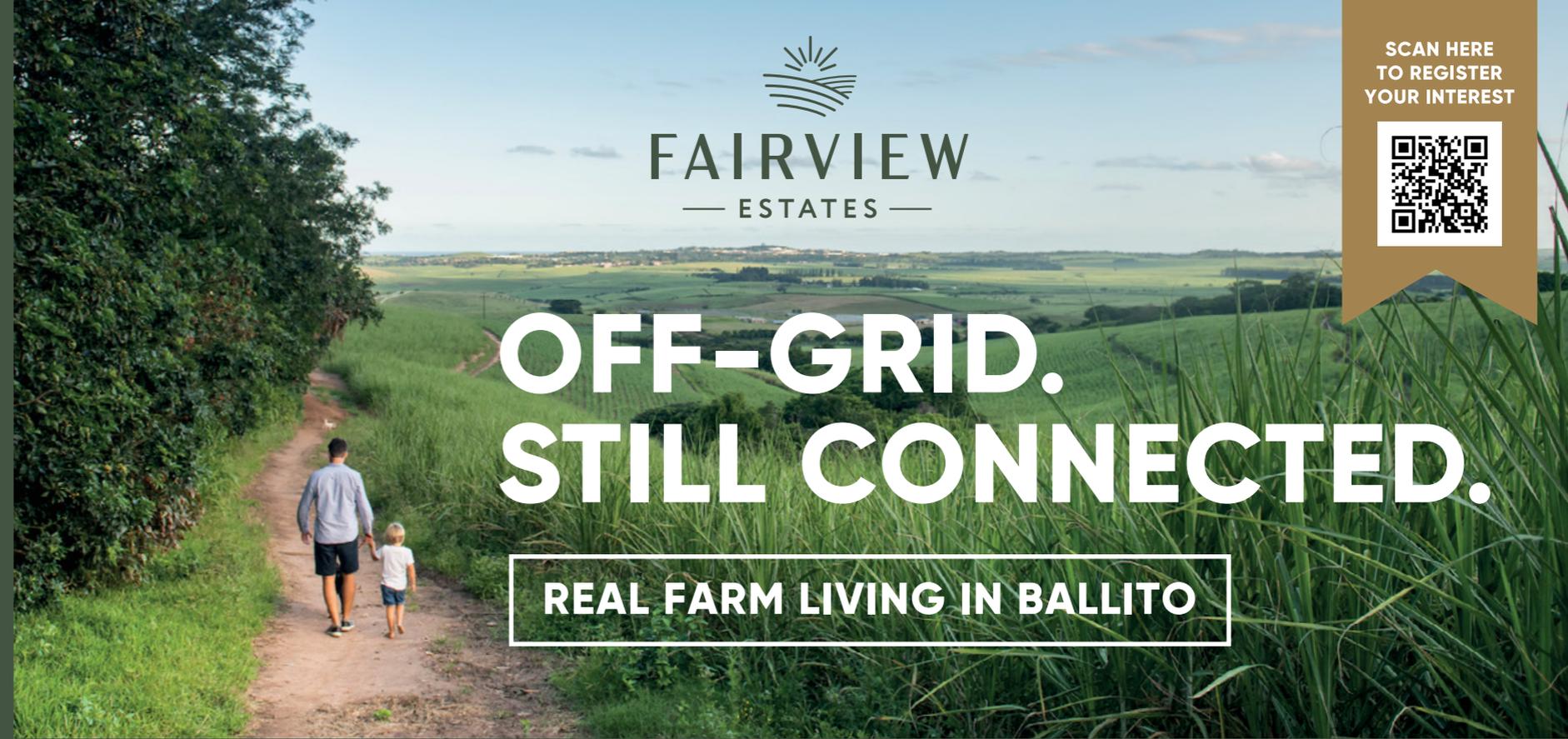
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TAKE THE PLUNGE: A DEEPER DIVE

GETTING BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE ART OF FREEDIVING,
WITH JULIE GAUTIER

“**Tasted** the pleasures of scuba diving, but keen to learn more about the ‘next level’ – from letting go of breathing apparatus to submerging in icy climes? We’re investigating the extremes, for thrill-seekers and adventurers alike, to give you a sense of what’s out (or rather, down) there... join us as we get the down-low on free-diving, from aquatic athlete Julie Gautier.

BREATHE DEEP: WHAT IS FREEDIVING?

The O.G. diving method, Freediving (aka breath-hold or skin diving) means going sub-aqua without the use of breathing apparatus such as scuba gear or oxygen. That’s right – you just take a big breath and hold it. But actually, it’s not quite that simple. Besides the limits of oxygen supply, exposure to high ambient pressure also has physiological effects that limit the depths and duration possible for gill-less humans; but that doesn’t stop us trying!

As far back as the ancient world, there are records of divers facing the same problems as we do today, from decompression sickness to blackouts. In fact, in Ancient Greece, divers used heavy weights to plunge them deep into the Aegean (about 30 metres, to be precise), to collect sponges, coral, and even pearls from the Ocean floor.

NATURE OR NURTURE?

When asked what drew her to the sport, Julie Gautier shares that while growing up on the island of La Reunion, her father was an underwater spear fisherman; she spent her childhood going to the beach and fishing with her dad.

“That’s when I developed a love for water. In my teenage years, I discovered there was such a thing as free-diving competitions and that’s how I got into it! I was at that age where you need to prove your worth and since I had been diving since the age of 11, I progressed very quickly.”

But if you weren’t fortunate enough to be ‘born into’ the art of breath control, there are plenty of skills to be learned later in life. Training for a free dive can begin with simply spending as much time in the water as possible, building physical strength and endurance – all the way to specific exercises to stretch out the rib cage and loosen the diaphragm, to increase lung capacity. Even Yoga, with its focus on breathwork and concentration can be a beneficial addition to your training routine!

‘MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO’

And it’s not only physical endurance that’s required to complete a successful dive – mental endurance must be sharpened, too. In fact, the art of free-diving can have a profound effect on overall well-being; says Gautier, *“during all those years of free-diving, I’ve learned how to surpass myself, to know my limits, to take care of my body and mind... stepping out of your comfort zone through sport really helps you become more confident. As a consequence, you make a habit of doing the same in your day to day life. You also learn to accept your failures and use them to grow and evolve. And water is an element that forces you to slow down, so in life you do the same, and that’s a very good thing.”*





PICTURE THE SCENE...

So what's it like, being alone beneath the waves without oxygen or clear vision? Contrary to what one might think, there's not a lot going on in the mind of this particular champion! And that's no bad thing, according to Julie Gautier:

"I think of nothing when I'm in the water, it's a moment of utter calmness where I'm just living in the moment, a moment of weightlessness where even the weight of my thoughts is lifted"

And if the prospect of achieving zen-like detachment while fighting for breath has you doubting whether free-diving is for you... think again. Calming the natural instinct to resist discomfort – while remaining safe – is certainly a balancing act. Knowing when to give in to the body's demands and when to fight is learned through personal experience; as in any other sport, *"you learn to know yourself better as you progress, step by step. You go down to a depth you are comfortable with and you add on metres day after day. You learn breathing techniques to make better use of your lungs and you learn to let go and accept the spasms that your body uses as warning signs, but they start to come later and later."*



Julie Gautier wearing the TAG Heuer Aquaracer Professional 300

"That's when I developed a love for water. In my teenage years, I discovered there was such a thing as free-diving competitions and that's how I got into it! I was at that age where you need to prove your worth and since I had been diving since the age of 11, I progressed very quickly"



“I think of nothing when I’m in the water, it’s a moment of utter calmness where I’m just living in the moment, a moment of weightlessness where even the weight of my thoughts is lifted ”

Making lemonade out of... seawater

Gautier has learned these lessons the hard way; when asked if she’s ever made any mistakes during a dive, she relates that during her last competition, she became too preoccupied with pressure resistance and ignored her senses. This led to an unfortunate chain of events, in which she pushed her own limits too far and ultimately failed the competition. Never one to be deterred by failure, she has since reevaluated her relationship with the sport, and started new creative endeavours creating films that express her love of water, and the beauty present beneath the surface of the waves.

In fact, some of this high-achieving athlete’s most memorable diving experiences haven’t been trophy or time-related at all! She describes the encounters she’s had with sea creatures as the most powerful ones: *“I remember my first dive with a humpback whale – in Silver Banks, on the coasts of the Dominican Republic. I was in awe of its size at first, but then I made eye contact with it and the most magical thing happened – it was as if we were communicating. These animals are so intelligent, seeing them move so serenely and gracefully, in total harmony with the water, is very humbling”.*

Why Try It?

Learning to freedive can offer myriad benefits – for some, it’s mental balance and strength, others, an escape into a beautiful aquatic realm. Many proponents say it has a powerful impact on self confidence, stress management, the ability to face challenges, make commitments, and take risks. Competitors – and champion athletes, such as Gautier – can take part in a range of ‘competitive apnea’ (that’s ‘not breathing’ to you and me) disciplines, in an attempt to reach the greatest depths, times, or distances in a single breath. Intrigued? Often described today as a ‘wellbeing’ sport, freediving is a discipline that requires deep introspection – listening to one’s body and thoughts, while developing certain strengths, and abilities. But if you master it, (as Julie Gautier says)... it can make dreams come true.

* This article first appeared in The Edge Magazine by TAG Heuer.



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