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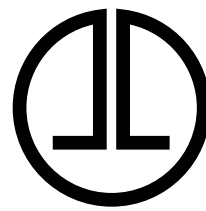


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DEAR CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT...

By Dave Charles

“I wish I had taken my short foray into the world of Politics more seriously. I enrolled as a student at Wits University in 1977 after a year of National service. I didn't have a clue about what I could do to earn a living, so I was advised to do a general Arts degree and to work it out from there. This involved choosing subjects that I might be interested in and, because I wanted to change the world, along with Zulu, English and History, I opted for a course in Political Science.

I must admit that from the outset, I really didn't understand much of what our lecturer, Alf Stadler, was talking about. At first, I thought he might be speaking a foreign language, and the prescribed reading was way beyond anything I had been prepared for at Boksburg High. But against all expectations, I passed Political Science1. I would rather have put needles in my eyes, however, than to have continued with it for a further two or three years.

No – instead, I changed course and opted for a career in television production...a real dead end as it turned out once BEE took control of that sector. I should have stuck to politics. When I consider how tough it is to run a business in South Africa, and how hard you have to work to make ends meet compared to the lot of the average minister or government official, I could kick myself.

Before this year's approved salary increase for state officials, salaries ranged from the Deputy President's whopping R2 825 470 to the lowest member of the provincial legislature's sumptuous R1 101 348.

And this excludes their substantial perks. These salaries apply to all members of parliament, irrespective of the political parties they represent, so it isn't difficult to understand why minority party representatives don't rock the boat too much apart from making impassioned speeches for the cameras.

Considering that there are 490 seats in the National Assembly this takes the annual cost to you and I to around R600 000 000 in salaries alone. And, of course, they have access to all sorts of opportunities to further feather the nest – not that I am suggesting for one minute that any of them would actually engage in anything untoward...but I digress. I have long tried to determine what these people actually do in exchange for these princely financial packages. They neither sow nor reap, as far as I can tell, and they don't appear to create jobs in any way that is meaningful to the growth of our economy. In fact, from what I can determine, their most vigorous endeavour seems to be currying favour with supporters by turning people against each other to secure their positions.

Hey, I could do that easily at half the price! Call me cynical if you will, but I just don't see how the political elite relate to the people they profess to serve or feel any of the hardships that the rest of the country experiences. None of them lost their jobs during the Covid crisis, they have private security details, generous housing, travel and entertainment allowances, they drive luxury vehicles and enjoy a host of other privileges paid for by you and me.

And now the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers has just gazetted its recommended salary increases in 2022. Among the proposed salaries is an increase for Deputy President David Mabuya, who will pocket R2.91 million if the proposal is confirmed.

The commission also proposes an increase for leaders of the opposition. John Steenhuisen will take home R1.64 million, while EFF leader Julius Malema and other leaders of minority parties will score R1.38 million.

If the economy was flourishing, if we had a stable electricity supply, adequate healthcare, security, and education, if jobs were plentiful and corruption was eliminated, I would consider this money well spent.

As it is, I am considering my options under the Consumer Protection Act - Chapter 2 Part H 54 - Consumer's rights to demand quality service.

Dear Consumer Protection Act, please could we have a new government – this one's broken.



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

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10 - Dave Charles – award winning broadcaster, television producer, editor, musician, and writer. Dave worked as a specialist TV producer at the SABC, and presenter on Radio 5. Dave and his wife, Sue, built a lodge in Zululand and spent five years working on the battlefields with the late Zulu War authority, David Rattray. Dave is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, the SA representative of the international Anglo Zulu War Historical society. He holds a BA Dram Art (Hons) Wits degree and he was an inaugural recipient of the Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Gold Medal for Service to the Zulu people. He currently owns the Life & Style media group.



24 - Shannon Devy is currently completing her Masters in English Literature at the University of Cape Town. An avid musician, reader and writer, Shannon enjoys coffee more than most things in life, and can often be found hunkered down at her favourite local coffee shop, tapping away at a new piece for Life & Style Magazine in a caffeinated frenzy. She lives in Cape Town with her cute rescue pup, Edie.



30 -Leah Acampora aka. Leah G is a presenter on Radio Life & Style and a freelance writer and digital marketer with a passion for wellness and health and fitness. She is a runner, a newly-wed and a cat mom who collects moments and enjoys traveling, quality time spent with the people she loves and sitting down to a plate of good food (usually Italian).



50 - Mia McCarthy is a young writer based in Cape Town. She is an avid collector of coffee shops, tidal pools, and interesting true stories.



32 - Dan Charles is a writer, musician and therapy enthusiast based in Cape Town, South Africa. He's done a lot of things for money in his life but, most pertinently, Dan has spent a good deal of time profiling and analyzing some of the most esteemed and up-and-coming local and international artists in the alternative music scene. He has contributed to publications such as Bubblegum Club, The Way of Us and THE LAKE. Right now, he works as a senior editor and feature writer for Life & Style. When he's not busy pushing deadlines to their deadliest extent, you can either find Dan out and about as he looks for more stories to pitch or just standing outside of his apartment building while he waits for his Uber to arrive.



26 - Kim Wilson is a dietitian with a post-graduate diploma in clinical sports nutrition. She's all about empowering people to achieve wellness without obsession. Kim is one of the founders of Lifestyle Health online, a health shop curated by health experts to provide quality health products and supplements that support and restore wellbeing. Her expertise has been featured in publications nationwide, and she has been called on to address both professional and public audiences in a number of events.



22 -Seaweed Steve Honeysett is a popular contributor to the Morning and Afternoon drive shows on 88FM with his regular surf reports. He is the Manager for Marine Safety for the KwaDukuza Municipality and has a wealth of knowledge having spent his entire life close to the sea.



54 - Rachel Carey is a qualified children's occupational therapist with a special interest in developmental neuroscience, neurodiversity, and relational models of intervention and parenting. She is the mother of two boys and the creator of the online IG and Facebook profile @rachie_ot_mom.



40 - Stephanie du Preez - Graphic Design & Marketing Freelancer - Based in northern England with a love for anything creative, progressive and of course, fun. South African design, interiors and art are my first love and I am blessed to be involved with the creativity that SA has in bucket loads!



14 - Julienne du Toit and Chris Marais - Both newspaper-bred (she: The Star, Johannesburg and he: The Rand Daily Mail, Johannesburg), Julie and Chris combined both their personal and professional lives back in 2008 and embarked on a freelance career together. During the past 15 years, however, they have been living and working exclusively in the Karoo, South Africa's intoxicating semi-desert heartland. They have told the story of the Karoo in many local and foreign magazines and a six-pack of travel, lifestyle, heritage and how-to-semigrate books.

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ONCE UPON A TIME...A POTTED TREE STORY

By Dave Charles

“Did you know that a bonsai tree can live for over 100 years if it's properly cared for? Actually, they can live for considerably longer than that by all accounts. There is a Ficus Retusa Linn in Italy that is considered to be the oldest existing bonsai in the world. It's over 1000 years old and Luigi Crespi, the founder of the Crespi Bonsai Museum, spent ten years trying to gain ownership of the bonsai tree before he eventually succeeded in 1986.

The tree was originally shaped by Chinese masters before Japanese bonsai master Shotaro Kawahara brought it to Italy where Crespi acquired it for an undisclosed sum to become the centrepiece of his bonsai museum. One could say that it's a lucky tree to have been lovingly tended for so long and there are several others on record that are worth millions that are also meticulously cared for due to their age and provenance.

But most modern bonsai trees have a limited lifespan. They don't require much to keep them happy, but an injudicious hand can kill them with kindness just as easily as it can with neglect. This worries me. I have a collection of bonsai trees that I love. Each has a story, some more poignant than others, and I wonder whether anyone will care enough to take on the responsibility of looking after them when I someday slip the bonds of earth to touch the face of God.

They are all relatively young bonsais as far these things go, the oldest being a forty-something-year-old Acacia Sieberiana or Paperbark that I inherited from friends who left it behind when they emigrated. The youngest in my collection is just over a year old, sprouted from a seed that I collected from a tree that I used to climb as a boy in my old hometown of Benoni. I grew up in Lakefield in the 60s and 70s. We lived in Westfield Road, a quiet cul-de-sac that was lined with strange trees that I was convinced were magical. They produced pretty, bell-shaped flowers and bright green seedpods that later darkened and split open revealing hair-covered seeds that irritated the skin if you touched them. They are apparently called Bottle trees and are native to Australia.

As we grew, these trees that lined the grassy verges along our street were our communal jungle gyms and we climbed them until it was no longer cool to climb trees. From tricycle to bicycle to motorcycle and eventually to car, the trees were always there like silent watchmen to welcome you home.

I loved those trees and from time to time over the years, long after I had left Benoni, I came "home" to visit them and the happy memories they evoke. Shortly before my mom passed away last year, I collected some seeds from the tree that still stands on the grassy verge outside our old house and one of them germinated.

It's doing very well now in its early bonsai form in Ballito and is a living link with that gloriously happy childhood in the town that will always hold a very special place in my heart.



- Mother tree in Benoni



- Seedling starting to grow.



- Two weeks old



- Two months old



- One year old.



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REST IN PEACE

Thoughts in a Karoo Graveyard

Story and Pix by Chris Marais

It's not like the old pirates say. Dead men do tell tales. Dead women too.

On one of those perfect autumn mornings in the Karoo, we find ourselves strolling about the Cradock cemetery, where thick mist swirls about the old gravestones and statues, some headless. We recall a story just picked up from a long-time local. There was a man who lost his wife and was inconsolable.

On most nights after she was buried here, he would take a camp chair, a lantern and a book out to her graveside. There, he would sit and read to her until bedtime, when he would pack up and leave.

Cradock used to have two movie houses in the old days. Every so often, the bereaved man would drive down to the cemetery dressed in his 'going-out clothes'. He would 'escort' his wife from her grave to his car, help her in and drive off to the movies. There, he would open the door for her, let her out and buy two entrance tickets. During the movie, he would offer her chocolates. And afterwards, he would take her back to the cemetery, open the passenger door and allow her spirit to alight. Cradock has many hard stories, some of them still in progress. But this one lifts the soul very high.

Here's a simple black stone in the ground that only says:

"Harry Edwin Wood – Astronomer"
Mr Wood, history records, was the official Astronomer and Timekeeper for the Union of South Africa. He is also famous for his discovery of a comet recorded as "1660 Wood".

In 1941 he retired and came to farm in the Mortimer area near Cradock. Legend has it Mr Wood, the one-time National Timekeeper, used to drive all the way in to Cradock (30km) to synchronise his wristwatch with the time on the steeple clock of the Dutch Reformed Mother Church. The one that looks like St Martins in the Field, Trafalgar Square, London. Nearby stands the imposing stone belonging to General Pieter Hendrik Kritzinger, who fought the British in this district during the South African (Anglo-Boer) War. General Kritzinger was one of the Boer warriors who led their British pursuers in a 'devil's dance' from the Free State through the Karoo Midlands, from Graaff-Reinet to Willowmore, Aberdeen all the way across to Cradock.



- Adderley Street, Cradock – historic river town in the Eastern Cape Karoo.



- Harry Edwin Wood, Official Astronomer of South Africa.



In Sacred Memory
of

MY BELOVED HUSBAND

HARRY POTTER,

DIED JULY 27 1910,

AGED 46 YEARS.

*"I HAVE LOVED THEE WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE;
THEREFORE WITH LOVING KINDNESS HAVE I
DRAWN THEE."*

AND HIS WIFE

BLANCHE ELIZABETH POTTER



- Cradock graveyard in the autumn mist – not for the faint-hearted.



This intrepid Boer guerrilla fighter also farmed around here, and later became a member of the Cape Provincial Council. Although a fine soldier, he was also known as a 'gentlemanly general', and after the war his attitude to the British softened considerably. In fact, the good General was a bit of an agricultural guru to young British immigrants arriving in Cradock to set up a farming life. You used to be able to find the graves of the four Cape Rebels who were executed in Cradock in front of the Victoria Hotel, and buried here. However, the devastating floods of 1974 washed them away. Nearly 70 British soldiers lie buried on these grounds. Some of them came back to Cradock after the Anglo-Boer War and made a life here.

One of them could have been a Harry Potter. It's quite weird, really. Everyone seems to know something about most graves in this cemetery. No one, however, can tell me anything about this Harry Potter grave right in the centre of what a local chap calls "The Valley of the Stiffs". All we know is that this Harry was a beloved husband who died on July 27, 1910 at the age of 46. Some say he was once stationed here with the British forces and liked it so much that he spent the rest of his years in the area. Either way, JK Rowling needs to find out about this particular gravesite, for obvious reasons.

The tall heaven-pointing plinth with the Freemasons' mark at its base belongs to the Koettlitz couple. Dr Reginald Koettlitz was famous for being, according to his description:

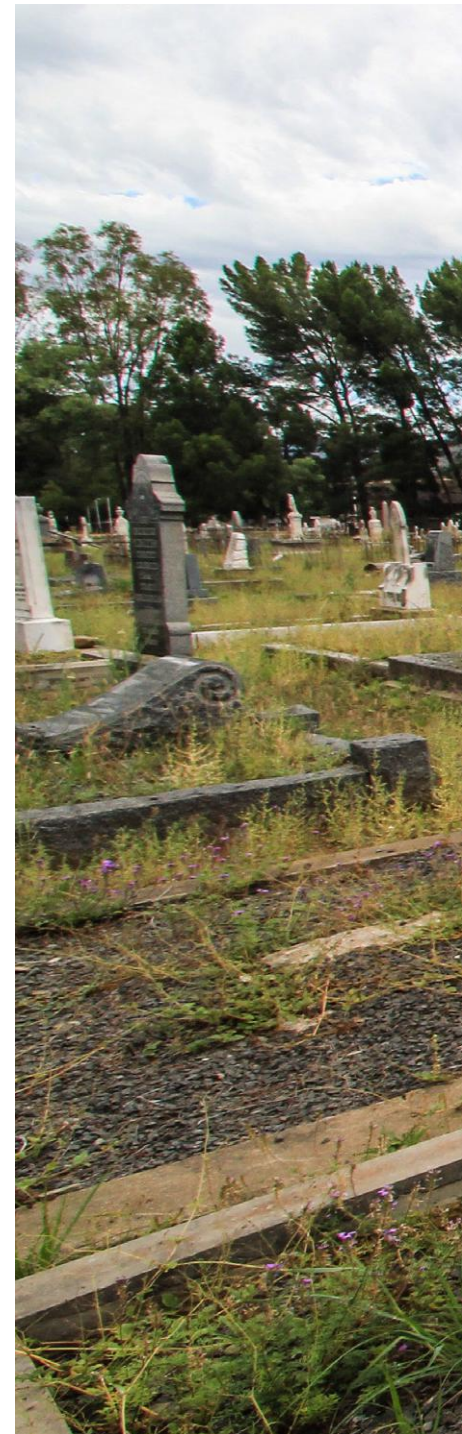
"An explorer and traveller, surgeon and geologist to Expeditions North Polar and Abyssinia and with Scott to the Antarctic".

Best known for his trip with Captain Scott on his first mission to the Antarctic, the story goes that Dr Koettlitz somehow neglected to add enough Vitamin C to the polar pioneers' diet. This was attributed by some critics as having led to the Scott Party being in a weakened state before they perished on the second expedition. Dr Koettlitz was exonerated some years later – after all, Scott himself should have realised that, after the first trip, there would be a good chance of getting scurvy if they weren't fed enough Vitamin C.

Look again at the Koettlitz stone, and you will notice that he died on January 10, 1916, and that his wife, Marie Louise, died a scant two hours after him. They are both interred at this site. Along the path, there's another large memorial to the Brothers Botha, who died on October 25, 1918, of Die Spaanse Griep - the Spanish 'Flu.



- Here lies General Hendrik Kritzing, local Anglo-Boer War hero.





- Cradock cemetery buff Stephen Mullineux.



- Peter Sidey, buried by the Cradock Teetotal Society.



- The 'rugby field grave' of sports fan Luzarian Vernon Holland.

The word "flu" does not really do descriptive justice to this dreaded infection which killed 20 million people around the world – 500 000 of them being right here in South Africa.

The Johannesburg Star records:

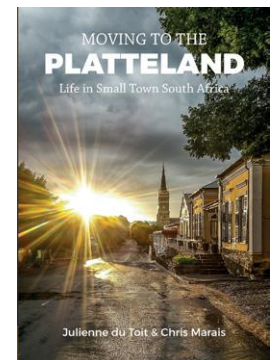
- "Now there were more than 1,000 dead in Kimberley. And they'd run out of coffins in some towns;
- A man called William Hill working at East Rand Proprietary Mine collapsed across the machinery in the winding house at 3am one day while the cage was coming up. It crashed into the headgear, killing 19.
- Doctors and nurses were dying. People checking on relatives living on the plateland found farmhouses as silent as the grave."

The Spanish 'Flu epidemic of 1918 (and the fateful Black October in particular) was judged at the time to be the "single most devastating episode in the demographic history of South Africa." At the children's section of the cemetery, wistful cherubs with downcast eyes guard the graves of babes, the pained messages of their parents on the stones almost too poignant to bear.

And as the mist clears, we see vandals have beheaded many of the little statues. Frontier life took its toll on the offspring of the pioneers and settlers along the Great Fish River. The Spanish 'Flu was but one of the many causes of infant death. Stephen Mullineux, a neighbour, knows quite a lot about Cradock's history. He meets us down at the cemetery one day, where he indicates the graves of the four suicides buried in the cemetery. They face west. All the other graves face the rising sun. Stephen shows us the grave of one Louis Levenstein, who has an etching of a rugby ball on his stone. The inscribed dedication tells one that Louis died in Adelaide during a rugby match.

Nearby is another sports fan's grave, that of Luzarian Vernon Holland. The stone is green and the base depicts an entire rugby field. On the way out, we notice the stone of one Peter Sidey, buried in 1864 with the help of the Cradock Teetotal Society.

Hmm. Cradock has a Bridge Club, a 4X4 Club and an Afvalgilde (The Guild of Honorable Tripe-Eaters), but who knew we had a Teetotal Society? There certainly isn't one around these days...



MORE FROM THE AUTHOR.

For an insider's view on life in the Karoo, get the **Three-Book Special of Karoo Roads I, Karoo Roads II and Moving to the Platteland – Life in Small Town South Africa** by Julianne du Toit and Chris Marais for only R720, including courier costs in South Africa. For more details, contact Julie at:

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EXPLORING THE KZN-OFS BORDER DISTRICT

By Steve Honneysett

I have often driven up Oliviershoek Pass and admired the splendid views of the mountains and the Sterkfontein Dam on the left, but I have always been curious about what is out there on the other side of the road on your way towards Harrismith.

I always thought that this was just farmland until I started doing some research and found a treasure trove of adventure out there, from monuments to mountain passes and some comfortable accommodation on the border of KZN. It started with a drive down Bezuidenhout's Pass last year where I discovered that between Oliviershoek and Van Reenen, there are at least half a dozen other passes to explore, so we have been ticking them off one by one. We booked our latest trip over the Easter weekend at Waterfall River Lodge on a pleasant farm on the Wilge River 12km east of Van Reenen. But it was essentially the drive up that made the trip most memorable.

We plotted a route that follows the train track up the pass, and cuts through the mountains with service tunnels. This it is a route not often travelled, but it offers spectacular views looking back down on KZN. The road was gravel all the way, and, after the recent floods, it was only accessible by 4x4 with some rather muddy sections that caused our vehicle to slide off the road a few times, forcing us to test our off-road recovery skills a bit.

The pass is used for maintenance on the line, as well as by a few residents from the area. There is a large depot at the top of the pass and several streams flow across the track in places where you have to test the depth with a stick before you attempt to cross them.

Over the top, the pass follows a section of the N2 highway, finally coming out behind the Green Lantern Hotel at Van Reenen which is a must stop to calm one's nerves with a refreshing beverage. Waterfall River Lodge is situated on the banks of the Wilge River with a super view of a waterfall that looks much like a smaller version of the Kariba Falls complete with plumes of mist rising off the water as it plunges down the escarpment.

The lodge has a rich history, and it was even used to plot a coup that never happened in the 1980's. Farm owner, Rick Dillon, entertained us with lots of history of the area and took us to Nelsons Head Mountain to view the 130 resident Cape Vultures that nest there on the border of a large game farm that stretches down to the outskirts of Ladysmith.

There is also a large hydro-electric operation in the area that supplies power to the towns around Ladysmith. The other mountain passes in the area are also worth checking out, but that will be for trips in the future. It's a part of the Drakensberg that we generally overlook but it is rich in tales from the days of ox wagon trekking through the mountains and of the struggles that shaped our history.

The Green Lantern Hotel is a must for a meal or refreshment in their homely little bar full of memorabilia from days gone by. The Anglo Boer wars left their scars on this area and one can visit many sites where monuments recall the battles fought there. There are so many stories to be told around the fire here, and this place is a must-go-see.

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





THE ENDURANCE ENDURES!

By Shannon Devy

“Famous explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton's lost ship has been found 107 years after it sank – with some help from South Africa!

In 1915, Sir Ernest Shackleton and his crew of 27 men were making their way across the Weddell Sea in the *Endurance*, a three-masted barquentine ship on her maiden voyage. They were there to attempt what Shackleton had dubbed the “Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition”, a 2900km on-foot trek across the ice and snow of the Antarctic continent. But it was not to be – after *Endurance* became frozen fast in an ice floe, later slipping beneath the surface as the spring melt put enormous pressure on her hull, the expedition was abandoned, and what followed was a daring escape which almost cost the explorers their lives.

ESCAPE

The party set up camp on an ice floe, hoping that it would drift towards the nearby Paulet Island, where the support crew on the expedition's second ship, *Aurora*, had stored a cache of supplies. But after two months of waiting and a failed attempt to traverse the ice to get to the cache on foot, they decided to relocate to a different ice floe. This one would take them within 100km of Paulet Island and its food and fuel supply, but barred by impassable ice, they would never make it. When the ice floe upon which they had built their camp broke in two, Shackleton ordered the crew into the lifeboats to chance the open water. Five harrowing days later, the exhausted men landed on Elephant Island, 557km away from the spot where *Endurance* sank.

RESCUE

A few days later, Shackleton and a small group of men launched one of the small lifeboats in a Hail Mary attempt to get help. For fifteen days, they risked the rough seas of the Southern Ocean, eventually landing on the British island of South Georgia. From there, Shackleton attempted to cross the island's steep cliffs alone wearing boots with nails banged into them,

eventually making it to a Danish whaling station where he was able to rally help to rescue his comrades on the beach, and the group left on Elephant island.

THE ENDURANCE IS FOUND

In March 2022, on the anniversary of Shackleton's funeral, an expedition led by the Falklands Maritime Heritage Trust and using a South African Ice Breaker, *Aghulus II*, located the lost *Endurance* on the bottom of the Weddell Sea. Images taken by the expedition's remote-controlled submarines, which were used to scour the sea floor, show the ship in astonishing condition, despite spending over a century 10 000ft under the water. So well preserved is the wreck that cameras even located boots and crockery on board, and photographs show the ship's name is still clearly emblazoned across the stern.

A CHALLENGING SEARCH

What makes this find so remarkable is the conditions that had to be overcome to carry the mission out successfully. The Weddell Sea is almost always covered in a thick layer of sea-ice, ever-shifting, and the terrible conditions of the area include blizzards and temperatures as cold as -18C.

WHAT NOW?

Under the international Antarctic Treaty, the wreck of the *Endurance* is a designated monument, so it cannot be disturbed in any way. No artefacts will be removed from it as of yet. It is not often that a piece of history comes alive so vividly, and it makes one wonder what other treasures from the past wait patiently at the bottom of the sea.





5 SUPERFOOD DRINKS TO TRANSFORM YOUR HEALTH

By Kim Wilson



“Superfood powders have been trending for years, and many of them for good reasons. Whilst we can certainly get the full spectrum of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants from a varied and mostly plant-based diet, these flavourful powders play both a tasty and nutritious role when it comes to “spicing up” your diet. In lieu of listing off the benefits of each nutrient and leaving you to come up with ideas for how to serve them, here is a compilation of Superfood Drinks Recipes to transform your health:

MATCHA LATTE

Matcha is part of the green tea family, but it's used as a concentrated powder rather than dried leaves. In so doing, it is much higher in caffeine as well as one specific amino acid called L-Theanine. This powerful compound is associated with feelings of heightened focus, alertness and sustained energy. Green tea is also a potent antioxidant.

RECIPE FOR ONE

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp matcha powder
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- ¼ cup hot water
- ¾ cup oat or alternative milk, warmed (and preferably frothed)

Method:

Add matcha and hot water to a large mug or bowl and whisk vigorously until frothy. Add in the vanilla, then pour in the frothed milk and serve.

TURMERIC LATTE

Turmeric has had a lot of media attention largely due to its main bioactive component called Curcumin. Curcumin has been linked with reduced risk for a wide variety of diseases, as well as being a potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory.

RECIPE FOR ONE

Ingredients:

- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 cup almond milk or oat milk
- ~1/2 cm fresh ginger, grated
- 1 tsp raw honey or maple syrup
- Pinch cinnamon
- Pinch black pepper

Method:

In a small saucepan, whisk all ingredients together except for honey and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes before adding the honey. Using a strainer, pour the milk into your cup. Use a frother if you have one.





MACA LATTE

Maca is a Peruvian root that's typically used only in powder form. There's evidence that maca can assist with boosting libido, as well as a host of other potential benefits including improved fertility, relief from menopause symptoms, improved mood, and improved energy levels. Maca also comes in three colours: red, yellow and black.

RECIPE FOR ONE

Ingredients

- ½ cup coconut milk
- 1 cup almond (or oat) milk
- 1 ½ tbsp raw cacao powder
- 1 tbsp maca powder
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- Pinch cinnamon
- Pinch black pepper
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ - 1 tbsp raw honey or maple syrup

Method

Whisk all ingredients together in a saucepan over medium heat. Heat through, whisking often until hot. For a frothy consistency whisk vigorously before serving or use a frother.

GINGER & CINNAMON LATTE

Ginger is a fantastic antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. It can help reduce cell damage over time. Ginger may also relieve symptoms of nausea and indigestion. Cinnamon on the other hand is great for balancing blood sugar levels in diabetics, and people often report a reduction in appetite when using cinnamon in their meals.

RECIPE FOR ONE

- ½ cup coconut milk
- ½ cup almond milk (or oat milk)
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- ¼ tsp ginger
- 1/8 tsp cardamon
- Pinch of cloves
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tsp raw honey or maple syrup

Method:

Combine all ingredients in a small pot and bring to a slight boil over medium to high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour into a mug and sprinkle with some cinnamon or add a cinnamon stick.



BEETROOT LATTE

Beetroot powder is made from freeze-dried concentrated beetroot juice. It is a concentrated dietary source of nitrates which when ingested are converted into nitric oxide. Nitric oxide dilates blood vessels to improve blood flow. This benefits those with high blood pressure, and athletes who want to see improved stamina and energy. Beetroot is also rich in a variety of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that benefit overall health.

RECIPE FOR ONE

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp beetroot powder
- ½ cup coconut milk
- ½ cup almond milk (or oat milk)
- 1 tbsp warm water
- 1 tbsp maple syrup or raw honey
- ½ tsp vanilla

Method:

Combine the beetroot powder with warm water, maple syrup and vanilla in a small saucepan, whisk to dissolve the mixture.

Add the coconut milk and ½ of the almond milk to the saucepan. Heat over medium-high heat until hot. Pour into a mug. Froth the remaining almond milk before adding to your mug.

Superfood Drinks for Super Health

If you lack variety in your diet, then superfoods can provide you with the extra nutrients you may be missing out on. Superfood drinks can offer many nutritional benefits, especially when used as replacements for sugar-sweetened drinks! However, don't let your superfoods journey end with just the recipes above, there are a whole host of delicious ways to include them in your diet. Superfoods can be added to smoothies, salad dressings, sauces, and more! All it takes is a little experimentation, but the sky is the limit.

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It also increases your metabolism & being rich in chlorophyll it helps to naturally detoxify the body & remove heavy metals.

For those wanting an energy boost without the "java jitters", matcha is a superior choice due to all its health benefits including the ability to improve alertness & focus, yet have a calming effect on the body.

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MOVES THAT FUTURE YOU WILL THANK YOU FOR

By Leah Acampora



“**So,** you've got the moves? The Insta-worthy, awe-inspiring moves? But are those moves sustainable? Short-term, maybe; aesthetically yes, you're winning, but is that spine going to keep you standing tall 'till the ripe old age of 80?

Scientists have predicted that the first people who will live 'till 150, have already been born, and that the average estimated life expectancy of human beings will rise to 81.69 from today's 73.16, by 2100. Now, more than ever, you should make training for LONGEVITY your top priority and allow this to guide your every move. You only need to perform one “poor deadlift” to know how easily your back is put out. But if the correct form and biomechanical patterns were habitual, you'd move well naturally, and your risk of injury would dramatically decline. 3 principal movements that you should master when you're training for longevity include: core engagement, the squat and the deadlift. These movements form the basis of every movement you perform throughout your daily life. Picking things up off the floor, maintaining good posture while you're in a seated position, bending over to stroke a pet etc.

Begin with core engagement, gently perform each step whilst maintaining the prior steps as you work through the sequence. Be sure to keep your breathing at a natural rhythm.

1. Tilt your pelvis to a neutral position (think about tilting your hips towards your lower ribs; not in an over-exaggerated way, the position should feel natural and unforced).
2. Draw your belly button towards your spine and engage your oblique muscles (almost like you're trying to cinch in your waist).
3. Lightly engage your pelvic floor muscles, think about a lifting sensation, or holding a wee.
4. “Ground” your diaphragm muscles to create a feeling of internal pressure.
5. Without losing any of the previous steps, pinch your shoulder blades together and drop your shoulders away from your ears.
6. Lastly, elongate the muscles at the back of your neck and gently tuck your chin in a “double-chin forming” motion.

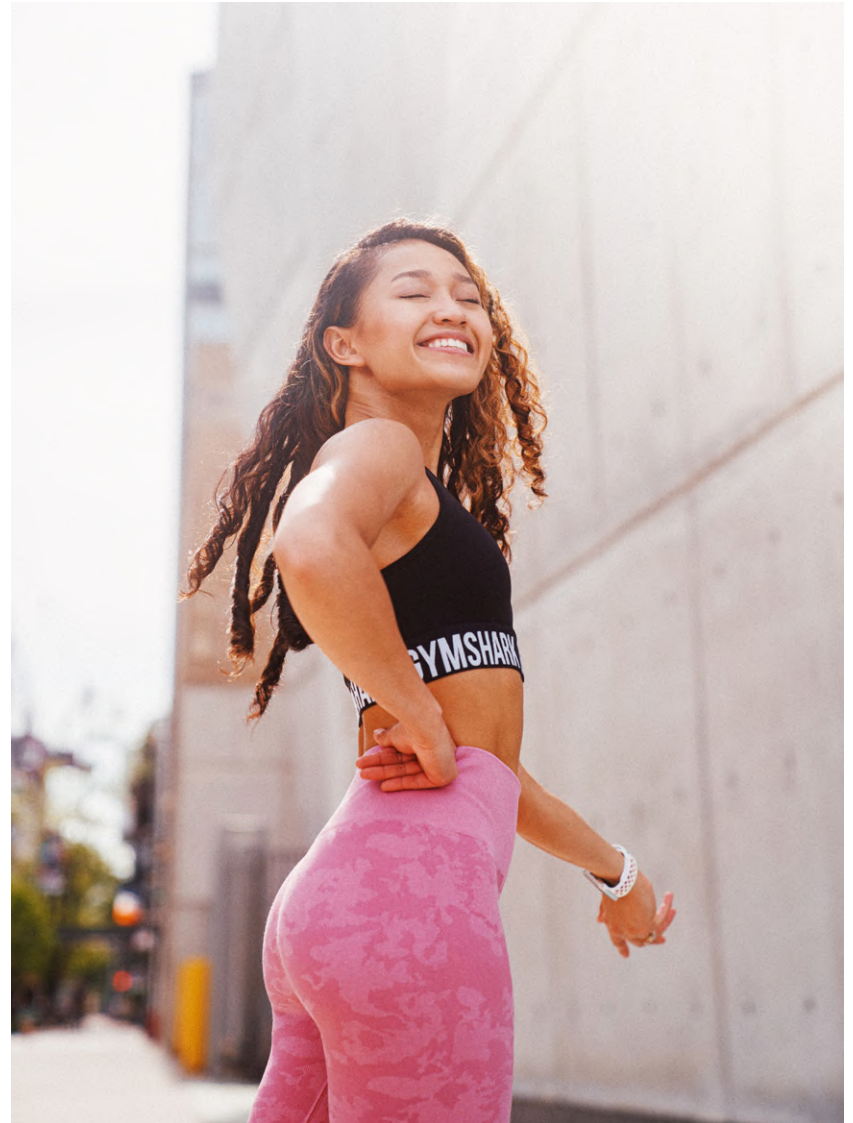
At first, you'll perform these movements step-by-step but as you improve and your body learns the pattern, you'll easily be able to find this new, postural preferential position - which should be maintained for EVERY movement you perform during exercise and daily life, even sitting. A strong core engagement protects the spine against injury by engaging the muscles that support and act on it to perform movement. Perform these six steps as often as you can remember to create good postural habits. Practice makes perfect - you'll need it for the squats and deadlifts we'll cover in the next issue.

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ONE BAND, ONE SOUND

The Nine Four

"In a conversation with Martin Scorsese for the documentary "Public Speaking", Fran Lebowitz explained how, as a child, she couldn't find any sense in the unnecessary risk involved with an activity like climbing trees. To her, climbing a tree only ever makes sense if "behind you, are Nazis." I've always felt the same way about running.

WORDS: Dan Charles

PHOTOGRAPHY: Deon Van Zyl (Nine Four)

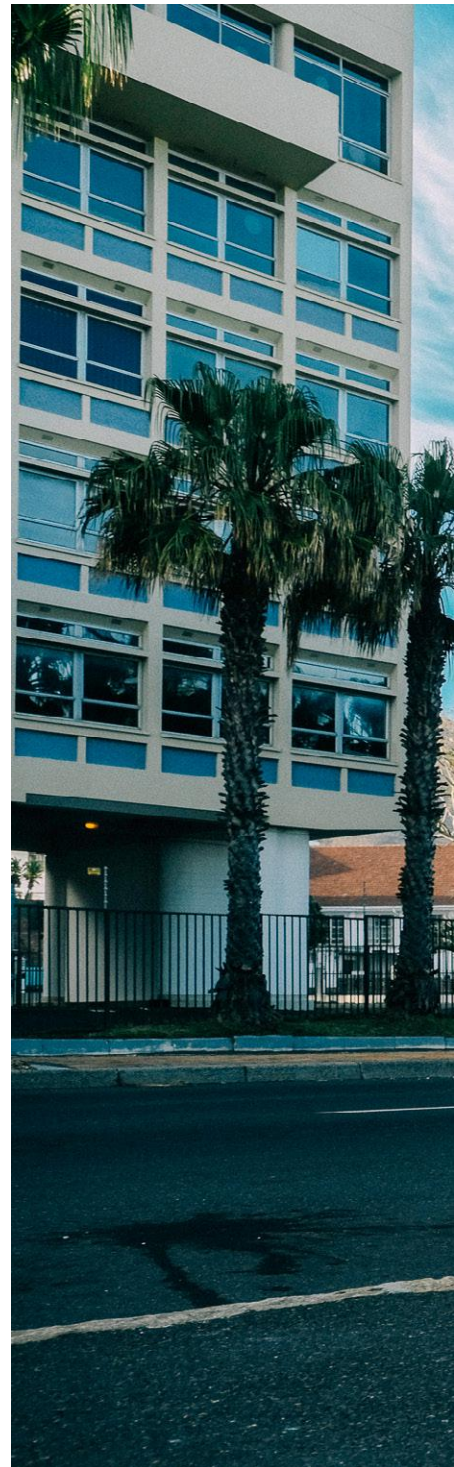
I used to believe that the only time it was ever appropriate to accelerate beyond the pace of a brisk walk, was if you were either being chased by someone dangerous (like a Nazi) or if your Uber was about to cancel on you. But now - after being peer-pressured by family members into running the 2 Oceans Marathon with them several years ago - I own a decent pair of running shoes, I have a medal hanging from my book case and there's a box of plasters sitting in my bathroom that I apply to my nipples to keep them from chafing. On paper, I guess, I'm now qualified enough to call myself a runner.

Despite owning most of the equipment of a diligent runner, I still find it incredibly difficult to commit to actually going out for a run. As somebody that carries around a rolodex of anxiety disorders in his head, I'm keenly aware of the numerous mental health benefits of regular exercise. But, regardless of my awareness, it's those same anxieties that also keep me tethered to the confines of my apartment.

However, earlier in the year - while vacantly searching through some Instagram stories for a semblance of a serotonin boost - I came across a post from the prestigious Cape Town-based running crew, The Nine Four. The post was an open invitation extended to anyone, at any fitness level, who might be interested in joining them for a "sexy paced" 5km open run along the Sea Point promenade. Although I had grown to appreciate the idea of running as a leisurely activity, I still had my reservations about joining something like a running crew. Logically, I could understand the safety benefits and the sense of camaraderie and accountability that comes with being a member of a running crew - in fact, for someone with my absence of diligence, it would probably be very helpful. But, again, my sense of social anxiety had always convinced me that I would be incapable of fulfilling both the social and physical obligations of a membership. Making polite and charming conversation whilst teetering on the brink of collapse several kilometres into a run? Nightmarish and inconceivable. But, even so, the opportunity of this open run managed to pique my interest.

Since its formation in 2013 - after local director and photographer, Paul Ward, had been introduced to a running crew called The Berlin Braves during some time abroad - The Nine Four has established a quiet reputation as one of the most tight-knit and tenacious running crews in Cape Town.

I first learned about it from some Instagram posts shared by people that I knew who had joined them, and I was immediately struck by the image and the attitude that the crew portrayed. With their iconic white rabbit logo, stark black Puma-sponsored uniforms and the consistently striking documentation of their crusades across Cape Town's concrete-coated CBD - The Nine Four looked far more compelling than anything I had come to expect from













a running crew. They came across as more of a rock group than anything else - which, in a way, gives prominence to one of The Nine Four's mantras: "One Band, One Sound." Having considered all of that, if there was ever going to be a crew worth pushing past my anxieties to investigate, I figured that this would have to be the one.

As difficult as it was to convince myself to attend the open run, the run itself proved to be even more challenging for me than I had anticipated. After meeting the crew and exchanging a few introductory fist-bumps at the starting point, I was determined to make a good first impression by pushing myself a bit too hard at the beginning of the run. Despite not having done any serious training since the start of the pandemic, I was sure that I could get through a casual 5km as easily as I could in the past. However, at just past the halfway mark, my breathing started to get more laboured and I could feel my legs beginning to tender their resignation from the rest of my body. Feeling humbled and a bit humiliated, I had to slow down to a walk to catch my breath.

Keeping an eye on the back of the pack during the run was a member of the crew called Henry who, despite my insistence that he should carry on with the rest of the group, stayed behind while I recuperated. Now, having to make awkward and out-of-breath small talk, this type of scenario was precisely what had dissuaded me from taking part in any physical group activity: being seen as a burden and holding people back from what they had set out to do - not cool.

But my dread began to subside as Henry took the time to explain the ethos behind The Nine Four that has kept the crew moving from strength to strength for almost a decade. The Nine Four is a crew that is less focused on running and more focused on the community cultivated within it. It's a collective built to accommodate anyone from any background who is determined to challenge and better themselves while, most importantly, supporting and encouraging each other along the way.

It's in that spirit that crew runs through the city together as a unit. "One Band, One Sound." In that particular instance - that included me and the sound of my heavy breathing as I hobbled my way to the end of the run with Henry and rejoined the rest of the crew.

As satisfying as it would be to end this article by saying that I've carried on running with The Nine Four ever since that day, that would be untrue. Although I did feel a great sense of personal growth within those quietly vulnerable moments of the open run (and I did end up joining the crew for a few more runs after that) I still find myself tripping over my old mental hurdles on my way to the next starting point. But, since then, I do feel a lot more confident in my running shoes. Instead of saving my stamina for running away from things that scare me (like Nazis), I'm steadily working up the speed to run towards feeling a bit easier within myself. And, when I'm fast enough, maybe I'll catch up with The Nine Four again.

THE NINE FOUR

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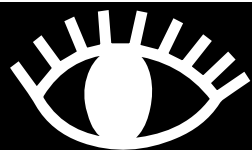
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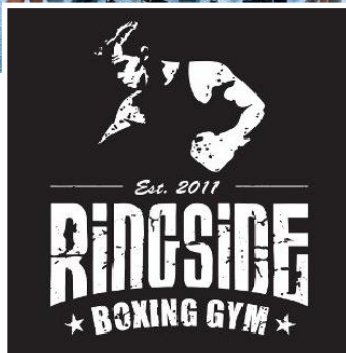
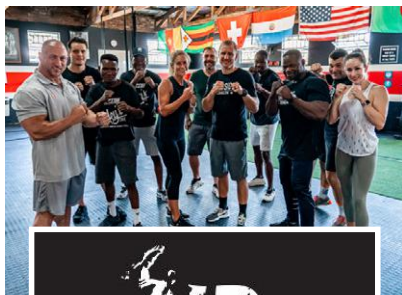
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ENTRANCE HALL

A personalised and specially commissioned bronze sculpture graces the entrance. Titled “Surrender” by South African artist Marco Oliver.



GENTLEMAN'S ESTATE

A RENOVATION PROJECT - CELEBRATING HISTORY WHILE ACQUIRING A CONTEMPORARY EDGE.

By Stephanie du Preez

The redesign of an old farmstead on a small holding in Pretoria, turned this home into a luxuriously elegant, gentleman's home.

As all hard, floor and sanware finishes were already specified when OLALA INTERIORS was commissioned, the completion of the interior design, detailing and finishing required an intimate understanding of the clients' preferences and tastes.

One of the design challenges was to respectfully incorporate the beautifully timeworn structure into a clean, uncluttered and contemporary home. The design brief was achieved by renewing spaces with functional art and modern, designer furniture, upholstered in uber sensuous and tactile fabrics.

It was very important to the client to keep some

of the old character of the property - the irregular, and sometimes rough and tumble plaster, on the walls. Schanè Anderson, CEO and Creative Director of OLALA INTERIORS, was careful in deciding which essential walls could be skimmed and prepared to enable her to cover areas with handcrafted wallpapers.

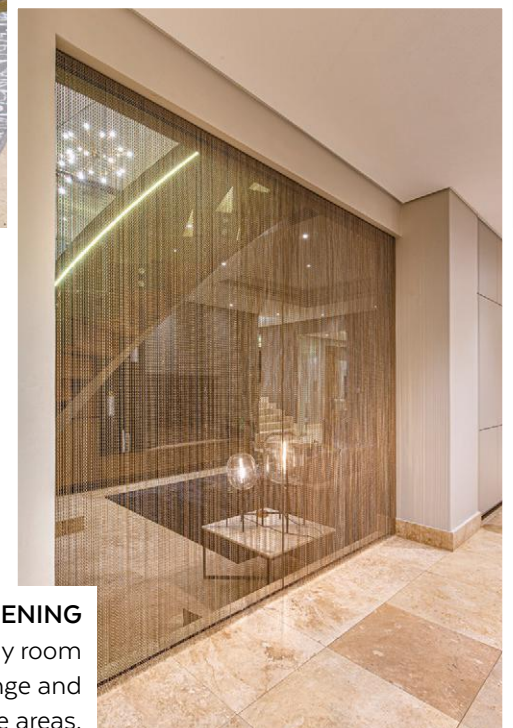
Bespoke decor and furniture was also an expressed requirement. “The client, a highly respected and reserved gentleman, is proud of his extraordinary heritage, and the home had to respect his legacy and history”, says Schanè.

In response to the brief, special emphasis was given to designer sculptural lighting in high traffic reception areas, specifically commissioned artwork, top notch handmade artisanal fabrics, wallpapers and rugs which were all specially selected for the home.



FORMAL LOUNGE

Sophisticated and fluid custom sofa in a hard-wearing but warm lux velvet, and accented with scatters in shimmering and rippled textures. The sofa is framed by marble top with brass insert side tables and finished off with a handcrafted special imported set of duo coffee tables. These offer a strong geometric statement with endless style possibilities. The interesting modern mix of materials — gold and bronze metal, black glass, marble and eucalyptus — finishes the perfect living space seated on an imported rug. Feature lighting showcases the handmade Nimbus glass with solid satin brass frame.



SPECTACULAR SCREENING

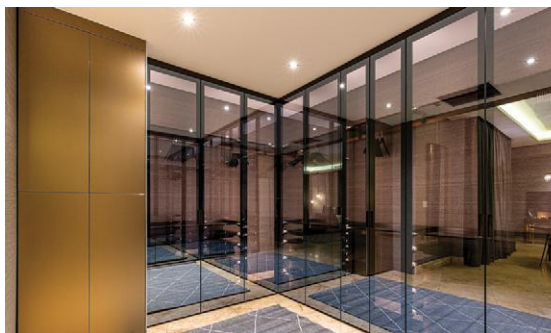
Screening off the family room from the formal lounge and passage visually softens the areas.

Visual interest is built up in different layers, with an overarching sense of warmth, elegance and calm, that feels majestic and welcoming.



SUMPTUOUS SEATING A generous soft, plush chenille upholstered sofa with extra depth seating and accented with metallic tones, on a handwoven bamboo silk rug in an intensely saturated black sapphire shade. ADDING circular references, using circular lights and softly rounded sofas to imitate and repeat curves in the main structure, without negating the design brief and remaining contemporary. All furniture was custom designed and built by OLALA INTERIORS for this home.

PERFECT FOR CURLING UP ON, a shapely styled kidney shape sofa upholstered in a decadent embossed textured velvet invites the eye to wander up along the full height padded headwall. Alluring design blends textures and finishes in this luxuriously comfortable master suite with private dining area where seating is offered in an exceptionally comfortable chair in a wooden base with zinc alloy ferrules.



THE GUEST SUITE follows through with the harmonious design theme with plush fabrics, hand-knotted rugs and custom hand-crafted furniture.



BOYS BEDROOM The modular airplane bed, upholstered on saddle leather, was designed and manufactured by OLALA INTERIORS as the focal point on a zebra inspired rug. The blocks are movable and can be used as a slide or crawl up.



OPEN MIC IS BACK...

“**After** a long lockdown related break, the popular Lifestyle Centre Open Mic at the Market event is back. Every third Thursday of the month from 6pm – 8pm, aspirant entertainers again have the opportunity to perform live in front of a large and supportive audience at the Market, one of the most popular venues in Ballito.

The event is hosted by the team from Radio Life & Style 88FM with professional sound and engineer on hand to ensure good sound and a comfortable experience. The Open Mic event is supported by the vendors in the market who create special offers on the various menus available to add to the vibe and excitement.

Of course, the focus is on the performers, and anyone is welcome to book a slot on the programme. It's a great opportunity for new talent to be discovered and for established artists to try out new material. Whether you sing to backing tracks or accompany yourself on an instrument, this is your chance to be heard. If you are keen to perform, please submit a short video together with your contact details to marketing@ballitolifestylecentre.co.za

We'll see you there!



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WAGYU BEEF

Health Benefits

“**Let's** start by establishing an important fact: Fats are an essential component to a healthy diet. Whether you subscribe to vegan, paleo or omnivore eating styles, fat is your friend. Fats contribute to the flavour and texture of many foods, including oils, nuts, seeds, avocados, salmon and many more of what some consider the healthiest foods on the planet. Yet on a much deeper and molecular level, fats are critical to several essential functions in our bodies. Did you know that eating some types of fat can actually help reduce your cholesterol and risk for cardiovascular disease? It's true.

Wagyu Beef is meat with small, finely interspersed specks of fat called marbling. The marbling is so subtle and consistent that, when prepared correctly, it bastes the steak from its interior to ensure juiciness and depth of flavor. Marbling is the most reliable component of meat taste and tenderness.

Researchers concluded that eating mono-unsaturated fatty acids are better for your heart than eating special diets with lean products. The research also shows that Wagyu meat can actually help to reduce cholesterol levels. The marbling in Wagyu beef has the highest percentage of mono-unsaturated fat of any protein in the country. The high degree of marbling adds an extraordinary depth of flavour that makes Wagyu beef a culinary delicacy. As a result, the meat has a delectably intense buttery flavor as well as scrumptious juiciness and breathtaking tenderness.

A RED MEAT THAT'S GOOD FOR YOU

High ratio of mono-unsaturated fat to saturated fat:

- Lowers cholesterol
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- Helps weight loss

Significant amounts of oleic acid:

- Good for the heart

High levels of Conjugated Linoleic acid:

- Contributes to weight loss
- Improves the immune system
- Helps fight cancer
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THE WONDER OF SONDER

By Mia McCarthy

“There is something delicious about becoming a regular at a local cafe. There's no better feeling than arriving at the establishment, sitting at your favourite seat and, before you can even look up, having an expertly prepared flat white set down before your eyes.

Such a thing happens to me every time I visit the wonderfully charming Sonder Cafe in Observatory. Sonder was born out of an intuitive need for connection following the worldwide quarantine of 2020. It opened its doors in January of 2021 and established itself as a firm favourite amongst Observatory's myriad students and freelance copywriters almost instantly.

It's hard to pinpoint exactly what makes Sonder such an exceptional cafe, especially in a suburb which is riddled with restaurants and coffee spots. You could pick any aspect of the establishment and become easily impressed. The coffee (importantly) is delicious. Mild, fruity, and served in beautifully glazed hand-thrown ceramic mugs. The menu is fresh, tasty, well-priced, and written with a remarkable knack for puns. You'll get no points for correctly guessing what toppings you would enjoy on the Hamela Anderson bagel, nor for predicting what might go into a Friends with Benedicts, but that truly is the mark of a masterful play on words, isn't it?

The decor (exquisitely curated vintage bohemian) lands you somewhere between your mum's kitchen and the kind of trendy Capetonian coffee hub that worms its way inevitably onto Instagram, replete with macrame hangings and a gallery wall. There's not a drop of pretension to be found at Sonder, though, which is refreshing in the Cape Town caffeine scene. Chase, one of the co-owners, is always quick to ask me how the writing is going. Mish, the mastermind behind the cafe, runs business with quiet efficiency. TK, the attentive barista, has taken care to memorise my order, a gesture which has cemented Sonder in my estimation as a coffee shop of repute.

There's always something going on at Sonder. The gallery wall, which is as functional as it is lovely to look at, features a rotating assortment of local artists' work for sale. At some point last year, the centre of the wall featured an enormous gouache painting by Capetonian artist Amy Lee that was worth more than a month's rent to me at the time. It was only through the exercise of Herculean self-restraint that I was able to resist making myself homeless for art (is this not the plight of every self-respecting writer?), though I did purchase a smaller artwork of Amy Lee's from the Sonder wall. It is one of my dearest possessions.

If you ever tire of looking at the magic walls of Sonder, you can entertain yourself with the in-house library (which takes donations from the public!) or the antique chessboards. Everything about Sonder is designed to make you feel at home, and it works. A few hours passed at the cafe will have you overhear a spirited political debate between students in Thai harem pants, identify another harried copywriter wrestling both his deadline and his excitable, leashed poodle, and watch a first date unfold between two blushing millennials.

To the backing track of a pleasant playlist which never fails to impress with its agility and range, one comes to realise that one is settling into the true meaning of sonder - the recognition that strangers enjoy lives that are as rich and complex as yours. At Sonder, every stranger has a story, and it's been nothing short of a pleasure for me to write some of it.

SONDER CAFÉ

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sonder

[sandə] noun • English

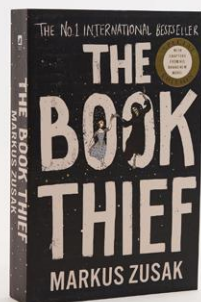
the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own – populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries, and inherited craziness – an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you'll never know existed, in which you might appear only once as an extra, sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk.

Find out:
what it is
how to use it
and more

HEARD & READ

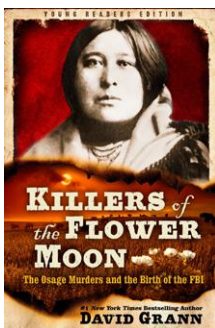
This month's book and music recommendations.

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



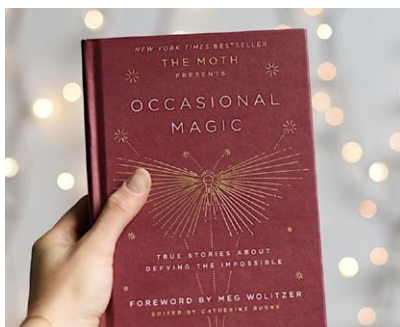
The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

A beautifully written ode to the unstoppable power of books, even in humanity's darkest hours. Set in Germany in 1939, "The Book Thief" is a gorgeous novel that follows the story of Liesel, a young girl navigating the frightening world of the Nazi regime. It's at her brother's graveside that Liesel steals her first, but certainly not her last, book. Soon, she's stealing books from Nazi book-burnings, libraries, and anywhere else she can get her hands on them. But Death knows Liesel: he's seen her before...



Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI by David Grann

One of the greatest pieces of investigative non-fiction in the last decade, "Killers of the Flower Moon" investigates a century-old mystery. Murder, oil, money and deception – this is a deliciously reported story which will leave you astonished. One for the true crime fans out there. nibh, eu eleifend augue.



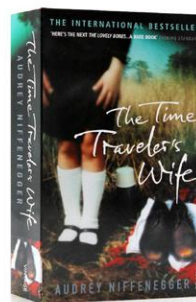
The Moth: Occasional Magic

Based on the award-winning podcast dedicated to the art of storytelling, "The Moth: Occasional Magic" features 50 true stories of people defying the impossible, as told live at The Moth story slams across the world. It is a wonderful read – sometimes heart-breaking, sometimes funny, always memorable and very difficult to put down!



Letters of Note by Shaun Usher

"Letters of Note" is a collection of one hundred and twenty-five of the world's most entertaining, inspiring, and unusual letters, and it is an absolutely magnificent read. From Queen Elizabeth II's recipe for drop scones sent to President Eisenhower, to Leonardo da Vinci's remarkable job application letter, this book is a fascinating celebration of an almost lost art – letter writing!



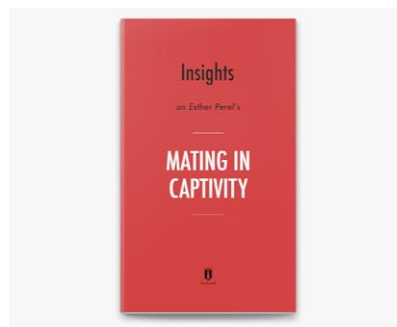
The Time Traveller's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger

Beautifully written and incredibly difficult to put down, "The Time Traveller's Wife" is an extraordinary love story of Clare and Henry who met when Clare was six and Henry was thirty-six and were married when Clare was twenty-two and Henry was thirty. Henry suffers from Chrono-impairment, a rare genetic condition which finds him travelling through time to his past or future. Can they build a normal life across time?



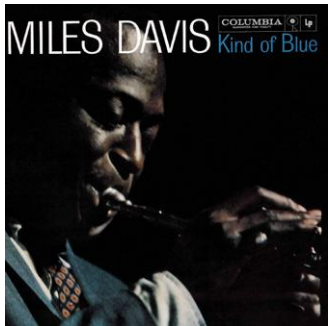
Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear by Elizabeth Gilbert

Elizabeth Gilbert, author of the best-selling "Eat, Pray, Love", is a master of creative living. In this book, she shares stories from her own life, as well as those from her friends and the people who have inspired her, to encourage us to live our creativity, tackle what we most love and face down what we most fear. A great read for anyone with a passion for any kind of creative pursuit!



Mating in Captivity by Esther Perel

Everyone's favourite couples' therapist Esther Perel is recognised as one of the world's leading sex therapists and experts in modern love. In this best-seller, she draws on her 20 years' experience to demonstrate how it's possible to keep erotic desire burning in long-term relationships. This book quickly became a global phenomenon, translated into over 24 languages.



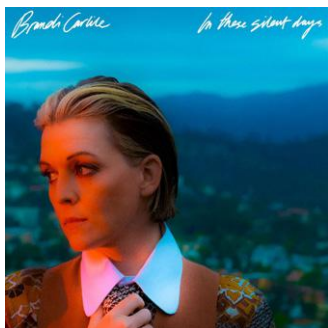
"Kind of Blue" by Miles Davis

Whether you're an avid jazz fan, a dabbler or brand new to the genre, "Kind of Blue" is worth a (re)listen this month. Here is the legend at his most accessible and melodic, sweeping the listener into an ethereal world of blues and greens.



"King" by Florence + the Machine

We are loving the new single from British songstress extraordinaire, Florence + the Machine. "King" sees Florence Welch back in full form and full voice. And lo' and behold, a new album is on the way - not a moment too soon!



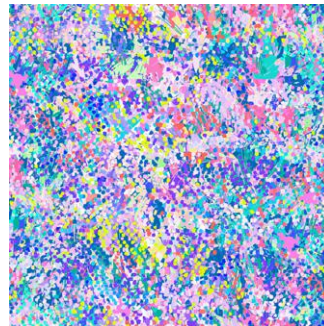
"These Silent Days" by Brandi Carlile

"These Silent Days" marks the seventh album from six-time Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Brandi Carlile. Built around Carlile's massive vocal performance, this album is an absolute masterpiece, and its lead single, "Right on Time", will have you wailing along in the shower before you know it. Well worth a listen!



"Dead of Night" by Orville Peck

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"Real Love Baby" by Father John Misty

A single we love from one of our favourite songwriters and general suave raconteurs, Father John Misty. Blending old school sonics with a modern take on love, this track delivers everything we want from a proper bop.



"Lightning I, II" by Arcade Fire

If you've never heard Arcade Fire, here's a sign that you're ready to meet your new favourite band. The latest singles from the Canadian supergroup mark a return to Arcade Fire doing Arcade Fire – lush, rich, catchy, and infinitely singable songs which will quickly become the soundtrack to your life.



"Daddy's Home" by St. Vincent

This Grammy award-winning album by St. Vincent is our number one pick for a weekend listen. Lush, nostalgic, and infinitely interesting, Annie Clark's down-and-out in downtown LA 1970's aesthetic is underscored by exquisite songwriting and downright brilliant musicianship. We think you'll love it as much as we do!

TEACHING CHILDREN TO BE BRAVE THROUGH STORIES AND PLAY

By Rachel Carey

“My sister Rebekah and I have always loved a project together. You know, painting things, decorating things, folding origami cranes for my wedding. That sort of thing. So, I guess it makes sense that when we were all plunged into total lockdown the two of us decided it was a good time to write a story for our children.

There was so much fear at the time. It was all so unknown. This strange virus. Who was safe? How to stay safe. What we were allowed to do. What we weren't. We wanted to write a story about a character who embodied bravery. We wanted to focus on strength, on courage, on feeling that you are brave and strong enough, even in the face of adversity.

And from this, The Little Gecko was born: a children's book about a little gecko who sets off on an adventure to find his tail, after losing his when startled by an owl. The book is written in gentle rhyme to support language development and features a bravery affirmation repeated throughout to help children to internalise the message of bravery.

Rebekah did beautiful water colours with superimposed natural features for the illustrations and we toiled over the words together to create a story that both captures imagination but also inspires bravery and self-belief.

The human brain has a negative bias. We are designed to remember the things that feel like threats in our environments. We take note of the bad things, not the good. It's about survival - we need to know what is dangerous for us. Unfortunately, though, this often makes us believe that things are scarier than they really are.

In the story, when gecko needs to have courage, he brings to mind all the challenges he has overcome already; he reminds himself of the good, of his successes, where he was strong. And it is in doing this, that he finds his strength and bravery.

It is so important to teach children the skill of doing this; of focusing on their wins in life, of reminding themselves what they have achieved, how far they have come. The Little Gecko book is a lovely introduction to this process.

As a children's occupational therapist I am so aware of how children are primarily sensory learners and how it is really through their bodies that they learn best. The connection with their bodies and their sensory systems is completely linked to self-regulation - a vitally important aspect of bravery.

Bringing the characters in the story to life for children, in the form of yoga poses, seemed like the natural progression of the book. I have collaborated with the wonderful, talented local yoga teacher and mum, Helen Garner to do just this.

As adults, we use yoga as a form of mindfulness and movement meditation in which we can become aware of our bodies and connect with the present moment. We do this through our external and

internal sense systems. These systems working smoothly are vitally important for sensory regulation which goes hand in hand with our emotional regulation. Children learn through play. For new synapses to be formed in the brain, neuroscientists hypothesise that we need up to 400 repetitions of an action. If children learn spontaneously in play however, the number of repetitions can be reduced dramatically to about 10 to 20 repetitions with the same outcome. Perhaps more importantly, evidence shows that when children learn through spontaneous play, they are able to generalise the skills they learn far better than when they learn through drill-like, staged repetitions.

Play is the language of learning for children and so the challenge for us was to create a yoga programme, that would include the regulatory sensory input as well as the strength and developmental goals yoga offers, while being fun and playful. Bringing the characters from the story to life allows us to do just that.

We held our first children's yoga holiday club during the last school holidays, and it was a great success. Watching these little children across the three days of the club, internalise the affirmation, become more aware of their bodies and their movements, and learn breathing and sensory techniques for helping them calm and regulate, was rewarding beyond measure.

We are now planning a series of stories that can accompany our children's yoga courses. The first of the series being the little gecko with the social emotional attribute of bravery at the core of the story. The characters he meets along the way are all included in the yoga course as postures and each offers characteristics that allows us to work on different developmental skills.

From balance, through to using both sides of the body together in a synchronised way, from dissociating our head and eye movements through to weight bearing through our upper limbs for better shoulder stability - these are all foundation skills that we work on in OT and which children need to learn and practice playfully to be successful at school and with the demands of the classroom.

What started out as a small project with my sister and I, for our own children, has grown organically into this beautiful gift that we can offer all children in the form of these stories and the yoga courses that go with them.

I'm not going to lie, it's daunting, and at times I feel a little overwhelmed to think I've somehow become a children's author and children's yoga programme developer. But then, like little gecko, I remember that I am brave and strong enough and I keep going.

THE LITTLE GECKO

Teaching Children to be Brave Through Stories and Play

rachiecarey@gmail.com
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- Gecko Yoga in action



- Author Rachel Carey

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