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travel

update

ISSUE 10

TOP **10**
HOTSPOTS
in SA

THE RISE OF
RESPONSIBLE
TRAVEL

FAMILY-FRIENDLY
MAURITIUS &
REUNION ISLAND

WINTER **VS** SUMMER
in Switzerland

GLAMPING
HOLIDAYS
IN THE UK



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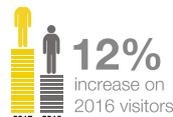
624
exhibiting
companies



2017 TOP 5 Travel Professional
Job Titles



Top Visitor Industry Sectors



WTM Africa 2017 saw an increase of 17% in travel professionals at this year's exhibition, while other indicators are reason to celebrate the success of this world-class travel exhibition says Chardonnay Marchesi, General Manager of Africa Travel Week.

“We are thrilled to announce that WTM Africa 2017 surpassed previous year's numbers and then some! We had over 5000 industry professionals in attendance at this year's WTM Africa, and have received incredibly positive feedback.”

WTM Africa opened with over 8000 pre-scheduled appointments between exhibitors and buyers, a year-on-year increase of 11%. While 66% of buyers attended the the exhibition for the first time.

With over 70 countries represented at WTM Africa 2017, it is also considered the most diverse show yet, with buyers in attendance from Zambia, Ethiopia and Namibia for the first time. In terms of visitors to WTM Africa 2017, 82% were from South Africa, while 18% were international. In addition, WTM Africa saw 364 registered media in attendance.

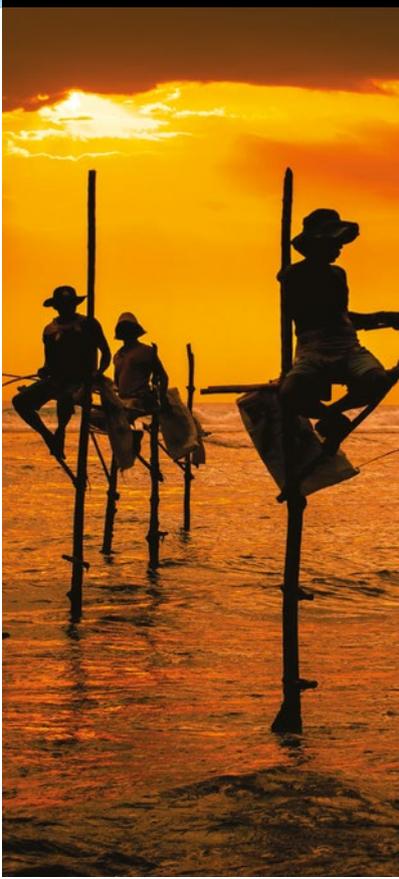
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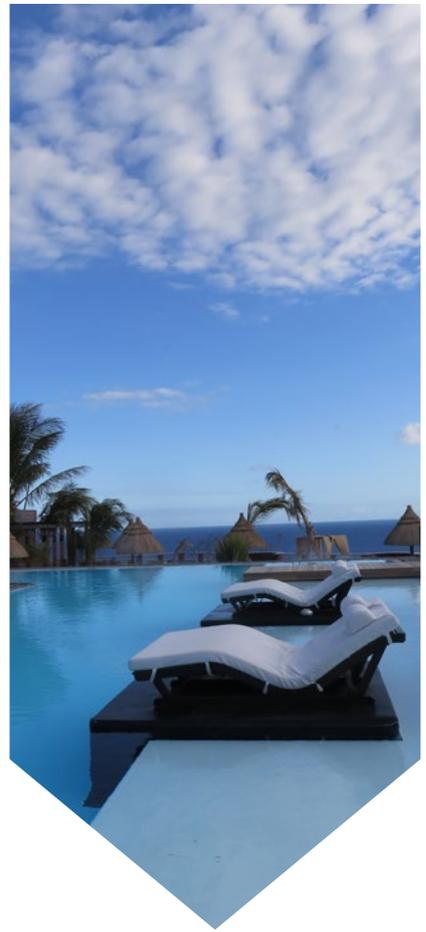
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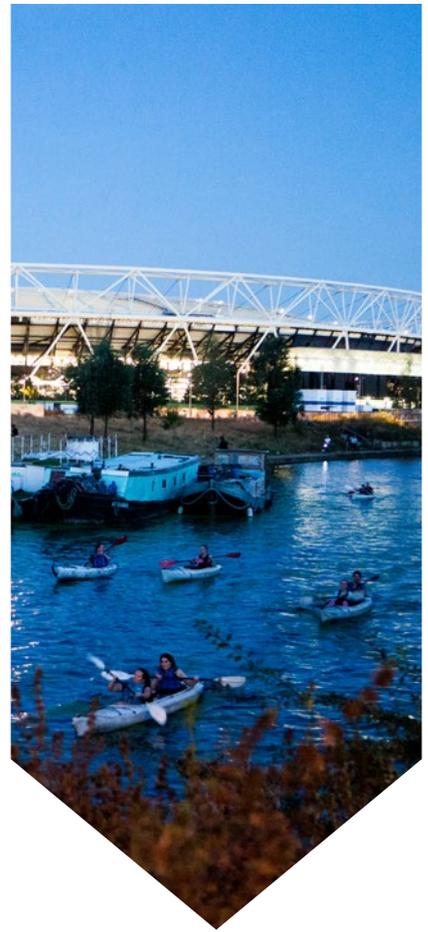
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RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Greetings from London!

It's a great honour to be working with the Travel Update team and to share some of my experiences with you from afar. A perk of being based in London is that it is one of the world's greatest hubs of culture, history, innovation and, indeed, tourism. With the average Brit taking three holidays per year, it comes as little surprise that the international travel industry turns to London for its annual World Travel Market (WTM) conference. Recently hosted in the city centre, WTM saw thousands of travel professionals gather to network and discuss the most pertinent topics in modern travel. The hot topics of the day revolved around tackling over-tourism and encouraging sustainable and responsible practices among industry businesses and travellers.

With over 8 million tons of plastic landing in our oceans every year, it's now more important than ever to fight this battle collectively. As Geoff Brighty, the Science & Policy Advisor of the Plastics Ocean Foundation, says, "How can you sell a holiday to a beach that is covered in plastics?"

In this issue, Travel Update's 10th edition, we put the spotlight on a number of innovative travel technologies and practices that are contributing to a more sustainable future. Take Unseen Tours as an example - they are employing homeless people to guide visitors on unique street tours of London. There's also lots of exciting family-friendly holiday ideas packed into this issue. Lesley Stones presents you with the ultimate top 10 list of South Africa's hottest hotspots. It'll inspire you to hit the road immediately. She also reveals the many family-friendly attractions of Mauritius, including kids' clubs at hotel resorts, a submarine experience and the impressive Chamarel Waterfalls. Enclosed too is an overview of the many family-friendly adventures offered on Reunion Island. Back onto mainland, Deborah Walters shares her experience of staying at the glamorous Polana hotel in Maputo, which she likens to the grand Savoy in London and The Mount Nelson in Cape Town. Last but not least, we compare Switzerland's dazzling natural attractions as seen in winter and summer.

Enjoy the glorious summer holidays in South Africa and remember to travel responsibly. Use a refillable water bottle, switch off lights and support local businesses for starters.

Franki Black

Guest Editor Abroad

Twitter: @women4adventure @frankiblack



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Lesley Stones: Lesley is a former Brit who is now proudly South African. She's an award-winning journalist who started by reviewing rock bands for a UK music paper. She later spent four fun-filled years working in Cairo and 12 years with Business Day and is now freelance, specialising in travel & leisure writing and being opinionated about life in general.

Scariest travel moment? Having my passport confiscated as I entered the UK, because it had wrongly been reported as stolen. Being stranded abroad with no passport is a traveller's ultimate nightmare.

Top 10 SA Hotspots, page 10 / FAM Trips, page 29 / Mauritius, page 40



Jo Kromberg was editor for African Safaris and Family Holidays and Leisure magazines and is now the Africa Travel editor for The Beijing Review, published in China. She is a regular contributor for Conde Nast Traveller China and Conde Nast Traveller India.

Scariest travel moment? It was in 1988 when a taxi cab driver started driving me into a dodgy neighbourhood in Athens, Greece. I needed to go to the embassy, since all my money was stolen, but the embassy was closed. The driver ended up taking me to his sister's place - he couldn't speak English, but she could. They turned out to be the kindest people ever, putting me up for two nights until I got money from the embassy.

Mozambique, page 33.



Justin Fox is an award-winning travel writer, novelist and photographer, and former editor of Getaway International magazine. His most recent books include The Impossible Five (Jacaranda Books, 2017) and My Great Expedition (Bumble Books, 2017).

Scariest travel moment? It happened while tracking buffalo in Zimbabwe. My group inadvertently bumped into poachers and a gun fight ensued. Fortunately, I kept my head down.

The Impossible Five (book overview), page 9.



Franki Black: Franki is a journalist who specializes mostly in travel and education. Her work has been published in a range of local and international publications, including Le Point, Songlines and Travel Ideas Magazine. Proudly South African, she now lives in London where she spends her time finding ways to stay warm and pursuing new outdoor adventures. Follow Franki's exploits on www.women4adventure.com (@women4adventure).

Scariest travel moment? Unknowingly hiking through a marijuana field in Guatemala where it is said that some travellers have mysteriously disappeared...

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GUESS THE LOCATION



Test your travel knowledge with www.geoguessr.com, a web-based game that allows you to explore the world from the comfort of your couch. During the challenge, Geoguessr reveals a series of Google Street view images of random locations from around the world. The object is to read the clues in each image and guess the location. The closer your guess is to where the picture was taken, the more points you earn. There are many hidden clues to be found in architecture, vegetation and store signs!

KARAOKE AROUND THE WORLD

Endear yourself to the locals of plenty of karaoke-loving countries by showing off your talent with Typo's portable karaoke microphone. It comes with a speaker that lets you blast music, while you sing along. You can also connect to your phone's playlist through Wi-Fi. Available at Typo stores around the country.



BRINGING THE 'JET' BACK TO 'JET SETTING'

It's time to jet-set around the world in an actual jet. Founded in 2011 by Jonathan Nicol, a commercial pilot-turned entrepreneur, www.stratajet.com makes the private aviation industry more accessible to ordinary travellers. Thousands of jets without passengers are flown across the world weekly to get them to destinations for chartered flights. Through Statajet, these empty aircraft are diverted - while en route to set locations - to accommodate your chosen itinerary. Best part is that you can get up to 75% off the regular price!

SOLAR RECHARGING KIT

The Goal G10 Plus Solar Recharging Kit allows you to head into the remotest corners of the wildest places, while always having power on hand for your electronic devices. It even includes a flashlight and a switch fan to cool you down on those sweltering adventures. Available at www.capeunionmart.co.za for R2199,00.



CITY STASHER

If you've ever arrived fresh off the plane at a new destination with a couple of hours to kill, you'll know how frustrating it can be to lug luggage around with you. Well, fret no more! City Stasher is a groundbreaking app that allows you to track your nearest stashpoint - including hotels and restaurants - and drop your bag off for as little at R76,00 for three hours. Each bag you book in is also insured up to R14 225. It makes exploration that much easier! See www.citystasher.com for more information.



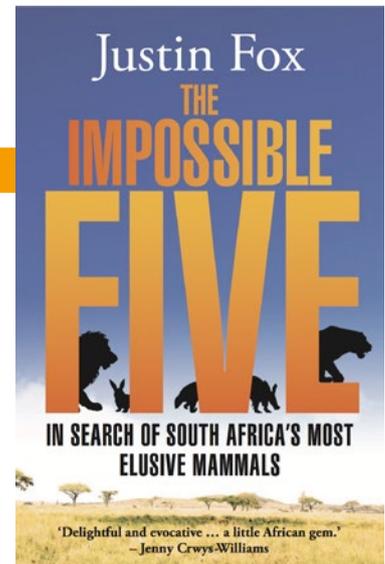


READ THIS BOOK

THE IMPOSSIBLE FIVE

Visiting South African game reserves is, for many people, all about ticking off the Big Five. But what about those animals you've got almost zero chance of seeing? Justin Fox embarks on a humorous, quirky, frustrating journey in search of South Africa's most elusive mammals. He calls them the 'Impossible Five': Cape mountain leopard, armadillo, pangolin, riverine rabbit and naturally occurring white lion. Besides the animals, the book is peopled with a lovable cast of eccentric characters and provides compelling insights into wild South Africa and the local game-ranging and natural-science industries.

Buy *The Impossible Five* on www.amazon.com.



CITY TOURS GUIDED BY THE HOMELESS

It seems like the obvious conclusion. Homeless people know city streets better than anyone else, so why not employ them to guide insightful urban tours? This is exactly what Unseen Tours, a not-for-profit enterprise based in London, has done. They offer six street tours of London, offered by twenty homeless guides. The aim is to show a different perspective of the city through the lens of the homeless with the guides weaving their own experiences of living on the streets into their narratives. The tours are designed to empower the homeless and to offer visitors quirky and informative tours of London's cultural riches. 60% of each ticket price (£12) goes to the guide.

See www.sockmobevents.org.uk for more information.

DO GOOD & STAY FIT

The UK is leading the charge in combining philanthropic action with exercise. A social enterprise, the GoodGym invites volunteer runners from around the UK to visit and help elderly people or to participate in community projects on a weekly basis. It's a remarkable way of staying fit, while making a real difference to the lives of others. Since its beginnings in 2008, the GoodGym has been behind 69, 522 good deeds in 39 regions around the UK. Find out more: www.goodgym.org



EAT WITH THE LOCALS

There are few things in life that connect people better than a shared meal. Most of us want to travel like locals and enjoy local experiences, but this is often easier said than done. Like Airbnb connects people to accommodation options, www.vizeat.com connects travellers to home-hosted food experiences. It's as simple as arriving in a new destination and choosing the food experience that whets your appetite. Think a cheese and wine tasting in a Parisian home, learning how to make pasta with a Roman or joining a supper club in a magical London garden. With authentic food experiences listed in over 130 countries, there's something to delight every taste.

SOUTH AFRICA'S hottest HOTSPOTS

By Lesley Stones

Everybody has their favourite way of enjoying South Africa, whether it's the Big Five wildlife, the beaches of Durban or the culture of Cape Town.

Nobody seems to have produced an official list of the country's Top 10 attractions, with some lists counting Cape Town as one destination, while others rightly break it down into its numerous individual delights. To mark Travel Update's tenth edition for the year, here are our Top Ten attractions.

1: KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

The undisputed king of the country's tourism hotspots, the Kruger is bristling with the Big Five (lion, rhino, buffalo, elephant and leopard) roaming across 16 different ecosystems. Accommodation ranges from your own flimsy tent to luxurious lodges. Driving yourself around is an option, but rather take an official 4x4 game drive to let the

guides and trackers display their skills. Don't miss the bush walks too, to really get close to nature. Even in high season you can still find roads where there's just you, the silence and the exciting crackle of twigs as some mighty beast approaches.

<https://www.sanparks.org/parks/kruger/>

2: TABLE MOUNTAIN

You can't take your eyes off Table Mountain, lording it over the city like a giant magnet. The cable car to the top is fabulous and efficient, especially if you book online in advance. Aim for the morning before the moody 'tablecloth' of mist descends.

Views from the top are glorious and a bistro on the summit is brilliant for sundowners. You can hike up or down too, but it's no easy meander with sheer cliffs and buffeting winds. Book a guide if you fancy walking.

<http://www.tablemountain.net/>



3: THE CAPE WINELANDS

Various wine routes meander through stunning mountain scenery and pretty little towns to gorgeous old wine estates with excellent wines to sample. Constantia Wine Route covers renowned estates like Groot Constantia, Klein Constantia and Buitenverwachting. Most charge for tastings, some run cellar tours, and several of the country's finest restaurants are based here. You can stay overnight at many of them, which is a lovely but pricey way to avoid drink-driving.

4: BLYDE RIVER CANYON

Blyde River Canyon is part of Mpumalanga's stunning Panorama Route, with breathtaking views along every twist of the mountain roads. The 33km long canyon is one of the largest in the world, and God's Window is a highlight for glorious views. The Three Rondavels are another landmark, where rocks have eroded into three beehive-shaped pinnacles. Don't miss Bourke's Luck Potholes nearby, where giant circles were scoured out of the rocks over the millennium by swirling rivers.



5: ROB BEN ISLAND

A trip to Robben Island is an emotional experience, as the infamous prison was Nelson Mandela's enforced home for 18 of his 27 years in jail. Tours leave from the V&A Waterfront, where an exhibition centre sets a sombre tone before the ferry ride. You can briefly enclose yourself in Mandela's tiny cell, then visit the quarry where prisoners worked in baking sun or bitter cold. The guides are former

political prisoners who share their own experiences of being jailed for fighting white domination. The whole experience turns this institute of brutality into a symbol of the triumph of the human spirit.

<http://www.robben-island.org.za>

6: APARTHEID MUSEUM

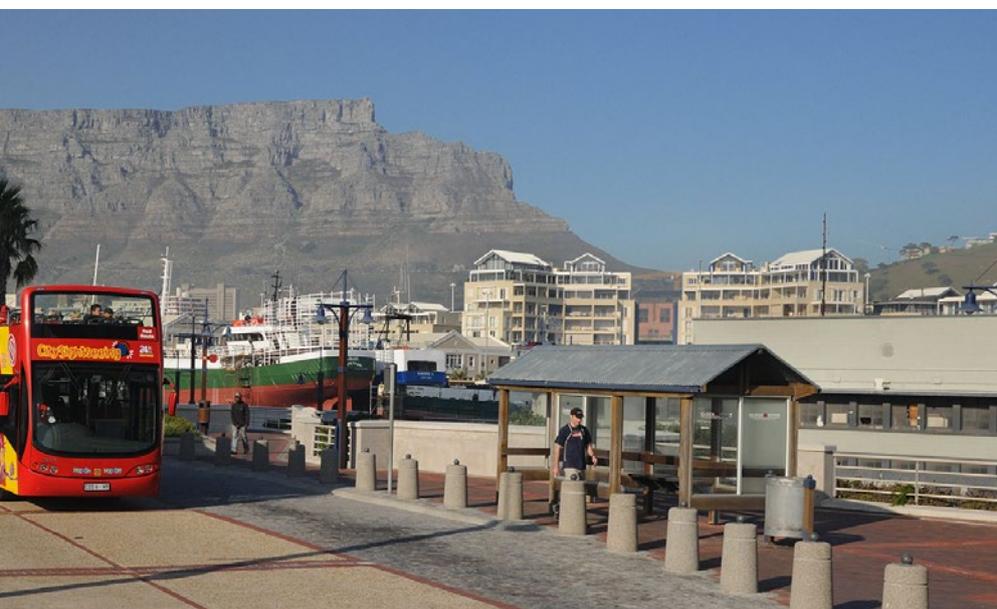
Johannesburg doesn't even pretend to be a tourist city – it's far too edgy for that. But the Apartheid Museum should be on every agenda. You could spend all day here, moved to tears by the battle for freedom and equality told through photographs, artefacts and film footage. Your entrance ticket comes in 'white' and 'non-white' versions, determining which entrance you're allowed to use.

<http://www.apartheidmuseum.org/>

7: CAPE POINT

This windswept peninsula is often wrongly regarded as the meeting place of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. They actually meet at Cape L'Agulhas further east, but Cape Point provides spectacular ocean views and great hiking territory. The reserve has zebra, lynx, antelope and ostrich, and baboons that may pinch your windscreen wipers. A restaurant perches on the cliff above the Atlantic and you can hike or take a funicular railway to a lighthouse at the top.

www.capepoint.co.za



8: CRADLE OF HUMANKIND

Recent amazing palaeontology discoveries make this a tourist attraction on the rise, with its displays of hominid fossils spanning several million years. The recent discovery of a new species, *Homo naledi*, drew visitors in number unprecedented in bone-watching history. The Maropeng visitor centre has excellent interactive exhibits explaining the progress of humanity and you can descend into Sterkfontein caves for a fascinating and educational day out.

www.maropeng.co.za



9: KIRSTENBOSCH BOTANICAL GARDENS

These magnificent gardens in Cape Town rank as one of the world's top botanical gardens and boast 5,000 indigenous species. Beautiful formal gardens are dotted with African sculptures, while other areas include a protea

garden, water-wise garden and a fragrance garden. Pack a picnic, hike through the *fynbos* shrubbery, or time your visit to coincide with the summer Sunday sunset concerts from November until April.

www.sanbi.org/gardens/kirstenbosch



10: DURBAN BEACHES

If you hate chilly seas, you'll love Durban's temperate Indian Ocean. You can hire equipment or take lessons for all kinds of watersports, admire spectacular sand sculptures and stroll the Golden Mile, a wide promenade stretching along the beachfront. Sharks also like the toasty temperature, but shark nets and lifeguards are there to protect you. There are boat trips, sunset cruises and deep sea fishing trips. Scuba divers are in their element at Aliwal Shoal, with colourful corals, ragged-tooth sharks, turtles, whales, rays and moray eels, and shipwrecks to explore.



Shikwari

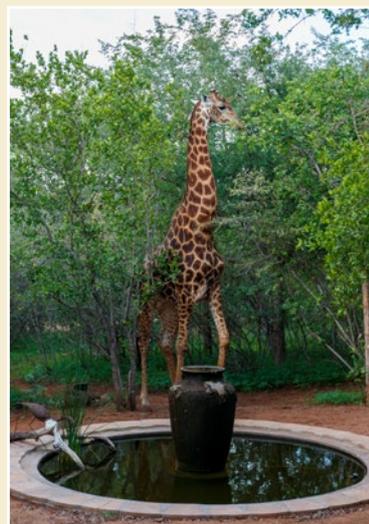
Game Lodge



There are 5 Shikwari suites each accommodating 2 adults & 2 children. Four are tucked away separately in the natural bush and connected to the main area by pathways and the fifth is a family suite closer to the main area with two rooms.

Cuisine at Shikwari has a distinctive South African flavour along with a touch of French and Italian flair. Favourite South African favourites such as Bobotie, Venison, Durban Curries, Karoo Lamb, Malva Pudding, Koeksusters and Cape Brandy Tart are just some of the local treats. This along with homemade baked goods, Pasta and French classic's such as Cheese soufflé's, Chocolate Fondant, Coq au Vin Blanc maybe the order of the day.

Shikwari is the perfect venue to host your rustic, relaxed bush wedding. There is something magical about being serenaded by the sounds of the bushveld as you say your vows under an African sky, with spectacular sunsets, unspoilt wilderness and great service. For the ceremony itself, you can choose the deck boma, or a romantic spot under trees near the lodge or you may want to choose a rocky outcrop with views of the bushveld that stretch as far as you can see; or a bush clearing. For the wedding reception, we are able to offer safari-style weddings and are well equipped to provide a delicious Reception dinner for you and your guests. This may include a traditional braai (barbeque); or "out-of-Africa" elegance under a starry sky, or cocktails accompanied by a string quartet as the sun sinks beyond the horizon. You can also arrange for traditional drummers, singers and dancers to perform at bush weddings. Whatever your preference, a wedding in the bush is a very romantic way of saying, "I do."



GUIDED ACTIVITIES

- Game Drive on Shikwari Reserve –
- See our Giraffe, Kudu, Wildebeest, Waterbuck and Zebra; learn about the flora, fauna and birds.
- Animal feeding (for health or in drought) you may even get to stroke our Zebra stallion "Little Boy" and in winter feed lucerne to them
- Bush Walks 6am in summer & 7am in winter Mornings only.
- Guided Big 5 Safari to Private Reserve in open vehicle.
- Guided Full Day Kruger Park Trip with Bush Breakfast, Lunch & Conservation fees included.
- Guided Panorama Route with Lunch at "Harries Pancakes"
- Open Vehicle Guided Drive for up to 9 Guests plus Guide and
- a bush breakfast to Kruger. Conservation fees inc.



Glamping

HOLIDAYS IN THE UK

Next time you're visiting London, venture beyond the bright lights of the city and discover the charm of the English countryside. Franki Black spends a glorious 48 hours off the grid and reconnecting to Mother Nature.

I've always considered myself a country girl at heart, despite the fact that I've lived in cities for most of my life. My compromise is to retreat regularly from urban life into the great outdoors, so when I was recently invited by Quality Unearthed to spend a romantic 48 hours in a whimsical gypsy wagon on a Northamptonshire farm, I didn't hesitate for one second. Specialists in off-the-grid accommodation, Quality Unearth offers everything from magical tree houses to cosy yurts dotted all around the lush English countryside.

BRIGHT BLUE WAGON

Adam and I met at Marylebone Station in London for the hour-long ride to Banbury. From there we hopped in a taxi and half an hour later arrived at our destination. Jenna Turnham, the farm owner alongside her husband, welcomed us and guided the way by torch down a grassy trail. Illuminated by the light of the full moon, our bright blue wagon stood in all her glory alongside a shimmering dam and ancient oak trees. Inside the wagon, Jenna pointed out the solar-powered light switches, fireplace and farm-fresh honey and bread. I marvelled at the



whimsical interiors: a pink woollen throw, dozens of pretty candle holders, antique books, a wrought-iron fairy fireplace, and a glorious king-sized bed. “Some people paint, but I like to turn wagons into magical hideouts,” said Jenna, before she bid us good night.

FIRESIDE SLEEP

Despite the chilly weather outside, we were snug as two bugs in our wagon thanks to our roaring little fireplace. That evening we fell asleep to the calls of distant foxes and the sounds of crackling flames and tapping raindrops. Jenna had warned us, “Don’t be alarmed if you hear coughing – it’s just the cows on the field nearby.”

SLOW MORNINGS

The next morning we stepped outside to survey the lay of the land. Situated on the edge of a lush field, our private site consisted of our wagon, a separate bathroom wagon with hot shower and eco-friendly toilet, a fire pit, gas cooker and table, and a marvellous fire-fuelled wooden hot tub for two. Life really doesn’t get better than this. Adam boiled water for coffee, while I shielded our scrambled eggs from the wind. After a wholesome breakfast, we cozied up around the fireplace for a solid



reading session - a luxury often not afforded in the city. Adam eagerly threw logs into the hot tub fireplace in preparation for the world’s ultimate outdoor treat.

COUNTRY WALKS, BRAAIS & HOT TUBS

Jenna had assured us that there are countless walking trails on their 400-acre farm, so we took ourselves off for a stroll through the countryside. We walked along bridleways, skirted along the sides of agricultural fields and wandered through leafy forests without seeing another soul. By the time we returned to base camp, our hot tub was starting to steam. But first, dinner had to be prepared. Adam lit the fire pit, while I wrapped mealies and sweet potatoes in tin foil and brushed olive oil on meat. “Isn’t this heaven?!” exclaimed Adam. Glamping (and camping for that matter) is indeed heavenly. It allows you to slow down and focus on the simple things in life. Preparing dinner may take hours as you wait for the coals to set, but this is exactly what it’s all about. In fact, even though we had reception at the wagon, I very consciously packed my phone away to fully embrace a digital detox - I can confirm that it does wonders for the soul. By the time we finished dinner, our hot tub had reached the perfect temperature. We slid into the steaming water and looked up to a night sky ablaze with stars.

After yet another blissful and cosy night’s sleep, we rose by natural sunlight, opened the lid of our hot tub and found it steamily hot. With the oak trees swaying in the wind and the hot water warming us up from the outside in, we felt a million miles away from the city.

GO BEYOND LONDON

Stay at Seren Wagon from £80 (+/- R1490, 00) per night, based on two people sharing and a minimum of two nights. Quality Unearthed also manages a range of other magical countryside hideouts throughout the UK, including tree houses, yurts and eco pods, suitable for couples and groups. *Contacts: +44 1348830922* www.qualityunearthed.co.uk 





WINTER VS SUMMER IN *Switzerland*

Switzerland is one of the few countries where the majority of people positively relish the winter; the season of glistening ski runs, snow-dusted pine trees, fondues and Christmas markets.

By Franki Black



With over 60% of Switzerland's territory comprising of the Alps, it comes as no surprise that skiing is a big deal in this picturesque country. There are 48 mountains standing at 4000 meters above sea level in this small land-locked country, which explains why just about every Swiss person starts skiing when he or she has hardly learnt to walk. Snowboarding, tobogganing, ice-skating and skiing are some of the winter thrills that see Switzerland's airports overflow with eager arrivals in trendy neon apparel carrying expensive equipment.

As much as the Swiss love their winter, they brag with such gusto about their summer that they put their Italian neighbours to shame. Imagine and relive the magic of Switzerland's most famous literary export, 'Heidi'. Summer in Switzerland is lush rolling hills, wild flowers, cows with bells and pretty wooden chalets relieved of their white winter coats. Its many vast lakes shimmer with crystal clear water and soaring mountains become playgrounds for hikers, mountain-bikers, para-gliders and rock-climbers.

Offering one of the world's highest standards of living and regarded as one of the safest countries on the planet, Switzerland is a particularly popular holiday choice among families with kids. Not only is it safe and home to limitless outdoor fun geared to suit all generations, but it also has one of Europe's best and most connected public transport networks, covering 29,000 kilometres across the country. The legendary Swiss pass is an all-in-one ticket that allows you to travel by rail, road and waterway,



and includes a range of benefits such as free admission to museums and 50% discounts on mountain excursions. The network's trains, buses and boats work like - you've guessed it! - Swiss clockwork and enable you to travel from lively cities to the remotest corners of the Alps, using public transport only.

Situated between France, Germany, Italy, Austria and Liechtenstein, Switzerland is a melting pot of cultures, gastronomy and languages, making it the perfect starting point for a European adventure. Whatever the season, you'll find something extraordinary to suit your travel style.

WINTER MAGIC

Skiing

Home to famous ski resorts such as Zermatt and St Moritz, Switzerland boasts some of the world's most exhilarating ski slopes. If you're after magnificent scenery, 125 kilometres of ski runs and winter entertainment to astonish even the most seasoned traveller, head to the Villars-Gryon ski resort situated high up in the Vaud Alps. Every year this popular resort puts on an impressive festival, which sees over 200 actors on skis, snowboards and parachutes dance on slopes, which are virtually vertical. Performers even demonstrate how tandem skiing is perfected, a great option for disabled travellers. Active days spent on the slopes are followed by evening bonfires, steaming glühwein and sizzling fondues. Another popular ski resort is Diablerets Glacier 3000, which lies at 3000 metres above sea level and is accessed via an extensive series of cable cars. From the top, you're treated to panoramic views of Europe's highest and most famous peaks, including Jungfrau, Matterhorn and Mont Blanc - this must surely be one of the most beautiful sights in the world.





Tobogganing

The popular ski resort, Niederhorn, situated in the Bernese Oberland, is the place to go to for tobogganing. Known as a family-friendly resort, Niederhorn is frequented by parents with minors wearing bear-eared hoodies. Even though children from three-years old are surprisingly quick at learning the tricky art of skiing, tobogganing is a slightly easier way of getting them comfortable on snow. Hire sledges at the resort, jump aboard with the kids in tow and sit back for a whiz past fairytale forests dusted in snow!

James Bond

Fans of James Bond should prioritize a visit to Schilthorn, a giant mountaintop reaching 3000 metres above sea level, offering majestic views of 200 snow-capped peaks stretching to the horizon. It was a notable film location in the 1963 James Bond film, *From Russia with Love*. As can be expected a fair share of 007 memorabilia is on sale for film buffs. There's also Piz Gloria, a slick

restaurant that rotates on its own axis every 45 minutes, where traditional food can be enjoyed. For skiers who are tough, brave and well trained a number of intimidating black slopes, which descend from the lookout point, beckon.

Cuisine

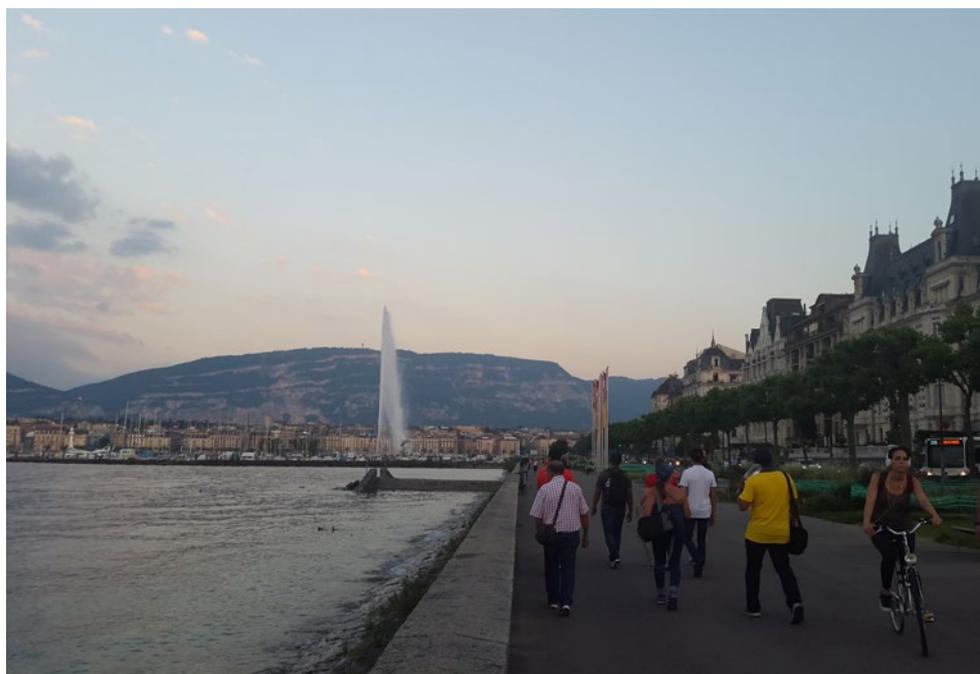
When in Switzerland, do as the Swiss do and indulge in pots of sizzling fondue. Famous for their cheese, the Swiss dip everything from baby potatoes to pickled onions into these delectable pots of melted cheese. It's then washed down with a glass or three of locally-produced white wine. Other local delicacies to add to your Swiss menu include raclette cheese, röstis (pan-fried grated potato served with goodies such as bacon and goat's cheese) and of course chocolate.

SUMMER SOUL & CITIES

Lake Geneva

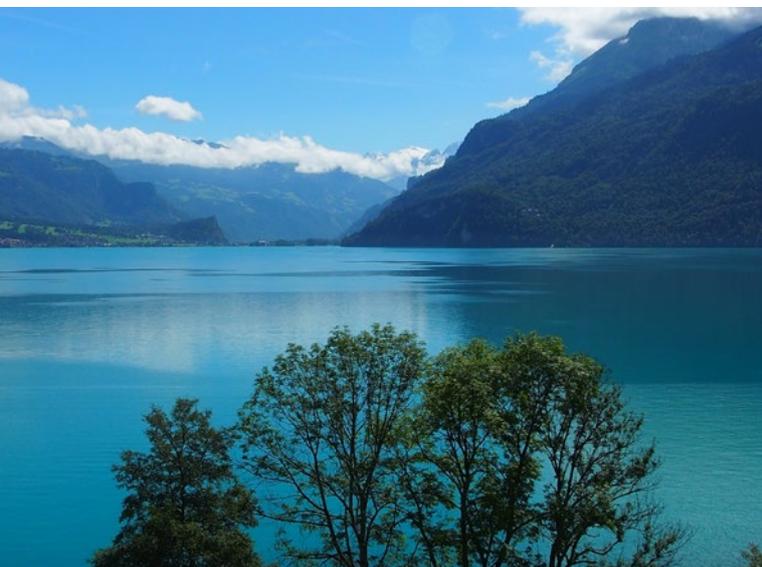
Switzerland is, almost annoyingly, also blessed with a multitude of glistening lakes, including Europe's largest: Lake Geneva. During winter, Geneva becomes something of a ghost town as locals head for the hills at every available opportunity, but when summer comes around, it's the lakeside that takes first prize. Locals and visitors alike spend long, balmy evenings picnicking, dancing and jogging around the lake and swimming in its bracing water, while food and music festivals pop up every other week. A stroll along Lake Geneva's shores reveals the multicultural flavours of this international city, which is largely made up of expats.

Outdoor Adventure





Switzerland's many ski resorts double up as meccas for hikers and mountain bikers. Interlaken, situated in the heart of the Jungfrau region, is not only a hotspot for Swiss watch-shopping, but also the perfect launch point for outdoor adventuring. This part of the country attracts river-rafters, paragliders, base jumpers, skiers, hikers, mountain-bikers and cavers from around the world. Also in the area is the picture-book town of Brienz, Switzerland's famous woodcarving capital and an important arts centre. It is home to the Jobin Art and Crafts Centre, where the ancient art of woodcarving is passed on from one generation to the next. Inside the centre you'll find carved cuckoo clocks, music boxes and sculptures of Brienz's famous bears - some of these sell for thousands of euros.



Zurich

Zurich, Switzerland's largest city, enchants in summer and winter. Situated along the Limmat River and drenched in old charm, Zurich is a summer spectacle, as musicians liven up the streets, locals take to the river and Lake Zurich for leisurely swims and cafés welcome guests for lazy late-night dinners. Winter, on the other hand, sees the city turn into a snowy wonderland with people gathering in bohemian cafes, old men huddling over chessboards and vendors selling boxes of warm chestnuts. Other city highlights include tasting Swiss chocolate at the famous Laderach shop, gazing at Europe's largest clock face, taking in panoramic views of the city from the Lindenhof and walking along the Bahnhof, Europe's priciest street. An inner-city hidden gem and former orphanage, known mostly only by the locals, is the Zurich

police headquarters, also known as the Hall of the Little Flowers. Inside is a large hall with spectacular arches, which is painted in a magnificent kaleidoscope of yellow-and-orange flowers. There are also mathematicians, astronomers and craftsmen at work depicted on the walls.

Season's Blessings

A sophisticated European hub, Switzerland's distinct seasons and diverse landscapes come together to offer an unrivalled destination for families, adventurers and nature lovers. Whether it's an annual ski trip over Christmas, a glamorous lakeside summer retreat or perhaps a farm-stay in the countryside, you're in for a treat come summer or winter. 

GETTING THERE AND GETTING AROUND

Fly directly from South Africa to Zurich on Edelweiss Air and SWISS. For more information see www.edelweissair.ch, www.swiss.com

Enjoy total travel freedom with the Swiss Pass - your all-in-one ticket to travel by rail, road and waterway throughout Switzerland. For more information see www.swisstravelsystem.com

For general information on Switzerland see: www.myswitzerland.com

About the Author: Franki Black is a South African travel writer, currently based in London. Her work has been published all over the world. Follow Franki's adventures on www.women4adventure.com & www.frankiblack.com.



SWITZERLAND BY TRAIN, BUS & BOAT

Home to numerous mountains, lakes, villages and high peaks of the Alps, Switzerland is an incredible holiday destination. Also known for its ski resorts, hiking trails, Swiss watches and chocolate, experience it all with the Swiss Travel System. Exploring Switzerland by public transport, well known for its reliable services, turns into a real treat. Regardless of where you

wish to go, Swiss public transport takes you there comfortably and hassle-free.

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SWISS PACKAGES

Combining transportation with accommodation, these exciting tailor-made packages allow you to see the best of each region.

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- **Glacier Express Tour**
3 days/2 nights package
- **Golden Pass Tour**
6 days/5 nights package
- **Tops of Switzerland**
8 days/7 nights package
- **Grand Train Tour of Switzerland**
8 days/7 nights package

SCENIC TRAINS

What better way than a scenic train to discover Switzerland's snowy mountains, peaceful lakes and unspoilt valleys. Enjoy these unique views and beautiful Swiss panoramas through extra-large windows.

- **Glacier Express**
Travel across 291 bridges and pass through 91 tunnels!
- **Golden Pass Line**
One of the most picturesque in Switzerland, linking the Swiss Riviera to Lake Lucerne.
- **Bernina Express**
A UNESCO World Heritage listed journey from Chur to Lugano with breathtaking views.
- **Chocolate Train** – Includes a visit to the famous Broc Chocolate Factory

For more information or to make a reservation contact World Travel on
rail@worldtravel.co.za or +27 11 628 2319
www.worldtravel.co.za





Reunion Island

FOR FAMILIES

Reunion Island, the adventure hub of the Indian Ocean Islands, has a surprisingly young population with a third of residents being under the age of twenty.





This

means that there's plenty to do for young travellers visiting with parents. With a wide range of adventure and cultural activities on offer, Reunion Island has something to suit every generational taste. The best thing about a family holiday on Reunion Island is that no vaccines or visas are required, so pack up your tribe for a tropical experience of a lifetime.

AQUATIC FUN

Reunion Island is only 63 kilometres long and 45 kilometres wide, which means that aquatic adventure is easy to find. Its west coast is known for sandy beaches and turquoise water ideal for snorkelling, canoeing and sunbathing. Take the kids on a transparent kayaking trip on the west coast's crystal-clear lagoon or try your luck with a yoga class on a stand-up paddle board.

The island's east coast is more known for its tropical jungles and vanilla plantations, yet it is home to one of the most exhilarating water activities imaginable: an aquatic hike in a jungle. Courageous families with older children can sign up for this four-hour adventure, which sees you making your way down a river by jumping into rock pools, scrambling over boulders and sliding down waterfalls. Led by expert guides, all participants are geared up with helmets and life jackets. There's even a traditional rum cocktail waiting at the finish line for mom and dad.

Reunion's thrilling water parks are favourite pit stops for families. Situated in the west and southwest, these adventure centres come with serpentine slides, shallow pools for younger children, splash machines and full-time lifeguards. Another favourite among the little ones is the miniature harbour situated around the corner from the marina in St. Gilles. Here each child gets to be captain and explore shallow waterways surrounded by marshes and local flora. There are small trawlers, ferry boats, fire boats, army boats, police boats and kayaks to choose from.

Perhaps the island's biggest oceanic thrill is whale-watching season between June and September. Keep an eye out from the shore for breaching whales or opt for a guided boat trip to get up close to moms and calves. You may even be lucky enough to see pods of dolphins along the way.

TREKKING

40% of Reunion Island has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, which makes it the perfect place for off-the-beaten track adventuring. It's home to three famous





calderas (amphitheatre-like valleys) and there are over 1000 kilometres of trails crisscrossing the island, offering everything from short walks to strenuous multiday treks. Boasting tropical vegetation and gorges that are almost three times deeper than Table Mountain is high; the terrain will make you feel like you've stepped onto the set of Jurassic Park. Whether you choose a short meander, a day outing or a family holiday solely dedicated to hiking, these gigantic calderas are not to be missed. If you're in the mood for some adrenaline-fueled action instead, opt for a helicopter flip or paragliding flight over the soaring peaks, deep gorges and waterfalls of the calderas.

VOLCANO

Reunion Island's Piton de la Fournaise is one of the most active, safest and best-monitored volcanoes in the world. It's a must-see attraction and can be compared to visiting Mars. Situated in the south of Reunion and surrounded by auburn planes of volcanic earth, the volcano can be perfectly observed from a lookout point. Look out for traces of hardened black lava and occasional flares of orange blazing from the crater. The otherworldly terrain around Piton de la Fournaise can be explored on foot, on Segway or on a guided trike tour.

CULTURAL

Take advantage of being in French territory by getting the kids (and yourself) to learn a little bit of French. Kids don't have the same inhibitions as we adults do and are surprisingly quick to pick up new languages. The Saint-Paul Market (open Fridays and Saturdays) on the west coast is the perfect place for the kids to put their language skills to the test and to taste local food, such as samosas, dumplings, sweet potato cakes and spicy cari (similar to an Indian curry). The capital city of Saint Denis is like a

“BOASTING TROPICAL VEGETATION AND GORGES THAT ARE ALMOST THREE TIMES DEEPER THAN TABLE MOUNTAIN IS HIGH; THE TERRAIN WILL MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'VE STEPPED ONTO THE SET OF JURASSIC PARK.”

slice of Europe served in the heart of the Indian Ocean and is another ideal spot to practice a few French phrases. Order an espresso at one of the city's many chic pastry shops, wander past 19th Century Creole mansions and visit the local museums.

Specifically aimed at young children, the Little Rosalie Train offers immersive rides through Saint-Paul and its seafront. These 1-1.5-hour educational journeys will take you past historical landmarks such as the buildings of the East India Company. Along the way the kids can listen to commentary on pirates and French settlers, while singing traditional Creole songs.

While on a musical note, it is well worth keeping an ear out for Maloya - the island's indigenous music and dance genre. Registered on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Maloya



finds its roots among the African and Malagasy slaves who were brought to the island in the 19th Century. Today it is widely celebrated and performed and most hotels and many restaurants around the island host regular Maloya evenings where both young and old guests can learn about traditional instruments and see local dancing in action.

LOVED BY KIDS

The Aquarium de la Reunion, located in Saint-Gilles, is a popular choice for families with young children. It is home to 500 fish and 200 marine species, all representing the island's surrounding reefs. There are seahorses, sharks and lobsters to marvel at and educational exhibitions where you'll learn about the ecosystems of reefs and the

reproduction of fish.

Another hit among the little ones is the Kelonia Turtle sanctuary situated in Saint-Leu. Boasting a number of large tanks, the sanctuary is home to adult and baby turtles, as well as reef fish. During your visit, be sure to climb to the top of the onsite tower for views of the beach and Saint-Leu.

Found along the west coast, the Crocodile Park is a regular haunt for families and home to 160 crocs, a jumping castle, a petting zoo, jungle gyms and broods of chickens. Time your visit to coincide with feeding time on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons to see some jaw-snapping action.

For those families that enjoy some Tarzan action, opt for the island's treetop canopy course. Built in the treetops, the course includes rope bridges, zip lines, swings, tunnels, jumps, tightropes, walkways, Tibetan bridges and giant steps. Participants are led by guides and strapped to lifelines at all times.

ALL IN ONE

Even though Reunion Island is a mere four hour flight away from Johannesburg, it feels worlds apart. This sparkling Indian Ocean gem, situated just east of Madagascar, offers sophisticated European finesse, infinite outdoor adventures, beach bliss and rich cultural heritage. It's the ideal getaway for the whole family where you can explore a volcano in the morning, visit a vanilla plantation in the afternoon and enjoy dinner on a balmy beach.

GETTING THERE

Air Austral offers direct non-stop flights from Johannesburg to Reunion Island with connections to and from many domestic and neighbouring airports. For more information visit www.air-austral.com

WHERE TO STAY

The *LUX Resort & Hotel* combines Creole energy with colonial charm and offers everything from tennis and volleyball courts to spacious swimming pools, serene gardens and spa. Guests can enjoy fresh, locally-sourced seafood at the resort's various restaurants and bars. Look out for regular family specials with up to two kids staying for free. For more information visit: www.luxresorts.com

Trike and Segway Adventures: For Segway tours visit www.mobilboard.com and for Trike Tours visit www.atmospherepei.com.

Aquatic Hikes & Rafting adventures:

www.oasisev.com

Aquarium de la Reunion:

www.aquariumdelareunion.com

Water Park: www.akoatys.com

Croc Park: www.crocparc.re

Little Rosalie Train Rides:

www.allonslareunion.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

www.reunion.fr , Contact@reunion.fr ,
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DID YOU KNOW?

South African passport holders do not require visas to visit Reunion Island for stays of up to 90 days.



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IT'S A TOUGH JOB BUT *someone* HAS TO DO IT...

*Occasionally, you remember that travel
is a job as much as a job.*

By Lesley Stones

That thought strikes you when you're living out of a suitcase because there's no time to unpack between changing hotels every day, as you do on the typical Familiarisation Trip (Fam Trip).

On a recent trip to Mauritius organised by Thompsons Holidays, 40 travel agents stayed at seven hotels in seven nights.

Leisure activities included a day on a catamaran and a tour of Port Louis, but the rest of the time they were on duty, dining with hotel managers and attending workshops to hear about other hotels and attractions that they didn't have time to visit. The agents generally pay a subsidised rate to join the trip, partly to reduce the costs for the hosting operator and partly to signify their serious intent.

Fam Trips are a long-standing part of the travel trade, but who really benefits? Are they just a way for tour operators to seduce travel agents so they keep selling their tours? Is there any value for a hotel that wines, dines and accommodates them when every rival hotel is doing the same? Can agents even remember which hotel was which after so many fleeting visits?

Rolph Schmid, MD of Labourdonnais Hotel in Port Louis, believes fam trips are essential even though the financial impact is difficult to gauge.

"If I said I could measure the definite return on

investment I'd be lying. But you never know who you're going to meet and you might get a new lead or new business," he says.

"It's important that travel agents get exposure to the properties they sell and form personal relationships with the reservations team or the sales team. Booking online is getting bigger, but some people still want the personal service of talking to someone who has been to the property and knows people, especially for big groups or conference bookings."

Hotels get the chance to show off their facilities and updates, and can test the agents' reactions. "We try to get feedback from them and understand their view of the property, and we want honesty," he says. The exchange of information works both ways too, with agents from around the world giving hoteliers valuable insight into what customers from their different countries are expecting.

Ideally Schmid prefers agents to stay two nights to really experience Labourdonnais, rather than quickly move on to a rival hotel. "The tour company organises these trips to maximise the visits, but if they do too much it can be counterproductive," he says. "At the end you've seen maybe 25 hotels and you can't remember if you saw this in that hotel or in the other."

There has been a big decrease in these trips over the



years as some people were abusing it – like groups that just want free beds in a handy hotel before an early morning drive to the airport.

“We have a responsibility towards our shareholders so we have to explain every room that we give away for free, so we pick who we feel is beneficial for us and could be a source of revenue,” Schmid says.

Done well, fam trips are very valuable, he adds. “It’s product knowledge, and the more knowledgeable you are on a product the easier it is to sell. When someone talks to you about a place with lots of enthusiasm it makes you feel like going there.”

Bissoon Mungrod, president of Hotels de Charme, says travel agents can only survive in a digital world by offering added value and excellent, individualised customer service by recommending the right hotel in the right place at the right price, with the right facilities and the right transportation package.

That only comes from personal experience, agrees Christian Lefèvre, MD of Coquille Bonheur, Thompsons’ partner in Mauritius.

“When people can choose from rival destinations like the Maldives, the Seychelles or Zanzibar we need a proper awareness that there are many more things to do here and this is one way to do it. Travel agents come, they see and they get a feel for the destination and learn everything

about the product. It’s very important that we get their minds focused on Mauritius - this way we see an increase in sales every year.”

Travel agent Corinna Howard of Outlook Africa in Pretoria says information overload is normal for the travel trade, but she needs to cram in as much as possible. The threat of online booking portals means travel agents must offer a great service that the portals can’t, by being able to advise clients on what will suit them.

“I wouldn’t want to come on a trip and not learn as much as I can in one week to seriously get educated about the island and its properties and offerings. If we didn’t see as much I’d be upset because I’m losing business while I’m here. So it’s not a holiday, but when I come back I have really learned something and got new information,” she says.

The hotels benefit as the agents naturally recommend those that have impressed. Likewise, any that don’t live up to expectations or look shabby risk having the agents take them off their books.

The trips will make travel agents more loyal to Thompsons, Howard agrees, not because it’s flying them overseas, but because it’s making the effort to educate them and cementing the loyalty by letting them get to know the tour operator’s staff more personally for future business. ■



LE FRANSCHHOEK HOTEL & SPA

Le Franschhoek Hotel & Spa, situated in the Cape Winelands, offers luxurious hotel accommodation and a truly unique winelands hotel experience. This luxury hotel features 79 en-suite, elegantly finished rooms and suites, and lavish villas. Each boasts breath-taking views over either the towering Franschhoek Mountains, or manicured gardens. Le Franschhoek Hotel is elegantly portrayed in their fine dining eatery – Sauvage Restaurant. Offering diners an opportunity to indulge in a scrumptious à la Carte menu, this Franschhoek restaurant is complemented by warm service, and picturesque placement.

In addition, it is an ideal destination for a team building, corporate function or even a fairy-tale wedding, boasting 5 world class conference venues, seating from 20 to 120 delegates.

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SWINGING FROM THE

chandeliers

By Jo Kromberg

"Will passenger Kromberg please board now at Gate (put any gate number here). You are delaying the departure of Flight (any flight number) to (yup, any one of at least six destinations). If you do not report at the gate within the next five minutes we will be forced to offload you."

I have heard variations of this sad refrain many times as I run, bathing in sweat and heavily breathing, constrained by bulky, awkward luggage and bags of various sizes and shapes as bemused passers-by look on.

But NOT today. Today I'm bright eyed and bushy tailed and I discover a whole new world in the form of duty free shopping at OR International Airport in Johannesburg. Yes. I am early!

VIP treatment from South African Airways (SAA) follows in the business lounge before we board business class.

Our flight from Johannesburg to Maputo in Mozambique lasts only about 45 minutes in which to enjoy this special business class treat. After a quick customs clearance at the beautiful new Maputo airport, we are personally met by three representatives from the iconic Polana Hotel with towels and drinks and whisked off in their air-conditioned vehicle.

We pull up in front of the hotel after a 15-minute drive through the city, located in a leafy boulevard of one of Maputo's most exclusive residential districts. Now just think New York's Waldorf Astoria. The Savoy in London. The Los Angeles Beverley Hills. Raffles in Singapore. The Mount Nelson in Cape Town.

These places conjure up romance, luxury and elegance. And like the legendary names they are associated with, they have history, prestige and influence.



A grand hotel is a landmark as architecturally notable as the city hall or opera house, and very often claims designated historical status.

The Polana is one such study in understated elegance. No pomp and ceremony, just sophisticated old world charm; from the marbled lobby with fresh flowers everywhere, lazy fans overhead to the old-fashioned, classic restored lift with iron gate.

After a quick and efficient check-in we are taken to our rooms and the effect is breath-taking. Never have I seen such a palatial, meticulously decorated and stylish room. There is an undercurrent of Indian influence here but the overall impression is of colonial, restored charm. With lavish references to Mozambique's Indo-Portuguese heritage, the feature predominantly exotically carved furniture, juxtaposed with luxurious fabrics in muted tones of cream and off-white. The bed-head is composed of delicate carved spindles, set against a silken backdrop, while the overhead canopy is framed by an exquisitely carved mahogany frieze.

My room looks out over the sea from a huge balcony with red and white tiles. My toes (and my hair) curl at the sight of my sea view.

After stellar buffet lunch consisting of superb morsels such as seafood soup, prawns, beef and duck, we are taken on a tour of the hotel and told its interesting and larger-than life history. Built in 1922 along sweepingly splendid lines, the Hotel has long been considered one of Africa's finest hotels. She recently emerged from an extensive renovation program, thanks to the Serena Group's commitment to lovingly restoring the original architecture and ambience of this masterpiece.

Offering 142 rooms, many of which are spacious suites, the 'Grande Dame' of Maputo now also offers a choice of

three restaurants, the Maisha Spa, a stunning swimming pool, extensive gardens, an exclusive residents' lounge, a business centre, a beauty salon and three gift shops as well as conference facilities featuring a majestic ballroom.

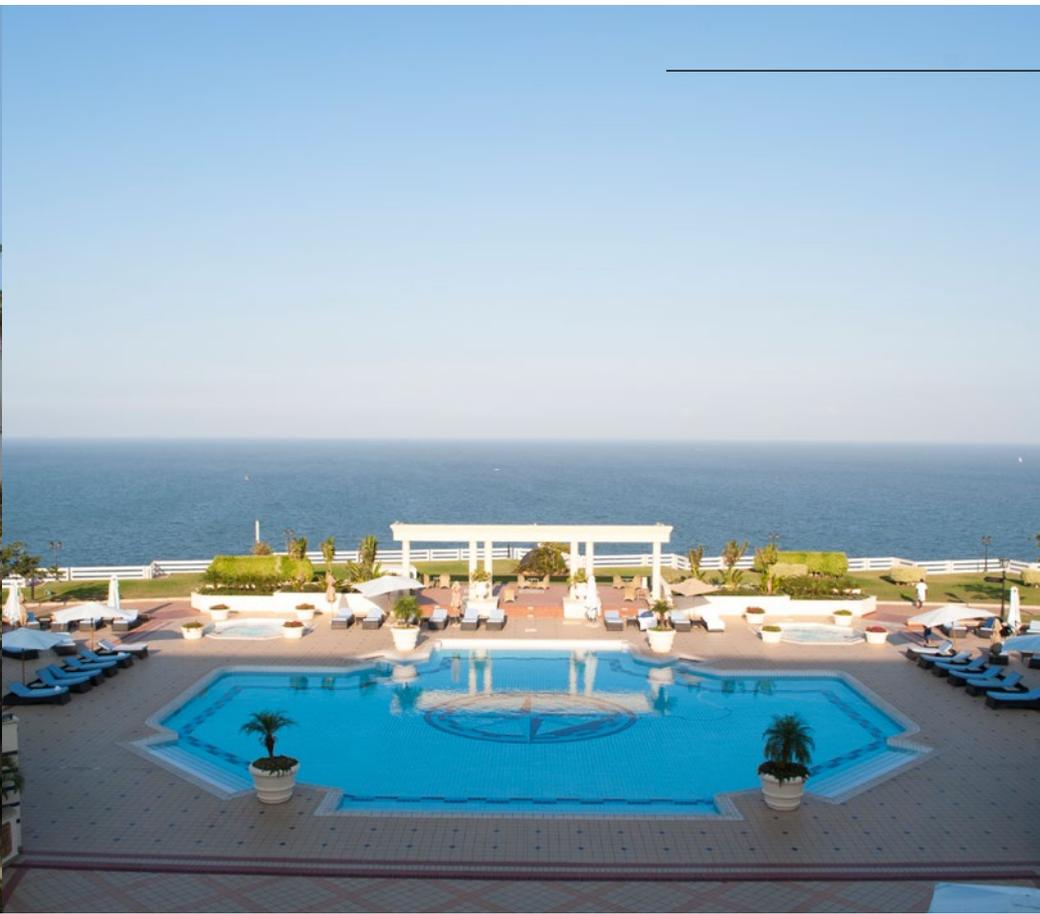
The outside gardens are beautifully manicured, hugging the massive art-deco pool and the hedges look like they have been trimmed by nail-clippers...

We are wined and dined at the Delagoa restaurant that evening in fine style, feasting on a 5-star menu with dishes including amouse bouche (small appetizers) and the finest fish, meat and seafood dishes. The service is impeccable and a wonderful and memorable evening passes in the blink of an eye.

The next morning the heat bites as we pile into our vehicle for a tour of the city and markets after a decadent breakfast.

MAPUTO SIGHTS

Our first stop is the Maputo Railway Station, built in front of the "Praça dos Trabalhadores" (workers square), the former Mac-Mahon Square. The construction of the "Department of Railway of Lourenço Marques" as it was called in the colonial era, started in 1908 and ended two years later in 1910. The remarkable bronze dome, founded specially for the building, was constructed in South Africa and its assembly was an innovation for that time. Our next stop is The Fortress or "Nossa Senhora da Conceição" which is located next to the Maputo Fishing Harbour. The Fortress is one of the most important and historical monuments in Maputo. The history for the Fort stems from around 1721 when Dutch settlers established Lagoa Fortress on the right bank of the Espírito Santo River at the Ponta Mahone. In 1796 the Fortress was attacked by French pirates who severely damaged its infrastructure.



then head off in our directions to loll by the pool like royalty or just enjoy the beautiful gardens or sun terraces – or simply read in your room as the tropical breeze blows the sea air softly into your sanctuary, making the curtains billow.

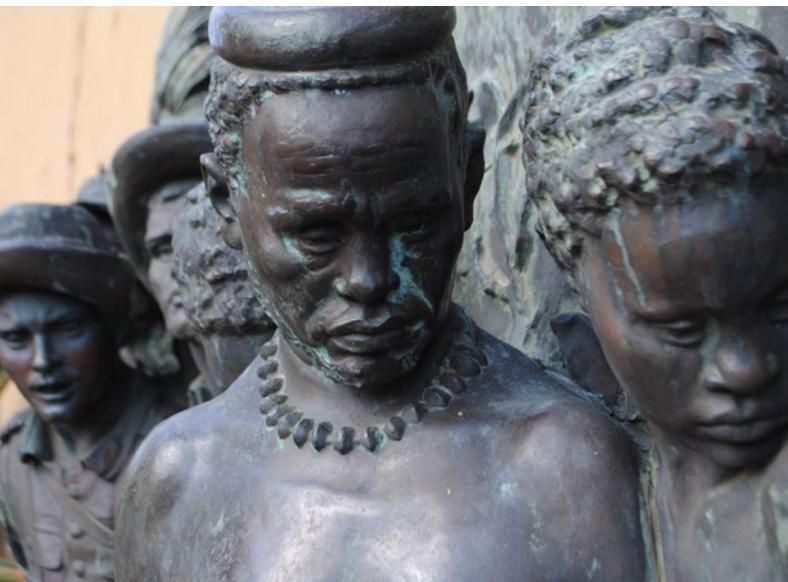
That evening – sadly our last – the Polana pulls out all the stops and present to us their amazing seafood buffet. Barbecued fish of all shapes and sizes, salads, vegetables, beef, calamari, prawns, crayfish, with about 20 different variety of sauces and condiments... it just doesn't stop, and each mouthful more

delicious than the last.

I go to sleep and dreams of paradise surround my sweet slumber. The following morning we are again surprised by a very special treat. The executive chef does a food demonstration in his hallowed kitchen where we don our own chefs' hats and aprons and are encouraged to participate. Unique, educational and fun! It is with a sad heart that we depart that afternoon but I can now officially say I have lived the legend.... 📺

It was rebuilt by Tenant Luis José and inaugurated on the 25th August 1799. It is an inspiring and amazing place and well worth a visit.

There are many other attractions in Maputo but we only have time for one last stop – the market. Built between 1901 and 1903, the building has a “U” form design and was built in the neoclassic style of Anglo-Saxon architecture. The building is believed to be a replica of Aster Hall in Hamburg. It's a hive of activity on a Saturday morning, with a wide variety of produce such as fruits, cashew nuts, fish, meat, aromatic herbs and spices as well as handcraft and souvenirs. A definite must-do! We enjoy high-tea in the afternoon back at the Polana – as is our wont here every afternoon – and yet again the array and quality of food and selection of teas and coffees is world-class. We



MORE INFORMATION:

Renovations of the Polana Mar wing, a separate building on the property of the Polana, have now been completed. US\$4m was spent on the extensive refurbishment, and the wing opened on May 1. Polana Mar has almost the same pedigree as the main building of the hotel and was originally constructed between 1969 and 1971. With the addition of 10 new rooms, the wing will offer 66 rooms over three floors, characterised by light spaces and magnificent views over the bay. The rooms fall into three categories - Prime, Executive and Prime Family. Four décor themes have been used in the refurbishment, all inspired by Mozambique's cultural wealth, fauna and flora and designed by a local firm of architects. Room amenities include minibars, electronic safes, tea and coffee facilities, USB connections and hairdryers. The wing is served by a dedicated team and butler service. Polana Mar also features a Kids' Club with toys, movies and games to entertain the young ones.

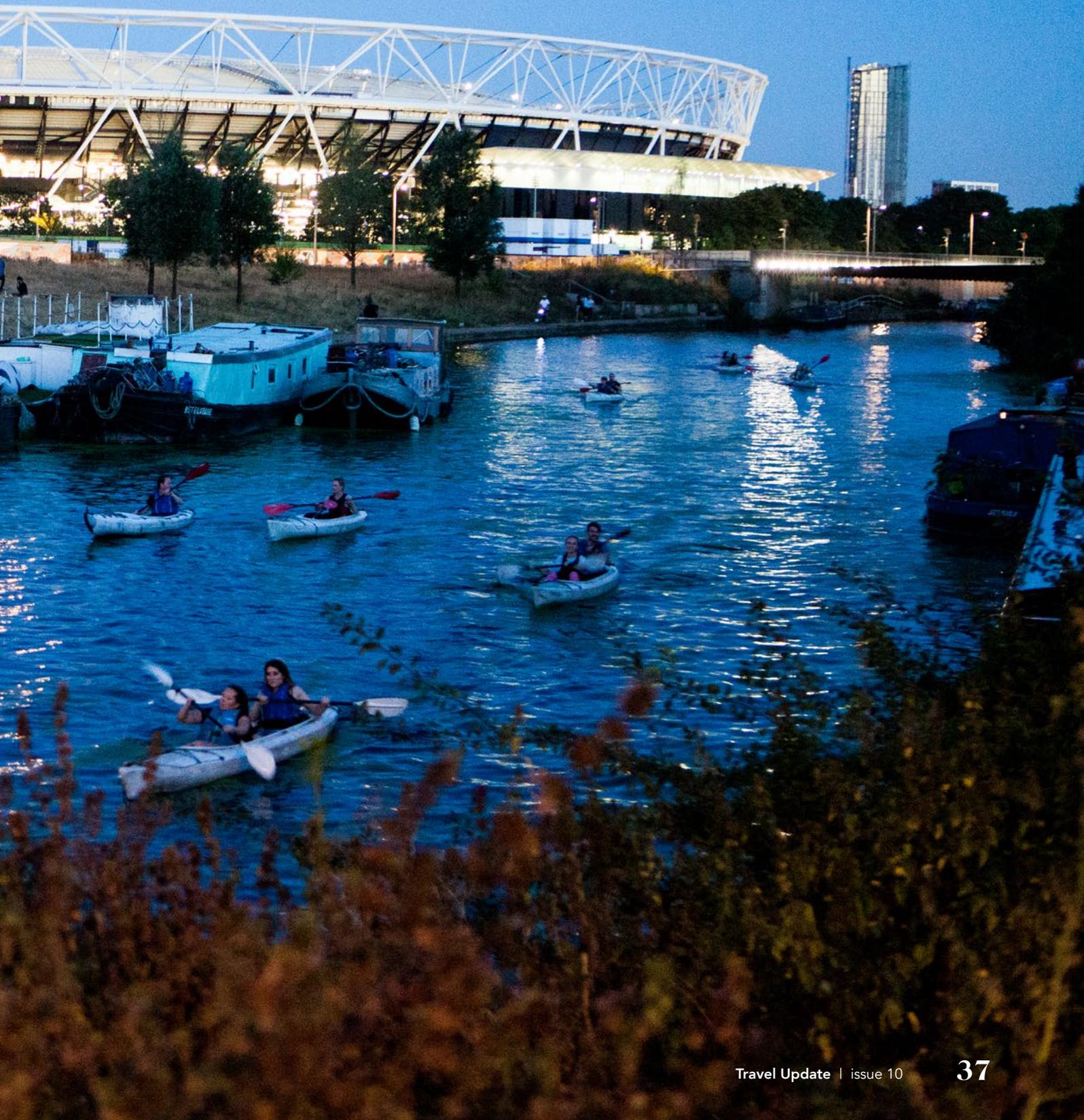
www.serenahotels.com/serenapolana



EXPLORING
EAST LONDON BY

kayak

*By Franki Black
Photographs by Genia Nowicki*



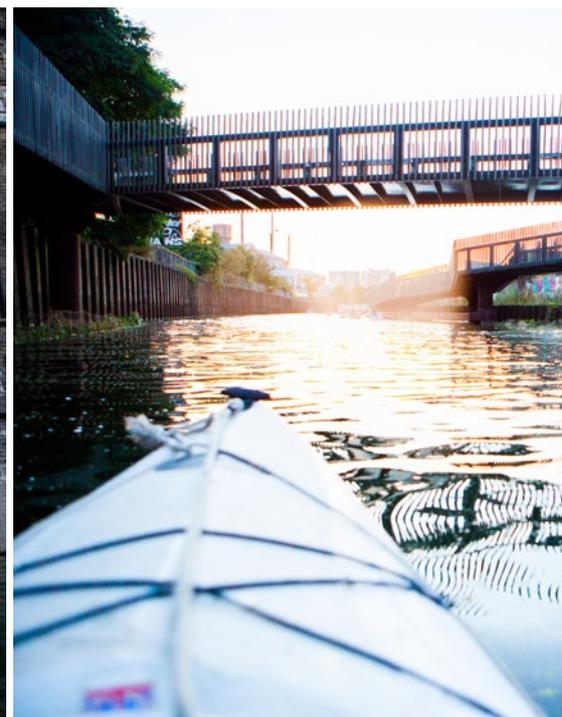


Talk to any old time East Londoner and you'll soon find out that twenty years ago East London was a far cry from what it is today. From the Thames to Walthamstow, this part of London will see you hobnobbing among coffee-drinking entrepreneurs, skaters and bohemians playing Janis Joplin records from their houseboats. Since hosting the Olympic Games in 2012, East London has become the hippest and most happening part of the city and I recently discovered that the best way to get under its skin is from a kayak.

My friend and I quickly connect with Secret Adventures: the go-to adventure tour operator for outdoor

action in and around the city. We sign up for their six-kilometre group paddle that starts in Limehouse and ends at Crate Brewery, a trendy café-bar in Hackney Wick. After a brief welcome from Madoc Threipland, the passionate founder of Secret Adventures, we don our lifejackets and slide onto a two-woman kayak.

Our twenty odd fellow adventurers speak a variety of languages and comprise of visitors and locals alike. Paddling alongside us for sections of the way, Madoc shares his insights into finding terrain for adventures. "There are loads of green spaces in London," he says. "When I'm looking for new outdoor places to explore, I simply plot





the green and blue bits on Google Maps and head out.”

Launching from the chic Limehouse Basin Marina, we navigate our way through thick layers of apple-green duckweed, until we reach the grungy remnants of East London’s industrial era. Forgotten warehouses with broken windows and walls covered in multi-colored graffiti stand tall next to the water, while a bank of swans gently frolics by.

We make our way past marshy scrublands and a footpath frequented by everyone from fit runners to the homeless. At the halfway mark I can feel my arms getting tired, but the distinct camaraderie found in communal outdoor

adventuring keeps me going.

We approach a canal lock, into which we haphazardly squash. For the next few minutes, I lean back and relax while the water level slowly rises. We’re finally deposited onto a stretch filled with quirky houseboats and chattering locals wandering along the water. The soaring ArcelorMittal Orbit of the Olympic Village marks our arrival at Crate, where we join East London’s most trendy locals for cold beers and stone-baked pizza. 🍷

Book your trip with Secret Adventures:
www.secretadventures.org







FAMILY FRIENDLY

Mauritius

When you're planning the perfect family holiday, some things are non-negotiable writes Lesley Stones

*I*t has to be a safe destination, with good weather, not involve long journeys so the kids get fractious, and it has to be affordable. Throw in the added plus-points of similar yet slightly exotic food, and the familiar language of English, and Mauritius comes up trumps every time.

There are several reasons why Mauritius is the best-selling overseas destination for Thompsons Holidays, and those are just a few of them. This little island is bigger on activities than you might imagine, especially if you stay in one of the all-inclusive beach resorts. And with the sobering price of alcohol on Mauritius, all-inclusive is the only way to go if you fancy a cocktail while your kids slurp endless sodas.

Airbnb is also active and you can go it alone by renting a house or villa, but that means your youngsters will miss out on the fun of organised activities and the chance to make new friends. And you'll miss out on the very wonderful opportunity to enjoy some down time knowing they are safely having fun.

As a tropical island its biggest attractions are naturally the spectacular beaches and water sports in the delightfully warm Indian Ocean. The water is safe for swimming because a coral reef surrounding the island keeps sharks at bay, although a few beaches have strong currents. The reef creates wonderful opportunities for snorkelling among vivid fish and colourful coral.



The resort hotels offer free watersports like glass bottomed boats, snorkelling, kayaking, windsurfing and water-skiing if the kids are old enough to learn. Many have dedicated Kids Clubs, like the Radisson Blu Azuri, (www.radissonblu.com) where the club is open from 9am to 10pm and activities include cooking with the chef.

The Ravenala Attitude (www.hotels-attitude.com) is

FOR SOUTH AFRICANS USED TO THE BIG FIVE IT MIGHT SOUND TAME, BUT THIS IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT. CHUGGING UP CLOSE TO ZEBRA, OSTRICH AND TORTOISE ON A QUAD BIKE IS FABULOUS

another kid-friendly resort with a cinema screen on the beach, guided bike tours to the nearest village and a bike tour to the gorgeous Pamplemousses Botanical Gardens.

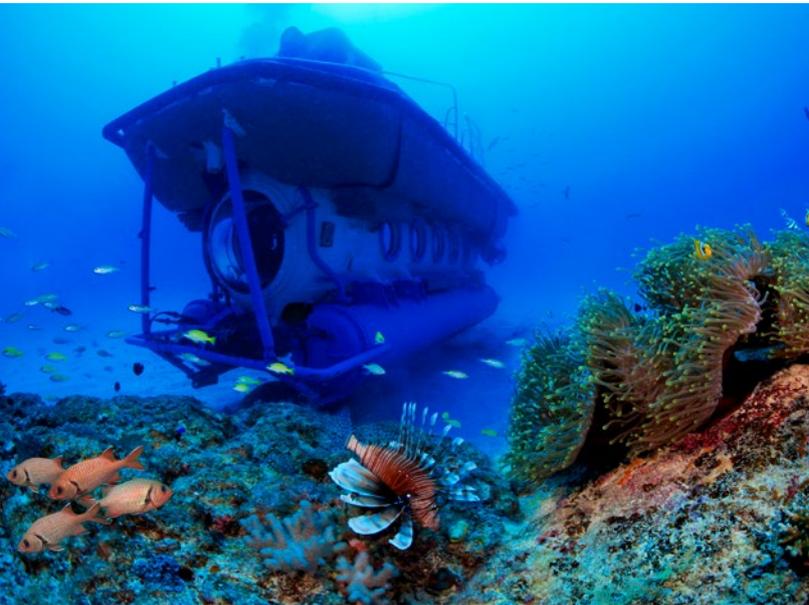
Outside these resorts Mauritius has plenty of other entertaining attractions, so get your bums off the beach and take a look. One of the best is Casela Park, (www.caselopark.com) a nature reserve filled with birds and assorted animals. For South Africans used to the Big Five it might sound tame, but this is entirely different. Chugging up close to zebra, ostrich and tortoise on a quad bike is fabulous, and jumping on the safari bus is fun when the ostrich and zebra stroll up to the vehicle to see if you're carrying any food. You can feed giraffe, ride

a horse or a camel, and walk with lions and pet lion cubs too, depending on your attitude to that. Casela also has a zipline whizzing through the trees for an adrenaline-pumping afternoon.

Chamarel is another must-do excursion, reached along twisting hilltop roads that are an attraction in themselves. Start with a visit to the Seven Coloured Earth, where sands of different colours form clearly distinct dunes. The sands are naturally coloured by iron and aluminium oxides that tinge them various shades of blues, reds and purple. Pick a dry day because the sands are at their most vivid when they haven't been darkened by the rain. The Chamarel Waterfalls as high as the Statue of Liberty are nearby, and you can see them from a viewing deck or follow a trail to brave a chilly swim in the cascading waters.

Down the road is Curious Corner, a rambling house filled with optical illusions that baffle and befuddle the brain. (www.curiouscornerofchamarel.com). It's ideal for slightly older kids who aren't afraid to poke and play and puzzle thing out. The interactive exhibitions include videos showing how tricks are done and plenty of photo opportunities to illustrate the illusions. Most disconcerting is a maze of mirrors where you can watch yourself in triplicate trying to figure the way out. Outside are Alice in Wonderland style outsized furniture and other visual trickery. Friendly guides are on hand to explain what to do if they see that you're missing out on any of the illusions.

A dearer attraction that's worth splashing out for is



the Blue Safari Submarine at Trou aux Biches. (www.blue-safari.com). The submarine descends to 35m for 45 minutes, although the whole trip lasts two hours including a boat transfer beyond the coral reef. An even bigger thrill comes with the Subscooter that Blue Safari invented, where you pop your head into a watertight capsule then drive your scooter down to depths of 3m. It's fabulous fun, and kids over eight can be your passenger, or drive their own scooter if they're over 16. Safety-wise there's always an expert accompanying you and a buoy attached to your scooter shows the support boat where you are and never lets you descend deeper than 3m.

A toothy treat for kids are the resident crocodiles at La Vanille Nature Park (www.lavanille-naturepark.com). There are hundreds of these menacing predators, as well as the largest, oldest giant tortoises on the island, which you're allowed to feed and pet. There's an adventure playground and some lovely walks through lush vegetation of banana trees, palm trees and giant bamboo. A mini zoo features skinks, geckos, fruit bats, turtles, deer, mongoose and monkeys as well as goats, sheep and donkeys. Another attraction is the park's massive collection of butterflies and insects, spanning about 23,000 species.

The capital of Port Louis has a few sights to interest older children, like the Blue Penny Museum with its tales of shipwrecks woven into the history, the Postal Museum and the fascinating Photography Museum.

Head to the market too, with a genteel level of hustle and bustle as you're implored to buy souvenirs of shark jaws and cheap cotton clothes, or to have your name engraved on a grain of rice. It's a typical tropical island market, enlivened by an intriguing array of exotic fruits and veggies being haggled over by the locals.

On a rainy day the aquarium in the small village of Pointe Aux Piments is the answer.

(www.mauritiusaquarium.com) Five nicely laid-out buildings display the marine life in well-lit tanks and pools, including a touch pool for children. Feeding sessions for the turtles, giant moray eels and sharks take place at 11am and 3pm every day.

If your kids have excessive energy, sign them up for a two-hour Kids' Package run by Mauritius Attractions (www.mauritiustractions.com). It's based in a nature reserve where they can see wild animals and play on inflatable bouncers, trampolines, go-karts, dodgems and jet skis, or take a pony ride and tackle a treetop adventure course. It's all supervised by the staff, leaving the parents free to try quad biking, horse riding, zip lines or hiking. One package is suitable for 3-5 year olds and another for 6-12s, so they'll enjoy the company of kids their own age. It's ideal to tire them out so you can enjoy some well deserved me-time in the evening. 

FAST FACTS:

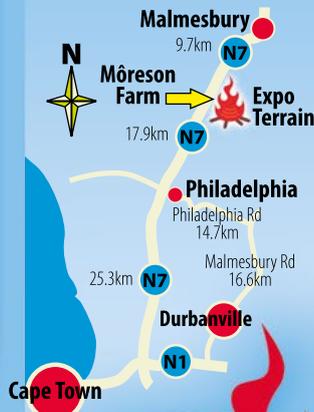
- SAA and Air Mauritius fly directly from Johannesburg. South Africans don't need a visa.
- All-inclusive hotel packages are the most economical option. Thompsons Holidays (www.thompsons.co.za) offer deals where kids under 12 go free to various family-friendly resorts with the package including flights, airport transfers on the island and all meals.
- Taxis aren't cheap and public transport is sporadic, so if you plan to do a lot of individual sightseeing it's worth hiring a car.
- The weather is hot and humid from December to February with temperatures touching 34°C, while winters are a balmy 20-29°C. Rainy season is February to March.

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YEAR OF THE JAGUAR



*Jaguar's F-Pace recently took two of the most prestigious motoring awards in the world. What makes this SUV such a big winner?
By Staff writer
(@travelupdatersa)*

Jaguar's F-Pace was awaited with much anticipation and excitement after its unveiling in 2015. It was the famous car maker's first foray into the SUV market, and being a Jaguar, it had a big reputation to live up to. A little more than a year after sales started, the F-Pace met these high expectations head on, driving away with the award for World Car of the Year 2017 as well as the World Car Design of the Year trophy.

To find out what it's winning formula is, we spent a week behind the wheel of one of the mid-range derivatives – the 20d R-Sport.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS LAST

Inspired by the sporty F-Type, the F-Pace's styling commands an almost aggressive presence on the road. And when it's crouching in a parking lot,

it's near impossible not to draw a comparison with a member of the big cat family getting ready to pounce.

The R-Sport gets further styling elements like a pitch-black grille with satin chrome surround finishing, gloss black window detail and huge, 20-inch wheels to round off its sporty exterior look.

Yet the British car maker is marketing this as a family sports car, so while it's unmistakably a Jaguar, the F-Pace is also a fairly large and versatile family SUV.

In terms of size, it falls between the compact and full-size SUVs of rival manufacturers – it looks larger than a Porsche Macan but is not quite as big as a seven seater like the Audi Q7.

POWER UP

The R-Sport is powered by a 2-liter diesel engine, one of Jaguar/Land

Rover's well-known Ingenium engines that's also used in the Land Rover Evoque and Discovery Sport. The engine might sound small, but thanks to a turbo charger it delivers a solid 132kW of power and 430Nm torque.

It's maximum torque is only achieved from a fairly high 1750 r.p.m, but joined to its responsive and smooth 8-speed gearbox, the engine power is almost always at hand and should be more than enough for most family drivers' applications.

It must be said that the single turbo 20d isn't wickedly fast or exciting, with a 0-100km/h of 8.7 seconds and a top speed of 208km/h. For a more powerful diesel drive, you'd have to opt for the higher spec twin turbo 20d (177kW, 500Nm torque), costing R84 800 more at R979 900, or one of the seriously fast V6 petrol models.



But the 20d is also the most frugal of the lot, with claimed fuel consumption of only 5.3 litres/100km.

ON A DIME

The R-Sport comes out standard with Jaguar's Torque Vectoring system, which can vary the power individually to each wheel giving you superb control of the vehicle.

Through a dial between the front seats and settings on the infotainment display, you can also individually adjust the ride comfort, handling and engine performance by tweaking things like the suspension, steering wheel response and engine power – one of our favourite characteristics of the car.

Yet even with none of the sportier settings engaged, the R-Sport's suspension is very firm. Be warned, combined with the 20-inch wheels, this Jag is not the softest ride on the road.

The tyre, damping and vectoring combination does give sharp sportscar-like handling though, and it's a lot of fun to drive.

SNUG STYLE

The R-Sport's interior is also more sports car than SUV. You're tightly enveloped by sports seats with bold red leather and a cabin with colourful red and blue lighting, trim and detail throughout.

There's no shortage of technology and luxury either – a Meridian sound system, 10.2 inch touch screen infotainment system with navigation and Jaguar/Land Rover's signature rotary gear selector, which stylishly rises out of the central control when you start the car.

Our favourite interior feature,

however, was the 12.3 inch HD virtual instrument cluster for the driver. Instead of the standard speedometer and rev counter setup, the driver sees a clear digital screen that's completely customisable.

In its standard setting, it displays things like the speedometer, fuel gauge and engine revolutions, but you can set it to display almost anything from the entertainment system or engine information you like. You can even turn the entire screen into a display for the satellite navigation.

Apt, we'd say, because you'll want to drive this Jag all over the place. 

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine:	1995cc, four cylinder twin turbo diesel.
Power:	132kW @ 4000 r.p.m.
Torque:	430Nm @ 1750-2500 r.p.m.
Fuel consumption:	5.3l/100km
CO2 (g/km):	139
Model:	Jaguar F-Pace 20d R-Sport AWD
Price:	R895 100

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TRAVEL *news*

THE RISE OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM *Snippets from World Travel Market London*

The international travel community once again gathered in London for the World Travel Market (WTM) in November. Countries from every continent put their best foot forward to prospective travellers, tour operators, journalists and many other tourism specialists. The 2017 hot topics were over-tourism and achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Simon Press, WTM London Director, said that responsible tourism should be the backbone of the industry.

The international water development charity, Just a Drop, was leading the conversation on how travel businesses can add value beyond the bottom line and create greater benefits for society. Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a guideline, travel businesses of all sizes were encouraged to assess the UN Sustainable Development Goals and identify where they can make a genuine contribution.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals were developed through consultation across government, business and civil society and are designed to manage business growth, while ensuring the sustainability of the environment and civil society. Fiona Jeffery, Founder & Chairman of Just a Drop, explained that of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, five are directly linked to travel and tourism. These are:

- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Jeffery suggested that every tourism business should make reference to these goals for current and future planning, as it forces businesses to think about how they can make a valuable contribution to the greater good.

She also recommended shared-value partnerships with non-profits as a means of achieving increasing impact.

At the Responsible Tourism Awards, hosted on the third day of the conference, tourism specialist Libby Owen Edmunds referenced a recent ITP report on hotel carbon emissions, which states that the accommodation sector needs to reduce its absolute emissions by 90% by 2050. She concluded, "The elephant in the room remains the aviation sector, which is responsible for 80% of emissions related to tourism."





BUSINESSES LEADING THE CHARGE IN RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

We take a look at some of the standout businesses recognised at WTM.



Each tour is structured to be as respectful as possible, with no photography allowed, and 80% of all profits are reinvested into local community development.

Find out more: www.realitytoursandtravel.com

TACKLING PLASTIC

Plastics-in-the-environment was a hot topic at the conference. Geoff Brighty, the Science & Policy Advisor of the Plastics Ocean Foundation, explained during an interview that the tourism industry is as much a victim of the issue as it is a cause of it. "Plastic production consumption has increased incredibly over the last 50 years," he explained. "In 1961 the global production of plastics was about 8 million tons, while last year over 8 million tons of plastics went into our oceans." Brighty advised tourism businesses to talk to the foundation about implementing responsible strategies to their business models. He said that in the long run these will save businesses money, improve their brand image and offer an enhanced tourism experience. He concluded, "Otherwise how can you sell a beach in a far-off land that is covered in plastics? You can't."

Find out more:

www.plasticoceans.org



RADISSON BLU HOTELS

The Radisson Blu Hotel group has partnered with Just a Drop to run Blu Planet, a responsible business initiative which focuses on conserving and protecting the earth's water supply and providing safe drinking water to children around the world. For every towel reused by guests, Radisson Blu makes a donation to Just a Drop. As a result, over 15,000 people across Just a Drop projects in Kenya, Nicaragua, Peru and India now have access to safe water thanks to this initiative. Radisson Blu staff members also participate in a variety of activities to raise funds for the charity.

REALITY TOURS

An important part of responsible tourism is supporting the most excluded members of society, such as the homeless and those living in slums. Supported by NGO Reality Gives, the award-winning Indian company, Reality Tours offers a variety of authentic travel experiences around India. These include slum, bicycle and street food tours.

REFILLABLE WATER BOTTLES

An innovative product introduced at the conference was the Water-to-Go Bottle and Filter, which was originally created using technology developed by Nasa. This unique bottle replaces any non-salt water from anywhere in the world, making it instantly drinkable. This removes the need for using plastic bottles and each refillable bottle can be used up to 400 times. Some travel companies are already using branded versions of these to replace the water bottles given to guests.

Find out more: www.watertogo.eu

MICE *news*

TRAVEL IN THE TIME OF BREXIT & TRUMP

The World Travel Market London 2017 Industry Report is an overview of some of the most prominent industry trends applicable to contemporary travel. The findings are based on two polls conducted

in September 2017. The first one comprised of 1,622 WTM London stakeholders, including tourist boards, private sector travel industry organisations, senior buyers and travel trade visitors, while the second

survey was completed by 1,025 British holidaymakers, representative of all regions and income brackets. We take a look at some of the key findings uncovered in the industry report.

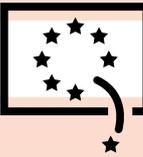
BREXIT

More than half of trade say Brexit has negatively impacted the UK's reputation as a holiday destination 16% of industry say they will have to raise prices Costs rising are holidaymakers' main post-Brexit concern 1/3 say it will have some impact on their 2018 holiday 55% say it will have a negative impact on their organisation.

The study also states that some UK inbound members reported that more than 20% of their EU national employees have already left the UK "because of the long-term uncertainty over their status", and almost 50% of respondents are having difficulties recruiting EU staff because of Brexit.

Also highlighted is how crucial EU workers are to UK firms, especially because of their language and service skills, and that there are not enough Brits with the right expertise who can fill the gap.





BREXIT

MORE THAN HALF OF TRADE SAY BREXIT HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED THE UK'S REPUTATION AS A HOLIDAY DESTINATION

16% OF INDUSTRY SAY THEY WILL HAVE TO RAISE PRICES



COSTS RISING ARE HOLIDAYMAKERS MAIN POST-BREXIT CONCERN



MORE THAN 25% OF COMPANIES SAY IT WILL IMPACT RECRUITING OVERSEAS STAFF



55% SAY IT WILL HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THEIR ORGANISATION



1/3 SAY IT WILL HAVE SOME IMPACT ON THEIR 2018 HOLIDAY

USA TOURISM UNDER TRUMP



27% of UK holidaymakers are less likely to go to the USA 4/10 say that USA is now not a country to do business with.

The report also references findings shared by *www.cheapflights.co.uk*, stating that travel searches for flights to the US dropped by 13% immediately after the election result a year ago. Six months later, in April 2017, the US Travel Association revealed UK visitor numbers were down 6% compared to the previous year, which led CEO Roger Dow to conclude, "Brand America is in trouble."

The report states that in the week following the Trump administration's controversial executive order, signed on January 27, aimed at banning travel to the US from seven mainly Muslim countries, international visitors dropped 6.5% year-on-year (according to data company, ForwardKeys). Searches dropped by 17% in the same week, according to Hopper, the flight app. Then, in March, Emirates airlines president Sir Tim Clark said the proposed travel ban had led to a dip in bookings of more than a third from Dubai and, while bookings later picked up, they didn't rise to predicted levels.

In conclusion, the report states that a drop-off in US tourism is predicted to result in 4.3 million fewer visitors in 2017, which adds up to a staggering loss of \$7.4 billion in revenue for the US, according to the Global Business Travel Association.

Source: http://london.wtm.com/RXUK/RXUK_WTMLondon/2017/WTM_Reports/WTM_2017_Industry_Report.pdf?v=636456423149143122

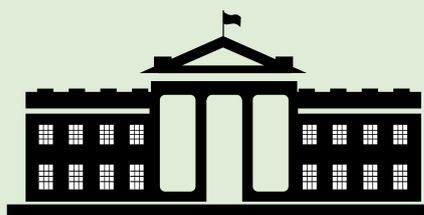


USA TOURISM ONE YEAR ON FROM TRUMP'S ELECTION

27% OF UK HOLIDAYMAKERS LESS LIKELY TO GO TO THE USA



16% OF COMPANIES HAVE CHANGED THEIR MARKETING AS A RESULT OF **TRUMP** BEING IN THE **WHITE HOUSE**




4/10 TRADE SAY USA IS NOW NOT A COUNTRY TO DO BUSINESS WITH

MICE NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

It's luckily not all doom and gloom. We take a look at some positive findings.



and products with highly-qualified meeting and event planners. This table-top exhibition, scheduled for June 2018, will be about networking, and making business connections. CEO of the Rwanda Convention Bureau, Frank Murangwa, says of the exhibition: “It is envisaged to become the leading African event for the meetings, events and incentives industry, bringing together suppliers and buyers from around the continent. Suppliers at this show will include convention bureau, convention centres, airlines, hotels, event organisers, tour operators and AV suppliers.” He concluded that this is an ideal opportunity for local suppliers to get a better understanding of international best practices within the MICE industry, and to subsequently generate further leads for business into Africa. Exhibitors, buyers and media can

email martin.hiller@reedexpoafrika.co.za or follow us on Facebook (@SMARTmeetingsafrica) and Twitter (@SMARTmiAfrica) to find more details.

ICELAND

Iceland Tourism is a remarkable example of how a clever and engaging marketing campaign can boost inbound travel. In addition to leisure travellers flocking to Iceland, the MICE sector has boomed. According to a report by Iceland Tourism Research & Consulting, Iceland has enjoyed double digit growth in this sector since 2011 with over 100 000 MICE travellers arriving in 2016. Its convenient location between North America and Europe, coupled with its extraordinary scenery, world-class infrastructure and rich culture, make for a perfect conferencing hub.

RWANDA

In an exciting move to forward the MICE industry in Africa, Reed Exhibitions has announced the launch of SMARTmeetings powered by ibtm events, a two-day event in Kigali, Rwanda focused on uniting African MICE venues



EVENTS TO DIARISE

There are plenty of conferences and events set to take place around Africa in 2018. Here are a few to slot into your diary.

8-10 May 2018 (Durban)

INDABA is one of the largest tourism marketing events on the African calendar and one of the top three ‘must visit’ events of its kind on the global calendar. It’s a must for anyone involved in the tourism industry.

www.indaba-southafrica.co.za

15-17 April 2018 (Cape Town)

ILTM Africa is a specialist invitation-only event, where the very best travel agents and advisors from across the world meet Africa’s most spectacular luxury travel experience providers.

www.iltm.com

18-20 April 2018 (Cape Town)

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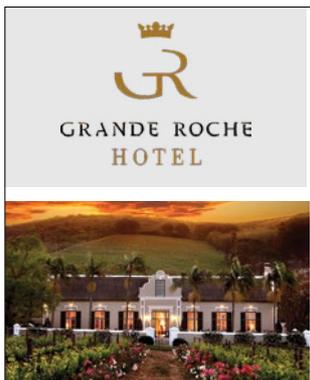
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