

ADVENTURE | SPORT | LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

DO IT NOW

VOL 6•1 2014 #33

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THE WAVES
OF DUBAI**

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ALL GROWN UP



COMPETITION P. 5

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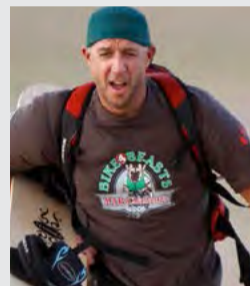
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> CALENDAR

MARCH 2014

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dinFO

Here are some great activities and events to look out for in March.

- ▶ **Obstacle Sports** // Warrior Race #2 -The Big Red Barn, Midrand (GP): 1-3 March
- ▶ **Entertainment** // Gauteng Homemakers Expo 2014, Coca-Cola Dome (GP): 2 March
- ▶ **Motoring** // World Rally Championship 2014, Leon (Mexico): 6-9 March
- ▶ **Entertainment** // Hobby-X 2014, Coca-Cola Dome (GP): 6-9 March
- ▶ **Motorbiking** // National Off-Road Championship, Wolmaransstad (North West): 8 March
- ▶ **Bicycling** // Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour, Cape Town (WC): 9 March
- ▶ **Obstacle Sports** // Jump City, Newtown, Johannesburg (GP): 9 March
- ▶ **Water Sports** // Big Bay Big Air Challenge, Big Bay Cape Town (WC): 9-10 March
- ▶ **Motoring** // Formula 1, Melbourne (Australia): 14-16 March
- ▶ **Running** // ProNutro AfricanX Trailrun, Houw Hoek Inn (WC): 14-16 March
- ▶ **Bicycling** // MTN National MTB Series #3, Saronsberg Wine Estate (WC): 15 March
- ▶ **Water Sports** // Induna X-Fest, Sabie (MP): 15 March
- ▶ **Obstacle Sports** // Impi Challenge, Van Gaalens Hartebeespoort (NP): 15-16 March
- ▶ **Aerial Sports** // Durban Sky Grand Prix, Durban (KZN): 21-23 March.
- ▶ **Motoring** // SupaDrift Series, SD02 Dezzi Raceway, Port Shepstone (KZN): 29 March
- ▶ **Multi Sports** // 64th SA National Championships Archery, Johannesburg (GP): 29 Mar-3 Apr

✓ FIND OUT MORE

For a more comprehensive list of events and activities taking place for the remainder of 2014, refer to the Calendar on www.doitnow.co.za/events

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IT'S JUST A MOUNTAIN

I THINK FOR MOST PEOPLE THAT HAVE CONQUERED THE HIGHEST PEAK IN AFRICA, KILIMANJARO, AND STILL POSSESS THE URGE TO GO HIGHER,

Aconcagua is probably the next mountain on the bucket list. At a height of 6,962 m above mean sea level (amsl), Aconcagua is the highest mountain on the South American continent and the highest mountain outside of the Himalayan mountain range. It is situated just inside the western border of Argentina with Chile and forms part of the Andes mountain range, the world's longest continental mountain range. ▶

Jake hauling his heavy pack up to Camp Canada.
Photo credit: George Louw



Camp Confluencia at 3,400 m amsl,
with Aconcagua in the background.
Photo credit: George Louw





EACH ADVENTURE HOLDS SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND PERSONAL GOALS THAT CONSTITUTE WHY WE DO THESE THINGS. MY MAIN GOAL WAS TO REACH THE SUMMIT OF ACONCAGUA WITHOUT GUIDED SUPPORT. ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF AN UNGUIDED CLIMB IS THAT DECISION-MAKING IS SOLELY IN YOUR OWN HANDS.

This objective inspired months of planning, preparation and training, and plenty of time to grow a beard that could capture enough snow and ice for the summit photo.

The Aconcagua climbing season starts in mid-November with the peak season ranging from 15 December to 31 January. To avoid a lot of people, I decided to plan my trip starting beginning December. The disadvantage of an earlier start is that the weather can still be unfavorable, with high winds and very low temperatures affecting conditions at the summit and some of the high camps.

I left Johannesburg on 1 December with an overweight duffel bag, a beard that has absorbed half my face and the two Spanish words I knew, *hola* (hello) and *si* (yes). But confident nonetheless. I landed in Mendoza after what felt like a week of connecting flights to find that no one speaks English and that my two Spanish words might not get me far. Combining my Spanish literacy and hand gestures that would have made Thamsanqa Jantjie (the controversial sign language interpreter who used incorrect sign language at the memorial service for Nelson Mandela) proud, I got accommodation, food and stove fuel for my trip, my climbing permit and a bus ticket for the ride to the mountain.

I left for the mountain on 3 December, enjoying a scenic four-hour bus journey, with multiple stops, through the Andes Mountains. My stop was at Los Penitentes, a small and cozy looking ski resort, and where I met up with Lanko Altas Montañas, the mule service company I hired to transport some of my gear up to base camp. I quickly sorted out my gear, separating what I would carry up to base camp from the items that the mule would haul up. I tried to keep my load less than 20 kg and the mule's less than 30 kg. I met up with a number of degenerated British climbers that had an unsuccessful summit bid, due to high winds and very low temperatures. This naturally fuelled my anxiousness, making me re-visit the months of planning and preparations in my mind. ▶

On 4 December I was dropped at the park's entrance (2,980 m amsl), where I started the slow slog up the Horcones Valley of Aconcagua following the Normal Route to Confluencia (3,400 m amsl), my first overnight stop. It was a beautifully warm and clear day, but a relentless, strong headwind was blowing that saw me completing the day's hike in approximately three hours. At these lower camps, it is compulsory to check in at the medical tent, where your vitals, such as blood oxygen levels and heart rate, are monitored. Mine seemed to be fine, with the doctor recommending that I drink a lot of water to stay well hydrated.

The next day I completed an acclimatisation hike up the glaciated valley to Plaza Francia (4,100 m amsl), which is situated right beneath the south face of Aconcagua. It was overcast, windy and a cold day, but also the day I met another solo climber that really impressed me. Not so much for the immense speed he was hiking at, but the fact that he was only wearing a T-shirt on a day that I saw myself experimenting with my winter wardrobe. We spent some time talking, doing manly things like comparing gear, gauging each other's experience levels and relieving each other from taking selfies. Apparently this was his first proper hike and when I enquired about his strategy for climbing Aconcagua, his response was a simple, "I don't really have a strategy. It's just a mountain, so I'll just walk up it and see how it goes. If I get sick, I'll come down." I instantly liked Jake, valued his outlook on life, his approach to challenges and his love for whiskey.

THE NEXT DAY I STARTED MY HIKE TO BASE CAMP (PLAZA DE MULAS) EARLY, AS IT WAS A LONG DAY WITH A GRADUAL ASCENT TO 4,370 M AMSL.

Again, a strong headwind was tormenting me, kicking up dust and contributing to an arduous seven-hour effort. The conditions didn't faze Jake as he came power-housing past me in his Bob Marley T-shirt, completing the hike in just over five hours. There was a glimpse of the summit with a white plume of snow being blown off the peak, indicating very unfavorable conditions up high.

The atmosphere at base camp was a combination of excitement, for those still going up, and disappointment, for those that had failed to summit. There were not a lot of success stories, with the weather having played foul for a couple of weeks.

Instead of taking a rest day, I decided to do an acclimatisation hike up the Cerro Bonete, at 5,003 m amsl, which is situated to the west of base camp. This gave me a great view of the surroundings and a better perspective of the days to come. ▶





In my happy place on the slopes of a big mountain. Photo credit: Jake Weston



A tranquil moment with the Cerro Cuerno in the background. Photo credit: Jake Weston

ON 8 DECEMBER, JAKE AND I DID OUR FIRST CARRY UP TO CAMP CANADA, AT 5,050 M AMSL. WE DECIDED TO TEAM UP, BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT WHENEVER ONE OF US TOOK LONGER TO ACCLIMATISE, THE OTHER PERSON WOULD CONTINUE ON THEIR OWN.

The day was a total whiteout, with high winds and thick snow making conditions very difficult. I was in my element though, as these are the conditions I have read about in books but never experienced in real life. I was able to wear my snow goggles, double plastic boots and I got a fair amount of snow and ice stuck to my beard. Jake was labouring under a 30 kg pack, carrying enough supplies to last him his entire permit stay of 20 days. We dropped our gear and returned to base camp for the night. ▶



Jake and me on the summit of Aconcagua.
Photo credit: an unknown climber





The next day (9 December), we moved the rest of our gear and supplies up to Camp Canada. This procedure of carrying gear and food to higher camps and then moving camp the following day was repeated for Camp Nido de Condores (5,570 m amsl). This is the optimum manner in which to acclimatise sufficiently while gaining altitude.

We received a weather forecast stating that Friday, 13 December would be a perfect weather window, with low winds and bearable temperatures expected. But for our schedule, this was a day too soon and meant that we had to move all our gear and food up to Camp Colera (6,000 m amsl) without acclimatising properly. But we both felt fine and decided to do it 'Alpine style' by sharing a tent and fuel, and taking only the necessary food and equipment for a summit attempt.

We spent a long, cold and sleepless night at Camp Colera, waiting in anticipation for the 03:30 alarm. As soon as it buzzed, we were up, got our gear on, boiled water for a quick breakfast and some tea and by 4 a.m., we started the ascent. It was -19 degrees, but a beautiful still and clear morning. The going was slow, having to fight for every breath and mentally resist the pain of our oxygen depleted muscles. Both my feet went numb and at one point I had to take my boots off and rub the life back into them. It didn't work that well, so I kept going, reasoning that if I can still wiggle my toes I should be fine. On our final approach to the summit we got engulfed by dense clouds, reducing the visibility to a few metres and pushing our determination to the limits.

AT APPROXIMATELY 2 P.M., AND AFTER TEN HOURS OF SUFFERING, WE REACHED THE HIGHEST POINT ON THE SOUTH AMERICAN CONTINENT.

We were broken, but happy. Although we were not entertained by a beautiful view of the surroundings, we both had personal accomplishments fulfilled. Mine was to have snow and ice in my beard, and Jake enjoyed a sip of his favorite whiskey.

The descent was challenging due to the lack of visibility, our bodies fatigued and Jake showing symptoms of moderate altitude sickness. He had no energy and found it hard to stay upright. After countless falls, I roped him to myself and with the assistance of another climber, we got him to Camp Colera safely after a six-hour descent. We were very lucky with the weather window we had, as conditions deteriorated again after that.

Although Aconcagua is not a technically difficult mountain, the weather and altitude have claimed its casualties and turned countless climbers back in their tracks. But still, in the words of my fellow adventurer, "It's just a mountain" and anyone can walk up it and see how it goes. •



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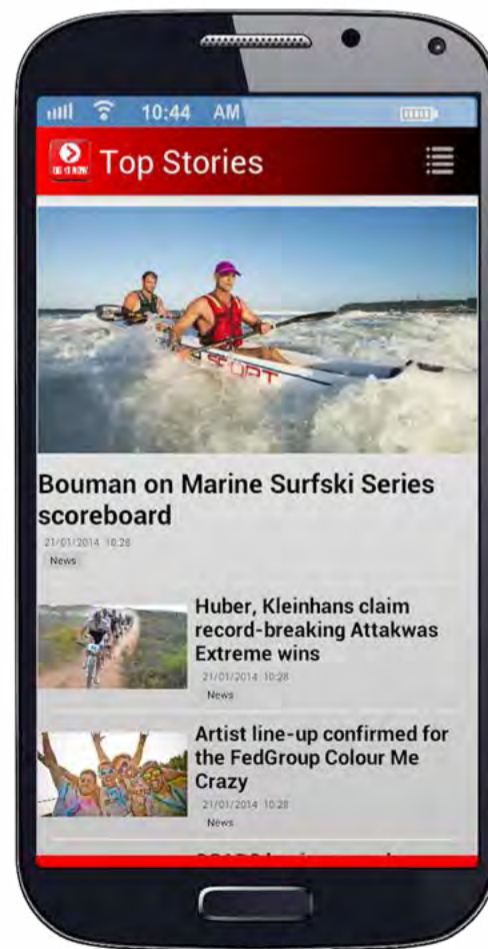
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Point 2 Point

← *running from the heart* →

What is it that makes us attempt the impossible? The human spirit is an incredible thing that has no limits or understanding of the impossible. ▶



Running through Cape Point Nature Reserve. Photo credit: Danielle Mascher

A small group of friends demonstrated what the human spirit is all about on 14 December 2013 as Point 2 Point, a 256 km road run from Cape Point lighthouse to Cape Agulhas lighthouse, became a reality.

We couldn't have asked for a more perfect morning as we watched the sun rise over Cape Point, while listening to the banter between the runners over the faint sound of the waves crashing. This set the scene as each runner started preparing themselves for the run ahead, thinking about what it meant to run and why they were doing it. Everyone runs for a reason, but this run was for more than getting fit, losing weight or getting lost in our own thoughts. It was a celebration of our health and mobility.

Initially, cycling the Point 2 Point was a dream of James Davis, but this dream soon became a perfect platform to express our love and gratitude for being so blessed to be able to run and make a difference.

As a result of the growing support for this initiative amongst James's running friends, the event was changed from a cycle to a run and it would be dedicated to three charities, namely the PinkDrive, Back On Your Bike and Chasing Inspiration. The aim was to create awareness for each of the charities, whilst inspiring people to try the impossible, dream big and make a difference in the process.

This year's inaugural run kicked off with a moment of silence for Chase, a 16-year-old boy who fought the bravest fight, but sadly lost the fight against leukemia a few days before the event. This quickly put life into perspective for our group of runners, who then went on to make the most of every step and every opportunity to laugh, as well as absorb the beautiful scenery along the way.

We met up with the support crew at the first water point, 13 kilometres into the race at the Cape Point Reserve gate, and after refuelling were back on the road and heading towards Simon's Town. By this time, the sun was already showing its full force and just before Simon's Town Golf Course, a couple of runners couldn't resist the temptation of taking a refreshing swim in the sea.

Whilst in Simon's Town, a few more runners joined in and spirits were high as 12 pairs of Redsocks or ShoOops went rocking down Main Road. Reaching Fish Hoek, we decided to take a breather and get a bite to eat, and it was here that the reality of the distance we had set out to run (and a few casualties that had happened already) started to dawn on us.

But with our energy levels restored, we left Fish Hoek and blew through Muizenberg and on to Baden Powell, in the hot midday sun and in our long socks that leave a funny tan. ShoOops tan as it is known and a few of us are still sporting ours.

Our group hit the 50 km mark feeling strong, but the heat was increasing and fatigue was setting in. However, our spirits were once again raised when we were joined by a few more supporters and come night fall, we had reached Somerset West. With the infamous Sir Lowry's Pass looming and the many hours on the road taking its toll, more and more runners had to stop. The spirit in these runners was unbelievable and if they could have run anymore they would have.

In the early hours of the morning we were down to two runners, one having run the entire way and the other joining in just before Sir Lowry's. The roads were becoming increasingly dangerous due to construction work, making it impossible for a support car to follow. At the 140 km mark and 23 hours after the start, and with the safety of the runners a priority, the team made a decision to stop the run.

Point 2 Point had been a special day. It was a day where people pushed past their limits, with some doubling the distances they had previously run. Where some found a new reason to run and others discovered how much is still left to be learnt about the human spirit and life.

The support along the way was also incredible, with runners joining in for short sections and people stopping to feed and hydrate us. Our thanks go to our friends from Wintergreen for providing us with chafe creams and massages, YMA security who played a big part not only on the day but with the design and planning of the journey, and EMT who kept us patched up and going.

So will we attempt this run again? Absolutely. We are looking forward to attempting the impossible in December, but with some changes. The run will be broken up over three days, with an average distance of 85 km per day, and we will run from Cape Agulhas to Cape Point.

Our aim, as always, is to create awareness for Back On Your Bike, the PinkDrive, the Chase Tanner Fund as well as inspire people. "To aim high and miss rather than aim low and hit." - Eric Thomas ▶



Team at the start - Cape Point lighthouse.
Photo credit: Carla Bakkes

End of day one outside Somerset West.

About the charities



South Africa's best-loved breast cancer community carer, PinkDrive, is the indispensable, tangible breast cancer Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) powering South Africa's first mobile PinkDrive Mammography Unit and PinkDrive Educational Unit through our country, driving home the fact that early detection saves lives.

PinkDrive currently runs two 'Pink' mobile breast check units, as well as three educational cars. Both units travel to semi-urban and urban areas around South Africa with the aim of enabling various disadvantaged communities access to education, physical examinations and how to do breast self-examination. The mobile screening unit successfully launched in the Western Cape in 2011 and operated through local clinics, community health centres and hospitals.

To date, it has provided 4,440 free mammograms, done 41,360 clinical breast examinations in community areas, and distributed 45,000 educational materials. Through the goodwill of many fortunate citizens and willing corporate businesses helping PinkDrive, they in turn are helping government to touch as many citizens as possible.

If you would like to find out more information about how you can support PinkDrive, visit www.pinkdrive.co.za ▶

Made it to Simon's Town.
Photo credit: Blake Dyason



All smiles. Running through
Cape Point Nature Reserve.
Photo credit: Danielle Mascher



Rest stop in Fish Hoek with some
TLC from Wintergreen. Photo credit:
Danielle Mascher





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BACK ON YOUR

On Thursday, 11 October 2012, the lives of Richard Holland and his family changed forever. Whilst training for an Ironman race, Rich was hit from behind by a car and sustained multiple life-threatening injuries, including a severe injury to his brain stem that resulted in an immediate coma. Rich was treated in Dubai, UAE, for several months and eventually repatriated to South Africa. Rich is now stable, living with his parents in Cape Town and receiving extensive neurological rehabilitation for his brain stem injury. He remains unable to move or talk and requires intensive medical supervision to care for him round the clock. After a severe brain injury, particularly to the brain stem that controls motor function, it is only possible to guess at the recovery time and the likely outcome. All that is certain is that recovery is a slow process and will take months and years, rather than weeks.

Back On Your Bike, an independent trust fund, has been established to assist Rich Holland and his family by raising money to cover his immediate and future medical care costs.

If you would like to donate to the fund or can assist in any way, visit <http://backonyourbike.com>

Chasing Inspiration

Chase Tanner was diagnosed with leukemia in September 2012. He underwent extreme doses of chemo and radiation, but despite his courage, determination and positivity in overcoming his illness, he passed away on 12 November 2013. Sjanine Tanner and her family will continue the Chase Tanner Fund and donate the money to another family, working through the Sunflower Fund, which is going through the same fight Chase and his family went through.

If you would like to contribute, visit www.sunflowerfund.org.za



If you would like to get involved and join the Point 2 Point run taking place in December this year, visit www.pointtwopoint.com for more information.



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RUNNING IN THE CLOUDS

THE RACE WAS UNFOLDING AT ALTITUDE. THE FAVOURITES HAD TAKEN TO THE FRONT OF THE RACE AT CHECKPOINT 4, LOCATED AT THE TOP OF THE 1,000 M CLIMB, BUT THERE HAD BEEN LITTLE WORD SINCE. RACE DIRECTOR ANDREW BOOTH WAS ANXIOUS! It is along this ridge where the runners are most vulnerable and also the furthest point from the finish if anything were to happen and medical services were required. The previous day the weather had been perfect for the run, but it was now Saturday, race day, and the clouds decided to make the race slightly more interesting. The skyrunners were now running in the clouds and they were behind schedule in reaching checkpoint 6. ▶

**SKYRUNNERS HAD
DESCENDED ON
LESOTHO FROM ALL
OVER THE WORLD
MAKING THE LESOTHO
ULTRA TRAIL A TRULY
INTERNATIONAL EVENT.
RUNNERS FROM
BELGIUM, SPAIN,
AUSTRALIA, CANADA,
NORTH AMERICA AND BRITAIN
JOINED FELLOW SOUTH AFRICANS
AT MALIBA LODGE, LOCATED IN
THE HEART OF THE TS'EHLANYANE
NATIONAL PARK, DEEP IN THE
MALUTI MOUNTAINS OF THE
BUTHA-BUTHE DISTRICT.**

The Ts'ehlanyane National Park protects a 5,600 ha patch of rugged wilderness, with altitude ranging from 1,940 m to 3,116 m and is considered to be almost 'trans-alpine'. Based on the definition of a SkyMarathon®, whereby the race needs to be within a minimum of 2,000 m elevation gain and between 30 km and 42 km in distance, with a course over paths, trail and rocks (Ultra SkyMarathon® exceeds these parameters by 5%), this park, with its network of rocky paths, rugged ascents and pristine landscapes made it the perfect location for Africa's first Ultra SkyMarathon®.

The excitement at race registration was palpable, with Skyrunners discussing what lay ahead as the mountains were now a reality. Some of the runners were apprehensive, while others were eager to get the race underway. Gear checks were done on a rigid basis, as runners had to have the required gear otherwise they would not be allowed to run. The weather here changes rapidly, I was told, so they had to be self-sufficient and prepared for any eventuality up on the mountain, hence the need for the right gear to sustain them until a rescue party could be sent out. "These mountains are unpredictable!" commented Race Director Andrew Booth, and for this reason, race registration and gear checks were all part of the Skyrunners' routine.

Race day arrived and the weather gods had dealt a cruel hand to the runners! The upper ridge, the highest part of the race at 3,100 m, was covered in cloud and would make navigation interesting. The mood was sombre to runners huddled around small fires in the new restaurant. Some sat quietly, inwardly focused, and were comforted by loved ones, while others chatted to fellow runners, to take their mind off what was to come. ▶





THE RACE START WAS FRENETIC AND THE RACE FAVOURITES, AJ CALITZ, LUCKY MIA, ANDREW HAGEN AND IAIN DON WAUCHOPE, SOON POWERED THEIR WAY TO THE FRONT. RACE STRATEGIES WERE BECOMING APPARENT

AS CALITZ, MIA AND DON WAUCHOPE PUSHED HARD UP THE HILL, LEAVING HAGEN, HONEY AND DIEZ-RAOBAGO TO SETTLE INTO THEIR OWN PACE BEHIND THEM. HOWEVER, THIS WAS ALL ABOUT TO CHANGE!

"It was at this point that the race did not unfold as predicted and some were hesitant to give the winner, Andrew Hagen, credit for a race strategy that paid full dividends," states Booth. "But his presence on the mountain, as one of the fastest descenders in the field, put pressure on the favourites." This pressure resulted in Mia, Don Wauchope and Calitz making an error when they couldn't find the markers and got lost in the cloud, ultimately lost time to Hagen. "The visibility was reduced to about 20 metres. All our physical and mental energy was required to focus on the line of the course," claimed Hagen. It was at this point that Hagen teamed up with Honey and Diez-Raobago to navigate in numbers and ensure that they stuck with the course markers. The cloud made the going tough, with runners literally running from one tag to the next. "The mist thickened at one point and it became even harder to see. I'd run to a tag and the mist would be hiding the next one, so I'd guess the line and go for it, and then adjust as the next tag came into sight," said Hagen. At times, the runners slowed their pace right down, even to a walk, to remain on track in the tough conditions.

Meanwhile, down below, Booth was getting anxious. The front runners should have reached checkpoint 6, but there was no word. Every time he called on the radio he got the same reply, no runners had come through as yet! It had been estimated that the runners should have reached the checkpoint in about three hours, but we were now at the four-hour mark and there was still no sign. ▶





Finally, the call came through, but not with the names expected! Andrew Hagen had a slight lead on Manuel Diez-Raobago, followed closely by Quintin Honey. There was no sign of Calitz, Don Wauchope and Mia! In fact, the call came through that two ladies, Tracy Zunkel and Robyn Kyme, had passed the checkpoint before the three men!

By checkpoint 7, located at the bottom of the mountain, Hagen had built up a healthy four-minute lead, which he managed to maintain until the finish line, where he was greeted by a cheering and ululating crowd that had gathered to see the winner of Africa's first Ultra SkyMarathon®. Meanwhile Mia, Don Wauchope and Calitz managed to haul in the two leading ladies on the descent, finally finishing together on the line in fifth and six positions, with Mia pipping them to the line in fourth.

The ladies race was turning out to be a close affair. Tracy Zunkel, the pre-race favourite, and Robyn Kyme matched each other pace for pace, cleverly staying together and safely navigating their way across the highest section of the course in the clouds. It was at the bottom and over the next climb that Tracy managed to build up a seven-minute lead over Kyme, taking her to a very emotional win at the Lesotho Ultra Trail 2013.

It was not long after the first men finished that the cloud lifted and opened up the mountains to glorious sunshine for the rest of the field to enjoy the views from the highest section of the race!

THE GOOD NEWS FOR ALL SKYRUNNERS IS THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN SKYRUNNING ASSOCIATION HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED THE NATIONAL SKYRUNNING CIRCUIT FOR 2014, SO GET YOURSELVES READY FOR #SKYRUNNINGMZANSI. •



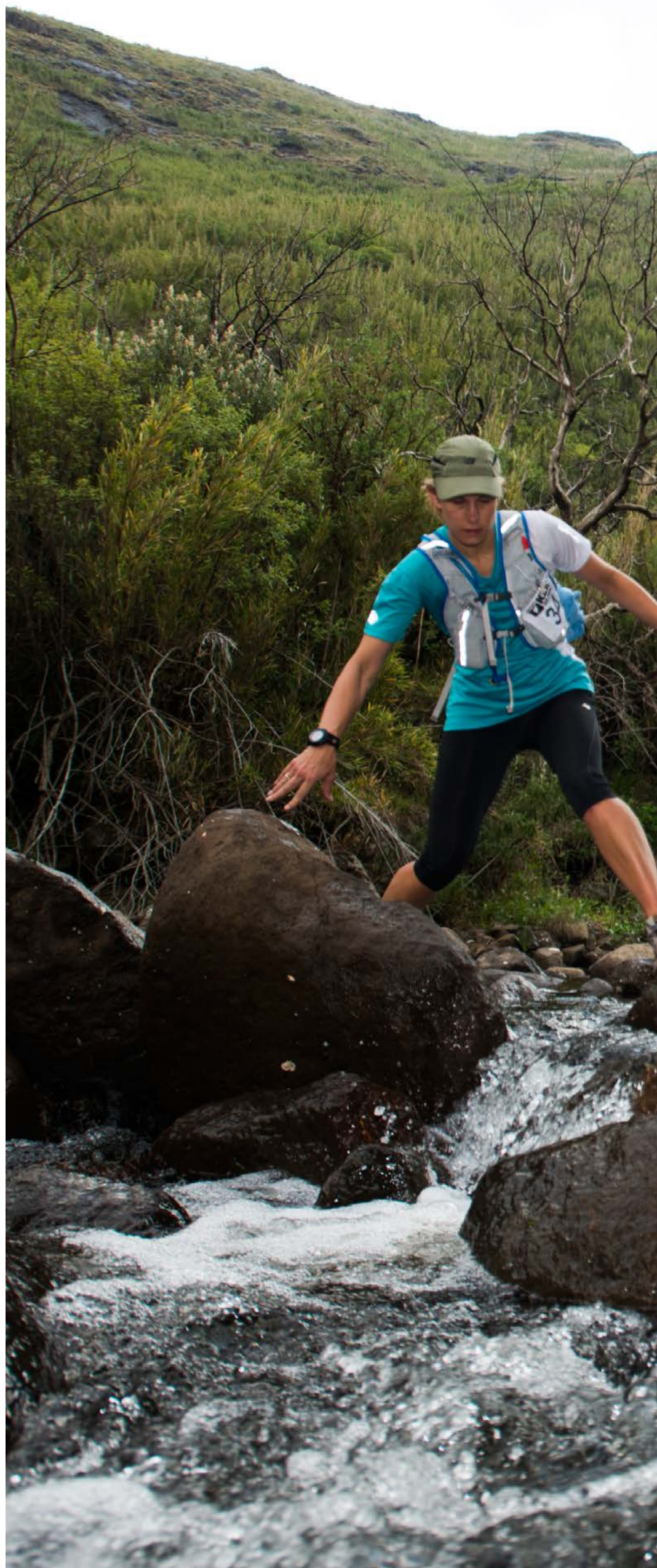
SKYRUNNING RACE DETAILS:

April - Ingeli SkyMarathon®
(www.ingeli.co.za)

May - Hogsback SkyMarathon®
(details to be announced)

October - Matroosberg SkyMarathon®
(www.matroosbergtrailchallenge.co.za)

November - Lesotho Ultra Trail
(www.lesothoultratrail.com)





RESULTS

Men:

1. Andre Hagen 6:07:22
2. Manuel Diez-Raobago 6:22:14
3. Quintin Honey 6:23:10
4. Lucky Mia 6:31:28
5. Iain Don Wauchope / AJ Calitz 6:53:39

Woman

1. Tracy Zunckel 6:56:17
2. Robyn Lyme 7:07:28
3. Stacie Carrigan 7:23:36
4. Gina Treleaven 7:56:37
5. Julia Hackland 8:44:15

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Learn more at: www.scott-sports.com/carbonexperts



SHOOT!

AN MTB ADVENTURE

Keep calm & crank Karkloof



IMAGE 1: OH SO FLOW

The Shot: A lone rider bombs the perfect berms of Karkloof's Blue Route. The low light forced me to shoot on 6,400 ISO, with the Exmor Sensor rendering forested background and patterning in a gorgeous, creamy monochrome.

The Specifications: 1/1,200 th sec @ f5.6; SONY A99-SLT + 70-400 mm lens; ISO 6400; WB Setting (Overcast); AE Setting (0 EV).

More Information: www.sappi.co.za

➤ World-class ... that's all I need to say about Karkloof.

As an Average Joe who's been fortunate enough to ride trails all around the world, I can safely say that few rides can compare whoop-for-whoop with this magical little piece of the Midlands Meander. But there's no need to take my word for it, so saddle up and plug into pure MTB mojo. ▶





IMAGE 2: GOING GREEN

The Shot: Fun times and sunshine envelops you as soon as you leave the Sappi plantations, allowing you to dial the ISO right back down. This shot was at the full extension of my super zoom, with tracking focus to ensure the riders stayed sharp throughout the sequence.

The Specifications: 1/800 th sec @ f5.6; SONY A99-SLT + 70-400 mm lens; ISO 250; WB Setting (Sunny); AE Setting (0 EV).

More Information: www.karkloofmtb.co.za

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ISO 400; WB Setting (Auto - Warm); AE SETting (0EV); No Flash; In-Camera parameters applied.



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IMAGE 3: PYGA ON FIRE

The Shot: I found a spot at the bottom of one of the wooden ramps and set up a sequence of shots with some of the Karkloof heavies. This shot of legend Patrick Morewood on his PYGA was side lit by two flashes on wireless units; I metered on the sky and stopped down 1EV.

The Specifications: 1/250 th sec @ f9; SONY A99-SLT + 16 mm fisheye; ISO 50; WB Setting (Auto); AE Setting (-1 EV); Remote flash on Phottix Transceivers.

More Information: www.pyga.co.za

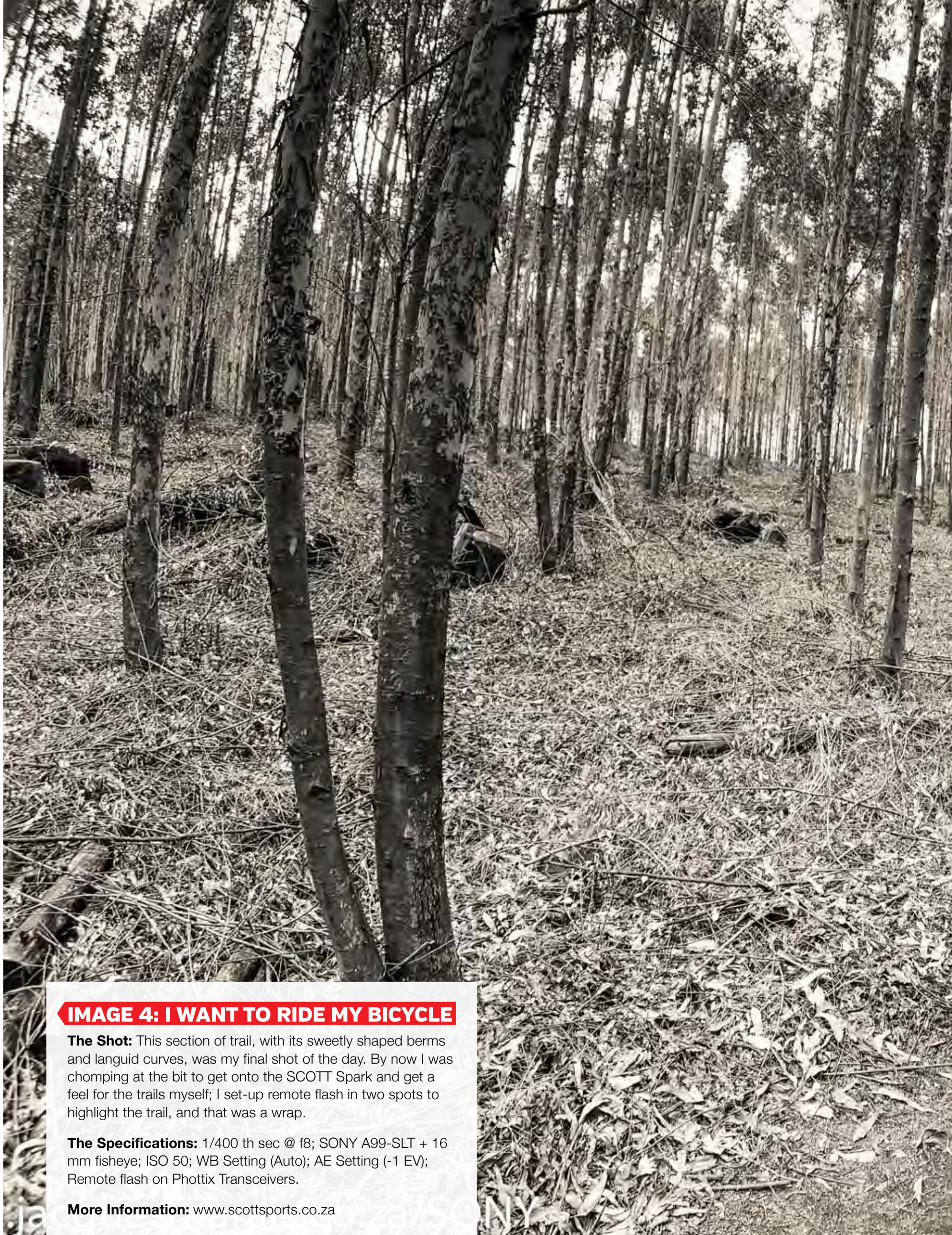


IMAGE 4: I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE

The Shot: This section of trail, with its sweetly shaped berms and languid curves, was my final shot of the day. By now I was chomping at the bit to get onto the SCOTT Spark and get a feel for the trails myself; I set-up remote flash in two spots to highlight the trail, and that was a wrap.

The Specifications: 1/400 th sec @ f8; SONY A99-SLT + 16 mm fisheye; ISO 50; WB Setting (Auto); AE Setting (-1 EV); Remote flash on Phottix Transceivers.

More Information: www.scottsports.co.za



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www.sappi.com/mountainbiking




IMAGE 5: SYNCHRONICITY

The Shot: Two kickers along a section of trail got us thinking along the lines of a synchronised jump shot, and we were lucky to have the right guys on hand, including local trail-scaping maestro Hylton Turvey and his mate Mark Millar. The only way to get this was to prefocus in the right place and then rattle off at 10 x frames per second.

The Specifications: 1/1,500 th sec @ f5.6; SONY A99-SLT + 80-400 mm lens; ISO 6400; WB Setting (Auto); AE Setting (0 EV); No flash.

More Information: www.sony.co.za



➤ **This fabulous and forested region should not be called Karkloof. Trailkloof maybe, or MTBkloof, or something similarly velocipedey, if I had my way ...**

I mean, why would you want a car here? Instead, you should be astride a bike, and maybe even have one in reserve. Just think, one mean All-Mountain machine with which to shred what must surely rate as one of South Africa's top single-track networks.

And then, if you had the kahunas to match, a gritty DH beauty with which to air those jumps. We can but dream, can't we?

My 48 hours in Karkloof proved exactly long enough to make me just a wee bit jealous of the folk who live here. With - I promise you, its true - more than a hundred kilometres of manicured and outback single-track slip-sliding through the Sappi forests in the immediate vicinity of the Karkloof Conservancy and Howick, you will need way more than two days to even begin to scratch the surface.

The problem is, once you do, you uncover an itch that will never remain scratched. Shooting the Sappi Trail Blazer event gave me a great overview of the trails, but what truly got me drooling was a tantalisingly short blast along the network of routes while a rambunctious KZN thunderstorm rolled in.

The SCOTT Spark dual suspension (courtesy of Joggie Prinsloo and the crew at SCOTT Sports SA) made me feel like a pro (well, not quite) and meant I could appreciate the oh-so-flow single-track at speed. Only problem is, how the hell do I now get used to NOT having variable lock-out on demand, and a bike that climbs as if I'm riding it with some hard-core kid's legs?

More info, I hear you say? Easy enough, go check out www.karkloofmtb.co.za and follow the flow on @karkloofmtb! •



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WE LIVE 

SEE THE VIDEO & FULL STORY AT FOXHEAD.COM/WELIVE | #FOXWELIVE

Bring together two adventurous hearts, two tired bikes, a pioneered route involving every type of mountain biking terrain that exists, and what you get is a 4,000 km adventure of unsupported, body-breaking and mind-challenging riding across South Africa and Lesotho. Only we could not justify having such an experience in vain, so we decided to use it to raise funds for two non-profit organisations. ▶

Into the flats of the Karoo.

RIDING THE DRAGON'S SPINE

FOR CEREBRAL PALSY

The main recipient is Malamulele Onward, an organisation that invests in children living in rural, under-served communities who are disabled as a result of having Cerebral Palsy (CP), to enable each child to reach their full potential within a supportive environment. They believe in excellence and that every child with CP should have access to the highest quality of care, regardless of how poor they are. While Greensleeves Place of Safety, which aims to provide holistic residential care for abandoned and abused children, would receive 10% of the funds.

The Dragon's Spine is a public mountain biking route that was pioneered by David Bristow and Steven Thomas in 2011. The route follows the edge of the escarpment starting from Beit Bridge, crossing Lesotho, and ending at Cape Point. It follows mostly district roads, jeep tracks, and foot paths to try avoid as much tarmac as possible.

Over the 62 days, of which 52 were riding, the route took us through incredible places that left us feeling in awe of the inspiring and diverse country we live in. From the remoteness of the Soutpansberg surrounded by wild nothingness, to our encounter with the largest living thing we had ever seen, the Sigole Big Tree, the breathtaking descent into the valley of Die Hel, the less visited yet equally astounding Northern Drakensberg, the majestic rolling highlands of the Eastern Cape's Wartrail, the towering sandstone walls of the Swartberg Pass, and the treacherous Nagmaal wagon trail that descends into the Tulbagh valley.

South Africa's landscape is riddled with natural wonders that wait to astonish us, as well as strange little towns with their own hidden surprises, such as Chrissiesmeer (MP) with over 230 natural lakes; Luneburg (KZN), a place so small we did not realise that we had cycled through it, yet is home to more than 300 sixth-generation German farmers; Utrecht (KZN), a town inside a game reserve; and Rouxpos (WC), a single farm that made its way onto the map because it used to have a Post Office. One thing that all the interesting and beautiful places we encountered had in common was the kindness of the people and the undeserving hospitality we received. ▶



Into the Western Cape and the first
real wet weather of the trip.









FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

- 1.** The Malibamatso River, which we followed to get from Oxbow to Motete.
- 2.** Morena Solane, our host for the night.
- 3.** The alternative route to scale Long Tom Pass - a forestry track via Horseshoe Falls.
- 4.** Our impromptu stay in the village of Solane en route to Motete after the gargantuan day down the Malibamatso.



A full-page photograph of a cyclist hiking up a rocky ridge. The cyclist is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, black pants, a silver helmet, and a large black backpack. They are carrying a mountain bike on their back. The terrain is rugged and rocky, with sparse vegetation. In the background, there are more mountains under a clear sky.

Cresting the ridge at 3,000 m above sea level en route to Oxbow from Ha Napo in Lesotho. A five-hour bike hike of 1,000 m of ascent gain.



Leaving the shade of Beit Bridge was our first experience of ever cycling with the extra weight on our bikes and so from the start, our idea of what was accomplishable in a day was constantly altered. This new experience, coupled with the fact that we had previously never cycled for more than two consecutive days, along with scorching heat and very sandy going, made for an exhausting initiation into what the next two months would hold.

A large element to the challenge that stood before us was that the sum total of our bike mechanic skills consisted of being able to replace brake pads, repair a broken chain, and insert a tube if anything were to happen to our tubeless tyres. Unfortunately, a quick bike mechanics crash course from a local Freedom Challenge rider and the purchase of a few tools and spares we had never used before left us with more apprehension about all that could go wrong rather than the assurance we had hoped for.

Luckily, our first bike issue was something we could handle, yet we certainly had not expected it to occur three hours into our first day of riding. Some good momentum, a blind rise, and a nasty pothole in the broken tar of the military road along the border with Zimbabwe, left Dylan with a dented rim and an ineffective tubeless tyre now needing a tube.

Subsequently, after days of riding all the way to Tzaneen without a single problem, a morning of five punctures to that tube sent us back to Tzaneen where a bike mechanic was able to straighten the rim and seal the tubeless tyre. We were extremely impressed with how our tired bikes performed on the ride with only a few minor problems that taught us some valuable mechanic skills.

Lesotho made for some of the toughest and most stimulating mountain biking we have ever experienced. It is safe to say that a bicycle is not the most logical way to move forward in Lesotho, but it does satisfy one's need for wild adventure, physical perseverance, and technical demand. As the first cyclists to complete the Lesotho section of the Dragon's Spine unsupported, we consider it the toughest trail on the route.

One of our more memorable days began with the impression that the 44 km ride following the Malibatso River would be relatively easy compared to the previous day that included a five-hour portage ascending 1,000 m in 10 km. Little did we know that between the weight of our bikes and the roughness of the terrain, after 10 hours of pressing forward we would have only covered 24 km. This resulted in staying with a chief in the first village we encountered, all orchestrated through our own form of sign language, as no one in the village understood English. ▶



Battling the Malibamatso.



Back roads of the Karoo.

On our second morning in Lesotho, about 20 minutes into our ride, my front gear lever decided to give in completely. This left me stuck on my little cog with nothing more than granny gears at my disposal, which in most circumstances would have been a real problem. However, the Dragon's Spine route through Lesotho was so steep and rough that apart from a few spinning occasions, which led me to become known as the 'Patella Propeller', there was hardly a time that I needed anything more.

Once out of Lesotho, we still had close to 440 km of riding before I could collect the new gear lever that I had ordered, and it was out of the unrelenting flatness of the Karoo terrain that my new manual gear changing system was born. A rolled-up piece of cardboard wedged in the shifter to keep my chain on the middle cog, which was swiftly removed at the foot of any climb only to be repositioned at the summit.

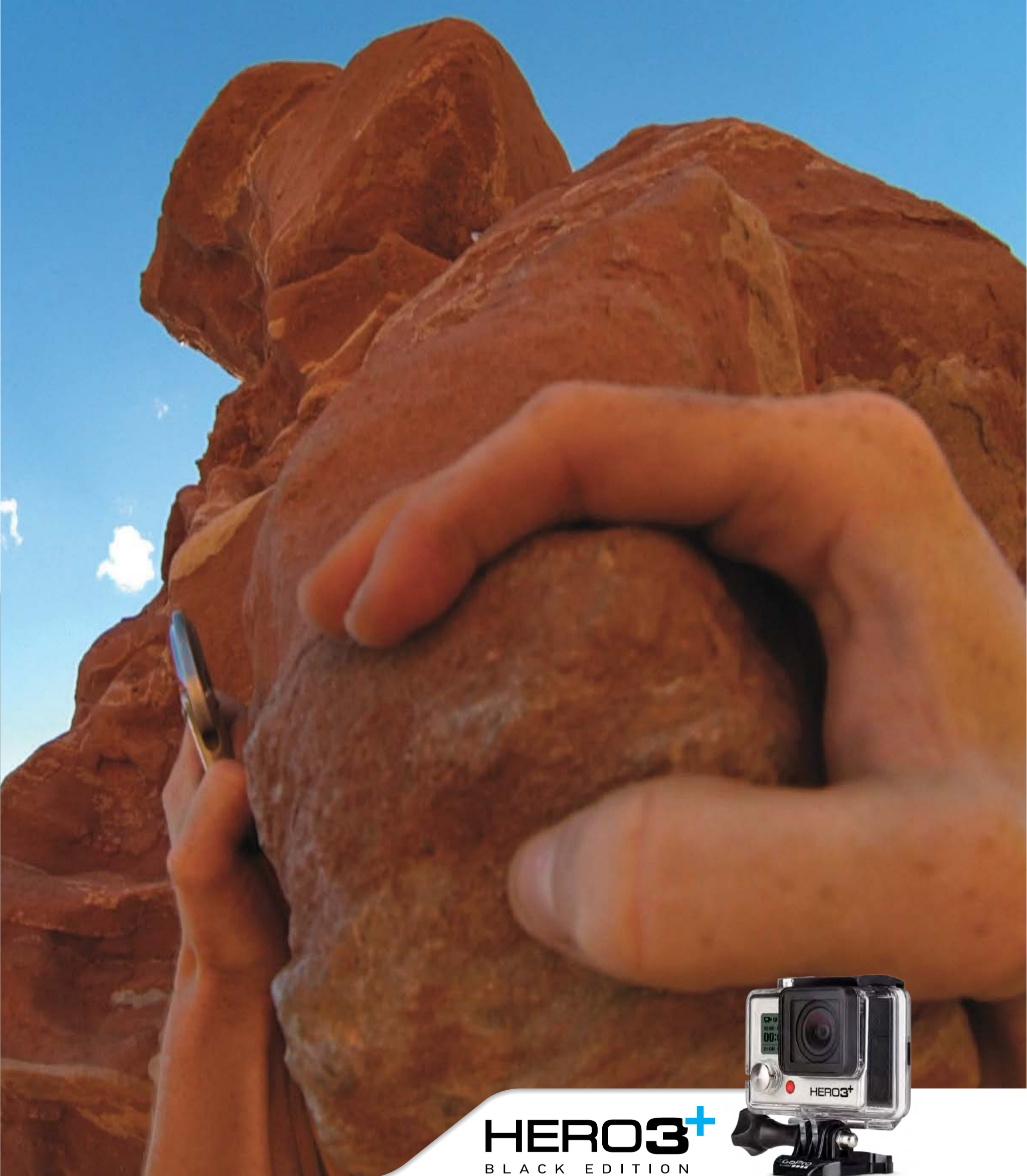
Despite a few mechanical hiccups and the very wet Western Cape weather, we made it to Cape Point, both us and bikes intact.

To date, approximately R60,000 has been raised towards the cause and this cycle gave us the opportunity to share the work that Malamulele Onward does with people from all over the country. We will continue raising funds until the end of January 2014 to try and reach our goal of R100,000 and will be doing a number of talks about our experience in the new year.

It has been a remarkable privilege to experience so much of our country that was unknown to us, yet all these places only form one little line across the map, revealing just how much more South Africa still has to offer our restless spirits. We are already dreaming about which part to explore next. •



For more information on Misty and Dylan's ride across Dragon's Spine, their talks, or to make a donation, visit their Facebook page: Riding the Dragons Spine for Cerebral Palsy. Alternatively, visit their website: <http://groupspaces.com/DragonsSpine4CP> or follow them on Twitter @wildweyers



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**MORE AND MORE
WE ARE HEARING
THE MAXIM THAT
CYCLING, AND
MORE SPECIFICALLY
MOUNTAIN BIKING,
IS THE NEW GOLF.**


DEALS ARE BEING DONE, IT IS SAID, ON THE SIDE OF A MOUNTAIN IN CLOUDS OF DUST AND STREAMS OF SWEAT, RATHER THAN FROM BEHIND THE COMFORT OF A COLD BEER AT THE 19TH HOLE.

The recent acquisition of Cycle Lab, the largest chain of cycling stores in the country, by the More Golf group, in what is touted as one of the largest deals in the South African retail sports sector in years, would certainly bear witness to this claim. ▶









Mountain biking, it seems, is gaining legitimacy in the boardroom. Luckily, that doesn't make it unaffordable to the average Joe. Sure, a top end mountain bike can set you back silly money, in some cases more than a small car, but it doesn't have to. For R10K you can get kitted out with a decent enough bike and have enough left over for other necessary kit that will see you right for a good few years. Nobody is going to laugh at you or ridicule your bike. Mountain bikers are friendly, welcoming folk.

AFTER THE CAPITAL OUTLAY OF A BIKE AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING, IT IS SAVINGS ALL THE WAY.

COMPARE THE AVERAGE TRAIL FEE FOR MOUNTAIN BIKING OF BETWEEN R30 AND R40 PER DAY, WITH THE AVERAGE GREEN FEES AT ONE OF THE 25 GOLF COURSES IN CAPE TOWN OF R369 PER ROUND AND YOU WILL START SCORING STRAIGHT AWAY.

Let's be honest about this. If you had to make a choice between golf or mountain biking based purely on the financial aspects, then mountain biking would win every time. You can pay R575 for one round of golf at a top Cape Town golf club, or for the same money get a one-year subscription to the Tygerberg Mountain Bike Club. That subscription allows free, year-round access to all of the club's amazing single-track trails that are spread over prime farmland in the Tygerberg region of Cape Town. ▶











The Tygerberg Mountain Bike Club was established in the mid 1990s by a bunch of like-minded individuals who were desperate to have somewhere to ride. Riding bicycles on mountain trails was in its infancy in those dark old days and quality single track was very scarce. These riders banded together in an effort to secure some land to build on and as a collective voice, they convinced landowners to open up their hills and then they used their combined labour and finances to build trails on them. These guys were true trailblazers, leading the way for all of us who now ride the trails. And not only that, they did it by using their own labour and money.

Fast forward to 2014 and the club now has upward of 3,500 members, a permanently employed trail manager and it is well on its way to achieving its goal of building and maintaining 120 km of the most pristine single track you will find in South Africa. There are trails for every level of rider, from rank beginner to experienced trail warrior, with the club offering regular 'newbie' rides and once-a-week, organised night rides (with amazing boerie rolls). The club's trails are used by the Cape Epic as the prologue stage for their annual eight-day extravaganza of mountain biking, and some of the land owners are now enthusiastic bikers themselves.

SO WHAT BETTER WAY TO SPEND A SATURDAY MORNING THAN RIDING THE 'STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN' AT MEERENDAL WINE FARM,

SPOTTING BUZZARDS AND CARACAL IN THE WILD FROM THE TOP OF 'DORSTBERG' AND THEN WANDERING AROUND THE FARMER'S MARKET BEFORE HITTING THE RESTAURANT FOR A WELL-EARNED COFFEE AND BRUNCH. YOU CAN DO IT WITH YOUR FAMILY OR WITH YOUR FRIENDS, BUT THE POINT IS THAT THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF THOSE EARLY TRAIL VISIONARIES, YOU CAN DO IT AND WE SHOULD ALL BE VERY GRATEFUL TO THEM.

As my dear old Dad would say, "You can't beat that with a big stick." •



For more information on Tygerberg Mountain Bike Club, visit www.tygerbergmtb.co.za

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EXPLORING THE WILD COAST

TWO OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS IN THE WORLD ARE MOTORBIKES AND THE WILD COAST. A 250 KM STRETCH OF VIRTUALLY UNSPOILED COASTLINE ON THE EAST COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA.

You can imagine my excitement when I was recently afforded the opportunity to combine these two loves and head out on a bike trip with my dad down to Mtentu River Lodge for two nights.

The lodge is situated on the banks of the Mtentu estuary and marks the northern boundary of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. The reserve was once a leper colony, which funnily enough served as a great form of nature conservationism since the area was never fully inhabited by humans and consequently has been kept largely untouched. ▶




Dad and I stopping for a break on one of the less-conventional routes to the Wild Coast.

Ironically one of the Wild Coast's best assets is its poor roads. I know this doesn't seem like a feature you'd describe as an 'asset', so let me explain. The whole charm of the Wild Coast is its remoteness, which allows you to escape the mass of holidaymakers who seem to take over the coastline during the December holidays. We were reminded of this phenomenon as we made our way along the south coast of KZN. Just outside Port Shepstone, we found ourselves stuck in a traffic jam and could only look on as thousands of people vied for their piece of sandy real estate. The poor roads of the Wild Coast act as a barricade, thus ensuring that only those people willing to endure the sand, pot holes and bumps will get to appreciate this piece of paradise.

As the road got worse, my smile got bigger for two reasons. First, it was fantastic adventure riding conditions, even though Dad may not have agreed as he struggled through the sand taking one or two tumbles along the way. And second, I knew the road's condition would result in only a few like-minded people joining us at the lodge.

Having said this, the road to Mtentu is not all that bad by Wild Coast standards and some friends of mine even managed to get their Toyota Tazz there on their honeymoon, although it did put their marriage at risk for a little while. If you not on a bike, it's advisable to take a vehicle with good ground clearance, a 4x4 or, at the very least, diff lock is recommended in wet conditions. Alternatively, you could always leave your vehicle at the Wild Coast Sun, near Port Edward, and opt for one of the less conventional ways of getting to the lodge by means of horseback, cycling or hiking - all an adventure of their own.

AS WE APPROACHED THE FINAL FEW KILOMETRES TO THE LODGE WE WERE GREETED BY A MAGNIFICENT SUNSET AND WERE BOTH VERY THANKFUL THAT THERE WAS ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE TO GO BECAUSE THE CHANCES WERE GOOD THAT HAD WE RIDDEN THE ROAD IN THE DARK, WE MAY NEVER HAVE GOT THERE!



Mtentu River Lodge blends in well with the natural environment to make it a really special place.

On arrival at the lodge we were blown away by the incredible scenery, with stunning views over the ocean, estuary and reserve. We needed a couple of minutes for the reality to set in that this was going to be our home for the next couple of days. We received another surprise when we were told that some people had cancelled their booking at the last minute and were offered the dormitory room in lieu of camping. As much as I love to camp, the thought of a soft mattress after nine hours of riding was far more appealing.

On the accommodation front, Mtentu offers six rustic but comfortable cabins that each sleep four people, as well as one dormitory style room that sleeps eight people. Ablutions are communal and it didn't take us long to make use of one of the best features of the lodge, solar-powered showers that offer the occupant the most breathtaking views of the Indian Ocean. ▶



The creatively designed dormitory room that incorporates the natural landscape is rustic but comfortable.



THE LODGE HAS A FANTASTIC LAID-BACK ATMOSPHERE TO IT AND IT WON'T TAKE YOU LONG TO UNWIND AND REALLY FEEL AT HOME. WE SPENT THE EVENING CHILLING AROUND THE FIRE HAVING A FEW DRINKS IN THE BOMA ENTERTAINMENT AREA.

The real curse of Mtentu is there's just way too much to do! It is the perfect setting to relax in and read a book, but that really doesn't seem like an option when there is so much to explore. You would need months to discover all that is on offer and sadly we only had one day. With a strong northeaster blowing, the decision was pretty much made for us. So we left the untouched beaches for another day and headed up the estuary to explore a couple of the beautiful waterfalls. ▶



EXPLORING THE
WILD
COAST

A beautiful view of Mtentu River Lodge overlooking the Indian Ocean.



The bar and entertainment area.



A magnificent view from the base of Swallow Tails Falls.



One of the best features of the lodge are the solar showers with a view!





You can paddle right up to some of the waterfalls along the river.

THE PADDLE UP RIVER IS AN ADVENTURE IN ITSELF, WITH TALL CLIFFS FLANKING BOTH SIDES OF RIVER TO GIVE YOU AN OMINOUS FEELING AS YOU HEAD FURTHER INTO THE WILD. AFTER A FEW KILOMETRES WE DITCHED THE CANOE AND MADE OUR WAY UP ONE OF THE MANY FOREST-ENCLOSED TRIBUTARIES ON FOOT IN SEARCH OF THE SWALLOW TAIL FALLS.

The hike up to the falls requires a lot of boulder hopping, swimming and climbing, but all this hard work was soon forgotten once we gazed upon the splendour of the waterfall. A large pool right at the base was great to swim in, with water drops falling effortlessly from above you. I couldn't help but acknowledge how blessed I was to have the opportunity to visit such a remarkable place.

Due to the strong northeaster we only just made it back to the lodge in time for lunch, having slogged our way back down the river against a powerful headwind. The lodge offers a great catered option for guests and for just R250 per person, per day, you can enjoy breakfast, lunch and supper without any hassle, thus allowing you more time to enjoy the incredible scenery on offer.

After a fairly active morning coupled with the lingering effects of the previous day's ride, we spent the afternoon relaxing. When the wind finally died down a bit, we took the opportunity to explore a little of the coastline and made our way north to Pebble Beach, arriving just in time to watch a fisherman haul out a decent catch from the rocks. We ended the day off sharing a few beers at the pub, while swopping adventure stories with the other guests.

Mtentu is not a five-star luxury lodge, but if you want an affordable, comfortable place where you can really relax and experience true adventure, there aren't many places that rival Mtentu River Lodge.

Unfortunately the next morning we had to pack up and leave relatively early, though we did have enough time to get one last swim in the estuary before heading home. It had been a short visit, but long enough to convince me to come back and explore this magical place again. •



For more information on Mtentu River Lodge, visit www.mtenturiverlodge.co.za

Dad and I take an evening walk along the beach.



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Mauritius

UNRUSHED HONEYMOON HEAVEN OR INTERNATIONAL SPORTS CAPITAL?



THE PEACEFUL INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND OF MAURITIUS HAS FOR MANY A DECADE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF PICTURE POSTCARDS, idyllic settings for weddings, honeymoons, and tranquil family holidays. Sports events were generally based on activities that one would have practiced while on holiday. ▶



TEN YEARS AGO, THE ONLY INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS TO BE FOUND ON THE ISLAND WERE GOLF AND DEEP SEA FISHING TOURNAMENTS.

While the island has a lot in its favour for making it a formidable host for a variety of sports events, it is only in recent years that a number of truly sublime sporting events have started to take their place on the international calendar. Many would wonder, why the change?

Mauritius has always had a natural beauty about it, which makes for superb pictures and an even better experience, but international athletes and sporting travellers would always look at infrastructure, as well as a safe and ideal environment in which to compete. The influx of foreign investment and the increasingly improving economy has brought with it considerable improvements to existing infrastructure. Take for example the newly opened Sir Ramgoolam International Airport. A year ago, when I came to Mauritius, the airport was small, old and not dissimilar to that of smaller African states in dire need of upliftment. The new airport took five years to build, has beautiful architecture and is capable of handling large volumes of traffic. In

addition to this, new highways have been built, generally upgraded roads, thus facilitating movement between towns. The local tourism board and media are most welcoming and eager to support and cover events in the press.

LUX* Sports, part of the LUX* Resorts Group, was the first to partner up with experienced and professional international businesses to organise exclusive annual events for sports travellers. These events, which have attracted world-class athletes, have been hugely successful in providing memorable sporting holidays, with sports people from all over the globe enjoying the company of champions in a relaxed, beautiful environment. Having participated in the Indian Ocean Triathlon for three editions now, I cannot believe the impressive level of organisation from all sectors involved, how lovely and unspoilt the environment is, and how sad I always am to leave new-found friends and the magnificent scenery!

So, I decided to have a look at what great events you can escape to in 2014 on the island of Mauritius. (Please check websites for date confirmations.)



FEBRUARY

SIOBC INTERNATIONAL, DEEP SEA FISHING

An IGFA Offshore World Championship Qualifier, SIOBC is a beautiful international annual released fishing tournament that takes place on the west and south-west coast of the island, in front of Le Morne and Black River, the best spots for deep sea fishing in Mauritius and among the best in the world! The event is organised by Le Morne Anglers' Club in partnership with LUX* Sports. Dedicated, passionate and professional fishermen are offering you a week of great fishing in an exotic and friendly atmosphere.

For more information, visit www.morneanglers.com

MAY

LUX* ROYAL RAID 35 KM AND 80 KM, MOUNTAIN TRAIL RUN

Now in its eight edition, the Royal Raid is the biggest Mauritian mountain trail run, with an average of 700 local and international runners. It was the first of its kind and the first international event, apart from golf and fishing. A fantastic challenge on the south-west coast, it offers challenging, yet breathtaking scenery. Exclusive passages through the Yemen Nature Reserve, Black River National Park and Parakeet Trail promise not to disappoint before a magnificent finish on the coast! **For more information, visit www.royalraid.com**

JUNE/JULY

LUX* MAURITIUS SURFSKI WEEK / MAURITIUS OCEAN CLASSIC, SURFSKI

This race has already established itself as one of the best downwind courses in the World Series and promises a fantastic week of surfski, as well as holiday fun! As part of the World Surf Ski Series, it is now in its sixth edition.

For more information, visit www.mauritiusoceanclassic.com

JULY

MAURITIUS OPEN WATER SWIM RACE, SWIMMING

Brought to you by the organisers of the world's biggest swim event, the Midmar Mile in South Africa, this 1,850 m (1 nautical mile) sublime swim takes you through the most beautiful lagoon that by far beats looking down at the pool tiles! It is ideal for swimmers wishing to travel and have a good time! **For more information, visit <http://sports.luxislandresorts.com> or www.midmarmile.co.za**



JULY

LUX* MAURITIUS MARATHON, ROAD RUNNING

The Mauritius Marathon is a fantastic event that takes place in one of the most stunning parts of the island. The route takes you on 20 km of coastal road in the south, then along one of the most gorgeous lagoons of the island, through typical coastal villages, to finish on the beach. This marathon combines a sporting challenge and the discovery of the natural and cultural heritage of Mauritius in a very friendly atmosphere! The Mauritius Marathon and Half Marathon are both AIMS and IAAF certified races. **For more information, visit www.mauritiushmarathon.com**

JULY/AUGUST

KITEIVAL, KITESURFING

This kitesurfing festival takes place at various points around the island and promises epic downwinds and picturesque scenery! Kiteival attracts top international kitesurfers from all over the world. **For more information, visit www.kiteivalmauritius.com**

AUGUST

MTB CYCLE TOUR, MOUNTAIN BIKING

Not a race, but a magnificent mountain bike tour. The 305 km route around Mauritius is on coastal tracks and beaches, and is a perfect getaway. **For more information, visit <http://sports.luxislandresorts.com>**

OCTOBER

MASTERS TOUR, ROAD CYCLING

Two separate events, the 100 km cycle race offers solid competition for the competitive cyclist. The Vet and Masters Tour is a wonderful tour of the island for older riders seeking solid riding, fun, and adventure!

For more information, visit www.cycletour.mu and <http://craworldeventsmanagement.com>

NOVEMBER

BEACH RUGBY, TOUCH RUGBY

This is one of the few dedicated touch rugby events on the island. While it is competitive, the event is a fun way to kick off the summer season and approaching holidays! **For more information, visit <http://sports.luxislandresorts.com>**



NOVEMBER

INDIAN OCEAN TRIATHLON, TRIATHLON

If you're tired of over-priced local events that have lost the personal touch, I highly recommend this race, which is probably the most exquisite triathlon in the world! Numbers are relatively small, but the atmosphere is superbly friendly and jovial. The course is challenging, with the bike leg going up the Chamarel Pass. The run leg has three passages of 500 m on the beach, which are amazing and fun. The swim in the very warm waters offers magnificent sights of the corals below. Distances of 1.8 km, 55 km and 12 km are testing enough to make you feel your legs, but not too long that you still have a sense of humour at the end!

For more information, visit www.indianoceantriathlon.com

NOVEMBER

LOOK PREMIUM CYCLING WEEK, CYCLING

Just a few days after the triathlon you have the option of doing a cycle tour of the island in the company of French Cycling Champion Laurent Jalabert. Stages are long enough to get some miles in your legs, but never longer than 80 km. You are guaranteed a good time on the bike and even better scenery!

For more information, visit www.vo2maxvoyages.com

NOVEMBER

OMNICANE SOUTHERN TROPICAL CHALLENGE, MOUNTAIN BIKING

Born in 2009, the idea was to create the first mountain bike stage race in teams of two in Mauritius. The two former editions were a great success and 2014 is set to be an even better race!

This four-day ride in teams of two is organised as follow:

- **Prologue** : 6.5 km
- **Stage 1** : 65 km
- **Stage 2** : 85 km
- **Stage 3** : 45 km

Teams register in one of four different categories that include Men, Ladies, Mixed, and Masters (both riders must be 40 years or older on race day). The minimum age of participation is 15 on race day. The team riders must remain together at all times during the race and are expected to reach the finish line by 17h00 daily. ▶



At each stage, the winners of the day receive prizes and the leaders in the overall classification are awarded their leader jerseys. All riders and race crew sleep in the tented race villages. The race takes place in the south of the island, the best place for mountain biking. It's wild, big and has a full choice of slopes! November is one of the ideal times of the year to do it as the weather is not so warm, sugar canes are small and it's not the hunting season. **For more information, visit www.mtb-mauritius.com**

DECEMBER

STAND UP CHALLENGE, STAND UP BOARDING

Now in its third edition, this sport is rapidly growing in Mauritius because of the sheltered coral reefs and magnificently clear waters. A great competition and great place to start the holidays! **For more information, visit www.stand-up-paddle-mauritius.com**

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E a s t L o n d o n



A FAIRY-TALE ENDING TO IRONMAN 70.3

A TRIATHLON IS A TRIATHLON, IS A TRIATHLON. EXCEPT THAT IT ISN'T. IN THE SAME WAY THAT A FISH ISN'T A DOLPHIN AND THE 100 METRE SPRINT ISN'T A MARATHON, NOT ALL TRIATHLONS ARE THE SAME. All triathlons have a swim, bike and run section, as advertised, and all of them run those disciplines in the same order. The difference, obviously, is in the distances involved. ▶



STARTING AT SPRINT DISTANCE, THEY GET PROGRESSIVELY LONGER (OLYMPIC DISTANCE), UNTIL AT THE EXTREME END IS THE LONGEST EVENT OF THEM ALL, THE IRONMAN, WHICH WITH A 3.8 KM SWIM, 180 KM CYCLE AND A RUN OF 42 KM, IS A BEAST OF AN EVENT TO CONQUER.

Sitting firmly between the shorter races and Ironman distance event is what was originally known as the Half Ironman, but is now branded as Ironman 70.3. (70.3 refers to the sum of the distance in miles of all three disciplines). In the past, Ironman and Ironman 70.3 were often compared with each other, and fanatical proponents of the longer event loudly proclaimed to anybody who would listen that the 70.3 race wasn't a proper distance. But that really wasn't true. It was simply a figment of someone's testosterone fuelled ego, a case of mine is bigger than yours, so it must be better.

The 70.3 has blossomed into a unique discipline of its own, with specialist training and professional athletes who dedicate their entire lives to the race. Events are held all over the world and the top racers, both male and female, travel the globe earning a living (often a meagre one) competing against each other.

In South Africa, the Ironman 70.3 event is held every year in late January, in East London (Buffalo City), in the Eastern Cape. The 2014 race saw a glittering array of top 70.3 athletes assembled on our shores. World champions, ex-world champions and stars of the future were all here to battle it out. Topping the list was three-time winner of the South African Ironman 70.3 and former world champion in the distance, Britain's Jodie Swallow.

The top male contender and favourite to win, James Cunnam, is a local boy and being Jodie Swallow's boyfriend, he was also the crowd's emotional favourite. Everyone loves a fairy tale. The trouble is, he has never won an event on South African soil, despite coming very close, and this year he was hoping to get the monkey off his back. James wasn't going to have it handed to him on a plate though, and he would have to work really hard to beat some of the best in the world who were here to beat, not help him.



Race day dawned to what couldn't have been better weather. There was no wind to speak of, the sea was a calm 17 degrees Celsius and the skies were cloudy, which would help keep the temperatures down.

At 6:45 a.m. the Pro racers left in the first of the start waves. Marko Albert (EST) was first out of the water in 23 minutes and 39 seconds, with Will Clarke (GBR) and Faris Al-Sultan (GER) breathing down his neck and only lagging by a couple of seconds. In his first race as a professional, South African Olympic distance proponent Rudolf Naude was also in this leading group. In the second bunch out of the water, Romain Guillaume, Andreas Giglmayr (AUT) and James Cunnama (RSA) were getting ready for a ding-dong battle of note.

Clark was first out of T1 on the bike after a blistering transition, but was soon passed on the road by Guillaume, who had taken off like a homesick angel in an effort to cement a solid lead going into the run. After only 12 km, ex-Ironman World Champion Faris Al-Sultan also passed Clarke to take over second spot. But it was back in the pack where war was starting to break out. Six or seven of the top guys were busy destroying each other in an effort to catch the leaders.

Local boys Cunnama, Kyle Buckingham, Matt Trautman and Stuart Marais were giving no quarter to Bert Jammaer of Belgium, and Brazilian Igor Amorelli. Trautman was first to break away and hit half-way in third place, in an attempt to reel in the two front runners. However, after the turnaround the cyclists were riding directly into a headwind and Cunnama put the hammer down to power past Trautman into third.

Into T2, Guillaume was leading by a massive 2:11, with Germany's Al-Sultan, then Cunnama and Trautman over a minute behind. This left the little matter of a 21 km half marathon run to decide the race.

Guillaume continued to hold his first place, but Al-Sultan was slowly slipping back into fourth, allowing Cunnama and Clarke to take over second and third. Guillaume must have known he was in trouble when he looked over his shoulder and saw the Brit and Safa charging into view. With only 4 km to go, Cunnama finally took the lead from Guillaume and very shortly afterwards Clarke moved into second. The two leaders were neck and neck and almost sprinting, and there was still 1.5 km to go.

IT WAS SHAPING UP TO BE A MONSTER BATTLE ON THE RED CARPET, BUT CUNNAMA PUT IN A LAST KICK TO MOVE INTO A LEAD HE WOULDN'T LOSE. CLARKE NEVER GAVE UP, BUT ULTIMATELY HE HAD TO CONCEDE 23 SECONDS TO CUNNAMA ON THE LINE. ▶





BUT WHAT OF THE WOMEN'S RACE? THEY WERE STILL OUT ON THE COURSE AND DESERVING OF OUR FULL ATTENTION, SO EYES DOWN AND KEEP READING PLEASE.

Swallow, the three-time winner of this race was doing her usual thing. Beating the course and her competitors into submission. To start with, she was the first woman, and fourth overall, to exit the water. In other words, she destroyed most of the Pro men in the swim. Astonishing. Having 47 seconds shaved off her time in the swim certainly wasn't what Lucie Reed (CZE) was hoping for.

POLAND'S MARIA CZES'NIK AND SIMONE BRAENDLI OF SWITZERLAND FOUND THEMSELVES 2 MINUTES FURTHER BACK AND MUST HAVE BEEN DEVASTATED. ▶

Lucie Reed is made of sterner stuff though and renowned for her bike power, and she was giving it her all. At the turnaround she was still 70 seconds back, but now Czes'nik and Braendli had been joined by Susie Hignett (GBR), although the three of them were making no progress on the leaders. It was at Hallway that Swallow made her move, putting herself two more minutes ahead of the chase group by the time she got off the bike to head onto the run course.

IT WAS NOW JUST A TWO-HORSE RACE, BUT IN THE REAL WORLD THERE IS NO ATHLETE ON EARTH WHO WAS GOING TO CATCH SWALLOW, AND DESPITE HER BEST EFFORTS REED WAS NEVER GOING TO TAKE THE WIN. SHE KNEW IT, WE KNEW IT, GAME OVER.

At the line, Swallow took her fourth consecutive Ironman 70.3 South Africa title in 04:37:00, a massive 3 minutes and 47 seconds ahead of second-placed Lucie Reed. Simone Braendli took third in 04:42:39.

The result meant that the fairy-tale script had finally been written. Cunnama and Swallow. Boyfriend and girlfriend. Together on the podium.

To read it, it seems trite, but to have been there and witnessed the pain and raw emotion of the moment is to have understood just what it takes for these two young athletes to live, train and race 70.3 all day, every day. It certainly put a tear in this romantic's eye, and I'm supposed to be an impartial observer. •



For more information, visit www.ironman703.co.za



TOP 10 MEN

1	James Cunnama (RSA)	04:05:00
2	Will Clarke (GBR)	04:05:23
3	Romain Guillaume (FRA)	04:06:23
4	Stuart Marais (RSA)	04:06:37
5	Igor Amorelli (BRA)	04:07:57
6	Faris Al-Sultan (GER)	04:08:41
7	Bert Jammaer (BEL)	04:10:56
8	Johannes Moldan (GER)	04:12:37
9	Kyle Buckingham (RSA)	04:13:41
10	Marko Albert (EST)	04:13:55

TOP 10 WOMEN

1	Jodie Swallow (GBR)	04:37:00
2	Lucie Reed (CZE)	04:40:48
3	Simone Braendli (SUI)	04:42:39
4	Camilla Lindholm (SWE)	04:48:14
5	Jeannie Collogne (FRA)	04:51:08
6	Maria Czes'nik (POL)	04:51:51
7	Lynette Van Der Merwe (RSA)	05:00:00
8	Jeanni Seymour (RSA)	05:01:08
9	Edith Niederfriniger (ITA)	05:02:24
10	Claire Horner (RSA)	05:09:35





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Triathlon all grown up

➤ **Triathlon** in the Western Cape is evolving into something big, and it's doing it in a hurry. ▶

Rossouw Bekker.





Triathlon all grown up





Ryk Neethling.

Triathlon all grown up

Di Mcewan.





Dean Hopf.

Only a few years back, events were hastily put together by volunteers and harassed officials from the local triathlon administrative body (In many cases, those poor officials were coerced into helping.) They did a sterling job with what they had, pulling help from wherever they could, liaising with local authorities for permission and organising road closures, marshals and traffic officials on the day. Organising a triathlon is not a job for the faint hearted or those with a short attention span.

In 2014, things have changed. The sport has grown, and the small child that was a fringe sport in the late 90s has had a spectacular growth spurt and is now a petulant teenager of the new millennium. It is a sport that is demanding its proper place in a society filled with similar 'edge' events. It is also a sport that needs proper organisational skills and talent.

➤ **With the *World Triathlon Series* coming to Cape Town this April (talk about an older sibling and massive peer pressure), the eyes of the triathlon world are on Cape Town, and the sport in the Western Cape, like any kid in its first year at high school, needed a new set of clothes and a proper haircut.**

Luckily, the Western Province Triathlon committee aren't short sighted. Realising that they are administrators and not organisers, they roped in the help of professional event organiser Olivia Ness and her team from Raw Events to run the logistics of the Western Province Triathlon Championships. Good move. Greater success. ▶



Those who entered the race on Sunday, 19 January probably thought that a 6:30 a.m. race start was stupidly early. They certainly changed their tune when the temperatures soured into the thirties by midday. With the weather playing along like a well conducted orchestra (without the wind section, which is unusual for any event held in Cape Town in the summer), the athletes were treated to the first of many pleasant surprises on the day, the venue.

The Val de Vie Estate in Paarl is simply stunning, with manicured lawns, perfect water quality and a secure environment for spectators and family. Val de Vie threw its doors wide, gave the athletes a huge welcoming smile and made a lot of friends in the process.

So the triathlon circus rolled into town for what was going to be an amazing day of racing. With Raw Events doing the rah-rah side of things, and the indefatigable Tony Bradford of WP Triathlon and his team pulling the strings, making things happen and just being everywhere, this event took sprint triathlon in the Western Cape to a whole new level.

Checking the line-up at the start, it was clear that this was going to be a quality race, despite many top contenders treating it as part of their taper before Ironman 70.3 in East London a week later.

In the men's race, Xterra Champ Stuart Marias, Ironman star Matt Trautman and up and coming local star Frederick Wagenvoorde were all on the line, along with a host of other class talent like Theo Blygnaut. There was also the added entertainment of multiple Olympic gold medallist and Val de Vie resident Ryk Neethling lining up as the swimmer in a relay fun team. That must have got a few egos twitching.


Heading up the women's field was race favourite Di McEwan, Olympian (on the serious comeback trail), Marie Rabie and Robyn Williams, who although concentrating more on off road races these days was looking to pick up the pieces left by those in front should they have a bad day.





➤ First out of the water after a brilliant swim was Theo Blignaut, followed 18 seconds later by Fred Wagenvoorde and then Ryk Neethling, who gave the others a fighting chance by **swimming backstroke**. Stuart Marais was trailing by a massive 2 minutes going into the swim/bike transition and had set himself up for a huge effort if he wanted to take the win. ▶

Frederick Wagenvoorde.



> Onto the bike and it was out on the road towards Paarl, looping through the verdant vineyards before heading back towards Franschhoek and then the return road to Val de Vie. Stuart Marais was hammering the ride on his mean, green Trek tri-bike to claw back the minute and a half he had lost to the leaders on the swim.

He eventually managed to pull a minute back on Wagenvoorde and 4 minutes and 30 seconds on Theo Blignaut, to come into T2 second with less than 30 seconds to close the gap.

The run was frantic, with Marais slowly closing on Wagenvoorde to eventually power into the lead 1 km from the finish with his customary kick, eventually winning by a miserly 20 seconds.

The women's race was a far more sedate affair in comparison, although no less fast at the front with Marie Rabie clocking the fastest swim time of anyone (male and female) on the day. But it was Di McEwan who was the runaway winner, taking the win by almost 4 minutes from Rabie, with Robyn Williams another 1 minute 45 seconds back. Such was McEwan's domination that her coach, Neil MacPherson, was on course calling split times and urging her to slow down in an effort to save herself for Ironman 70.3, where she will be starting as one of the favourites.

After the hustle and bustle of the big boys and girls in the early races, the day moved on to include youth and kiddies races later in the morning before the prize-giving at the polo club. Here, the farmers market was in full swing and competitors were able to get a delicious bite to eat and a cold beverage to quaff, while catching up on race tales with their mates. •



For more information and the full race results, visit www.wptriathlon.org.za



Stuart Marais.

Results

Men:

1. Stuart Marais
2. Frederick Wagenvoorde
3. Theo Blignaut

Women:

1. Dianne McEwan
2. Marie Rabie
3. Robyn Williams

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IT IS NOT YOUR FRIEND



▶ **MONDAY MORNING I AWAKE WITH A SORE AND BRUISED BODY - A REMINDER THAT I CONQUERED THE FINAL WARRIOR RACE BLACK-OPS CHALLENGE. IT IS A RACE THAT LIVES UP TO ITS REPUTATION. A RACE THAT TESTS EVERY FIBRE OF YOUR BODY, AS WELL AS ALL YOUR MENTAL STRENGTH. IT IS A BATTLEFIELD! ▶**





▶ **THE WARRIOR RACE SERIES HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR EVENTS TO HIT SOUTH AFRICAN SHORES AND WITH GOOD REASON. THE EVENTS OFFER EVERYTHING FROM FAMILY FUN TO AN EXTREME FITNESS CHALLENGE FOR ATHLETES. THE PAST WEEKEND SAW US COMPETING IN THE FINAL RACE OF THE YEAR, WHICH INCLUDED THE WHO'S WHO OF SOUTH AFRICAN MULTI-SPORT ATHLETES BATTLING IT OUT FOR THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE, AS WELL AS R230,000 IN PRIZE MONEY.**

These are the true warriors competing in the Elite category: no teamwork and no soft burpee options for them, and all 30 obstacles over 17 kilometres had to be completed while racing against the clock. Just completing the course is a challenge for most athletes. Having to do it against time takes it to the next level.





Heavy rains and high winds made for an even tougher race than normal. The course was muddy and slippery and the obstacles treacherous and physically demanding. The first half of the route was made up of mostly running with obstacles dispersed in-between. We had to pull heavy tyres, carry sandbags (wounded warrior challenge), and climb over and crawl under obstacles. The deep, muddy trenches of the 'Mud Monster', a favorite amongst competitors and Rookies alike, was exceptionally challenging to get out of. It consists of a series of trenches approximately three-metres wide and two-metres deep, filled with water, and on the edge is heaps of mud that one must get over. It is incredibly difficult to find traction and most people tend to help each other, in extreme cases even forming human ladders.

The last four kilometres on the course is where things get interesting and the warriors must rise above. A line up of eight obstacles all testing the upper body to the extreme lie in wait for us. With spectators cheering us on, every ounce of strength is demanded from our bodies. The 'Rope Hanger', an obstacle with five very short ropes over a metre apart that one has to swing from one to the other, and 'Extreme Monkey', traversing a horizontal ladder by hanging on the poles and swinging to the next, took their toll on most of the competitors. It was a demanding course leading us to the last obstacle, the 'Ice Crusher' and over the finish line. ▶

▶ **THE MEN'S WINNER, MICHAEL JOUBERT, WHO HAS A BACKGROUND IN ROCK CLIMBING, BLASTED PAST CLAUDE EKSTEEN ON THESE LAST OBSTACLES AND TOOK THE TITLE IN AN ASTONISHING 1:37, GOING HOME WITH A COOL R100,000.**

In the Ladies race, Carla van Huysteen, who is well known for her performances on the Xterra Off-Road Triathlon Series, was out in front from the get go. A nimble runner and tough competitor, she had a great performance taking the Ladies title and also went home with a nice holiday bonus of R100,000. Jetaine Ribbink and Jacqueline Steinman closely followed her to the finish line.

For the Rookies, it was a fun day in the mud with family and friends on a six-kilometre course lined with 15 obstacles. The obstacles are less demanding and can be completed by anyone with a sense of adventure. Participants can compete in teams or individually, and funny outfits are seen all around.

For those wanting to step it up from Rookie, but not brave enough for the extreme Black-ops, organisers have introduced a new Commando Intermediate distance course. This will challenge the more-fit athlete and prepare them to progress to the Black-ops if they so desire.

So with the 2013 Warrior Races done and dusted, here are some Black-ops training tips to help you prepare for the 2014 races.



QUICK TRAINING TIPS

The Black-ops obstacles often require the ability to pull up your own body weight, so upper body strength is critical. Add upper body vertical pull movements to your weekly routine, including pull-ups of all different grips (wide, narrow, etc.) and through a full range of motion (i.e. starting with straight arms from a dead hang). These can be done on tree branches, playground monkey bars, or in the gym, for example. From my personal experience, I found rock climbing to be an incredibly valuable exercise for time versus result. If all else fails, climb a tree! This will do wonders for those under and over log obstacles in the race that require total body strength and coordination from log to log.

Keeping the hips strong and mobile are also key to speed in the obstacles. For example, major strength is required to move fast through the mud pits as you lunge and lurch through them, while your hip flexors are key to pulling your suctioned legs up and out of the mud every step of the way. On the flip side, gluteus maximus is your go to when pushing yourself forward during those heavy-tyre pulls. As for hip mobility, that comes in handy when climbing the rope walls, since the higher you can place your leg and coordinate it with your upper body pulls on the rope, the quicker you can get up it. Lower body pushing and pulling movements, like sprinting, hopping, jumping, running up hills, hiking steep trails, walking, or running up steps two to three at a time and doing proper lunging or even sled/tyre pulls, will all work to get the hips open and strong for speed. ▶







Q&A WITH THE LADIES WINNER, CARLA VAN HUUSTEEN

Q: First off, you are more known for racing in the Xterra Series worldwide, how did your season go?

A: I had a very good start to the season with my win at Xterra SA Champs, a very up and down mid season where I suffered with a few injuries, and then I luckily managed to pull it all together for the final Xterra World Champs where I was happy with my performance and placed 12th Pro Female.

Q: How did you change your training towards this race?

A: I definitely had to introduce more upper body strength and stability training. Kettle bells, climbing (out of pure enjoyment), rope climbing, and pull ups ☺

Q: What was the hardest obstacle for you and how did you overcome it?

A: Mentally, the half-pipe and heavy-tyre pulling was what I was worried about most. I found a tyre and flipped and trained with it a bit. The half-pipe was mind over matter and I had to just commit to it!

Q: What is your favorite post-race meal?

A: Sushi, although I always crave a burger and chips, but rarely go for that option ☺

Q: Any words for our aspiring young Rookies out there?

A: Don't fear the unknown, the only way to go into this race is with confidence. Also, do some homework on what is being expected of you and make sure you at least try and prepare, the experience will just be much more enjoyable!

Q: Will we be seeing you defending the title next year?

A: I can't predict the future, but if I have it my way, of course!! •



For more information and dates for the 2014 Warrior Races, visit www.warrior.co.za



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TEEING OFF

island style



"Golf is so popular simply because it is the best game in the world at which to be bad," quipped AA Milne, creator of the famous Winnie the Pooh character.

Having enthusiastically hacked my way around golf courses with a mid-twenties handicap for most of my life, I can attest to the wisdom of this statement. Taking things a step further, I can boldly proclaim that there's no place better in the world to be bad at golf than Mauritius. ▶



A small island hidden away in the Indian Ocean, Mauritius has become a tourist Mecca over the last few years, mainly due to its magnificent beaches and good climate.

Due to being part of the British Empire, it was one of the first countries in the world to play golf, all the way back in 1844. Today, it boasts a high concentration of world-class golf courses (eight 18-hole courses and five 9-hole courses), all in close proximity to 5-star hotels and pearly-white beaches.

Our adventure began at the Constance Belle Mare Plage Hotel, a beautiful resort on the east coast of Mauritius. Managing to successfully escape the diversions (the watersports and the buffet breakfasts being the biggest distractions) we were soon on course and raring to go. ▶

The resort has two courses, the Legend and the Links. The Legend course is one that rewards good shots, but the plentiful water hazards (make sure you take a few spare balls) and tricky afternoon breeze make this a challenging course for golfers of all levels.



Holes 4, 5 and 6 (two par-fives and a long par-four) are the most demanding section of the course, while holes 9 and 10 (both short par-fours) provide good scoring opportunities. Set in a natural forest, with indigenous trees and shrubs lining the fairways, one cannot help but appreciate the beauty of the setting. The course also boasts a few herds of deer that can be found quietly grazing on one of the fairways. This is one case where Mark Twain's assertion that golf is a good walk spoiled, is definitely incorrect.

Like most links courses, the Links' at Belle Mare Plage (a short shuttle ride away) offers wide fairways and large greens, meaning it probably presents a slightly easier challenge than the Legend course. However, the deep bunkers, paired with the fearsomely fast greens, are enough to keep any golfer on their toes. In addition there are three par-fives longer than 500 metres (holes 2, 6 and 10), which can cause a nasty blotch on the scorecard.

Although slightly inland (and therefore without the sea views), the pyramid-like volcanic structures, picturesque lakes and majestic banyan trees ensure that these surroundings definitely doesn't play the role of ugly sister to the Legend course.

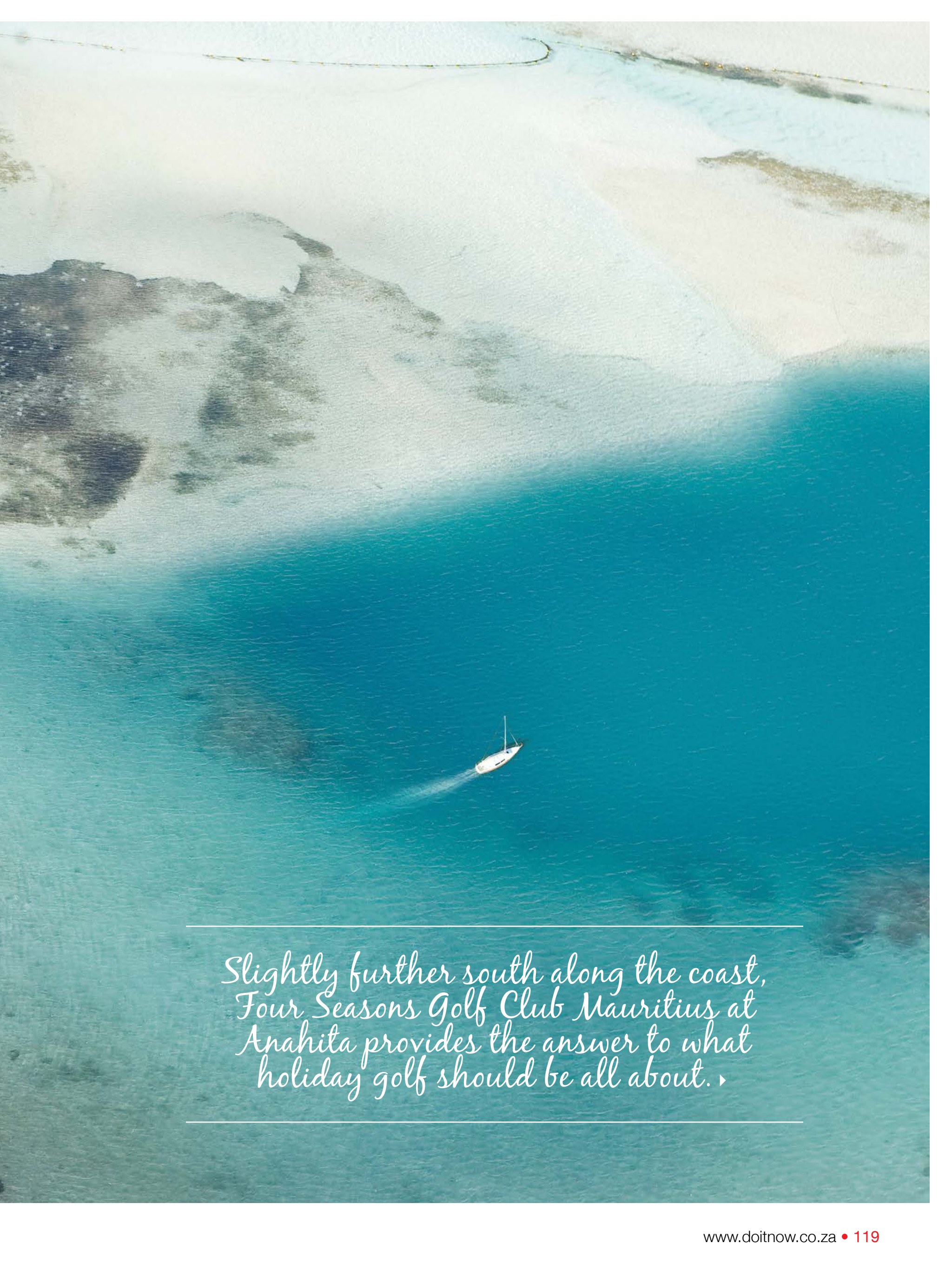
Both the Legend and Links courses are free of charge to guests of the hotel, with optional extras such as caddie, golf cart and club rental available. The Legend course has hosted both the Johnnie Walker Classic and the annual Mauritius Open event, while the Belle Mare Plage Hotel was recently awarded the 'Best Golf Resort of The Year Outside Of Europe and North America' by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators. ▶









An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. The top half of the image shows a sandy beach with some vegetation and a yellow and black buoy line. The water transitions from a light turquoise near the shore to a deeper, vibrant blue further out. A small white boat is visible in the middle of the water, leaving a white wake. The overall scene is serene and idyllic.

*Slightly further south along the coast,
Four Seasons Golf Club Mauritius at
Anahita provides the answer to what
holiday golf should be all about. ▶*

Guests are pampered like royalty, from the futuristic golf carts (complete with electronic devices with built in GPS and videos of the layout of the holes) to the friendly staff driving round the course offering everything from extra tees to snacks and drinks.



The course has wide fairways and a forgiving rough, so there are plenty of occasions to throw caution to the wind when teeing off. Having said that, there are five sets of tees, so those keen for a tougher round can always accept the challenge of the championship tees. Of the eighteen holes, six are overlooking the turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean, so you would be forgiven for taking a lot of photos during the round. In particular, the closing three holes provide one of the most spectacular finishes to a round of golf you'll ever find.

Just a five-minute boat ride away (and free for guests of Anahita The Resort), I greeted the island of Ile aux Cerfs (Deer Island) and its Le Touessrok course with awe and trepidation. Having been warned how treacherously difficult it was, and having noted that it was voted one of the world's top ten courses by *Golf World Magazine*, I fully expected to be humbled by the great course. I was not disappointed, as this truly is a difficult course: hazards include lakes, ponds, the ocean, deep bunkers, volcanic rock, and plenty of mangrove swamps. The course is the second longest in Mauritius, the greens are small and hard to read and there are quite a few tee-offs looking out over water.

However hard the course is, playing golf on a spectacular island means that a good round is guaranteed, regardless of the state of the scorecard. One can even take inspiration from the words of BC Forbes, who stated that, "Golf without bunkers and hazards would be tame and monotonous, as would life."

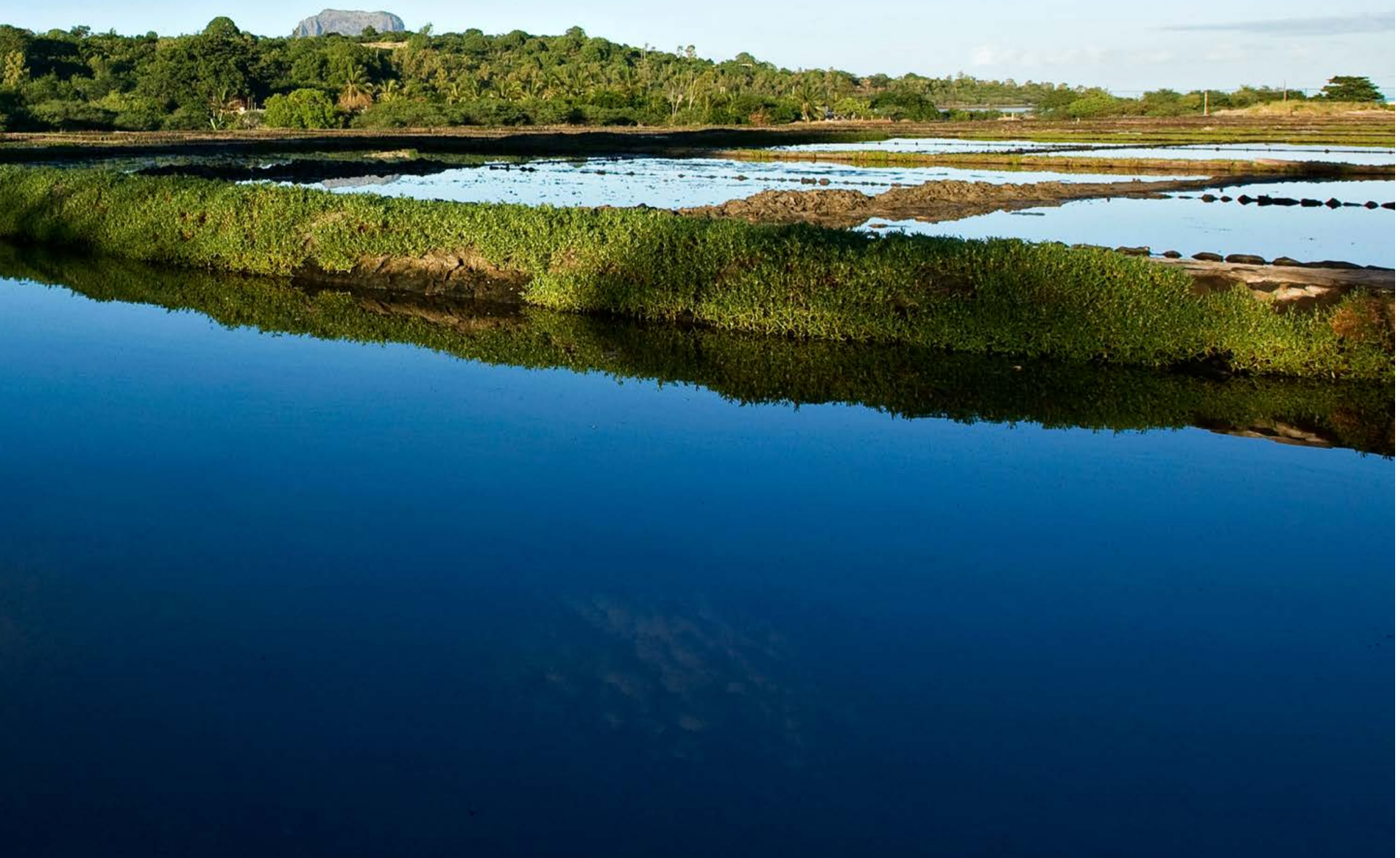
With this much top-quality golf on offer and in such stunning settings, it's easy to become infatuated with the game. However, conventional wisdom says everything should be done in moderation. So in closing I leave you with the wise words of Harry Vardon, who said, "Don't play too much golf. Two rounds a day are plenty." •



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Flights: Air Mauritius (www.airmauritius.com) flies direct from Durban to Port Louis (flight time of just over three hours). Direct flights depart Fridays and Sundays. Air Mauritius transports golf clubs (up to 20 kg) free.

General: English is the official language of Mauritius, but French and Creole are also widely spoken. The currency on the island is the rupee. The climate is good all year round, with winter (May to October) being cooler and drier.



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SURFING THE WAVES OF DUBAI

IT'S BEEN DONE. YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME. TWO THINGS WE WERE TOLD BUT SURF EXPLORATION IS A FUNNY THING, IF THERE IS A WAVE AND IT FALLS WITHIN YOUR CAPABILITIES, YOU WILL WANT TO SURF IT. A WASTE OF TIME IT IS NOT.

Surfing the waves of Dubai was born through a Facebook wing-and-a-prayer. Dubai offers a proper surf season that is enjoyed by a vast number of ocean lovers. The only draw back is an ocean temperature reading of 36 degrees Celsius during an afternoon session. ▶

Matt Pallet going for the stale fish aerial he has been dreaming of since booking his ticket.



Dubai was badly hit by the recession leaving the outskirts scattered with rubble and unfinished buildings. As the economy is recovering, so is the construction and finishing of developments.



Mohammed, Matt Pallett and Dave Richards review Carl de Villiers' footage of them being bounced in the back of the truck, as Mohammed floored it up Big Red.



Crystal azure blue warm water and a wave every 90 seconds makes for a very happy Matt Pallett.



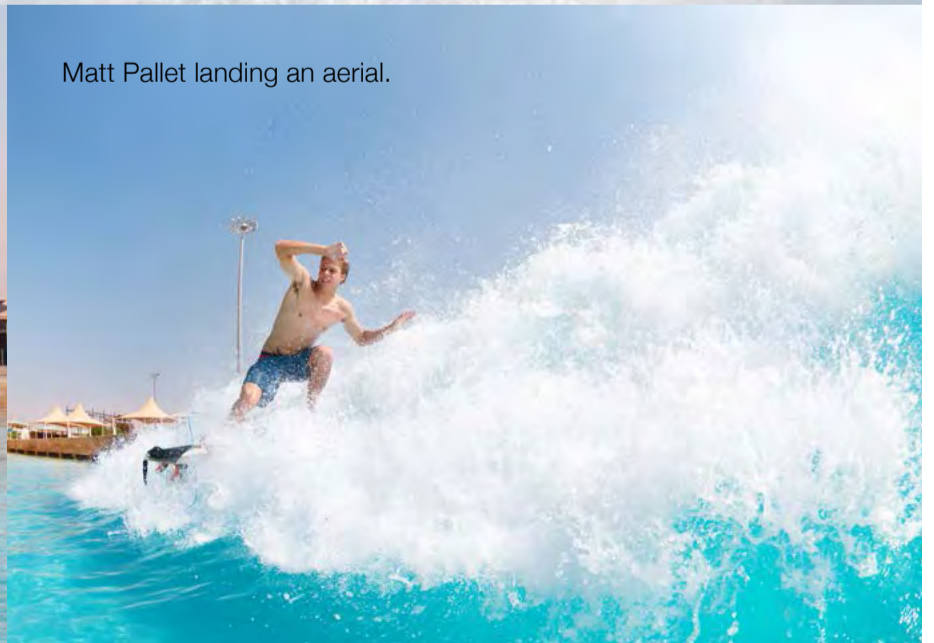
Matt Pallett with aerial number thirty.



The mechanical nature of the wave pool allows for multiple aerial attempts of various forms. Matt Pallett going for broke with three hours to play with.



The desert and Wadi Adventures makes for an interesting surfing backdrop.



Matt Pallett landing an aerial.

THE TRIP ITSELF HAD BEEN ON THE CARDS FOR OVER A YEAR, BUT OBSTACLES GOT IN THE WAY AND THEN SUDDENLY, LIKE DOMINOES, EVERYTHING FELL INTO PLACE.

IT TOOK SOME TIME AND BECAUSE IT TOOK SOME TIME WE HIT A HURDLE. WITH DAVE RICHARDS, MATT PALLET AND MYSELF SCATTERED AROUND THE WORLD, COMMUNICATION WAS SLOW.

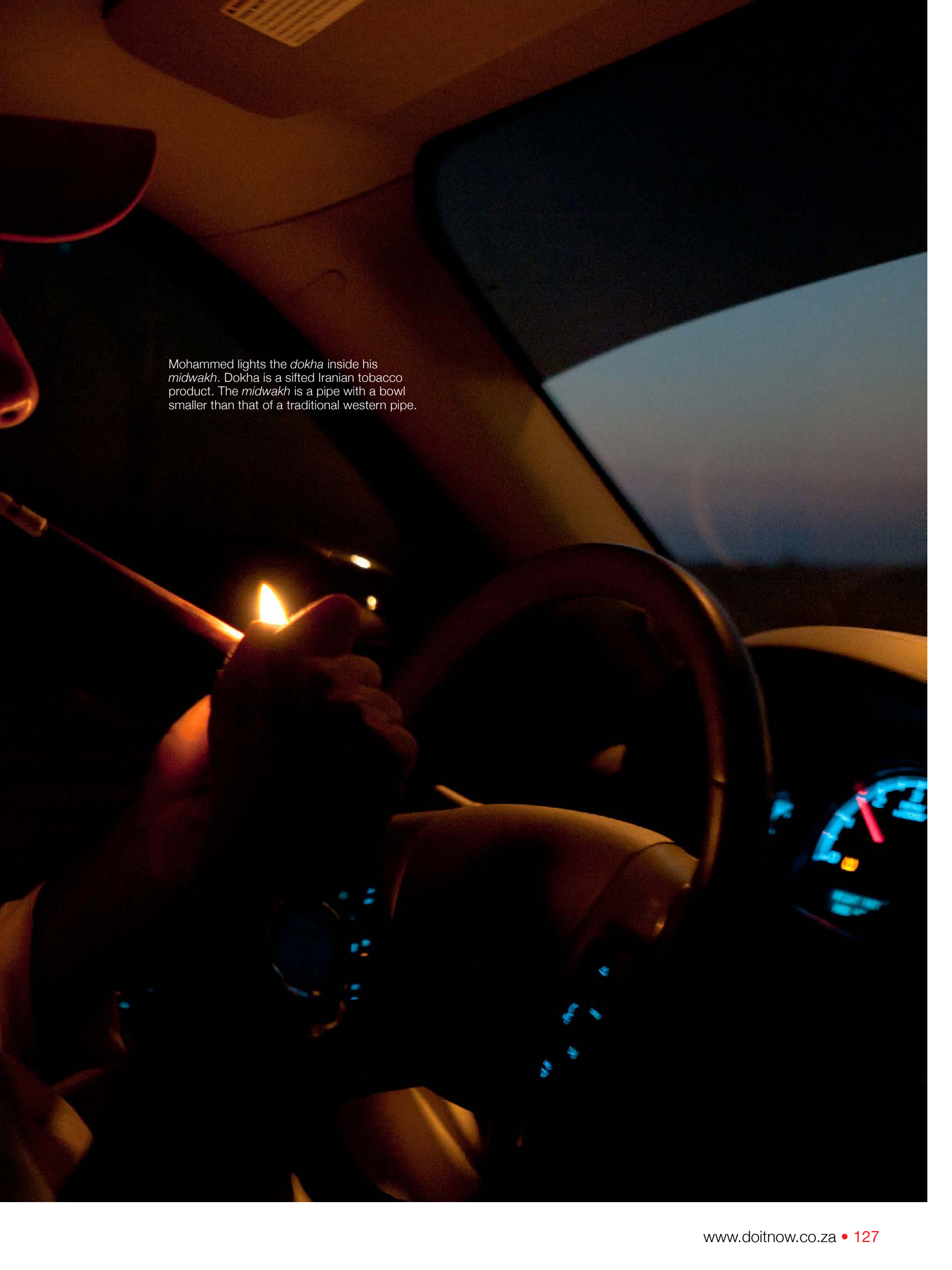
As a result, the Wadi Adventure wave pool was fully booked during the times we'd hoped for, so that Matt and Dave could acquaint themselves with the nature of surfing an artificial wave and surf themselves into exhaustion with a wave every 90 seconds. Having lived in Dubai for six years, our new friend Carl de Villiers had established a web of connections and friendships and was able to secure us three hours of pool time all to ourselves at a favourable rate.

Arriving in Dubai, we let the adventure unfold, kicking off the trip with some snowboarding in the desert, an obscure thought brought to reality by Sheikdom. It is odd being ensconced in winter clothes, in sub-zero temperatures, but when the moment you walk outside it will feel like you've been slapped with a warm blanket.

In Dubai you adhere to the rules. If road rage is your Achilles heel, then find a cure fast. Do not raise your middle finger, ever. It will get you deported. Do not question the actions of the traffic police, it will get you deported very fast.

The Chinese are an ingenious nation, their food a delight the world over. "Do you feel like Chinese tonight?" Hours later we found ourselves in Restaurant 9. Running a business from a home is against the law, so its location remains unspoken. This restaurant has its own rule, no locals, ever. A restaurant either lives or dies by word of mouth, personal reviews a nail in the coffin or a Michelin star. A spread of local talk could and would result in the shut down and deportation of people, people whose families rely on the success of Restaurant 9. By locals they mean Emirate. A spy camera acts as a bouncer screening the answer to any knock at the door. A delayed response meets our knock. Our dinner party, 11 strong and absent of any Emirate, is granted entry. Entry only because we are escorted by a frequent patron, a patron with Asian features, a Filipino.

The sights and smells are a welcome assault on your senses. It's hot, it's sweaty and two fridges greet you on entry. Local and foreign flavors imbibe the atmosphere. This is no fine dining establishment. If it's the sparkle of crystal glassware you seek and not the beading of forehead sweat, then this is not for you. Like celebrities, we are given the grand tour of the kitchen, the shelves stacked with precooked meals as a quick turnaround is key. Through the night, various meals are delivered and eaten; all are delivered with smiles and consumed with happiness. The next day we find out that the one dish, soft in texture and delightful in flavor, was pig intestine. Certainly not Halaal. ▶

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's hands lighting a pipe. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a watch. The pipe is held in the right hand, and a lit match is used to light it. The scene is set inside a car at night, with the steering wheel and dashboard visible. The dashboard lights are illuminated, and the car's interior is dimly lit. The background shows the car's window and the dark exterior.

Mohammed lights the *dokha* inside his *midwakh*. *Dokha* is a sifted Iranian tobacco product. The *midwakh* is a pipe with a bowl smaller than that of a traditional western pipe.

THE VISIT TO THE WAVE POOL IS EAGERLY ANTICIPATED, BUT A FULL DAY STILL NEEDS TO PASS AND IT IS ONLY BREAKFAST.

CARL TAKES US TO THE BIGGEST MALL IN DUBAI, WHICH WOULD TAKE AN HOUR TO WALK FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER.

An aquarium with mature sharks, manta rays and large schools of large fish are, to use an intended pun, but a drop in the ocean. We meet up with Mohammed, a well-travelled Emirate and very excited surfer. Wearing a traditional *dishdasha* (a long usually white robe traditionally worn by men in the Middle East), Mo starts the tour with a stop at the biggest sweet shop Matt has ever seen. A bag full of sweets and an empty wallet we continue.

You cannot visit Dubai without getting a proper glimpse of the Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world. We look and quickly return to the comfort of air conditioning, wishing time to tick so the first wave could be ridden in the cool pool water.

Mo had arranged for us to spend the night on the family farm to break the two-hour journey to Wadi Adventure, but not without first visiting Big Red, a massive 300-ft high sand dune with sides the steepness of a black ski run. It was great entertainment as Mo floored it up the corrugated sand dune. Looking out from the highest natural point, for as far as the eye could see, it dawned on us that we are going to be surfing in the desert. Wave pools are not new, South Africa has two, but this one is special as the pool is functional for aeriels, cutbacks and even barrels, and it is all ours for three hours. However, we still had to get through the night and Mo had planned more. ▶





Matt Pallet attempts a stale fish while surfing the Wadi Adventures wave pool in Dubai.

The family farm is a luxuriant date farm, an Emirate tradition dating back many centuries. A meal has been prepared for us, but first we sample the produce. Mohammed's cousin, Butti bin Mejren, brings his falcons and we are allowed to handle these majestic subjects. Six in total, one is said to be a prize-winning specimen and Butti handles him with great care and respect. In Dubai, falconry is the sport of kings and the first place prize at the annual falconry competition is a brand new SUV. The birds must rest as must we, but not before we meet Mohammed's uncle and drink some tea with him.

The moment of realisation that you are standing in front of something you have been picturing in your head for over a year arrives. The pool was in a state of glassy calm as the weights drop, sending ten plumes of spray into the air. First four, then eight, then ten and out comes a wave. We all stand in awe as the dream finally becomes a reality.

Matt has already waxed up and needs to be told to stop for a line up photo, an order he reluctantly complies with. Dave has been here before so his wax is applied a bit slower, a bit more precise. He knows the nuances of this wave and waits to see Matt's response. The pool officials tell him which mark on the wall to line up with, otherwise you will under paddle and miss a wave. Matt doesn't want to miss any waves, so this order is taken seriously. On the first wave he throws his tail into sending the section skywards, water glistening as it catches the golden light. A mountain acts as the backdrop with a keyhole slowly allowing the first rays of morning light to filter through. The second wave and every wave thereafter are met with an aerial of some form. The most attempted and most garnered by Matt is the stale fish, something that's been on his mind since booking his ticket.

The pool is mechanical, the ramp always within a metre of where it was last seen. The pool causes a refraction, so we skip the barrel option. Good barrel conditions take around seven minutes to develop as the pool surface must be allowed to settle. We wanted a wave every 90 seconds. Dave's past experience shows, the first wave is a layback followed by progressively better aerials.

Dave Richards goes for a frontside grab, as he flies towards the photographer.



AN HOUR INTO THE THREE-HOUR SESSION AND THE BOYS ARE HITTING THEIR STRIDE.

TRADING WAVE FOR WAVE THE STAMINA NEVER DRAINS; THEY ARE YOUNG, SPRITELY AND FUELLED WITH ADRENALINE AND EXCITEMENT. FOR THREE HOURS, PLUMES OF MIST ARE SENT SKYWARDS FROM THE REAR OF THE POOL. Matt has his mind set on landing a clean stale fish and frustration builds with its absence. Mixing the attempts with lien and indie grabs, he finally rides one out as fresh as the morning air. Dave quietly goes about putting on a performance that belies a lack of quality time spent in the ocean. Once a QS warrior and now a happily married man, he watches the Dubai forecast indicators, waiting for them to rise above one metre.

Despite being called the close out, a left and right is on offer. Matt has a go at the left only to shun it straight after. Dave is still quite happy on the rights. Reminiscing on his times in Cape Town, Matt attempts an acid drop from the pool wall. Dave tries the same, but completely misses the wave. For all its repetition, the wave pool is not easy to master.

It's 10 a.m. and the next session has not arrived, no one declines the offer of a fourth hour. An extra cost well justified. The investment was made. The scouts' honour met. We scored 100%. •



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▶ **The Illovo Suncoast Wall & Back Surfski Series is one of the oldest surfski races in the region.**

Starting at Suncoast Pirates Lifesaving Club, competitors paddle south to the harbour wall and back again, covering a distance of 8 km. However, due to dwindling numbers and poor sponsorship in the past, the series all but disappeared off the calendar. Thanks to Anton Fouche and some keen sponsors, the series has been revived and is creating great excitement in surfski circles, as it will now fill the void at the end of the year. ▶

Revival of **Wall & Back** Series 2013







► **The six-race series took place over six consecutive weeks on Friday nights from 18 October to 22 November 2013, on an 8 km course.**

Paddlers could participate in either the Singles or Doubles categories. Hosting the series at Pirates also served to raise the stakes because it is notorious for its tricky surf conditions. If the wind is blowing, the prevailing winds are either NE or SW, resulting in a headwind either on the outward-bound leg or inward-bound leg, thus giving paddlers a serious workout on the day.

Race 1 (18 October)

True to form at this time of the year, the weather gods dealt up something different each week, and on majority of the races, the conditions were extremely testing. Race one greeted the paddlers with an unpredictable shore break, large mid breaks, and a testing backline combo of surf conditions with bumpy seas all the way to the wall and back. Even the likes of Hank McGregor, the current World Marathon Champion, found the conditions a challenge and had to punch through the waves on the way out. He prevailed to take line honours in the first race of the series. Nikki Russell, despite overshooting the finish, managed to take the win in the women's race.

Despite the hectic conditions, not everyone was put off. Matt Bouman, a seasoned lifesaver and extreme paddler, seemed excited about the conditions when asked about the race afterwards. "Coming from a surf lifesaving background that was just so much fun! When the east blows and the sea is all lumpy and bumpy it is great fun," commented Matt. Nikki Russel, one of the few woman paddlers to take on the conditions, also showed pure glee when recalling the race afterwards. "That was the most insane paddle, I absolutely loved it," she said. With glowing comments like these, it seems that in spite of the conditions and a couple of broken boats, the revived series is going to be a hit once again. ►

Race 2 (25 October)

The next couple of races saw similar conditions, although Race 2 proved to be a bit more challenging than Race 1. In fact, the weather became so unpredictable that even Hank McGregor and Matt Bouman fell victim to rogue waves. Hank was the first to be caught side-on by a wave just off Limestone reef and knocked off his ski. This resulted in him having to swim for several minutes to retrieve his ski before being able to continue, and this pretty much put an end to his race. This left Matt Bouman to take the lead, only for him to fall victim to the extreme surf conditions on the way in to the shore at the finish when he was knocked off his ski in the tricky backline surf. Matt explains his error, "As I came around the final buoy, I probably didn't need to rush things as much as I did. I could have sat and picked my time a little better. So at the end of the day, it was pretty unlucky, but entirely my fault. It was a stupid mistake to have made!" This opened the door for Brett Bartho to take line honours. Once again, Nicole Russell managed to claim back-to-back wins despite the tricky surf conditions, saying her experience from lifesaving allowed her to negotiate the large surf conditions safely on the night.

- ▶ **Not many paddlers made it to shore that evening without taking a dip in the surf, showing the level of skill required to navigate the surf zone off Pirates. ▶**









Race 3 (1 December)

The final races in Race 3 saw average to tricky surf conditions dominate, which attracted a greater number of paddlers to take on the early Friday evening dice. Competition, however, was still rife amongst the paddlers, with Hank McGregor across the line first, while Michelle Burn took the win in the women's race..

Race 4 (8 December)

Race 4 saw a world-class field turnout, which included all the local favourites and Jasper Mocke from Cape Town, who were getting in their last bit of training before heading to either Hong Kong for the Dragon Race or East London for the Pete Marlin race. Hank McGregor had to dig deep on the night to stay ahead of the extremely talented field, pipping Matt Bouman to the line by four seconds. In the ladies, Michelle Burn once again proved what a classy paddler she is when she comfortably claimed yet another win.

Race 5 (15 December)

Race 5 saw a small field turnout for the race due to poor weather conditions. A gale-force SW wind meant the outward-bound leg was going to be a tough headwind for the paddlers. Brandon van der Walt negotiated the headwind conditions the best, working together with the double's team of Derek Hauptfleisch and Anton Fouche. Once they turned and started back for the finish line, Brandon put in some hard sets to build up a lead over second placed Oliver Burn. Brandon took his first win of the series, giving him a perfect send-off as he prepares to relocate to Cape Town. Michelle Burn continued to solidify her lead in the series with her third win of the series, making her the woman paddler to beat in local waters.

Race 6 (22 November)

Once again, Mother Nature played her role in the proceedings as she dished up a howling NW wind, which meant that the homeward-bound leg would be a cruel headwind. The surf conditions caused trouble for some paddlers, who took a number of attempts to get out. The majority of the paddlers commented on the poor conditions, claiming that it was very choppy and tough going. However, it was Hank McGregor who secured the final race win, despite the rough conditions. Danica Bartho secured first place in the women's competition, in spite of having just conquered the 162 km surfski race from Richard's Bay to Durban.

The strong competition and strenuous conditions that the paddlers had experienced throughout the series paid dividends, as Hank McGregor went on to win the Dragon Race in Hong Kong, while Grant van der Walt went on to bag the win in the Pete Marlin surfski race in East London.

Most paddlers that took part in the series had exciting stories to regale about their paddle to the wall and back, and said they would most certainly return to complete the series again next year. Mother Nature 0 : Paddlers 1.

► **So keep your Friday evenings open this time next year for some awesome paddling East Coast style! •**





Overall results

Men

1. Matt Bouman
2. Grant van der Walt
3. Brandon van der Walt
4. Hank McGregor
5. Barry Lewin

Women

1. Michelle Burn
2. Nicole Russell



For full race results and more information on the series, visit www.wallandback.co.za

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 C180, 2012, 1.6 BE F/L (W204) ZA, Iridium Silver
 C180, 2012, 1.6 BE F/L (W204) ZA, Iridium Silver
 CLS500, 2013, BE (C218) ZA, Tenorite Grey
 E250, 2013, CGI Coupe Avantgarde, Palladium Silver
 C250, 2013, BE Coupe, Pan roof, Iridium Silver
 C250, 2013, CDI BE Avantgarde, Media, Parktronic, Palladium Silver
 C300, 2013, Avantgarde, Parktronic, S/Roof, Edition C, Polar White
 C350, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Media, Parktronic, Pan Roof, Palladium Silver
 C250, 2013, CDI BE Avantgarde, Media, Parktronic, Command, Palladium Silver
 C350, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Media, Parktronic, Pan Roof, Command, Rev Camera, Diamond silver
 C350, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Media, Parktronic, S/Roof, Lane Track, Diamond silver
 E300, 2013, Avantgarde, Lane Pack, Media Int, Intel lights, Calcite White
 E300, 2013, Avantgarde, Lane Pack, Media Int, Intel lights, Calcite White
 C350, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Media, Park T, S/Roof, Lane Track, Palladium Silver
 C350, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Media, Park T, S/Roof, Lane Track, AMG, Iridium Silver
 C200, 2012, CDI Aut Av BE F/L, Obsidian Black
 A180, 2013, Auto, Avantgarde, Active Park, Media, Night Black
 A180, 2013, Auto, Avantgarde, Active Park, Media, Night Black
 C250, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Park T, Media, S/Roof, Iridium Silver
 C250, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Park T, Media, S/Roof, Iridium Silver

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 R395 000

C250, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Park T, Media, Lane Track, S/Roof, Command, Polar White
 C250, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Park T, Media, Lane Track, Command, Polar White
 C200, 2013, CDI BE Avantgarde, Park T, Media Int, T/Bar, Intel lights, Harmon/Kardon, Command, Polar White
 C250, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Park T, Media, Lane Track, S/Roof, Command, Polar White
 C350, 2013, BE Avantgarde, Media, Park T, Sun Roof, Polar White
 C350, 2012, BE Avantgarde, Park T, S/Roof, Media Int, Iridium Silver
 GL500, 2013, F/L (X164) ZA, Calcite White
 C180, 2013, 1.6 BE F/L Avantgarde, Auto, Media, Parktronic, Polar White
 ML350, 2009, (W164) ZA, Iridium Silver

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Reigning SA Open champ, Don Wewege, negotiates a tricky gate combination.
Photo credit: Travis Wilkinson

SLALOM IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN VERY BUSY ON THE SLALOM FRONT. PLANS ARE UNDERWAY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PERMANENT COURSE ON THE UMKOMAAS RIVER IN KWAZULU-NATAL, preparations for the 2014 SA Canoe Slalom Open are running smoothly, and our current National Junior Champion, Brandon Orpwood, took bronze at the African Championships! ▶





Brandon Orpwood taking tight lines at the African Championships.




BRANDON'S SUCCESSES IN KENYA

BRANDON ORPWOOD WAS THE ONLY COMPETITOR FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2013 AFRICAN CANOE SLALOM CHAMPIONSHIPS, HELD FROM 20 TO 23 OCTOBER 2013, ON THE SAGANA RIVER IN KENYA. As the current National Junior Champion,

he was a definite medal contender in the Junior Category. However, he almost did not make it when he couldn't get his kayak on the plane to Kenya. Fortunately, the International Canoe Federation development coaches were on hand to help him find the necessary equipment, as well as provide some coaching.

The course was not very big or technical, but it did require a clear plan of action. Brandon performed really well in the heats, placing second overall and first in the Juniors going into the finals. In first place was the current African Champion and London Olympian, Johnny Akinyemi from Nigeria, who was looking strong on the water.

Starting in the reverse order of their finishing position in the heats, Brandon was to go off second last. Jean-Pierre Bourhis, from Senegal, put down a storming run to take an early lead. Brandon came



Don Wewege racing down the biggest drop on the Ash river.
Photo credit: Travis Wilkinson

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SA CANOE SLALOM OPEN 2014

NOW INTO ITS SECOND YEAR, THE 2014 SA CANOE SLALOM OPEN PROMISES TO BRING YET AGAIN THE BEST PADDLERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO THE ASH RIVER IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, IN THE EASTERN FREE STATE. THE EVENT WILL BE HELD ON 11 AND 12 JANUARY 2014.

Funding has been secured thanks to the Dihlabeng Municipality's continued support of Slalom South Africa and this event. Water levels are expected to remain at about 20 m³.s⁻¹ for the entire event, as the river is fed by the Lesotho Highlands Water Transfer Scheme. Entry will be free and accommodation available at special prices from Graceland Country Lodge, located just 3 km from the course. Equipment can be booked for those who do not have their own. But book early to avoid disappointment!

GROWING SLALOM

Slalom SA is mostly self-sufficient and we are in desperate need of financial assistance. If there are any companies or persons that would like to assist in the development of slalom in southern Africa and be associated with a sport that is truly dynamic, to please contact Don Wewege. •



Full event details can be found on Slalom SA's Facebook page www.facebook.com/SlalomSA

For more information on the event or slalom in general, contact Don Wewege on don.wewege@gmail.com

close to taking the lead from Bourhis, but a few touches placed him in second. Only Akinyemi was left to prove his worth. Akinyemi powered down the course to take the win and his second African Championship title. Brandon finished third overall and second in the Juniors, continuing South Africa's great run in the African Championships with a podium position in every single championship. Brandon is only 16 and the future looks very bright for this talented, young athlete.

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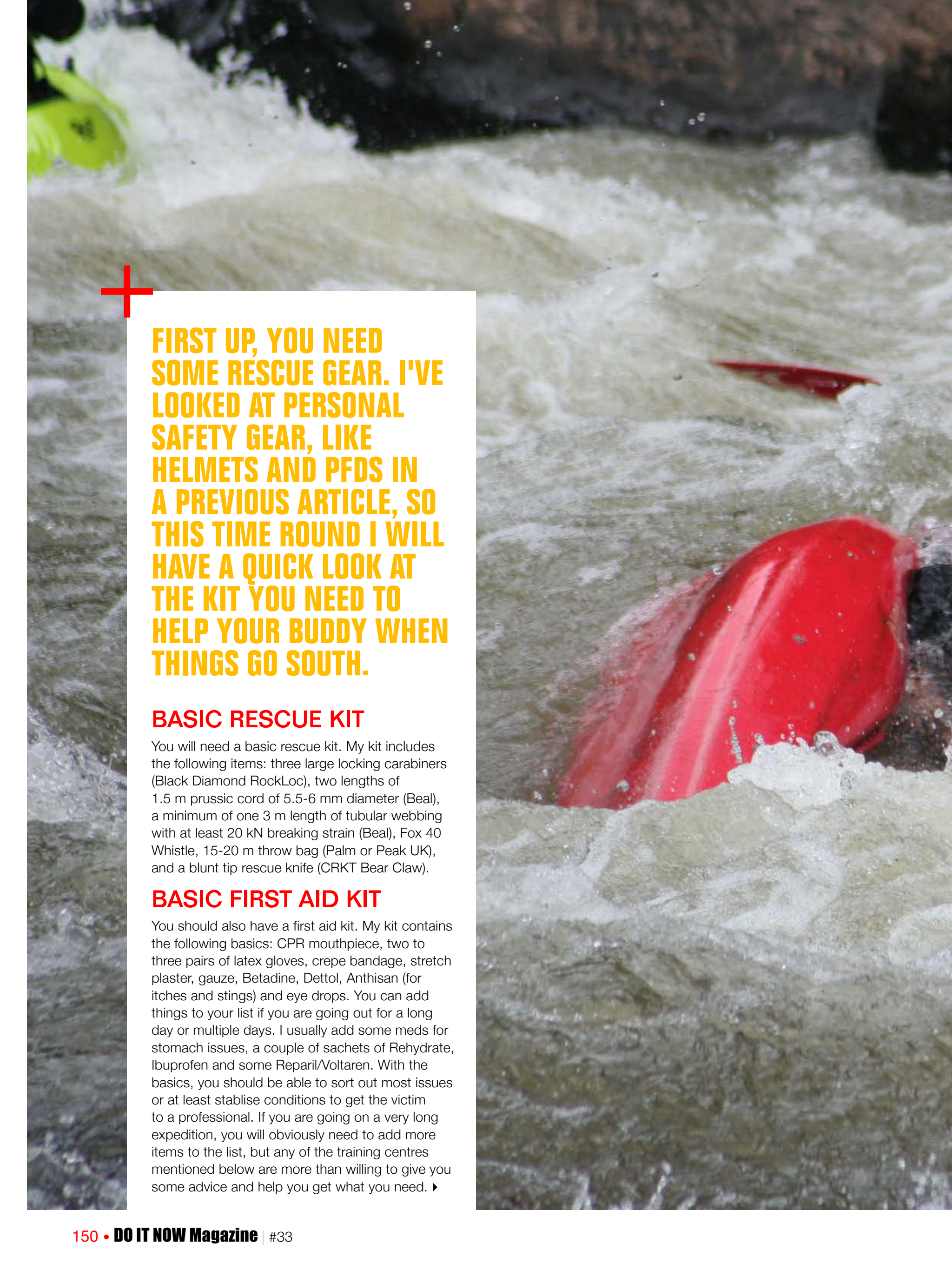
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KEEPING IT SAFE THIS SUMMER

Dewet getting MJ safely to the side with a throwbag.

+ It's summer and a great time to head to your nearest dam, river or lake and get in some quality paddling. Like all things in life there are risks involved with paddling, but there are precautions you can take to keep the risk factor low and fun factor high. ▶

A red kayak helmet is shown floating in turbulent white water rapids. The water is churning and splashing, creating a sense of movement and danger. The helmet is the central focus, partially submerged and tilted. The background shows more of the rapids and some dark rocks.

FIRST UP, YOU NEED SOME RESCUE GEAR. I'VE LOOKED AT PERSONAL SAFETY GEAR, LIKE HELMETS AND PFDS IN A PREVIOUS ARTICLE, SO THIS TIME ROUND I WILL HAVE A QUICK LOOK AT THE KIT YOU NEED TO HELP YOUR BUDDY WHEN THINGS GO SOUTH.

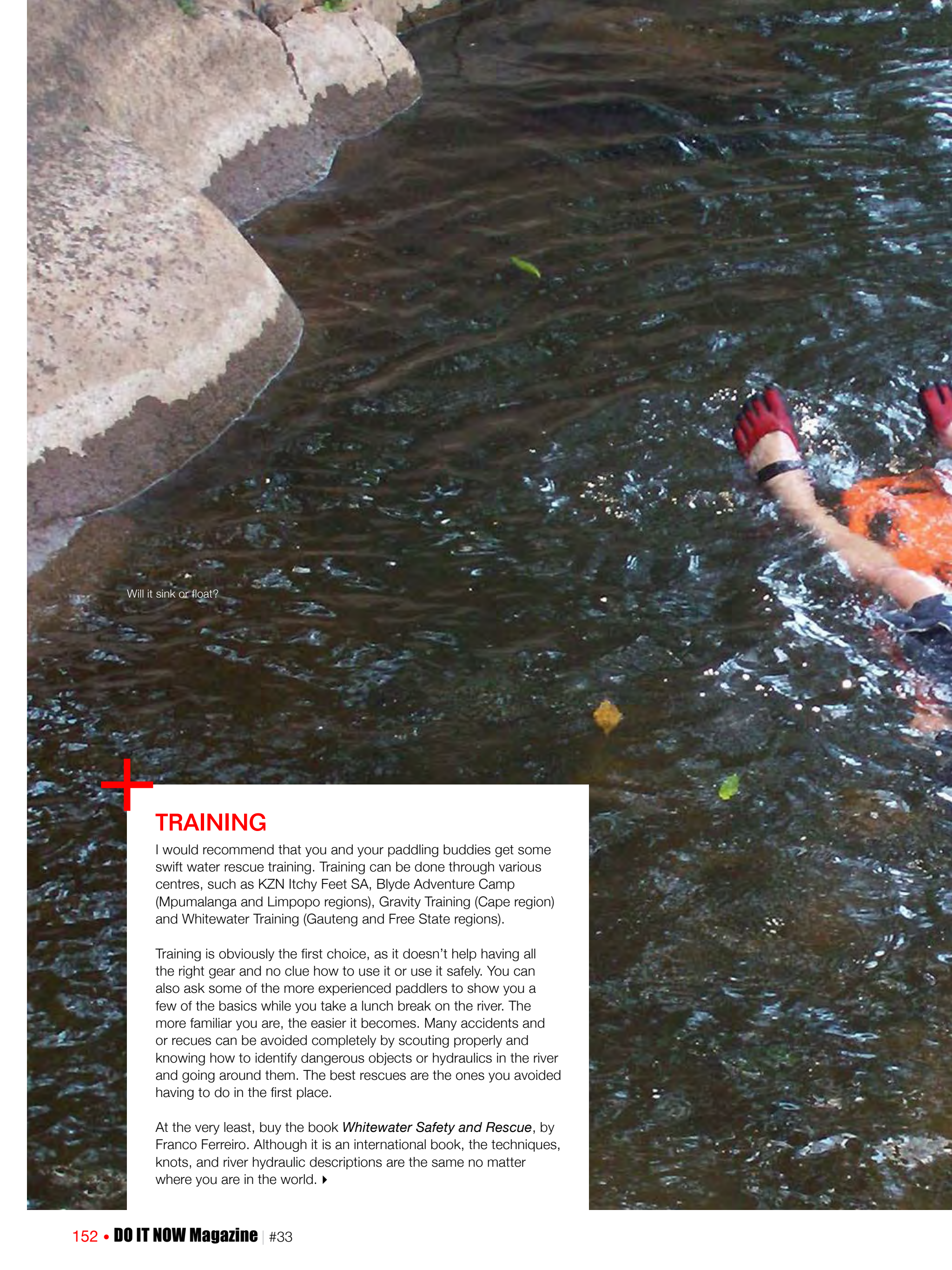
BASIC RESCUE KIT

You will need a basic rescue kit. My kit includes the following items: three large locking carabiners (Black Diamond RockLoc), two lengths of 1.5 m prussic cord of 5.5-6 mm diameter (Beal), a minimum of one 3 m length of tubular webbing with at least 20 kN breaking strain (Beal), Fox 40 Whistle, 15-20 m throw bag (Palm or Peak UK), and a blunt tip rescue knife (CRKT Bear Claw).

BASIC FIRST AID KIT

You should also have a first aid kit. My kit contains the following basics: CPR mouthpiece, two to three pairs of latex gloves, crepe bandage, stretch plaster, gauze, Betadine, Dettol, Anthisan (for itches and stings) and eye drops. You can add things to your list if you are going out for a long day or multiple days. I usually add some meds for stomach issues, a couple of sachets of Rehydrate, Ibuprofen and some Reparil/Voltaren. With the basics, you should be able to sort out most issues or at least stabilise conditions to get the victim to a professional. If you are going on a very long expedition, you will obviously need to add more items to the list, but any of the training centres mentioned below are more than willing to give you some advice and help you get what you need. ▶



A person wearing a red life jacket and red gloves is floating in a river. They are holding a small, light-colored object in the water, testing its buoyancy. The water is dark and turbulent, with some rocks visible on the left side. The person's arms are extended, and they appear to be focused on the task.

Will it sink or float?

TRAINING

I would recommend that you and your paddling buddies get some swift water rescue training. Training can be done through various centres, such as KZN Itchy Feet SA, Blyde Adventure Camp (Mpumalanga and Limpopo regions), Gravity Training (Cape region) and Whitewater Training (Gauteng and Free State regions).

Training is obviously the first choice, as it doesn't help having all the right gear and no clue how to use it or use it safely. You can also ask some of the more experienced paddlers to show you a few of the basics while you take a lunch break on the river. The more familiar you are, the easier it becomes. Many accidents and or rescues can be avoided completely by scouting properly and knowing how to identify dangerous objects or hydraulics in the river and going around them. The best rescues are the ones you avoided having to do in the first place.

At the very least, buy the book *Whitewater Safety and Rescue*, by Franco Ferreiro. Although it is an international book, the techniques, knots, and river hydraulic descriptions are the same no matter where you are in the world. ▶





Lloyd acting as a victim.



PROCEDURES

Always let somebody know when you are going out for a mission and where, so that they will hopefully notice when you don't come back and can start to make plans to look for you. If you are paddling sections that you don't know very well, take your time scouting every rapid to make sure you don't paddle into a river wide siphon or strainer. Never paddle further than the last safe eddy or exit point on the river bank. If you can't see it from your kayak, then get out and scout from the bank.

Humans need oxygen, so in any situation your first priority, once you have made sure everybody else is safe, is that the victim can breathe. If you are lucky and the victim only needs a little help to get their head above water, you can give them something to push against the river bed, like a paddle, or something that floats and they can hold on to, like a kayak. Alternatively, you can use throw bags, if necessary, to make stabilisation lines for them to get support.

If the victim can breathe, you need to communicate with them to find out what the problem is and ascertain their level of consciousness. It is preferable that the victim helps themselves, but in some cases they might be so stuck that they can't get themselves out and you will have to get a more 'hands-on' approach to save them.

REMEMBER, THE REASON WHY 99% OF US PADDLE IS TO HAVE FUN AND ENJOY THE RIVERS. KEEPING IT SAFE MAKES IT EASY TO KEEP IT FUN. NEXT YEAR WE WILL LOOK AT SPECIFIC RIVER HAZARDS, HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM AND THE MAIN RESCUE TECHNIQUES FOR EACH SITUATION. UNTIL THEN, WEAR SUNSCREEN AND PADDLE FORWARD. •



For more information, photos and links to other online resources, visit Deon's blog:
www.doitnow.co.za/blogs/deon-breytenbach

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At the heart of the image



SA SWIMMERS TAKE ON **Antarctic** **ice mile** **challenge**

A photograph of a penguin standing on a dark, jagged rock in the foreground. The background is a vast, icy landscape with snow-covered ground and distant, hazy mountains under a cloudy sky. The penguin is facing right, looking towards the horizon.

Next month, a team of six South African ice swimmers will take on a world-first challenge to swim an ice mile south of the **ANTARCTIC CIRCLE (66.5622° SOUTH)**, wearing only a Speedo costume, one cap and goggles, raising funds for charity and boosting awareness of the WWF's SA Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI). It has never been done there before because it is, in short, insane. To attempt the distance of one mile (1,650 m) in water temperatures that promise to be 0 degrees Celsius will be extremely dangerous and very difficult to complete. ▶

Costs to access the Antarctic venue are also prohibitive. Other very well-known swimmers (Lynne Cox and Lewis Pugh)

have completed swims in this region before, but never as far south nor with a similar distance goal of one mile. One of the team members, Ram Barkai, currently holds the Guinness Book of Records for the furthest south swim, but it was just short of a mile (1,000 metres) and therefore not registered as an official ice mile.

What is an ice mile?

An ice mile is an officially recognised and officiated challenge by the International Ice Swimming Association (IISA), founded in 2009. It requires extremists wishing to complete an ice mile (1,650 m) in water temperatures at 5 degrees Celsius or below, wearing only a Speedo-type costume, one neoprene cap and goggles at an outdoor venue. To date, only a small number of swimmers from around the globe have achieved the feat, with applications growing daily.

The challenge

Six South African extremists will be teaming up to pool their vast experience and head to the serene, yet deadly waters deep inside the Antarctic Circle. Each member of the team will be attempting an ice mile at this extreme south latitude, where hostile waters promise to be 0 degrees Celsius or lower. Here, they hope to push the limits of ice swimming beyond what any other human being has achieved before them. In addition, the ambitions of the team and IISA are to take Extreme Cold Swimming to the 2024 Olympic Games.

Why?

There is little additional rationalisation needed in the heads of the team when they are asked, "Why?" "Once an extreme adventurer, always an extreme adventurer!" says Ram Barkai. Pushing limits and surpassing mental and physical boundaries in a place of extreme hardship is in their blood.

As Ryan Stramrood states, "One cannot beat the life lessons taken from something as intense and as difficult as this, whether successful or not. It sets the foundation for how we live our lives - without fear. We have travelled the world looking (and finding) remote, hostile places to test ourselves. Antarctica could not be a less-inviting venue for a swim! It will surely test us all to the limit."



WWF's South Africa Sustainable Seafood initiative champions the plight of all ocean life under threat of depletion due to over harvesting. It helps in many areas, including educating the consumer, to make informed choices about the seafood on their plates. The Antarctic Circle Ice Challenge team spends a significant amount of time in our beautiful (chilly) oceans while they train for their various global expeditions. They are therefore intrinsically linked to the ocean's well-being and the health of all its inhabitants - both friendly and not-so-friendly. With team member Ryan Stramrood as an official registered SASSI Ambassador, the team will dedicate this adventure and its comprehensive PR package to raising awareness of SASSI and its objectives.

Preparation

The team is currently getting as swimming fit as possible, spending as much time in the icy Table Bay waters as they can and swimming the distance between Robben Island and Blouberg Beach in Cape Town - their preferred training course. They also endure actual ice baths, where the water temperature is brought down to 0 degrees Celsius.

They are undergoing full medical assessments, as well as eating well to add a bit of extra padding that will compensate for the distinct lack of apparel worn during their swim. However, most of the preparation is mental - and that's the hardest part.

Once the team boards the ship on 21 February 2014, a more detailed acclimatisation strategy will be decided upon with the assistance of the medical crew on board. Permission has been secured by the trip organisers, who will facilitate the team's challenge. The team plan to complete one or two additional swims en route to Antarctic to acclimatise as the sea and air temperature drops.

Dangers

There are many dangers the team face, but hypothermia will be the most troublesome. Hypothermia is deadly and it takes a lot of experience to ensure they do not push it past the point of no return. A dedicated medic needs to be in close proximity. Other dangers include high blood pressure from extreme nerves prior to the swim, which potentially impacts profoundly as the body hits the ice water, so staying calm and mentally preparing will be key. Wildlife is a further concern, but it is further down the list. ▶



MEET THE TEAM

1 Ram Barkai

- South African, 55 year old.
- Guinness Book of Record holder for the southernmost swim.
- Founder and Chairman of the International Ice Swim Association.
- Successful two-way Beagle Channel crossing - Chile to Argentina to Chile.
- Tymen Siberia - 1,000 metres in minus 33 degrees Celsius ambient and 0 degrees Celsius water.
- Arctic Circle, Murmansk - first ice mile inside the Arctic Circle - 0 degrees Celsius water.
- Member of the team to successfully swim from Russia to the USA across the Bering Strait - 2013.
- World first extreme cold swim around the southernmost tip of South America - Cape Horn.
- Six successful ice miles.

2 Ryan Stramrood

- South African, 40 years old.
- Successful solo English Channel - UK to France.
- Two successful solo Gibraltar Straits crossing - Europe to Africa.
- Successful two-way Beagle Channel crossing - Chile to Argentina to Chile.
- Founding member of the International Ice Swim Association.
- Tymen Siberia - 1,000 metres in minus 33 degrees Celsius ambient and 0 degrees Celsius water.
- Arctic Circle, Murmansk - first ice mile inside the Arctic Circle in 0 degrees Celsius water.
- Member of the team to successfully swim from Russia to the USA across the Bering Strait - 2013.
- World first extreme cold swim around the southernmost tip of South America - Cape Horn.
- Four successful ice miles.

3 Kieron Palframan

- South African, 39 years old.
- Successful solo English Channel - UK to France.
- Successful solo Gibraltar Straits crossing - Europe to Africa.
- Successful two-way Beagle Channel crossing - Chile to Argentina to Chile.
- Founding member of the International Ice Swim Association.
- Tymen Siberia - 1,000 meters in minus 33 degrees Celsius ambient and 0 degrees Celsius water.
- Arctic Circle, Murmansk - first ice mile inside the Arctic Circle in 0 degrees Celsius water.
- World first extreme cold swim around the southernmost tip of South America - Cape Horn.
- Four successful ice miles.



1



2



3



4

4 Andrew Chin

- South African, 43 years old.
- Full length Orange River relay swim.
- Successful two-way Beagle Channel crossing - Chile to Argentina to Chile.
- Founding member of the International Ice Swim Association.
- Member of the team to successfully swim from Russia to the USA across the Bering Strait - 2013.
- World first extreme cold swim around the southernmost tip of South America - Cape Horn.
- Two successful ice miles.



5

5 Toks Viviers

- South African, 51 years old.
- Full length Orange River relay swim.
- Successful two-way Beagle Channel crossing - Chile to Argentina to Chile.
- Founding member of the International Ice Swim Association.
- Member of the team to successfully swim from Russia to the USA across the Bering Strait - 2013.
- World first extreme cold swim around the southernmost tip of South America - Cape Horn.
- Two successful ice miles.

6 Gavin Pike

- Forty-six-year-old South African currently living in the Netherlands.
- Various solo island crossings, including Robben Island and Alcatraz.
- Successful solo Gibraltar Straights crossing - Europe to Africa.
- Expedition swimmer and paddler on three Orange River Challenges.
- Numerous extreme cold water swims.
- Has yet to complete an official ice mile.

To follow the team's progress, follow them on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com>

i Only three swims have been completed in Antarctica:

- In 2002, Lynne Cox was the first to swim at Neko Harbour around 60 degrees south. A distance of 1.2 miles that took her 25 minutes. Lynne has written a book about her journey to reach this goal.
- In 2005, Lewis Pugh followed Lynne's footsteps to swim 1 mile in Deception Bay and an additional 1 km further south at around 65 degrees.
- In 2008, our own Ram Barkai completed a 1 km swim in a frozen lake inland Antarctica at 70 degrees south and was awarded a Guinness World Record for the world's most southerly swim.



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GRAPPLING.

It is this intoxicating combination of athleticism, intensity and fighting that is so intriguing and has people throughout South Africa, and across the world, lining up to watch it, thus making it one of the most popular and fastest growing sports today in countries such as the USA, Europe, Japan and Brazil! ▶

There are specific rules in MMA to protect the athlete. For example, kneeing your opponent to the top of the head is illegal.



Modern MMA only emerged in 1993 with the Ultimate Fighting Championships. The championship was based on the concept of pitting different fighting styles against each other in competition with minimal rules, in an attempt to determine which system/martial art would be more effective in a real, unregulated combat situation. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, MMA competitions implemented additional rules for the safety of the athletes and to promote acceptance of the sport, while maintaining as much of the original no-holds-barred concepts as possible.

There are very few rules in MMA, all of which were established over the last ten years. Before that it was a brutal combat sport in which the health of the fighter was always at risk. The rules dictate that certain moves, including head butts, biting, eye gouging, attacks to the groin area, kidneys, striking to the back of the spine and trachea, are prohibited. Because there is no worldwide association presiding over MMA, rules vary from country to country and from tournament to tournament.

+ SINCE THESE CHANGES, MMA HAS GROWN RAPIDLY TO THE POINT OF SETTING PAY-PER-VIEW RECORDS, WITH VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS AND COMPETITIONS IGNITING THE EXCITEMENT IN THE WORLD OF MARTIAL ARTS AGAIN.

THE EARLY DAYS

MMA has been around since man discovered the need to defend himself using various methods of combat. It was, however, the late Bruce Lee who made the movement more structured by creating a unique fighting style that combined everything from western boxing, to karate, to fencing. That's right, it was the renowned Lee that coined the phrase, "The best style is no style, the best form is no form." He later stated that you must take what works from different martial arts and discard the rest. This is exactly what MMA is based on; two competitors attempting to defeat each other by utilising a wide variety of fighting techniques, including manipulating areas of striking and grappling.

Lee devoted his life to studying martial arts and even went to the extent of creating his own 'style', Jeet Kune Do, which incorporated various styles into one in the late '60s and literally means 'Way of the Intercepting Fist'

"The best fighter is not a boxer, karate or judo man. The best fighter is someone who can adapt to any style. He kicks too good for a boxer, throws too good for a karate man, and punches too good for a judo man." - Bruce Lee

Today, fighters are attempting to follow these steps, taking the best of what they have studied and bringing it into the ring. The best MMA fighters, like George St Pierre, Vitor Belfort, Anderson Silva, and Junior Dos Santos, are those who continually cross train in several realms of striking and grappling to become the ultimate warrior.



THE WORLD OF THE MMA WARRIOR

What is a warrior? One definition is, someone who engages in or desires combat. History's greatest warriors have, however, shown us that being a warrior is more about gaining control over oneself in all aspects of life. There have been many famous cultures of the past that glorified the warrior. For example, the Spartans, Romans, Persians, Knights Templar, Mongols, Vikings, and Samurai were societies that were famous for the development of their warriors. The legends of those warriors have been passed down because of the impact they made on the consciousness of the world.

The warrior tradition is still alive today. Since every generation has its own warriors, we have lost sight of how to recognise one. A new breed of warriors has evolved through the vehicle of MMA, such as George St Pierre, one of the world's best pound-for-pound fighters. It is these men and woman who will be the role models that future generations use as a gauge of their own warrior status. Even though they may not be battling in a life-or-death scenario, the main attributes of these modern-day warriors are the same as those of the warriors of the past.



Ground fighting.

STYLES IN MMA

MMA is the most complex form of combat known to man. When Royce Gracie shocked the world at UFC1 in the 1990s, everybody thought that BJJ (Brazilian JiuJitsu) was the ultimate art of fighting. A style that could beat every other discipline of fighting. Many people thought that learning BJJ was enough to compete in the UFC. But with the growing popularity of the UFC and more and more talented fighters from different horizons coming to compete in the octagon, it was rapidly proved that BJJ was not enough. Fighters started to borrow skills from different styles and slowly invented the cross-training art of fighting. Today, only a well-rounded fighter using a highly elaborated cross-training style can succeed in MMA.

MMA is a hybrid martial art that combines all ranges of unarmed combat, as well as the most effective techniques and training methods of the various styles, into one.

STAND UP FIGHTING

The MMA athlete needs to be able to throw punches like a boxer and kick like a Thai boxer/kick boxer.

CLINCH FIGHTING

Here, the MMA athlete will draw from various systems, and styles like punches, knees, elbows and takedowns are the order of the day. Greco Roman wrestling, freestyle wrestling and Muay Thai forms a strong foundation in the clinch.

GROUND FIGHTING

Arguably the most technical range in MMA. The MMA athlete needs to be able to dominate superior positions on the ground to set up devastating submissions and ground-and-pounding. Brazilian JiuJitsu, submission wrestling and sambo/shoot wrestling form the foundation here. ▶



THE WORLD OF THE

MMA WARRIOR

Morne Swanepoel, a world-renowned coach and fighter who won the 2013 award for Best Coach and Fighting Gym in South Africa. Watch the video above for the official announcement.



R



Morne dominating his opponent with a 'knee on the belly' technique and executing a ground-and-pound fighting style.

BECOME A WARRIOR

Everybody in the MMA world trains to be winners, but not everyone is willing to do the preparation it takes to win. Expose yourself to stand up, clinch and ground fighting to ensure you become a complete fighter. How well you train, how well you plan your training and how hard you work is all up to you. If you train athletically, with fewer restrictions, you have more options that you can actually apply. These are the aspects you have control over:

- Fighting knowledge
- Developing a combat athletic mindset.
- Becoming fighting fit through combat athletics.

+ WHETHER ONE IS A FIGHTER OR JUST WANTS TO TRAIN LIKE ONE, ANYONE CAN DEVELOP THE FITNESS OF BODY AND THE STRENGTH OF CHARACTER OF A WARRIOR.

WARRIOR MINDSET

The mind of the warrior is just as important to work out as any muscle. Without the cooperation of the warrior's mind and body, no success is possible. Although you can train certain muscles of the body only every once in a while, the mind of the warrior can and must be trained consistently every day. The mindset of the warrior will eventually determine his destiny as a fighter, MMA athlete and his eventual destiny in life.

To control the mind is to control one's thoughts. When this is done correctly, the warrior is able to control his actions. This goes for anyone wanting to start MMA training as well. Most people are put off training for reasons such as fear and negativity - "I can't do that stuff," or "I am too old," or "I don't need this, I can look after myself," and so on. Acquiring the ability to quiet the mind and stop it from running wild with these types of emotions and thoughts is often one of the toughest tasks for the new warrior. The results are so rewarding when one leaves one's ego at the door and takes this first step to a better lifestyle by obtaining the warrior mindset.

The demanding training of MMA is well worth the effort as it develops the mindset so that no matter how hard life throws you to the ground, you will always get back on your feet and hold your head high! •



For more information on MMA fighting and coaching, visit www.combatcoaching.com



Clinch fighting.

One of the ways to win a MMA fight is via submission. Here Morne demonstrates one of the most effective submissions in MMA called the 'rear naked choke'.



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RIVONIA CROSSING 2191

In theory

So it rained. And rained and rained and rained. You call your instructor to ask when you should reschedule your weekly lesson.

She laughs and says, "Horse riding's not for sissies you know, lessons as normal in the rain, you won't melt!" Casting a dubious eye at the weather, you agree that while you may not melt, your personal evolution may cause you to sprout gills. ▶





Nevertheless, you arrive at the appointed time for your lesson to find that your instructor has taken pity on you and you'll be having a theory lesson.

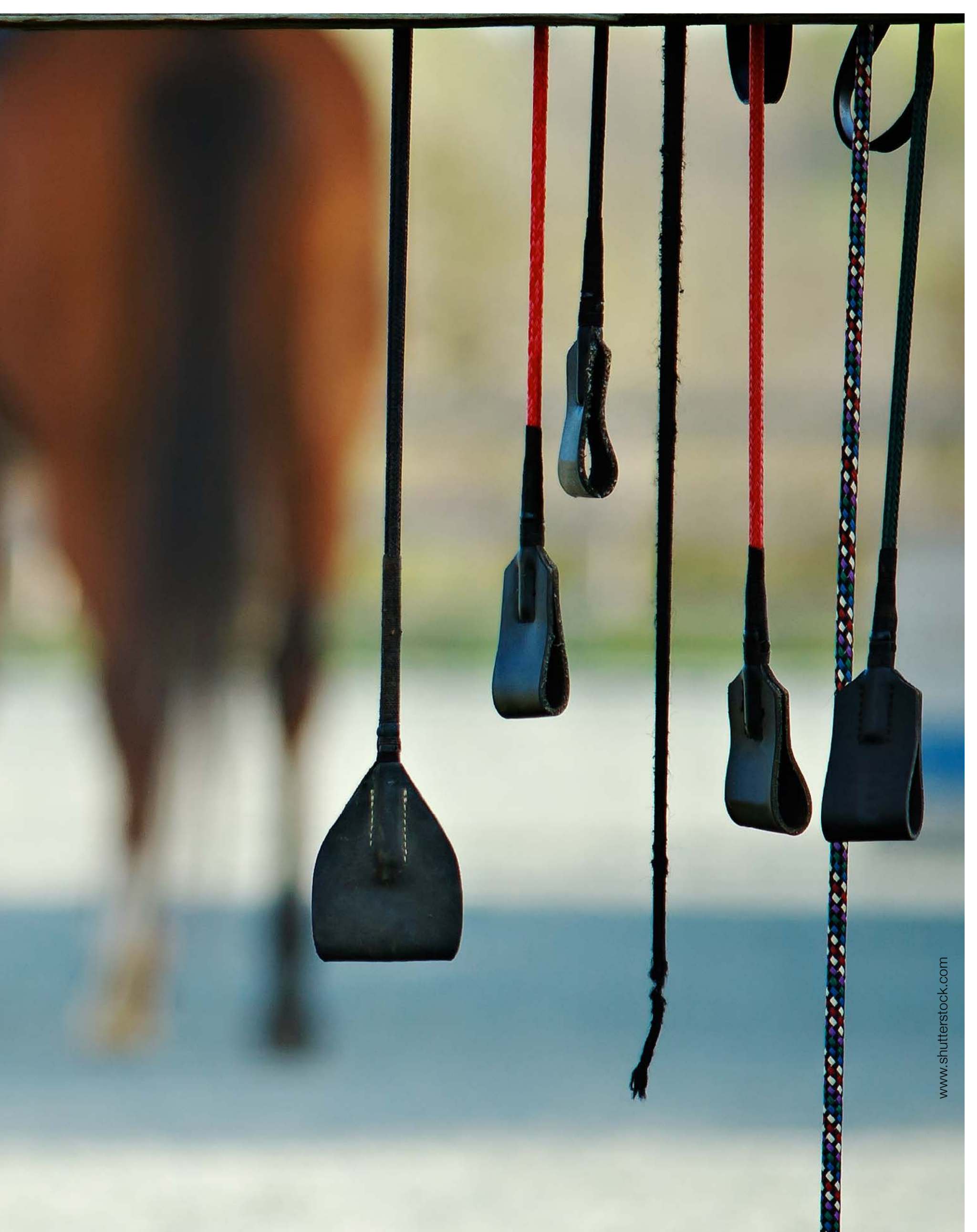
In a nice warm, dry stable. Occupied by a nice warm, dry horse. Which leaves very little room for you.

You're still slightly nervous of just how large horses are, especially close up, but this one seems to be quite relaxed. She's quietly alternating between appearing to doze and occasionally munching grass out of her hay rack, despite the fact that there are already two people, your instructor and a groom, in her stable with her. And there's not enough room left to swing ... well, anything, really.

You squeeze in next to your instructor, who has a bewildering array of bondage equipment dangling over her shoulder. She seems quite unfazed by the apparent lack of space, moving easily around the horse. Ok, maybe it's not THAT crowded.

Up until now, your horse has arrived at the mounting block for your lesson fully dressed in saddle and bridle, with everything correctly aligned and adjusted. By the end of the lesson, a groom magically appears and whisks the horse out of your uneducated hands to get undressed again - you assume. (You haven't actually spent much time with undressed horses!) Apparently today is going to correct that.

As your instructor is going through the terminology that identifies bits of the bondage equipment she's carrying, you realise that a bridle is made up of about 10 different bits of leather, each one with its own name. Are you ever going to remember all of this? Thankfully, it turns out that it is all rather self-explanatory. The strap that goes over the nose is called the nose band. The strap that goes over the horse's eyebrow area is called the brow band. The piece that goes over the top of her head is called the head piece. And the metal bit that goes in her mouth is called, well, the bit. And so on. Duh. ▶



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Meanwhile, the pretty chestnut mare that is your demo model for the day is getting snoozier and snoozier, and as you're leaning forward to see, she's leaning sideways to sleep

... on you. You find yourself gently but firmly pinned to the stable wall, with a large head resting on your shoulder that is getting heavier and heavier by the moment, while she softly blows warm, sweet-smelling horse breath into your ear. What's more disconcerting is the groom getting the giggles when he notices you being pinned against a wall by half-a-ton of drowsy animal. She proves to be deceptively easy to push off you though, and doesn't seem to take offense. Whew.

You watch your instructor demonstrate the getting-horse-dressed process, which turns out to be called 'tacking up' and then it's your turn to have a go. As you undo the first buckle, the previously and nicely arranged bridle promptly chucks all of its component parts around your wrist, turns itself inside out three times and twists the cheek pieces around in your hands. Wait ... what? Your instructor takes it away from you, straightens it out and gives it back, and this time guides you through the process - and more importantly, which buckle to undo first. Once you get the hang of that it's actually quite easy and you feel confident enough to try tackle putting the saddle on next time!

See you for your lesson same time next month! ☺ •



WIN A HORSE RIDING LESSON

Answer this simple question and you stand a chance to win a free horse riding lesson at Chikara Stables, in Nooitgedacht, Johannesburg.

Q: The strap that goes over the horse's eyebrow area is called the ... ?

To enter, email your answer to competitions@doitnow.co.za. The competition closes at midnight on Friday, 31 January 2014. The winner will be drawn from all correct entries. DO IT NOW's terms and conditions apply.

About the prize

The prize, valued at R200, may be taken any time before 30 April 2013, on a Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday afternoon by prior arrangement. Chikara Stables cater for all levels of rider, specialising in nervous beginners or rusty adults! Be sure to wear closed shoes with a small flat heel if possible (think school shoes), as well as long pants (jeans are perfect) and long socks. Chikara Stables will provide you with a safety helmet.

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EXPLORING
treasure
Isle



“The greatest sadness of all is to forget how to play” is a quote I have long admired.

Determined to keep my playful spirit alive and well, a few days of carefree fun on the island of Reunion seemed like just the ticket. ▶

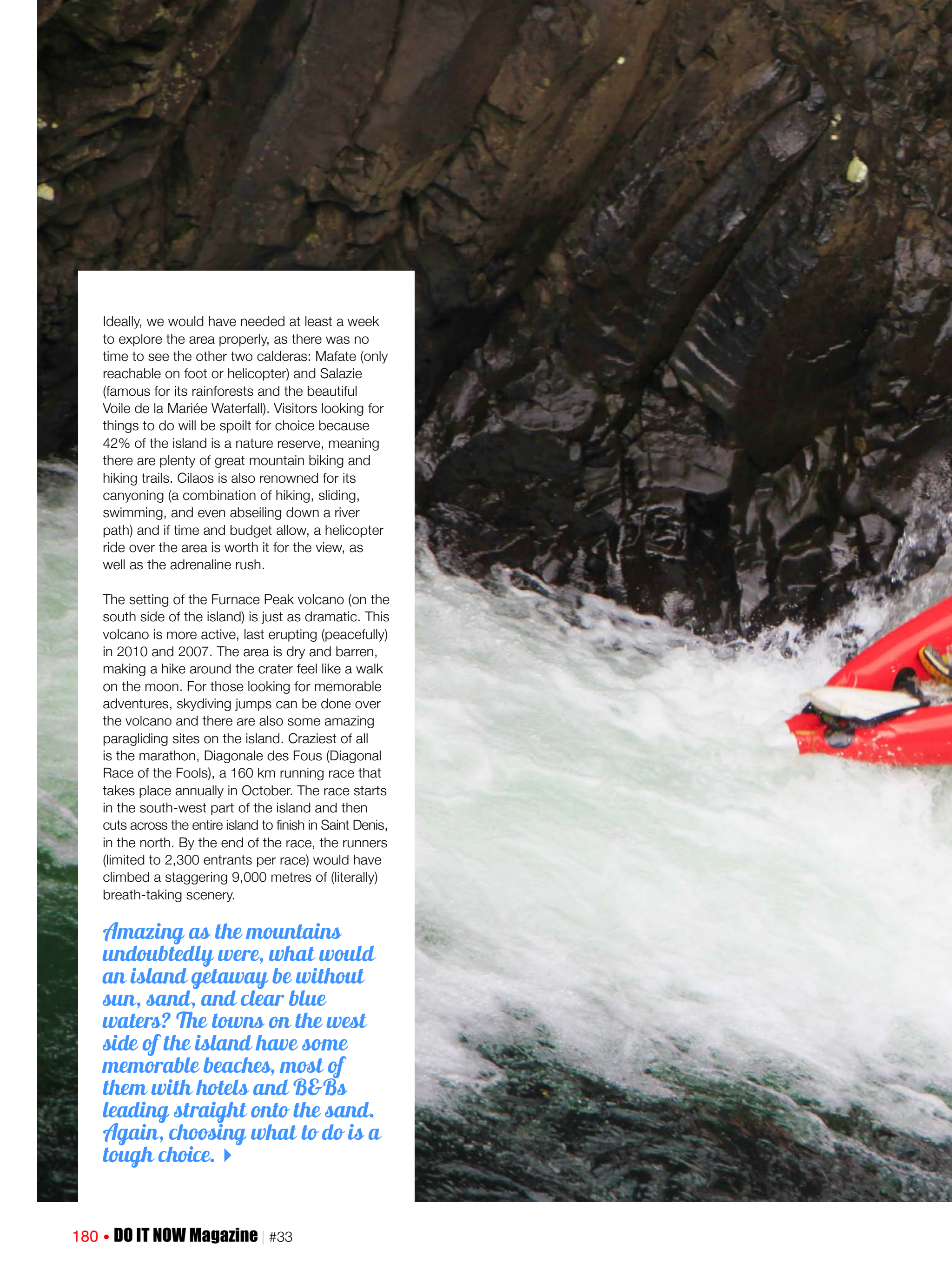




Reunion Island is relatively small (63 km long and 45 km wide, covering 2,500 square km) and close to Madagascar and Mauritius. Just a four-hour flight from South Africa, it's known for its rainforest, mountains, and beautiful beaches.

Touching down on Reunion Island, I was eager to unpack a whole Pandora's Box of adventures that lay before me. Once out of the airport and in the safe care of guide Nicholas Cyprien, we headed straight for the mountains. This made sense, as Reunion Island is essentially formed on two volcanoes: Piton des Neiges (Peaks of Snow) and Piton de la Fournaise (The Furnace Peak). The Peaks of Snow volcano (in the centre of the island) last erupted a very long time ago, leaving three massive calderas (bowl-shaped valleys) surrounding it. Driving up to the first caldera (Cilaos) was like climbing a stairway to heaven: 420 gut-wrenching hairpin bends, with towering peaks above and a few mind-numbing drops below. The view of Cilaos is well worth the around two-hour drive, as the town is nestled in a giant amphitheatre and surrounded completely by mountain peaks that appear to pierce the azure sky.

While the village itself is picturesque beyond words, it was the famous Creole hospitality that managed to beat all expectations. The name Cilaos means 'the place one never leaves', and the hospitality really was that good. We stayed at the Hotel Tsilaosa, and the owner, Noe Dijoux, even took us down to his cellar for a tasting demonstration of the local wines. ▶

A red kayak is shown navigating a turbulent white-water rapids in a narrow, rocky channel. The water is churning and white with foam, splashing against the dark, jagged rock walls. The kayak is positioned in the lower right corner of the frame, moving towards the viewer. The background is a steep, dark rock face with some sparse green vegetation.

Ideally, we would have needed at least a week to explore the area properly, as there was no time to see the other two calderas: Mafate (only reachable on foot or helicopter) and Salazie (famous for its rainforests and the beautiful Voile de la Mariée Waterfall). Visitors looking for things to do will be spoilt for choice because 42% of the island is a nature reserve, meaning there are plenty of great mountain biking and hiking trails. Cilaos is also renowned for its canyoning (a combination of hiking, sliding, swimming, and even abseiling down a river path) and if time and budget allow, a helicopter ride over the area is worth it for the view, as well as the adrenaline rush.

The setting of the Furnace Peak volcano (on the south side of the island) is just as dramatic. This volcano is more active, last erupting (peacefully) in 2010 and 2007. The area is dry and barren, making a hike around the crater feel like a walk on the moon. For those looking for memorable adventures, skydiving jumps can be done over the volcano and there are also some amazing paragliding sites on the island. Craziest of all is the marathon, Diagonale des Fous (Diagonal Race of the Fools), a 160 km running race that takes place annually in October. The race starts in the south-west part of the island and then cuts across the entire island to finish in Saint Denis, in the north. By the end of the race, the runners (limited to 2,300 entrants per race) would have climbed a staggering 9,000 metres of (literally) breath-taking scenery.

Amazing as the mountains undoubtedly were, what would an island getaway be without sun, sand, and clear blue waters? The towns on the west side of the island have some memorable beaches, most of them with hotels and B&Bs leading straight onto the sand. Again, choosing what to do is a tough choice. ▶





WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

General: Reunion Island is a province of France, meaning that pretty much only French is spoken, and the currency used is Euros. The infrastructure is really good and the population of about 850,000 people enjoy a first-world standard of living.

Currency: 1 EURO = R12.85
Generally, prices are slightly more expensive than South Africa.

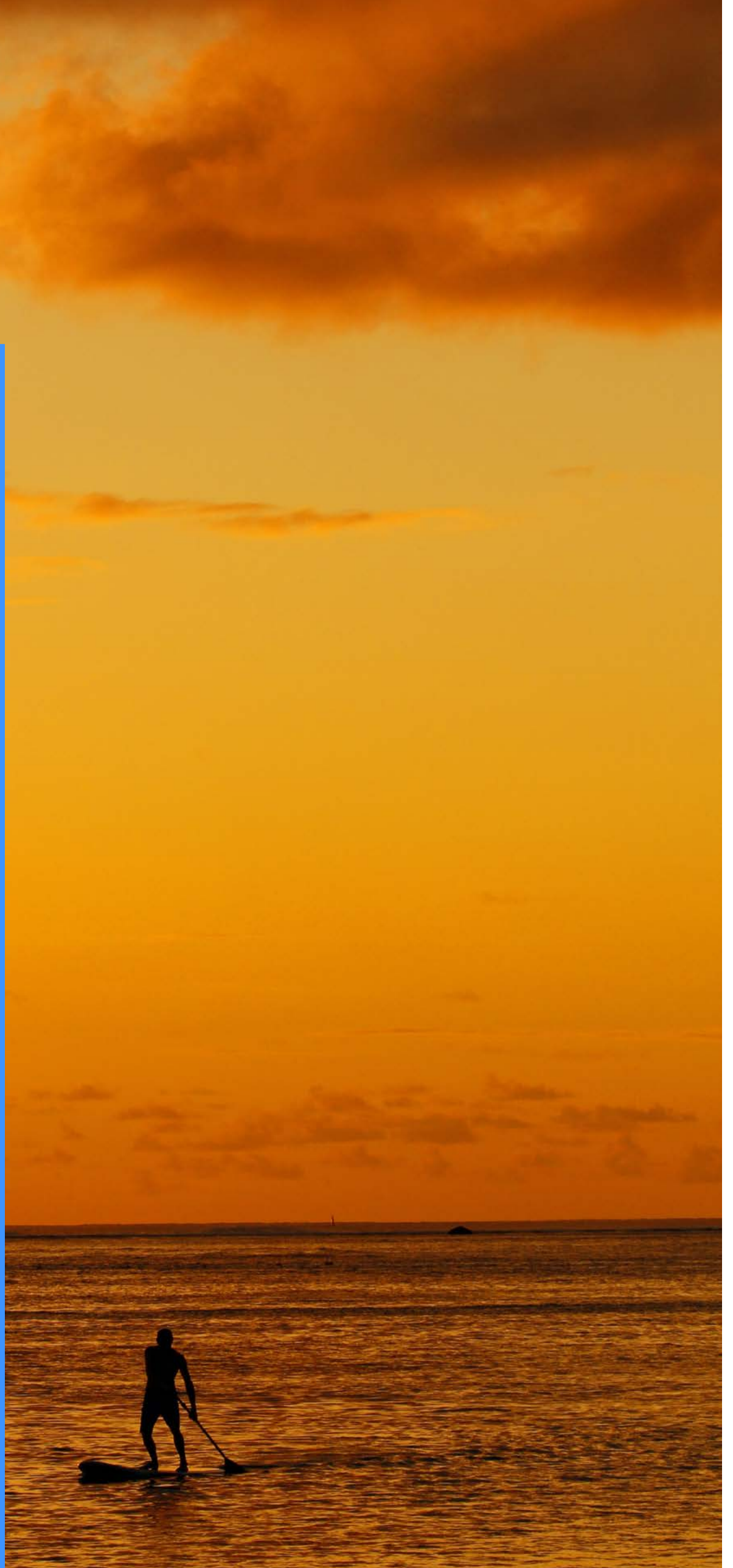
Getting there: Air Austral (www.air-austral.com) flies between Johannesburg and Saint Denis every Thursday and Sunday, with round trips priced at roughly R5,400 per person. Note that South Africa passport holders do not need a visa to visit Reunion Island.

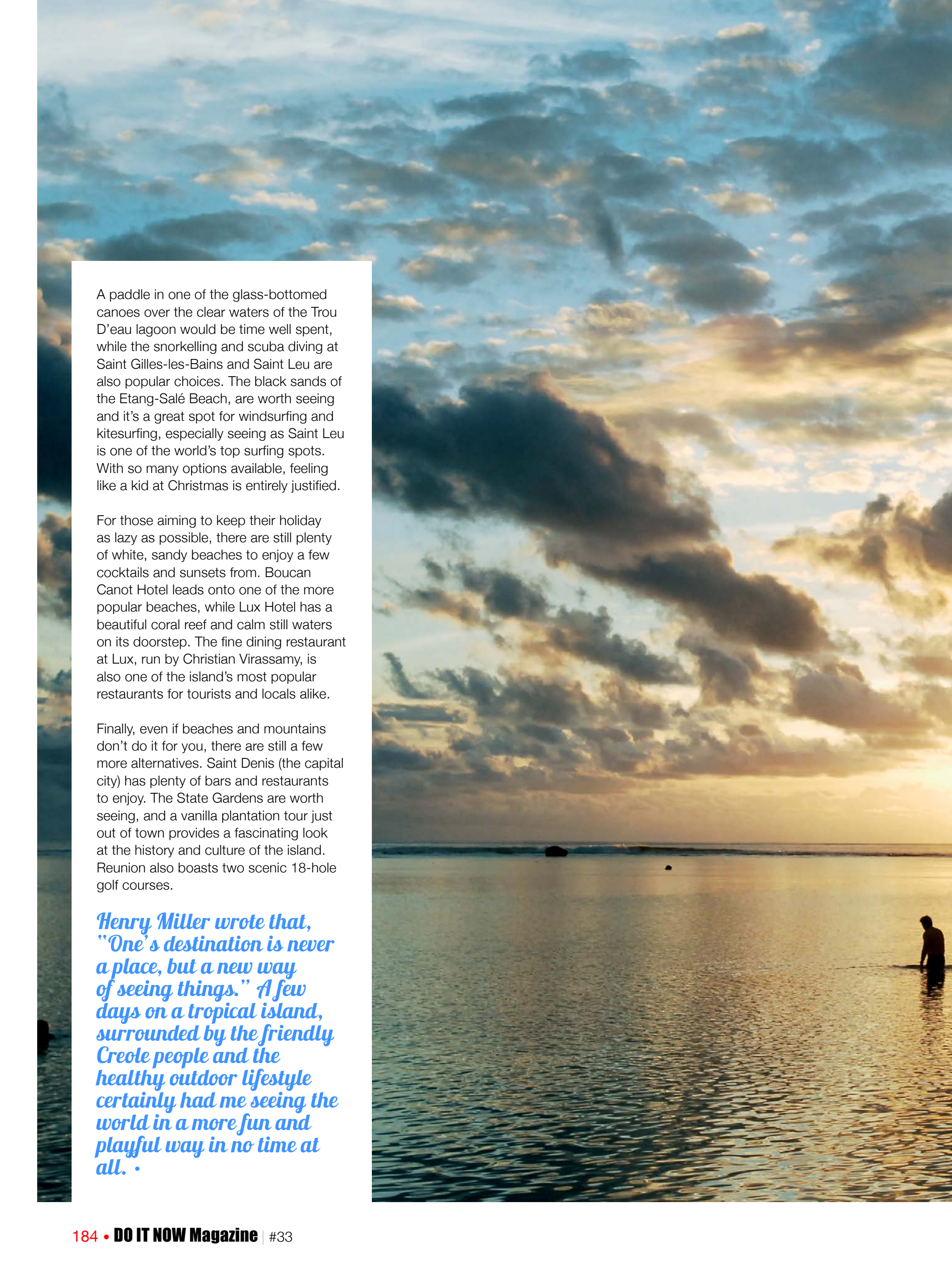
More information: Visit the Reunion Island Tourism website at www.reunion.fr/en. Maps and brochures can be requested by email from reunionisland.za@atout-france.fr

Recommended Tour Guide:
globotrotero@free.fr

Recommended Hotels:

- **Hotel Tsilaosa**
R1,180 p.p.p.n.
www.tsilaosa.com
- **Boucan Canot Hotel:**
R2,300 p.p.p.n.
www.boucancanot.com
- **Lux Hotel:**
R2,275 p.p.p.n.
www.luxresorts.com
- **Helicopter ride over Cilaos:**
R3,800 per person for a 45 minute ride.
www.helilagon.com
- **Vanilla plantation tour:**
Tours cost R65 per person
www.lavanilleraie.com ▶



A full-page background image of a tropical sunset over the ocean. The sky is filled with large, dramatic clouds in shades of blue, orange, and yellow. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm glow. In the foreground, the water is calm with gentle ripples. A person is standing in the shallow water on the right side, their silhouette visible against the bright light. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

A paddle in one of the glass-bottomed canoes over the clear waters of the Trou D'eau lagoon would be time well spent, while the snorkelling and scuba diving at Saint Gilles-les-Bains and Saint Leu are also popular choices. The black sands of the Etang-Salé Beach, are worth seeing and it's a great spot for windsurfing and kitesurfing, especially seeing as Saint Leu is one of the world's top surfing spots. With so many options available, feeling like a kid at Christmas is entirely justified.

For those aiming to keep their holiday as lazy as possible, there are still plenty of white, sandy beaches to enjoy a few cocktails and sunsets from. Boucan Canot Hotel leads onto one of the more popular beaches, while Lux Hotel has a beautiful coral reef and calm still waters on its doorstep. The fine dining restaurant at Lux, run by Christian Virassamy, is also one of the island's most popular restaurants for tourists and locals alike.

Finally, even if beaches and mountains don't do it for you, there are still a few more alternatives. Saint Denis (the capital city) has plenty of bars and restaurants to enjoy. The State Gardens are worth seeing, and a vanilla plantation tour just out of town provides a fascinating look at the history and culture of the island. Reunion also boasts two scenic 18-hole golf courses.

Henry Miller wrote that, "One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things." A few days on a tropical island, surrounded by the friendly Creole people and the healthy outdoor lifestyle certainly had me seeing the world in a more fun and playful way in no time at all. •



DARLINGTON MERMAIDS AND ROOIBOS TEA

IF YOU THINK BACK TO HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO WHEN THE KAROO WAS A HUGE MARSHLAND AND MAMMAL-LIKE REPTILES ROAMED FREELY, IT IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE TO IMAGINE THAT THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN MERMAIDS. With the environment evolving and habitats changing, species have had to adapt, or have they? ▶



A big heave hug for the mermaid by Al Speeth.

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Peter Voges receiving encouragement to play the mermaid.

Clarias gariepinus, the African sharptooth catfish, also commonly known as barbel, is an eel-like fish and one of the most resilient fresh water fish species known to man. This species is able to crawl across dry ground to another body of water when one pool dries up, and can survive for long periods in shallow mud between rainy seasons. It also feeds on either living or dead animal matter and can make loud, croaking noises. And with a slender body, four pairs of barbels (a slender, whisker-like tactile organ near the mouth), and large accessory breathing organs, you could be forgiven for thinking it resembles a mermaid - until you see its flat, ugly head. Having sacrificed their good looks for the propensity to survive literally anywhere, one can find them throughout the entire country, in any water system. They grow enormous, thus are a sought-after recreational species and make good table fare, comparable to fresh-water kingklip.



MY FISHING FRIENDS AND I AFFECTIONATELY CALL THEM MERMAIDS, MORE SPECIFICALLY 'DARLINGTON MERMAIDS', AS THE DARLINGTON DAM, NOW AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE ADDO ELEPHANT NATIONAL PARK, PROVIDES THE IDEAL RESIDENCE TO HUNDREDS OF THEM.

Several river basins feed into the Darlington Dam, including the Sundays River from the Graaff-Reinet area, the Voël and Holsloot Rivers from the Pearston area, and the Schoenmakers River from Somerset East (which receives its water from the Orange and Fish River canal systems). As a result, Darlington Dam is an ideal catchment area for food funnelling from these river basins. On arrival, one is overwhelmed by the size of the dam, some 35-square kilometres of Rooibos-tea coloured water.

Parking on the grassy flood plains, you can only get within 100 metres of the water. The anticipation is strange to say the least when you look at the tea-coloured water, perplexed as to where you would start to fly fish in this giant teacup. It is not long before you doubt your eyes, as the splashing sounds of jumping fish quickly draws your attention to an abundance of fish activity; it is not what you expect. Besides barbel, this huge expanse of water also hosts several fresh-water fish species, like monster carp, yellowfish, moggel, Orange River mudfish, eels, tilapia, and surprisingly mullet. These mullet have adapted to fresh water and grow in excess of 10 kilogrammes. The shriek of a tern or gull makes you shake your head in disbelief, as you feel as if you are at the beach, perhaps the Karoo Beach? However, reality kicks in as you focus on a goliath heron stalking small fish or frogs in the shallows of the grass.

We quickly walked down to the edge of the water to get a closer look at what the activity was all about. In the shallows, what looked like submerged logs washed up on the banks were actually monster carp scrounging through the grass of the flood plain. Feeding with half their bodies sticking out of the water, and exposed to all the predatory birds in the area, they were very skittish and scuttled for cover in the deeper water when they heard our footsteps. This was confirmed by a serious outcry from the resident fish eagles objecting to our arrival in their territory. ▶



ON CLOSER INSPECTION OF ALL THE ACTIVITY IN THE WATER, WE NOTICED BARBEL MOVING AROUND, COMING UP FOR GULPS OF FRESH AIR AND THEN FEEDING FEROCIOUSLY ON THE DEBRIS WASHED OUT OF THE CONFLUENCE OF THE RIVERS AND INTO THE DAM.

I joked to my friends that the Darlington mermaids were trying to entice them into the depths of piscatorial desire. While speculating about mermaid fantasies, we rushed back to the vehicle to set-up our tackle.

Only one problem though, we had brought knives to a gunfight. Our quarry was just too big for our #5wt rods. Nothing less than a #7wt would do. A #9wt would be advisable, preferably with at least 100 m of backing. Bring your big game, as these things are brutes.

We set-up a floating line with a 12-lb tippet and searched our fly boxes for the brightest, furriest fly we could find. Even more so than carp, barbels have a sixth sense of your presence. As you try to move closer to them, they simply keep moving away from you, keeping their distance. The secret is to find a spot, if possible, where there is a drop off or a weed bank and position yourself within easy casting distance. Then stand still and wait. Remember, these mermaids are promiscuous, but curious. They will move closer after a while and if you are lucky, they will come and inspect you and then bump you, usually when you are focussed on the flamingos in the distance. We call this the Darlington break dance because you get such a fright that you literally jump out of your waders and walk on the water, which is very funny as long as it is your fishing buddy and not you.



A Darlington mermaid.



When scanning the water in front of you and the mermaid comes up to breathe (and winks at you), or gulps something that has been washed down the river, you present your fly to the rise, not delicately, but deliberately allowing your fly to slap the water. Now watch in amazement as the barbel literally jumps all over the fly and grabs it with great gusto. However, their long whiskers and four pairs of barbels allow them to be super selective as to what they consume. This means they can expel the fly as quickly as they mouth it, resulting in hook ups being quite tricky. Often after you have struck to set the hook, the fish is on and then it's off. The fact that they have a bony mouth doesn't help either.

Sight fishing for barbel in dirty brown water sounds about as far-fetched as Darlington mermaids and Rooibos tea in the Karoo, but it is about as much fun as you can have with your clothes on. •



Suggested reading on barbel:

Visit www.fosaf.co.za for venues and accommodation, or read the book sold by Fosaf called *Favoured flies*, volume 2, pages 116 to 138, which focuses on targeting barbel.

Suggested barbel fishing venues:

Barbel are prolific throughout the country in fresh-water systems and are specifically targeted in big dams like the Vaal Dam, Gariep Dam, etc, as well as rivers, such as the Vaal, Orange, Umzimkulu, Fish River, etc.

Suggested gear when fishing for barbel:

It is advisable to have a boga grip, as barbel are very big to net. The boga grip allows the angler to grip the fish in the mouth, unhook and weigh it before releasing it, without having to touch the fish.



STARTER
SERVES 6-8

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Summer sensations

Kipper Pâté

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 large kippers
- 200 g unsalted butter
- 2 lemons
- 45 ml double cream
- Cayenne pepper
- 6 eggs
- Watercress
- Bread for toasting

METHOD:

1. Place the kippers skin side up in a large oven dish. Place 50 g of the butter on top. Bake the kippers in a hot oven (200C) for 15 minutes. Allow to cool slightly and pour the rendered butter into a bowl. Very gently peel back the skin and discard it. Edge the fillets apart from the 'frame'. The back fillet can be lifted away easily and should have no bone. Place with butter in the bowl. The belly fillet should be turned over and the pin bones gently lifted off. Getting every single piece off the bone takes time, but is important. Once all the filleted meat is off the bone, place it in the bowl and add to it the strained juice of the two lemons, a twist of black pepper and 100 g of the butter, softened.
2. Place the kipper meat, lemon juice and butter in a food processor and blend until quite smooth. Add the double cream and a pinch of cayenne pepper and blend again until smooth. Check for seasoning and then decant the mixture into small ramekins. Smooth the surface of the mixture with the back of a spoon or a small spatula and sprinkle a little cayenne on top.
3. Melt the remaining butter in a small pan or microwave. Allow to cool a little then pour over the pâtés to create a seal. Refrigerate.
4. Serve with hard-boiled eggs, a bunch of watercress and toast. The pâtés will keep for a week in the fridge.



MAIN

Fish Pie with Saffron Mash

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 shallots, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 150 ml white wine
- 142 ml pot double cream
- 900 g fresh haddock fillets, skinned
- 200 g bag raw, peeled prawns, preferably unfrozen
- 800 g fresh spinach (about 2 bags)
- 200 g crabmeat

FOR THE TOPPING:

- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 red chilli, halved and deseeded
- 200 ml full-fat milk
- A pinch of saffron strands
- 1¼ kg potatoes, cut into large chunks
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon

METHOD:

1. Tip the shallots and vinegar into a saucepan and place on the heat so the vinegar evaporates quickly. Splash in the white wine and reduce until practically dry. Add cream, bring to the boil, then simmer gently until reduced by two-thirds and very thick. Leave to cool. Cut the fish into bite-size chunks and set aside with the prawns.
2. Tip spinach into a large colander and pour over boiling water from a kettle until all the spinach is wilted (you may need to do this more than once). Cool under the cold tap, then squeeze the spinach tightly to get rid of any excess liquid.
3. To make the topping, mash the saffron, garlic and chilli together using a pestle and mortar. Tip into a saucepan with the milk, bring to the boil, and then remove from the heat to infuse. Bring the potatoes to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes until soft. Drain, then mash well with the infused milk, olive oil, lemon juice and zest.
4. Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6.
5. To assemble the pie, mix the fish and prawns into the cold cream until completely coated. Tip the fish into the bottom of a large gratin dish and scatter over clumps of crabmeat. Unravel the spinach and lay it over the fish, then top with the mash. Cook the pie for about 30 minutes until golden and starting to brown and bubble around the edges. Serve with green veggies if you like. ▶

DESSERT
MAKES 12 SLICES

Coffee, Nutella and Praline Slice

INGREDIENTS:

- 120 butter
- 120 g golden caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 120 g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 tbsp hot espresso coffee

FOR THE FILLING:

- 6 heaped tbsp caster sugar
- 6 heaped tbsp flaked almonds
- A little groundnut oil
- 200 g butter
- 200 g icing sugar
- 200 g chocolate spread, such as Nutella

METHOD:

1. To make the cake, put the butter and sugar in the bowl of a food mixer fitted with a beating attachment and cream together until light and fluffy. Set the oven at 180C/gas mark 4. Line the base of a square 20 cm cake tin with baking parchment. Break the eggs and add them, a little at a time, to the butter and sugar. If the mixture curdles or becomes grainy at all, then add a spoonful of flour. Sieve the baking powder and flour together, and then add, with the mixer on low speed, to the cake mixture. Pour in the espresso coffee, stir well then transfer to the cake tin and smooth the surface.
2. Bake for 20-25 minutes. Check by piercing with a metal skewer or knitting needle. If it comes out of the cake clean, without any wet cake mixture on, then it is cooked. Remove the cake from the oven and let it cool.
3. To make the butter cream filling, lightly oil a baking sheet. Warm the caster sugar in a non stick, shallow pan without stirring. As it starts to melt, add the flaked almonds and let them colour lightly. As the mixture starts to darken to toffee colour, stir slowly and gently to ensure an even colour, then remove from the heat and tip onto the oiled baking sheet.
4. Beat together the butter and icing sugar with an electric mixer until fluffy. Add the Nutella and beat until fully incorporated. Crush the almonds and sugar with a rolling pin or in a food processor until they resemble coarse crumbs, putting a few larger pieces to one side for decoration. Stir half of the finely crushed nuts and sugar into the butter cream.
5. Lift the cake from the tin and peel off the baking parchment. Slice it in half horizontally. Spread the cut side of the bottom half with a good third of the butter cream, and then place the second half on top, cut-side down. Spread half the remaining cream thinly on the top. Slice the cake into 12 equal portions, then spread a thin layer of the remaining butter cream around the sides, scatter each with a dusting of the praline, and serve. •



MOVIE TITLE

FROZEN:

Director: Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee
Starring: Idina Menzel, Josh Gad and Kristen Bell

HIGHLIGHTS

Catchy songs and great animation.

RECOMMENDED FOR

Animation fans.

VERDICT



Having won the award for best animated feature film at the 71st Golden Globe awards and boasting a lead cast who all have a background on Broadway, you can expect “Frozen” to be one of Disney’s best animated musical feature films in years. It has all the charm and catchy tunes reminiscent of the classic Disney films whilst still being able to modernise our ideas of what a typical Disney princess should be.

What sets *Frozen* apart from the Disney movies of late are the really great, catchy songs written by husband and wife team Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez. Songs such as *Do you want to build a snowman*, *Let it go* and *In the summer* will be stuck in your head for a while after watching this movie and not even in the annoying way (maybe a little annoying for others around you).

Although the storyline is somewhat predictable, the movie does have some unexpected twists and turns, loveable characters who make the journey worthwhile and not to mention a cameo appearance by *Tangled*’s Rapunzel and Flynn Ryder (if you can spot them in the crowd). All in all, this film is extremely entertaining for viewers of any age and is well worth watching. ▶



MOVIE TITLE

THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY

Director: Ben Stiller

Starring: Ben Stiller, Adam Scott and Kristen Wiig

HIGHLIGHTS

Ben Stiller's performance.

RECOMMENDED FOR

Fans of comedy/drama.

VERDICT 



It's rare that I walk into a movie not expecting much, but walk out excited, entertained and generally happy. *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* has a terrible trailer, which dissuaded several of my friends, but the movie is an entirely different experience. Ben Stiller has never been a favourite actor of mine, and his comedies in recent years have mostly fallen flat. It was interesting to experience a self-directed movie of his, but it worked.

Stiller's co-stars add a lot of depth and character to their roles. While some of the personas are a little wacky (Ólafur Darri Ólafsson is a drunk helicopter pilot who sings karaoke) each of them are plausible in their given environments. They add a perfect blend of comedy and drama to the overall story. Also, I love seeing Patton Oswalt in whatever he does. There's not much I can say other than ignore the trailer and just watch a really enjoyable movie. You won't regret it.



GAME TITLE

KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

Developer: Guerrilla Games
Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment
Genre: First-person shooter

HIGHLIGHTS

Amazing visuals and fluid gameplay.

RECOMMENDED FOR

First person shooter fans.

VERDICT 



The Killzone franchise, beginning on the PS2, was originally designed to be Sony's Halo-killer and desperately failed in that regard. But at the very least, they seem to have understood that to continue along that path was foolishness and have instead focused their efforts on producing a quality shooter that demonstrates most of the PS4's capabilities wonderfully in its role as a launch title. It is probably one of the best uses of the PS4 at the moment (although in truth that title wasn't too hard to claim at this point).

I liked KSF a lot, and I didn't especially like either Killzone 2 or 3. Its fresh, vibrant, gorgeous, fluid, fun, satisfying and quick paced as a shooter, which is all you really want, with good play time and a good multiplayer mode for extended playing. Out of the two exclusive PS4 titles launched, it's definitely the superior one and is a good game in its own right for sure. ▶



GAME TITLE

INJUSTICE: GODS AMONG US

Publisher: Warner Bros. Interactive

Developer: NetherRealm Studios

Genre: Fighting

HIGHLIGHTS

Excellent fighting and cut scenes.

RECOMMENDED FOR

Fans of fighting games.

VERDICT 



There is an odd sense of *déjà vu* when the first screens appear after loading up *Injustice: Gods Among Us* on the PS4. Yes, we've seen all of this before. It's pretty much the same game, just enhanced to 1080p and a few more DLC characters added into the line-up. Of course, gamers shouldn't be surprised by re-releases of fighting games to newer versions. The real question is whether or not this is in fact the ultimate edition the title suggests or just another way to rake in more cash on a popular title.

While the story isn't the greatest, some of the interactions between the characters are really fun. Inevitably, the Arcade mode and S.T.A.R. Lab Missions (a challenge mode that offers interesting survival matches) will take up the majority of your time. Combat is easy and fun, with little secret easter eggs hidden throughout the different arenas. If you enjoy fighting games then *Injustice: Gods Among Us* sets a new high standard. Although it's great, it isn't as ultimate as the name implies.

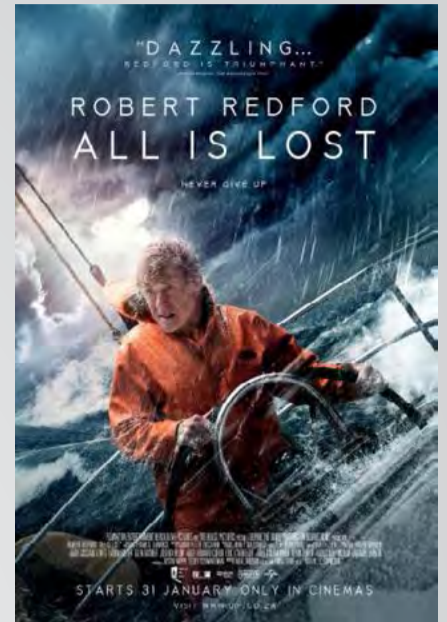
MOVIES TO LOOK OUT FOR



➤ **ROBOCOP**
Genre: Action, Sci-Fi
Director: José Padilha
Starring: Joel Kinnaman, Gary Oldman and Samuel L. Jackson
Date: 7 February



➤ **ANCHORMAN 2**
Genre: Comedy
Director: Adam McKay
Starring: Will Ferrell, Steve Carell, Paul Rudd and Christina Applegate
Date: 7 March



➤ **ALL IS LOST**
Genre: Drama
Director: J.C. Chandor
Starring: Robert Redford
Date: 11 April

GAMES TO LOOK OUT FOR



➤ **SOULCALIBUR:
LOST SWORDS**
Genre: Fighting
Developer: Namco Bandai
Date: February



➤ **RAMBO:
THE VIDEO GAME**
Genre: Action
Developer: Reef Entertainment
Date: February



➤ **TOMB RAIDER:
DEFINITIVE EDITION**
Genre: First-person shooter
Developer: Square Enix
Date: February ▶

BOOK R

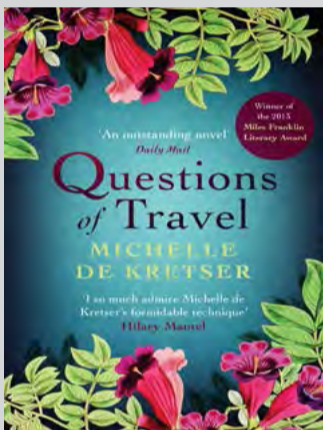
ALL THESE FINE BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE AT ALL



➤ **BARRACUDA**
Christos Tsiolkas

Daniel Kelly has one chance to escape his working-class upbringing. His astonishing ability in the swimming pool is destined to transform his life. But when he melts down at his first big championships and comes only fifth, he turns on everyone around him and destroys everything he has ever wanted. *Barracuda* is the huge new sucker punch of a novel from Christos Tsiolkas, author of *The Phenomenal*.

R240.00



➤ **QUESTIONS OF TRAVEL**
Michelle de Kretser

Laura travels the world before returning to Sydney, where she works for a publisher of travel guides. Ravi dreams of being a tourist until he is driven from Sri Lanka by devastating events. Michelle de Kretser illuminates travel, work and modern dreams in this brilliant evocation of the way we live now. *Questions of Travel* is infused with wit, imagination, uncanny common sense and a deep understanding of what makes us tick.

R165.00



➤ **JACKIE CAMERON COOKS AT HOME**
Jackie Cameron

Under Jackie's leadership the Hartford House restaurant in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands has been named the no.5 restaurant in the country, as voted by the judges in the 2013 Eat Out DStv Food Network Restaurant Awards. *Jackie Cameron Cooks at Home* is a generous invitation to good cooking that is easy and delectable.

R230.00



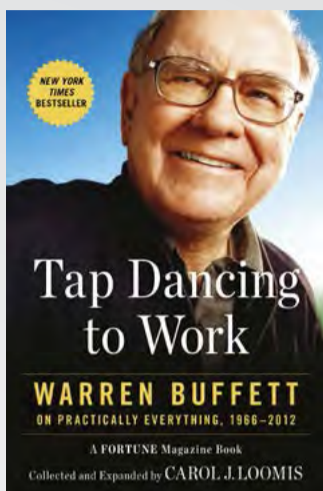
➤ **EAT RIGHT FOR YOUR BODY TYPE**
Anjum Anand

Anjum Anand believes the key to sustainable, healthy weight-loss does not lie in modern Western science or diet experts but in the Indian system of Ayurveda - the oldest and most holistic medical system on the planet. In this groundbreaking diet book, Anjum shows how to work out your body type, the foods you should eat (or avoid) and how to combine them into delicious recipes for every meal.

R170.00

REVIEWS

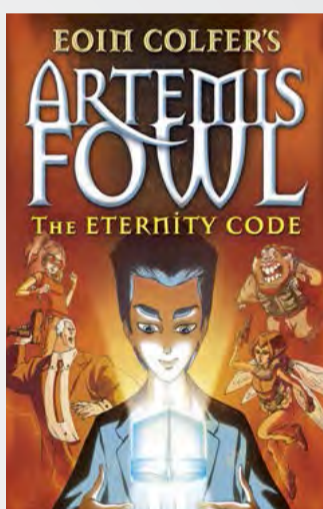
ALL GOOD BOOK STORES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.



> **TAP DANCING TO WORK** *Carol J. Loomis*

When Fortune writer Carol Loomis first mentioned a little-known Omaha hedge fund manager in a 1966 article, she didn't dream that Warren Buffet would become the world's greatest investor. Nor did she imagine that she and Buffet would become close friends. Readers will gain fresh insights into Buffet's investment strategies and thinking on management, philanthropy, and even parenting.

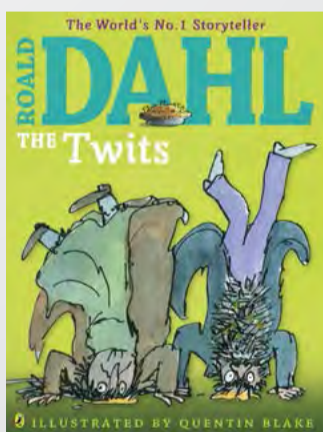
R180.00



> **ARTEMIS FOWL: THE ETERNITY CODE (AGE 9+)** *Eoin Colfer*

Thirteen-year-old criminal mastermind Artemis Fowl has constructed a super computer from stolen fairy technology. In the wrong hands it could be fatal for humans and fairies alike. But no need to worry, Artemis has a brilliant plan. He's not going to use the computer. What could possibly go wrong?

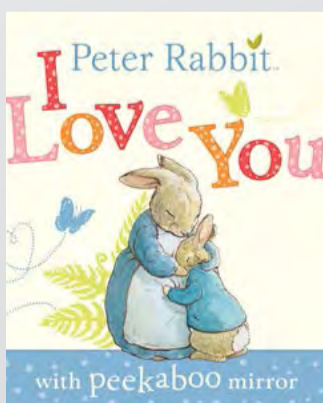
R160.00



> **THE TWITS (AGE 6+)** *Roald Dahl*

Mr Twit is a foul and smelly man with bits of cornflake and sardine in his beard. Mrs Twit is a horrible old hag with a glass eye. They've kept Muggle-Wump the monkey and his family caged in the garden for far too long, and now the monkeys want to take their revenge ...

R120.00



> **PETER RABBIT: I LOVE YOU (AGE 1+)** *Beatrix Potter*

This is a warm and gentle rhyme featuring Peter Rabbit (and a mirror surprise)! You can snuggle up with the little bunny you love the most and read this adorable book together. Featuring Peter Rabbit - and other classic Beatrix Potter characters - this warm and gentle rhyme is the perfect bedtime book for babies and toddlers. •

R80.00

inFOCUS

Reader Photo Competition

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R500!**



4TH QUARTER WINNER

Photographer: Altus Kotze
Photograph: Beautiful sunset
Camera Type: Canon 550d

Camera Settings: Settings 1/250 second f 9 iso 100
Place: Pomene Mozambique
Category: Lifestyle



2013 DRAW WINNER

Photographer: Kerry de Bruyn
Photograph: Kilimanjaro sunrise
Camera Type: Sony alpha 500

Camera Settings: Iso 200; 18 mm; f4.5; 1/25
Place: Taken on top of Kilimanjaro at sunrise
Category: Adventure

inFOCUS QUARTERLY COMPETITION

The inFOCUS competition will feature a photo online winner every fourth quarter, with a R500 voucher to be won! The closing date for the first quarter competition is 25 March 2014. Please email entries to competitions@doitnow.co.za.

Good news for all entrants! All entries received in 2014 will be entered into a final draw to take place in January 2015. The details of the grand prize will be announced on DO IT NOW's website (www.doitnow.co.za) soon.

When emailing your images to us please include the following information:

- Name of photographer
- Name of photograph
- Camera type
- Camera settings
- Place where the photograph was taken
- Which category you are submitting your photo under - Adventure, Sport or Lifestyle •

* Competition rules can be viewed on www.doitnow.co.za.



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