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June 2015 Sunday Times



Cornubia

The name that will soon
be on everyone's lips

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MAKING KZN ROAR

Rob le Sueur's Nambiti Private Game
Reserve has a lot of soul



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CHARLIE BRAVO #423-14



You had to be there to fully appreciate this story, but hopefully the retelling will bring it to life for you.

Picture the scene: I am sitting near the top of the uKhahlamba mountains in the Drakensberg with tour guide extraordinaire Samson Miya (see more pg 10). We could have been game-viewing in Hluhluwe, bird-watching in the Midlands or on any of KwaZulu-Natal's beaches. Each is as beautiful and serene as Cathedral Peak, where Samson and I sat in silence... until my phone went ping.

It was a voice message from Jonathan, who runs a surfing group on WhatsApp. In the way only a supercool surfer dude can, he gave an account of the conditions, which were groovy. Samson loved that. We laughed as the butterflies flitted around us.

On Tuesday I was longboarding off Addington Beach in near-perfect conditions. On Wednesday I was hiking up Cathedral Peak. If I could have swung it, I would have woken up in a game reserve on Thursday. KZN residents need no convincing of the province's beauty.

That's why we live here.

So scratch beneath the surface of the glossy tourism brochures and ask yourself: is this sector doing enough to create jobs and sustainable enterprises?

Tourism contributes R40-billion a year to the provincial economy and creates 390 000 jobs. It represents 10% of gross geographic product. In this edition of SPICE we feature some committed people working in the field, some in government but most in the private sector.

Please enjoy the read. I hope the stories do justice to the visionaries, entrepreneurs and innovators who are making tourism flourish.

A final word: We need to clean up our act, and it should be easy. A promenade strewn with broken bottles is an obvious no-no. The beach offering is critical. We need more coastal resorts, and you should be able to sit on Durban's beachfront with the sand between your toes and a cocktail in your hand.

GREG ARDÉ
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tourism special

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A PLACE WITH SOUL

Rob le Sueur has transformed some old cattle farms into Nambiti, a Big Five reserve that has revolutionised his life, provided work for hundreds of people and delighted thousands of visitors

TEXT **SHELLEY SEID** PHOTOGRAPHY **ROGAN WARD**

As a child, all Rob le Sueur wanted to do when he grew up was start his own Big Five game reserve. So he did.

Nambiti Private Game Reserve is a 22 000-acre area near Elandslaagte, just outside Ladysmith, rich in Anglo Boer War history. Approximately 70 000 guests pass through the reserve’s 10 lodges annually to view the 40-odd animal species and countless birds in a magnificent setting of savannah, grasslands, rivers and waterfalls.

Fifteen years ago, Nambiti was nothing more than a couple of cattle farms. Today, alien vegetation and farm fences have been removed, and with the last of the Big Five introduced in 2007, it is a conservation and business success.

Le Sueur, a passionate conservationist, grew up on a farm in Nottingham Road in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands and spent much of his early life fishing in the rivers of Timbavati. He says although he always dreamed of putting this project together, he had no clear plan of how to do it.

“I learned you need to be brave without being stupid. And you need to be prepared to change.”

He speaks from personal experience. Initially he planned to generate income by establishing a number of private-use lodges, but he soon realised that even very wealthy people want an asset that can produce.

“That changed a lot of things. The reserve had to be commercial. One of the most important things I have learned is that conservation has to be a business. It can’t run on fluffy stuff; it has to run on real things.”

Before Nambiti, Le Sueur’s life included an agricultural degree, a listed international security company, a handful of business interests and stakes in a couple of game farm syndicates.

With these syndicates a fair distance away (in Botswana and northern Zululand), he rarely found the time to visit and decided to look for something closer to Durban. At the time he had business interests in Ezakheni, near Ladysmith, but never considered it a viable area for a game reserve.

It was a good friend of his who contacted him one day and said he had seen some land for sale that might be perfect. “I drove up on a Saturday morning; it was midwinter, quite cold, and we rode the area on horseback. Immediately, I could feel that the place had a soul. A place has to have a soul to make it work.”

This, he knew, could be a “proper” reserve, a place that could sustain the Big Five. But the effort involved was extraordinary – 100km of game fencing had to be erected, conservation research undertaken, stocks of wildlife assembled, and then, out of the blue, came a land claim.

“We had just introduced lion. For two years we were left hanging with all the potential sales of lodges on hold.”

In the end, sense prevailed. Instead of fighting the claim, Le Sueur entered into negotiations with the community concerned.

“We sold the land to them and we kept the lodges. Today we run it together. We pay a lease for the land and they look after us.”

It’s a good community, he says. “We are lucky. They saw the benefit of a game reserve. When we bought the farms only 19 people had jobs. Today we employ more than 475, the majority from communities in the Ladysmith area. These are not construction jobs – they are real jobs, and well paid.”

The project took more than seven years and cost about R143-million. The investment by the private lodge owners was more than R246-million.

In the early days of Nambiti the biggest challenge Le Sueur faced was getting potential buyers to visit the site. “Once I got them to Nambiti the place sold itself, but they were busy and the reserve was in Ladysmith, which seemed unlikely.”

His solution was enterprising. He chartered a helicopter, picked up the potential clients from their business premises and flew them the 55 minutes from Durban.

“We would land and while we had breakfast the doors would be taken off the helicopter. We would then fly low-level over the farm, up the gorge and over waterfalls, get back in time for a brunch, put the doors back on and fly home. The guys would say it was the best day of their lives.”

It worked. Today, the 10 independently run lodges, ranging from three-star to five-star, all have full access to the reserve and run at more than 70% occupancy.

“Nambiti is an incredible success – beyond anything I ever dreamed of,” says Le Sueur.

“I learned that while conservation is important, tourism is as important. Running a venture like this costs a fortune. If we didn’t have the lodges paying levies we would never be able to do it. If you want to keep communities happy and reserves successful, you need to develop the whole package.”

THE NUTS AND BOLTS

“When you manage this sort of enterprise you need to think about every aspect – the animals, the ecology, the lodges. If each does well then we all do well. From the outset we established a board run by an independent (he owns nothing in the reserve) and strong chairman. Each lodge is represented and community members also sit on the board. Everyone gets on well. There is competition, but there is also a larger common goal.”

“We have been very lucky with the communities who are now part of Nambiti. We have had challenges from operations trying to set up coal mines. That’s been blocked because the community understands we are a long-term benefit. There’s also been a lot of upskilling, both in the lodges and on the management side.”

“Not only are we creating employment, but the lodges spend a couple of million a month in Ladysmith. Visitors from Johannesburg and Durban fill up with petrol there and probably pop in to the local Wimpy. This was an area that had almost no one coming through it 10 years ago. The economic benefits to the area have been massive.”



SAMSON SHOWS THE WAY

Tourism has changed the life of Drakensberg guide Samson Miya, and his employer at Cathedral Peak Hotel has some firm ideas about what needs to be done to ensure others follow in his footsteps

TEXT GREG ARDÉ PHOTOGRAPHY BRETT FLORENS

What would it take to make Samson roar, I mused, as I huffed and puffed behind him up the mountains on a clear May morning. Samson Miya is a tour guide with the Cathedral Peak Hotel in the Drakensberg. If he were a representative of all the people earning a living from tourism in KwaZulu-Natal, our industry would be flourishing. But what would it take to provide more opportunities for more Samsons and give them a chance to grow?

Knowledgeable, fit and friendly, Miya is passionate about his job and a fine ambassador for the province. Every week for the past four years he has hiked up the mountains, showing local and international tourists his beautiful homeland.

“Look,” he says, surveying the mighty Drakensberg 2 500m above sea level. “It’s stunning. I love this job. I have the biggest office in the world.”

Miya is 29 years old and married with two children. He lives in a village near the hotel he has worked at all his life and where he has been trained. Before Miya became a tour guide he met a Brit, a guest at the hotel, who knew more about the Drakensberg than he did. “I thought, this man comes from overseas and knows more about where I grew up than I do. That’s not right.”

So he set about learning, and now he talks authoritatively about the majestic mountains, the flora and the fauna. Miya takes tourists on a range of trails, from mild to manic. Each one offers breathtaking views and tranquillity.

Climbing towards the 3 004-metre Cathedral Peak summit, your heart feels as though it’s about to burst out of your rib cage as you scramble ever upwards like a crazed troll. On the descent you dance gingerly down the mountain like a ballerina, each step carefully considered and artfully executed.

Miya says the mountains give him a constant dose of good karma. “I do get annoyed with things sometimes, but never angry, because I come up to these

mountains every day and I get peace of mind.”

He says tourists love his hikes. Cathedral Peak was started in the 1930s by Albert van der Riet and is now run by his son, William, and grandson, Byron. The family hotel is in a picturesque setting at the base of the mountains. It offers guests warm hospitality and a range of activities apart from hiking. It is a big employer and a significant source of revenue for the local community.

William says the KZN hospitality sector could get a much bigger boost from the government.

“SA Tourism doesn’t help KZN in international marketing drives, and the KZN Tourism directive to use properties outside of Durban has not been felt to date.”

Van der Riet says occupancy figures have been decreasing year on year since 2008.

“We are fortunate in that we cater for varying clientele. We have very loyal guests who return year after year, a stunning chapel that caters for up to 120 guests, five conference venues, excellent team-building and incentive opportunities available on site, as well as a very strong family-focused entertainment programme.”

Van der Riet says the hospitality sector has to be constantly looking at innovative ways to market its properties.

“It’s all about instant gratification today with mobile technology. Guests want immediate answers – bookings and confirmation. They like to book and pay on the move with confidence. We are focusing our efforts on online distribution, while continuing to have a presence in print media.”

He says the weakening rand is a double-edged sword, attracting international tourists but hurting local visitors. The poor state of the roads, particularly the R74, affects business. Domestic tourists are price sensitive and shop for the best price, not necessarily the best deal.



Smaller, new tourism properties are opening up in his area of the Drakensberg, Van der Riet says, which offers competition.

SA Tourism, he adds, is bringing in visitors from new markets.

“We have noticed many emerging markets, including the Pacific region, Asia and many African countries,” but he says it is extremely costly for private operators like him to advertise in these markets.

“If I were the minister of tourism and could wave a magic wand, I would market KZN as a region, improve the roads, throw in cheaper flights and remove any legislation hampering tourists.

“The Drakensberg, unfortunately, is not the attraction it used to be. Youngsters of today are not outdoor-orientated, preferring instead to spend time on their mobile phones and iPads. We need to encourage parents to reintroduce their children to the outdoors. This is part of the reason Cathedral Peak Hotel offers such a large variety of both indoor and outdoor activities, and free Wi-Fi.”



Byron van der Riet



TREADING GENTLY

TEXT SHELLEY SEID



Brett Gehren has his own small stake in paradise. In fact he has six, from a 16-bed lodge on the banks of the Kosi Lake, deep in the unspoilt iSimangaliso Wetland Park, to a private Zululand retreat filled with indigenous game and riverine forests.

In less than 20 years Gehren has built up a portfolio of exclusive lodges set in some of South Africa’s most pristine natural areas and offering unique ecotourism experiences. His company, Isibindi Africa, employs more than 200 people, at least 80% from the respective local communities, at the lodges in the Kruger National Park, Rorke’s Drift, Kosi Bay Nature Reserve, iSimangaliso Wetland Park and Hluhluwe game reserve.

Born and bred on a beef farm just outside Dundee, Gehren spent his holidays off the beaten track in Botswana, Namibia and on islands in the Okavango Delta. It was adventure that he hankered after rather than the suit and office lifestyle his B.Comm degree was threatening.

He was saved, he says, by a friend at Mala Mala, who offered him a job as a ranger. He moved on to work with David Rattray (the pioneer of heritage tourism) at Fugitive’s Drift reserve, which eventually led to him buying a small, adjacent farm on the banks of the Buffalo river.

It was here that Gehren began offering river-rafting trips and team-building events. The business took off. Still single and “with a huge appetite for risk”, he then built a lodge on the family farm, simple beehive-shaped suites among thorn trees and dolerite boulders on a spectacularly beautiful piece of land. “I saw it as an opportunity,” he says. “I knew that Isibindi Zulu Lodge was perfect for the overseas market. There was a lot of debt but it didn’t feel like a noose around my neck.”

He barely paused for breath. The Kosi Bay project which would result in Kosi Forest Lodge began a year later, in 1997, and in the same year he won the tender to develop

Thonga Beach Lodge (although there was an eight-year delay before building started). The two lodges in Kruger followed.

“With the first two properties we were doing fine,” he says, “but we needed the others to give us the necessary momentum to market to the internationals.”

Gehren insists there was no long-term vision, no blueprint. “I just bumbled along. I obviously had the knack of satisfying the need for adventure destinations and delivering service with it.” Luck, he adds, also played a part. “I thought Kosi would appeal to the local market, but the woman running South Africa Tourism in France came over and, completely unsolicited, spent time there. She fell in love with it and, as a consequence, put it on the European map.” Still today, around 80% of its guests are foreigners.

Gehren is conscious of the impact business can have on the environment. “Tread gently” is the company philosophy. “We try to be as green as possible, but when people pay top dollar they expect certain things. However, we are very careful not to leave a scar, to blend easily with the environment.” The buildings are modest, the rooms comfortable yet simple, constructed mainly from thatch, wood and canvas. His particular haven is Kosi Forest Lodge. “They all have huge appeal for different reasons, but this is where I rest my soul.”

The Isibindi brand of ecotourism has been an unmitigated success. “We offer unusual experiences,” says Gehren. “It’s not about the buildings. Lots of guys spend lots of money on fancy buildings. For me it’s about the experience. Lying on your bed and listening to the different noises in the forest, going on a walk through nature. People want something personalised, something a little different from what everyone else gets. That’s what makes it work. The experience needs to be authentic, which is why it is so important to work hand in hand with your neighbours, the surrounding communities.”

BE MY GUEST

TEXT **SHELLEY SEID**
PHOTOGRAPHY **ABHI INDRARAJAN & ROGAN WARD**

In 2005 Tsogo Sun was approached by a group of women running guesthouses in Soweto. They had heard that the hotel group was refurbishing properties and wanted the old furniture and fittings.

"We thought it was a good idea," says Candy Tothill, Tsogo Sun's internal communications and special projects manager, "so we got involved in helping these guesthouses from a corporate social investment point of view. We called it Adopt-a-Guesthouse.

"We were quite ignorant about business development at that time, but once we discovered what these women were doing and what they were capable of we realised we had been condescending. We changed the name to Book-a-Guesthouse, with the understanding that what was needed was business training and development, not handouts."

Ten years later the skills-based, entrepreneurial tourism development programme operates across six provinces, including KwaZulu-Natal, providing support to guesthouse owners.

To access the programme, candidates must apply through a local tourism authority. They need to have been in the guesthouse business for two years, and their establishments must have a star grading and the potential to employ staff.

The success rate of the programme, which now includes 60 guesthouses (nine in KZN), is 97%. "The 3% who don't complete the programme have dropped out or closed down for personal reasons. It takes a particular type of person to run her own business," says Tothill.

Much of the training takes place at Tsogo Sun properties with hands-on housekeeping courses and time in the food and beverage department learning about standards, especially regarding breakfast.

Tothill says the training also covers "things that sound mundane but are critical, like table-setting etiquette, guest relations and telephone courtesy."

A full-time operations manager ensures that every guesthouse is compliant, and they are visited at least quarterly. On average, bookings increase by between 10% and 20% after the programme.

Tothill says 258 direct jobs have been created through the programme, and down the chain as many as 2 000. "We also place our students at some of the guesthouses when they have completed training. The programme focuses on creating wealth, not alleviating poverty. It's an important distinction"

www.bookaguesthouse.co.za

Phindi Ngema started her Westville guesthouse, Big Five B&B, in 2005.

"I was involved in catering and finding it too hectic. I thought that running a guest house would be easier – little did I know."

She was selected to join the Book-a-Guesthouse programme and says it provided invaluable support. "They made running the business easier," says Ngema, whose three-star establishment was Guesthouse of the Year in 2010.

She caters mainly for corporate clients and hosts conferences for up to 30. "I enjoy conferences; everything is prearranged and there are no surprises." big5bnb@telkomsa.net.

REAPING REWARDS

TEXT **GREG ARDÉ**

James Seymour is a walking repository of facts and figures about tourism in KwaZulu-Natal. It has been his game for more than 20 years, and as head of the Durban KwaZulu-Natal Convention Bureau he makes a convincing argument for the province to spend more money on the business of events.

"The province lacks a business events support fund, of about R200-million, to secure events, congresses and exhibitions. The organisers of these events expect a contribution from the destination bidding to host them. If they don't get the contribution, they go elsewhere.

"Sydney has three different agencies, each dedicated to securing business, conferences and sporting events for that city. To secure Top Gear we had to put up some money, to host Indaba we do the same. It is a small price to pay when you consider an event like Indaba generates a couple of hundred million in revenue for KZN.

"The Aids conference in Durban next year is projected to generate R700-million for the city. It will involve 20 000 delegates. To secure it, the city and province had to chip in R7-million for venue costs. But it showcases us to the world. In addition, it develops the capacity and knowledge of residents involved in specialised fields such as research into the prevention of HIV and Aids. It also enables our local specialists to report in terms of their achievements in such fields.

"Statistics show that 20% to 40% of people who attend these events come back with friends and family, and become word-of-mouth ambassadors for the city and province. This is critical, targeted spend. Domestic advertising campaigns are important, but this is a great stimulus for growing the leisure market. People complain about the city and province putting money into events, but these investments stimulate the economy and the local knowledge base."



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The core aim of the **SEDf** is to promote the development of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that can grow local economies and create decent work opportunities, particularly among youth and women. Through its programmes, the **SEDf** also encourages businesses to make the transition from informal business practices to formal business compliance.

The **SEDf** partners with industry, NGOs and the public sector to leverage innovative support approaches that achieve common developmental goals and objectives. We also believe these partnerships result in better technical cooperation around skills development and technology transfer, which will help to enhance the sustainability of the initiatives, as well as the businesses supported.

The **SEDf** has recently been introduced in KZN and will be launching some exciting initiatives, such as its enterPRIZE Challenge business plan competition. We invite you to visit our website www.sedfafrica.co.za to see what competitions are happening in your area.

We'll also soon be launching a new SME database platform to help you find the business support you need. When visiting the website, please click on the SME Database box at the bottom of the page to be among the first to begin populating the SME landscape in your area.



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LET THE SUNSHINE IN

TEXT GREG ARDÉ

PHOTOGRAPHY ABHI INDRARAJAN & ROGAN WARD



If anyone knows about tourism in KwaZulu-Natal, it is Tsogo Sun's Mike Jackson, a 35-year veteran of the industry.

Jackson has seen Durban's fortunes change in the years he has been involved in the business, and he believes KZN needs to do a few fundamental things to get it right.

The first priority is to grow the business, and the best way to do that is to entice more corporate travellers to conferences and events. These people bring their friends and families on follow-up trips.

Durban's hotels do well during the holiday seasons, but we need to fill beds out of season.

Tsogo has five hotels on Durban's beachfront and two in Umhlanga, with 2 000 rooms, and the group employs 1 312 people at these facilities, of a total of 1 695 in all its hotels in KZN.

"A big event like the Ironman competition, taking place in August, attracts 3 000 entrants and their families. This is big business for Durban. We are unlike other cities in South Africa. Johannesburg is the financial capital and Cape Town gets business because of where it is.

"Our struggle is to get more events here, out of holiday season, otherwise we are just a leisure destination over the holidays and we can't sustain the hotels in Durban just on that business."

Jackson says a contribution from the eThekweni municipality and provincial government of at least R100-million is needed to secure big conferences and events for Durban.

The money is needed to offset the cost of the events, and big-event organisers know that cities are competing for their business, so they look for the best deal.

Jackson says assuming Durban and KZN get

enough tourism business, they still need to up their game to compete internationally.

"We need to create an environment conducive to tourism, and that's down to service delivery, policing bylaws, cleanliness and maintenance. We have opportunities and challenges here. We're falling short."

Jackson says beggars assail tourists at robots and are intimidating. Another serious turn-off is a dirty promenade with broken bottles and litter.

Jackson says the tourism sector is well organised in Durban and voices its concerns to government.

He says the authorities would do well to take their cue from Singapore, which is "extremely focused" on cleanliness and creating a user-friendly and welcoming environment for tourists.

"There's no spitting or urinating in public or broken bottles. Here it sometimes happens in full view of the police."

Jackson says much is being done to improve tourism in KZN. Recent charter flights from Poland bought 2 500 tourists directly to Durban.

This year the industry and government jointly chipped in to host 150 top German and US travel agents, who were overwhelmed by KZN.

"So many people are talking up our city and our province, and so much is being done to get more people here."

Jackson is Tsogo Sun's KZN director of operations; deputy president of the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry; past chairman of the Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa; and a director of Tourism KZN.

FUTURE IS CLEAN

TEXT SANTHAM PILLAY

How do you improve tourism prospects in KwaZulu-Natal? The short answer is: clean up. Tourism represents 10% of the province's economy, so ensuring KZN is visually appealing is critical.

The clean-up has been given major impetus by the Sustainable Enterprise Development Facility, a project implemented by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and funded by the government of Flanders.

Under its enterPRIZE Challenge programme, public and private sector partners collaborate to support business development in five identified sectors.

The Responsible Tourism Challenge, launched in uMhlanga Municipality this month, will see partners collaborate to build sustainable businesses and create jobs.

The ILO's SCORE (Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises) programme will provide training and capacity building.

National project coordinator Juliet Williamson said the success of the initiatives in each sector relied on the willingness of the various partners to join forces.

"An underlying principle is the collaboration of public and private sector partners to offer market-led linkages and support."

Existing tourism businesses will compete for prizes relating to responsible tourism, and waste companies will vie for prizes for innovation and growth potential.

One of the sponsors of the waste category is PETCO, a South African Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) plastic recycling company. PETCO supports businesses that contribute to effective environmental management by providing waste-related training and mentorship.

PETCO's Cheri Scholtz said the company aimed to recycle 50% of PET plastic bottles this year.

"This equates to some 2.3 billion bottles needing to be collected. So we are actively working with our contracted recyclers and other partners from government and the NGO sector to unlock collections where possible throughout South Africa. We believe that KZN has great potential and we are keen to expand our range of projects there," Scholtz said.



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HOTELS & RESORTS

Property pundits in KwaZulu-Natal say Cornubia will change the face of Durban. With a 10-year to 20-year development timeline, that remains to be seen. For now, you've got to see the scale of the development to appreciate it.

Cornubia is a stone's throw away from Mount Edgecombe, but is obscured by hills covered in sugar cane. Behind that, huge swathes of land have been graded, with lots apportioned and sold off. New roads laid out on a neat grid separate them.

The elements are there for success: it is a superbly well-situated site with easy access to the N2 and 3km from Umhlanga Ridge, the commercial heart of north Durban.

It is also strategically placed at the nexus between Umhlanga, Mount Edgecombe and Phoenix, and if two big commercial developments there are anything to go by, it promises to live up to expectations and exceed the R20-billion the government hopes the private sector will plough into the ground over the next 20 years.

Frontrunners in the commercial and industrial developments include Investec Property, which is building an 85 000m², R1.8-billion regional shopping centre, and Redefine, which has bought

146 610m² of land it will turn into 90 000m² of warehousing, built to tenants' specifications (upwards of 900m² each).

Both Investec Property and Redefine have started earthworks, and units in Redefine's Ushukela Industrial Park should be ready for occupation in February.

Other big local property companies are also involved. ZenProp has already developed buildings worth R190-million for clients and JT Ross has bought big chunks of land totalling 160 000m².

The total investment in Cornubia is already R3.8-billion, according to Tongaat Hulett, and a further R3.1-billion has been committed for the next two to three years.

Cornubia offers 750 hectares of developable land, 15km south of King Shaka International Airport, and has been deemed a priority project by the government.

It envisages various components, including warehousing, offices, retail and residential nodes. Town planners say 100 000 people will eventually live there.

Out of the sugar cane things are starting to take shape, including a collection of 2 000 double-storey, low-cost row houses.

The government has earmarked 392ha for parks, gardens and rehabilitated wetlands. That, and private landscaping, should improve the housing estate's appeal over time.

A development committee has been established, drawing on representation from homeowners who are liaising with managers in the adjoining industrial estate to link job opportunities and labour resources.

A 20-member committee has also volunteered to clean the streets, and eThekweni municipality is establishing an orchard next to the housing estate. A total of 691 people living at Cornubia are employed there, 403 in construction, 206 in the businesses that have already started operating in the industrial estate and 82 in greening initiatives, according to Tongaat Hulett.

If the brochures are anything to go by, Investec Property's outdoor, lifestyle shopping centre might extend the area's appeal.

One of the key drivers of the project is Investec Property's Iain Burns, who has been involved for the past seven years. He says leasing to all the major chains is well under way.

Virgin Active is moving into the centre, Edgars will have a 6 000m² store, and Outdoor

Warehouse, Clicks, Dischem, Checkers, Pick n Pay and Woolworths are among the others already committed to the development.

The centre will have high visibility from the N2 and the M41, and stores will be connected by landscaped paths, bridges and malls. At the heart of the development is a "town square", with restaurants surrounding it.

Due for completion in September 2017, the centre's planners seem keen to complement rather than compete with nearby Gateway.

Burns told SPICE: "We will provide the most comprehensive grocery offering north of Durban, with a new-look Pick n Pay, substantial Woolworths food offering, including a spectacular coffee shop focusing on Cornubia's outdoor element, and a

large, full-line Checkers store, with parking to service these stores. There will be 1 700 ground-level parkings.

"Of particular interest to the mountainbiking fraternity is that a 100km trail will start in the greenbelt adjacent to the centre. It will take cyclists on a trail to King Shaka airport and back. We are at an advanced stage of negotiations with Cycle Lab for their first store in Durban, so bike enthusiasts, as well as members of the new Virgin Active, will be able to access the trail directly from our centre."

The upgrade of the existing interchange near Gateway, as well as the planned bridge connecting Cornubia Boulevard with Umhlanga (it will be a 3.5km ride, and construction begins in the next few months), will unlock a massive catchment area

and make the centre more accessible to La Lucia, Umhlanga and Prestondale shoppers.

Cornubia is being developed in a partnership between the government and Tongaat Hulett Developments.

THD's Mike Deighton says: "Cornubia represents a unique opportunity to prove concepts and showcase what can be achieved when government and business work together, combining their complementary strengths, to plan and implement large and complex projects."

Grant Smith from JT Ross says: "We believe in this new investment node. Our city has a significant shortage of industrial land with good access and immediate services. We see a new Riverhorse emerging at Cornubia."

NORTHERN EXPOSURE

Welcome to Cornubia, 750 hectares surrounded by sugar cane fields, and a future property powerhouse that will boost the economy of KwaZulu-Natal

TEXT GREG ARDÉ PHOTOGRAPHY RUSSELL CLUVER

Redefine, the listed property company, is investing more than half a billion rand in Cornubia. SPICE asked its industrial asset manager, Johann Nell, why it was developing Ushukela Industrial Park there.

What was the motivation for Redefine buying at Cornubia? Cornubia is strategically placed within the northern corridor and connects with Umhlanga, Phoenix, Waterloo, Verulam and the Dube TradePort via the R102. The precinct is easily accessible from the N2 via the M41 and Cornubia Boulevard. It is close to the Dube TradePort, and is strategically located to benefit from its proximity to the Aerotropolis and office precincts around Umhlanga and La Lucia.

You have purchased 146 610m² at Cornubia. What are you doing with the land? Redefine has recently started construction on its Ushukela Industrial Park, a mid-sized unit development. Units range between 900m² and 3 000m² and can be combined to suit tenants' needs.

What is Redefine's strategy and long-term view on Cornubia and KZN? Redefine is driven to remain a property supplier of choice, focused on creating efficient warehousing and industrial space that can be tailored to suit our clients' requirements. In addition to the Ushukela development, Redefine owns four land parcels within Cornubia, with developable bulk of approximately 60 000m². These land parcels will be utilised for tenant-driven developments, in consultation with qualified enquiries specifically focused on logistics and warehouse use. Redefine Properties has identified Cornubia and the greater KZN warehousing market as an important region for investment.

Redefine's industrial complex is under way. How big is it and when will it be ready for occupation? We are on track to complete the 27 000m² Ushukela Industrial Park by the

end of January. The Ushukela brochure will be made available in August. Earlier enquiries for detailed information can be accommodated on a one-on-one basis.

What percentage of Redefine's total portfolio does Cornubia represent? Once fully developed, Cornubia will comprise approximately 30% of Redefine's KZN industrial portfolio and 5% of the industrial portfolio nationally.

What interest is Redefine getting from Gauteng clients for these facilities in Durban? We have a national footprint and the clients engaging with us have national and international interests. At Cornubia we are able to cater for local, national and international tenants.

What challenges do property funds have with investing in KZN? Accessing large tracts of flat, serviced land along main arterial routes at reasonable prices is always a challenge.

What are the differences between developing in Gauteng and KZN? Town planning and building-control processes in the eThekweni Municipality are different, and in Redefine's experience more efficient, but this will vary from case to case. Building material specifications can differ due to moisture and corrosion in KZN. Construction costs in KZN are generally higher than Gauteng by 8% to 10%, largely due to greater competition between the larger construction companies in Gauteng.

What impact are growing logistics costs having on the demand for warehousing in and around Durban as opposed to businesses still

transporting goods to Gauteng before breaking for redistribution? Logistics and supply-chain management is a dynamic environment with ever-changing deliverables. The reality is that it can take anywhere from 12 to 24 months to deliver property to the market. Redefine continuously tries to obtain intellectual information from the logistics and warehousing sector to enable us to provide generically designed warehouses to the market, thereby facilitating fast-tracked supply-chain solutions.

Is Redefine looking for a specific type of tenant for Cornubia? In the case of the Ushukela Industrial Park, we have included automated segmented doors and access to the fire sprinkler system throughout the park. We believe this will cater for smaller warehouse-type operations, as well as hi-tech kitting-type businesses that require a smaller industrial footprint. Redefine intends developing the balance of the land with a specific focus on fast-moving consumer goods and logistics-type warehousing, which could include cold storage solutions.



TUNED IN, SWITCHED ON

Childhood in the chaotic 1980s in Umlazi gave media executive Andile Khumalo the mettle he needed to make it to the top – and to give back

TEXT SIBUSISO NGALWA PHOTOGRAPHY WALDO SWIEGERS

Andile Khumalo is the embodiment of an astute entrepreneur. He's articulate, self-assured, and part of a growing set of successful young KwaZulu-Natal business people making a go of things outside the province.

A chartered accountant, he counts specialist banking and asset management group Investec among his past employers. Now he's the co-owner and chief investment officer at MSG Afrika Investment Holdings, with media executive Given Mkhari as his partner. In his 37 years he has achieved a lot.

We sat down for an interview after an entrepreneurship workshop in Umhlanga hosted by MyStartUp, an online-platform Khumalo co-founded which assists aspiring entrepreneurs. "A lot of the success that people experience begins with someone else giving them a shot," he says.

Khumalo comes from a family of teachers and his maternal grandfather, a principal, was the biggest influence in his life. Growing up in Umlazi in the early 1980s at the height of political violence was tough, he says, but the guidance from his family carried him through.

"There was a constant reminder about being the best that you can be. At the time, the element that my family stressed was education. I was born in 1978, when the country was getting to one of the toughest periods of our history. During the 80s this country was on fire. That was the last push."

His development from University of KwaZulu-Natal accounting graduate to influential business player is a tale he tells with the fervour that suggests a man pleased with his progress in life.

And why not? MSG Afrika's investment portfolio covers 15 companies in the media, communications and ICT sectors, including

radio stations Capricorn FM and Power FM, TV production company Quizzical Pictures and PR/event management company The Communications Firm. He is the managing director at Joburg talk station Power FM, where he also hosts a business show, and treasurer of the Black Business Council.

The group has licences for Eastern Cape and Free State radio stations which will be music-driven.

"Most of the commercial radio stations don't necessarily fulfil all the needs in the market. The insight we have at MSG is that we live in a time where nothing was built with black people in mind. The spectrum planning in our industry didn't have the black middle class in mind," he says.

"Radio presents the greatest opportunity of a good business. It makes you feel you are building something. It's also a lot of fun."

Fun and passion are part of the MSG philosophy. "I'm fearful of losing time more than losing money. You can never alleviate the risk of losing money. I often worry about capacity and spending time on things that are not going to be worth the effort."

"The thing about passion is that it helps you get through when times are really hard. I'll never do anything in business that I'm not passionate about."

Like any businessman, Khumalo will tell you there have been good and bad times, and a few lessons learnt. In 2009, for example, he and his partners watched as the call-centre company they had invested in crumbled at the height of the global financial crisis. About 300 jobs were lost, with the millions they had invested.

"I remember the effort it took to try and rescue the business. But it didn't feel right because the business was something I wasn't passionate about," he says.

resilience
courage
vision
ambition
creativity
curiosity
dedication



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THE EYES HAVE IT

Angela Buckland sees the world differently from most of us, but her photography lets us share her distinctive vision

BY BETH STOLS
PHOTOGRAPHY ANGELA BUCKLAND

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT
Parkour at Moses
Mabhida Stadium
ABOVE
Architectural detail at
Durban beachfront

ABOVE, RIGHT
NOW and THEN installation



The ability to elevate your imagination through photography involves raw skill and an understanding of processes. These are traits artist and educator Angela Buckland has honed during her 20 years in the industry. Her signature work is instinctive and emotional, and it's rare to find a photographer who so naturally and intuitively encapsulates her subjects.

Buckland's journey has included local and international exhibitions, private and public collections, diverse commissions and three art books. She studied fine art at the University of Natal but changed courses and went to Technikon Natal to study photography.

Her vision and flair were noted, and in her fourth year she was awarded the Emma Smith Overseas Scholarship. She completed her MA with distinction at Birmingham City University then established the first photography course in the Fine Arts Department at DUT, taught for many years, and has lectured at Vega School of Brand Leadership in La Lucia.

This year Buckland is working with iSimangaliso Wetland Park in the greater St Lucia area, teaching staff members photography. The course includes aerial photography, portraiture, land photography, light and visual literacy. Buckland is adamant she's not there to displace professionals but is empowering the community with skills appropriate to their work.

She is drawn to social issues and purpose; her art is more meaningful to her when she attempts to offer an insight into the lives of others. Two years ago she collaborated with Oxfam Australia and Oxfam Great Britain, designing and facilitating a workshop for economic and political refugees living in Durban. The content used photography to increase the resilience of refugees and decrease their vulnerability.

"Some refugees migrate from remote rural areas into an urban environment and are unaware of certain urban hazards, like electricity. Using plastic disposable cameras, I trained leaders in the refugee community, who then dispersed and connected with new refugees coming into the city."

The process facilitated an incredible connection between locals, foreigners and groups of people

who had never met one another. "The product was meaningful, insightful and often deeply moving, as people had the opportunity to tell their stories in a safe context." The final edited work was exhibited in Durban and Australia, then became a resource for Oxfam to show how photography is able to innovate and educate.

Buckland has developed "Photogarage" workshops for individuals and corporate clients with a thirst for photographic inspiration. Recently she facilitated a workshop for a corporate client aimed at building creative thinking among leaders and developing focused self-awareness, consciousness and mindfulness.

Her creative voice is never silent. She is working on a new personal project and is conceptualising, editing, consolidating and getting the logic together with test prints. "It's a portrait series inspired by Nicholas Nixon. I have been photographing my daughter and her childhood friends since 2011. The work documents the transition from childhood to adulthood through the lens. As a mother, this transition is overwhelming and too irresistible not to record."

Buckland's take on KwaZulu-Natal is noteworthy. "What's important about Durban, and what we fail to recognise, is that Durban is such an incubator for creative productivity. Unfortunately this incubation can't sustain itself and it's a well-documented fact that creative people leave. It is one of Durban's greatest losses."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Zip Zip my Brain Harts, an emotional and personal account of a glimpse into the social context of disability within families

Light on a Hill, a commission documenting the building of the new Constitutional Court

Quiet Place, a collaboration with Italian architect Giovanni Vio

Documenting the full Constitutional Court chamber on the occasion of the retirement of Chief Justice Arthur Chaskalson



Virginia Dlamini from Harding, pensioner
Resident 27 yrs



Makhosi Mthethwa from uMkomaas, bead seller
Resident 30 yrs



Manxumalo from Johannesburg, beader
Resident 36 yrs



NJ Maphumulo from Ndwedwe, street trader
Resident 8 yrs



Goodness from Hammarisdale, dressmaker
Resident 38 yrs



Selina from Mithatha, pensioner
Resident 28 yrs



Nonkululeko Shoji from Ndwedwe, unemployed
Resident 3 yrs



Mrs Norah Hlamisa from Verulam, temporary domestic worker
Resident 15 yrs



NM Muthwa from Mlume, street trader
Resident 25 yrs



Q & A

What's your favourite subject to photograph?
Issues that matter.

What inspires you in KZN? The lifestyle.

Which photographer's work has influenced you the most? Martin Parr.
If you had a substantial sum to invest in a print? It would be a vintage print by either Santu Mofokeng or David Goldblatt.

How destructive is the camera phone for your industry? It's fantastic that photography has become so accessible. I believe the future lies in high-end commercial photographers and the well-versed, trained individuals who really understand their craft as a medium.

Photography – passion or business? Definitely passion.

4 MOST IMPORTANT PHOTOGRAPHIC TIPS

- › It's not about the camera.
- › "Make" pictures, don't "take" pictures.
- › Use your knees.
- › Ask yourself: What's unique about this moment?

LEFT Selected images of residents and their belongings from the artwork 'Block A, Thokoza Women's Hostel', an installation of 699 prints, that is touring nationally. Thokoza Women's Hostel, in Durban, is the oldest in South Africa, built in 1925



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Model shown with optional extras.

SWELL PASTIME

The sea is the fount of Durban's prosperity, but as well as providing the rest of the world with a gateway to Africa, it offers residents and visitors a wealth of leisure activities

TEXT **SHELLEY SEID** PHOTOGRAPHY **ROGAN WARD**

Durban harbour is the lifeblood of the city and the gateway to Africa, says Barry Meehan, the driving force behind the Durban Boat and Lifestyle Show, now in its 12th year. "Without the wealth generated from it, Durban would not be what it is today – a modern metropolis which is rapidly becoming the African playground of the rich and famous."

Meehan's show, in mid-July, has a starring role in attracting wealth and influence to KwaZulu-Natal's coast. On show this year will be a Riviera 77 enclosed flybridge power boat (a steal at R3.3-million), a Fountaine Pajot Salina 48 (an elegant catamaran) and a Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 379, a monohull sailing boat with a beautiful interior, designed mainly for coastal cruising.

All will be available for inspection courtesy of Boating World, a Durban company that supplies the most prestigious brands of boats. CEO Derrick Levy says the KZN market is an exciting area to be in. "The warm Indian Ocean brings in an abundance of fish, and the climate is conducive to boating throughout the year. Added to that is Durban's proximity to Mozambique, Kenya and many other Africa countries."

Levy has been in the boating business all his life. He sailed almost before he could walk and as a youngster held triple national colours in water sports; he still holds the 500km ski-racing world record.

His father ran a "boatel" – a hotel on water – on the Vaal River and continued in the boating industry when he moved the family to Durban almost 40 years ago. The young Levy – competitive, determined and passionate – was bound to succeed in the family business. Today he owns and runs Boating World from offices in Durban and Cape Town, where he imports, retails and brokers new and pre-owned boats in the 30ft to 200ft range.

The two cities are different markets, explains Levy. "Cape Town is very protected and good for cruising; Durban, being more open, is good for fishing."

Much of his market is outside South Africa, and keeping customers happy takes considerable effort. "When someone sells a luxury car or diamond jewellery, they sell it and walk away. In the case of our boats we become partners with those people."

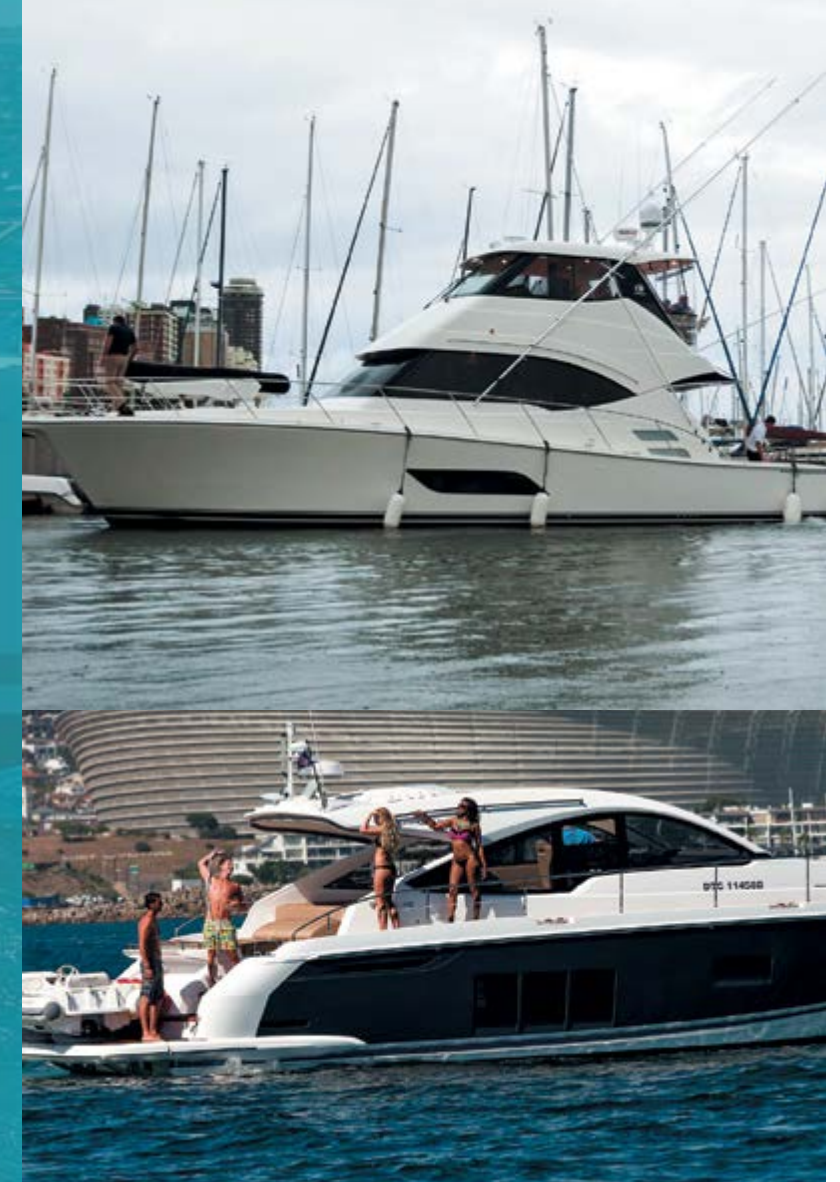
Levy recounts the time he sold a new Riviera to a VIP in Angola. "He was new to boating. We trained him and a local skipper and had all the information translated into Portuguese for them. A week later he phoned to say he'd hit a whale. The boat had brought him safely to shore but the blades were bent. We sourced the parts and sent our team into Angola. The boat was put onto land and the shafts were fitted when the tide went out. From accident to seaworthiness in less than eight weeks."

Why should the person who has almost everything buy a leisure boat? "These days," says Levy, "a boat is an alternative golf course – you have a captive audience who cannot fail to be impressed. There are whales and dolphins in the natural environment and there is nothing like a sunset from onboard a boat. It is ever-changing and always beautiful. After a day on a boat you feel rejuvenated; it's like going to a spa."

Durban International Boat and Lifestyle Show runs from July 17-19 at Durban Marina. For more on Boating World go to boatingworld.co.za



LEFT: Derrick Levy RIGHT: The Sea Breacher behaves like a normal jetski on top of the water and can submerge and leap out of the water. It will be on view at the Durban Boat and Lifestyle Show





SERENE MARINE

Teremok offers a refuge for the soul amid the beachfront bustle of Umhlanga

TEXT **SHELLEY SEID**



Boutique lodge Teremok Marine is a sophisticated establishment that feels like anything but a hotel. A converted house, its decor is distinctive and eclectic. Each room is different, with its own décor, fragrance, confectionery, even its own “mood” CD.

The lodge offers a complimentary chauffeur service to restaurants, beaches and shops, and guests can help themselves to Teremok’s bespoke blend of coffee and homemade biscotti.

We spoke to Kim Davidson who owns and runs Teremok with her mother, Debbie, and sister, Tracy.

Were you ever concerned there might not be a market? Not at all. We identified the need for a discerning, luxury, boutique establishment in Umhlanga and believe that we are still the only establishment of this kind in the area.

Why does it work? Because we’re hands-on. We approached things from the view of what we wanted (and didn’t want) when we travel.

Average duration of stays? Three nights, but anything from one night to four weeks.

What’s your annual occupancy? Has it grown? Approximately 70%. We have been open for going on 12 years and saw a slump from 2010, due to the global economic climate. But we are gaining ground again.

What recurring feedback do you get? We get a lot of comments about our service levels, breakfasts, and attention to detail. This is rewarding, as they’re all areas that we identified as being key before opening.

How do you hit the “service” balance? My mom, Tracy and I are all very hands-on. The service offered is attentive but discreet – as we like it.

Describe your typical client. The common thread is that they’re well-travelled, discerning, and appreciate our quirky sense of style and humour.

Oddest request or wackiest behaviour? A couple of unusual requests include wanting us to erect a movie screen in the garden for a Valentine’s picnic; that we remove a book on Princess Di from one of our suites; and to allow a guest to stay with a cheetah (they were from a charitable rehabilitation project).

Point of pride? Our continued “#1 Hotel in Umhlanga” rating on TripAdvisor.

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Had any celebs popping in lately? We’ve had a steady stream of senior cabinet ministers and authors.

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POWER & ROARY

Wilanda Stubbs is a petrol-head to her bones, and can’t get enough of her Mercedes ML400

TEXT **MASOOD BOOMGAARD** PHOTOGRAPHY **ROGAN WARD**

Wilanda Stubbs has never been intimidated by butch machines. As far as she is concerned, the more powerful and imposing the better, which is why she can’t get enough of her Mercedes-Benz ML400.

But far from being the typical suburban soccer mom SUV owner, Stubbs doesn’t shy away from thrashing through desert dunes or the bush.

Her sense of adventure goes back to her childhood when Stubbs, a self-confessed tomboy, preferred cars to dolls.

“I have always been passionate about cars, and about the motor industry,” says Stubbs, dealer principal at NMI Pinetown, agents for Mercedes-Benz, Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep and Mitsubishi.

“My mum always said that I was supposed to be the son and my brother was supposed to be the daughter.”

The daughter of an aeronautical engineer, Stubbs spent some of her formative years in Seattle, where her father worked at Boeing headquarters.

She says she was always very hands-on with cars. “If my dad was busy in the garage I would always go in there and get involved...I am able to help myself with most basic technical aspects of cars, but not everything,” says the new mum.

While in the States, Stubbs discovered a love for American muscle cars. Her first car was a Pontiac Trans-Am, made famous by David Hasselhoff’s *Knight Rider* character in the hit TV show of the same name.

“As far as dream cars go, I was always a fan of the classics. I loved the AC Cobra and wanted to build one of those kit cars. Later on I wanted a Dodge Viper. So it was always sports cars,” recalls Stubbs.

“But later my father started doing 4x4 driving and I got attached to 4x4s and SUVs. And that’s when I fell in love with the ML.”

Stubbs says she enjoys the refinement of her ML400 and its array of features. “It really does have this sophistication about it, but it also has the airmatic suspension so it can pretty much do anything a 4x4 is supposed to do. The ride is just amazing. It’s a lovely feeling when you put your foot down and you get that power and acceleration.”



“IT CAN PRETTY MUCH DO ANYTHING A 4X4 IS SUPPOSED TO DO”.

MILES OF SMILES

AARON MCILROY is one of Durban’s funniest comedians. He has performed in hundreds of shows and starred in the movie ‘Spud’. SPICE asked him about his happy places.

PHOTOGRAPHY **VAL ADAMSON**

What is your favourite place in Durban? At the end of north pier on the beachfront.

Where do you relax in the city and how? I go for a surf, usually when it’s not too big.

Where do you like to meet friends? In coffee shops, because I like coffee.

Which are your favourite restaurants and why? The Oyster Box is my favourite place to eat. I can’t afford to go there very often. I also like Afro’s Chicken because it is super-cool and tasty.

If you were to show a visitor to KwaZulu-Natal three special places, where would they be and why do you choose them? The Drakensberg because it’s amazing. The beachfront because it’s cool and happening. And game reserve Umkhuze because it’s unique.

What place in KZN brings back your best memories? The Drakensberg. I feel like I became a man walking in those mountains.

If you sneak away from the madding crowd for some peace and solitude, where do you go? I used to go to the movies, but now I find myself just hiding in the cupboard.

What is the best place for families in KZN? To be honest, I believe church is the best place for families.

Which is your favourite building in Durban? My home is my favourite building because it’s mine.

If you were a town planner and could redesign Durban, what must-have feature would you include? I would have a bridge over the harbour, connecting the Bluff to the city. I think that would be a big win.

Simone and Theo Henselmans from Balgowan submitted this photograph. It was shot early in the morning at Giant’s Cup Wilderness Reserve, while thick mist slowly cleared. The couple won a stay at Montusi Lodge in the Drakensberg.



TERMS & CONDITIONS: The competition starts at 6am today and ends at midnight on July 25. The winner’s name will be published in Spice Magazine. The prize is valid until December 31, 2015, and is subject to availability at the time of booking. The prize must be taken up (or rejected) as stated, may not be transferred to any other person, may not be sold or converted into cash. The prize does not include transport and winners must make their own way to the venue. Winners must be over 18 years of age. The competition is open to all South African residents, except employees of Times Media and Teremok. By entering this competition you are allowing the use of your contact details for future marketing purposes.

Help us to celebrate KwaZulu-Natal’s gems by taking us to your happy place on the SPICE route.

Send us your photos of a beautiful building, a quirky spot or an interesting person or people. The best picture will be published in SPICE and the winner will receive a two-night stay for two (bed and breakfast) at Teremok in Umhlanga (featured on page 26). The prize is valued at R8 000 and includes a 60-minute massage for both visitors.



E-mail your photos to ardeg@sundaytimes.co.za, with SPICE ROUTE in the subject line. Entries are limited to five pictures per person per competition. The editor’s decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



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BEAUTY DIVIDEND

Tourism has the potential to transform the economy of KwaZulu-Natal and its people

TEXT **SADHA NAIDOO**

PHOTOGRAPHY **ABHI INDRARAJAN & ROGAN WARD**

KwaZulu-Natal, widely known as the Zulu Kingdom, is a region of wonderful natural beauty and diversity, rich in culture, adventure and mystery. A great climate, holiday activities and excellent travel and accommodation infrastructure, with warm, welcoming hospitality, combine to make this a truly desirable destination.

KZN has much to offer: the coastal belt, the rolling hills of the Midlands, the towering peaks of the Drakensberg and two World Heritage Sites.

The first, iSimangaliso Wetland Park, is a vast wilderness area incorporating a pristine marine reserve, lakes and coastal dune forests. The second, uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, is overlooked by majestic mountains dotted with sandstone caves that are adorned with the rock art of the San people.

Durban is famed for its beaches and eclectic mix of cultures, a potpourri of eastern, western and African influences. Close by is the historic city of Pietermaritzburg and the Midlands Meander, an arts and crafts route. To the north are the battlefields, echoing epic struggles of more than a century ago.

Tourism is one of the largest economic sectors

in the world and is widely regarded as being an engine for economic growth and development. This is no different in KwaZulu-Natal, where tourism contributes almost R40-billion to GDP and creates approximately 390 000 direct and indirect jobs.

KZN is the country's leading domestic holiday destination, and to attract more tourists Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) has just run a successful TV reality show called *Holiday Swap*, which profiled a range of attractions and activities in the province. TKZN is also working on a brochure of activities people can enjoy, to raise awareness of what the province has to offer and to make it easier and more attractive for people to experience them.

A positive outcome of the *Holiday Swap* initiative was that viewer demographics were aligned with TKZN's target market. The majority – 97% – were from the emergent tourism market, with the top five provinces in terms of viewership being Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo.

Niche tourism is an important driver of growth and we have identified the cruise market as an area of opportunity. Cruise tourism is especially important, given our east coast location and port access. KZN also lends itself to becoming a key charter destination. Promoting charters forms an integral part of our airlift strategy, in line with Durban's potential air connectivity with both regional and long-haul destinations through King Shaka International Airport.

In a first for KZN, we negotiated a charter programme with Rainbow Tours, a leading Polish tour operator, with no fewer than 2 500 passengers taking charter flights between Warsaw and Durban. We are now looking to expand charters to our other key source markets.

Our growing number of world event successes is steadily developing KZN's profile as a region with the capacity to stage major conferences and sporting events. This enhances our chances in bidding to host world-class events in the leisure and business environments. The impact on tourism of the Durban KwaZulu-Natal Convention Bureau, which was established in July 2010, has been exceptional. The purpose of the bureau is

to promote business tourism services in KZN and Durban. Having set an ambitious target of securing a top-100 International Congress and Convention Association ranking by 2020, we were delighted to see Durban listed 97th at the end of 2013, and within Africa's top three.

Our drive now is to sustain the conferencing growth we have achieved. Major events secured for Durban include World Routes, the World Baptist Alliance and the World Forestry Conference, all this year, and the World Aids Congress in 2016. Of these events, several are firsts for Africa and will assist in the drive to encourage future visits here.

The 21st World Routes event takes place in September. We are confident the exposure this event will give us will have an immense impact and unlock international connectivity at King Shaka. Our ambition is to transform the airport into a major player in international air space. We need to engage with airlines and showcase KZN's attributes by hosting a conference comprising the biggest gathering of air-related organisations in the world.

KZN suffers from a fundamental flaw in its product offering. With our wonderful sub-tropical climate and year-round warm weather, this is the ideal beach destination, not only for South Africans but for tourists from land-locked African countries and northern hemisphere tourists looking to escape the winter cold. However, we lack beach resorts.

The KZN Tourism Master Plan spells out the vision for KZN: To be globally renowned as Africa's top beach destination, with a unique blend of wildlife, scenery and heritage. With the master plan complete and the growth opportunities identified, KZN is poised to ensure that tourism continues to be a significant contributor to the GDP.

Growing and sustaining the domestic tourism sector, major events and conferences, facilitating beach resort and iconic developments, focusing on air-route development and growing the niche tourism sectors all contribute to us being a growing leisure, sporting and business travel destination of choice.

Sadha Naidoo is chairman of KZN Tourism and the Calypso Group, and has been in the business for more than 20 years

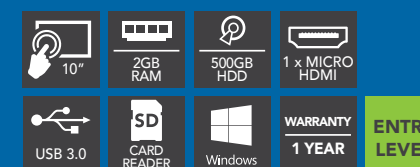
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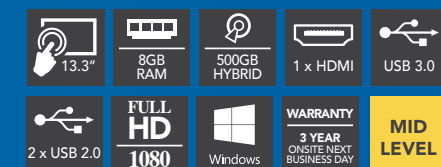
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