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LIFE



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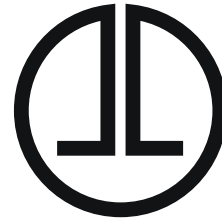
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/ LETTER FROM THE ED /

JOURNEY THROUGH THE LIFE OF PLANTS

Friends, welcome to the Summer Edition of Life & Style

THROUGHOUT MUCH OF the 1970s, Stevie Wonder released a series of albums that would come to be regarded as one of the most impressive creative streaks in the history of recorded music: *Music of My Mind* (1972), *Talking Book* (1972), *Fulfillingness' First Finale* (1973), *Innervisions* (1974), and *the incomparable Songs in the Key of Life* (1976). Often referred to as his “classic period,” this body of work cemented Wonder’s status as an unparalleled force in popular music— a sonic visionary exploring themes of love, politics, and spirituality through divine sound.

Towards the end of the 1970s, producer Michael Brau approached Stevie Wonder with a request to compose a soundtrack for a documentary based on the book *The Secret Life of Plants*—a work that argued plants, like humans and animals, are sentient beings. Enchanted by the idea, Wonder asked Braun to describe each image in the film, allowing him to translate the plant life on screen into sound. This task was one of profound ambition, a testament to Wonder’s limitless imagination and his ability to channel vast depths of feeling into lush, expansive orchestrations—especially considering that Wonder, a blind man, was composing for a medium he could not fully experience.

However, despite the album’s innovative sonic theatrics, *Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants* was met with sharply mixed reviews. The immense scope of the album’s vision was criticised by publications like *Rolling Stone*, which called it “a strange succession of stunted songs, nattering ballads, and wandering instrumentals,” while *The Village Voice* compared it to “*the painful awkwardness of a barely literate sidewalk sermon*.” The album failed to live up to the monumental standards set by Wonder’s previous work, and thus marked the end of his classic period.



The book *The Secret Life of Plants* was also met with severe criticism from the scientific community, which dismissed the studies it presented as pseudo-science. Critics pointed to its reliance on anecdotal evidence rather than replicable scientific methods (for instance, the use of polygraph tests on plants to measure their responses to stimuli was criticised for lacking controlled conditions and verifiable results).

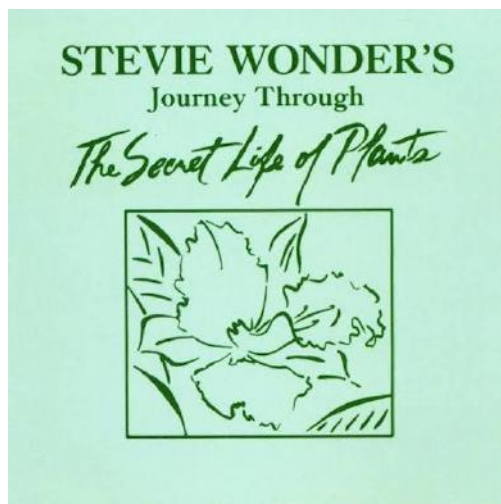
So, what led to the book’s immense popularity despite its lack of scientific merit? Why would one of the greatest artists of the 1970s risk his critical acclaim to contribute to its cultural relevance?

I’m not a scientist, nor am I particularly skilled in advanced cultural criticism, so I can’t offer a definitive answer. But there is an excerpt from the book that high-

lights the ideas of Joseph Henry Vogel, who suggested that plant research could foster emotional growth in children. Vogel proposed that by using simple training kits, children could learn to express their emotions and observe measurable effects, helping them understand the power of their thoughts. By observing how plants respond to emotional expressions, children could better understand the impact of their feelings:

“They can thus learn the art of loving,” says Vogel, “and know truly that when they think a thought, they release a tremendous power or force in space. By knowing that they are their thoughts, they will know how to use thinking to achieve spiritual, emotional, and intellectual growth.”

Perhaps the legacy of *The Secret Life of Plants* lies not in its scientific revelations, but in its call for compassion toward the plant life that surrounds us—and by extension, toward each other. This idea brings to mind the concept of mycelium—a complex network of fungal threads that connects plants and fungi, allowing them to share nutrients and water in order to sustain one



another within the balance of their ecosystem. More specifically, it reminds me of the poet and essayist Ross Gay—who often reflects on the deep connection between the natural world and human emotions—and his musings on the comparison between underground mycelial networks and the invisible connections between people:

“The luminous, mycelial tethers between us, our fundamental connection to one another, the raft through the sorrow, the holding through the grief—joy is, reminds us, again and again, that we belong not to an institution or a party or a state or a market, but to each other. Needfully so.”

In that spirit, this edition of *Life & Style* pays homage to *The Secret Life of Plants*, featuring yet another stunning cover illustrated by our friends at Studio Muti, as well as a collection of articles exploring botanical themes and connections. Like the book itself, the content in this magazine may not have much scientific merit, but we hope it carries enough love to share with you all.

Yours evergreen & ever-growing,
Dan Charles

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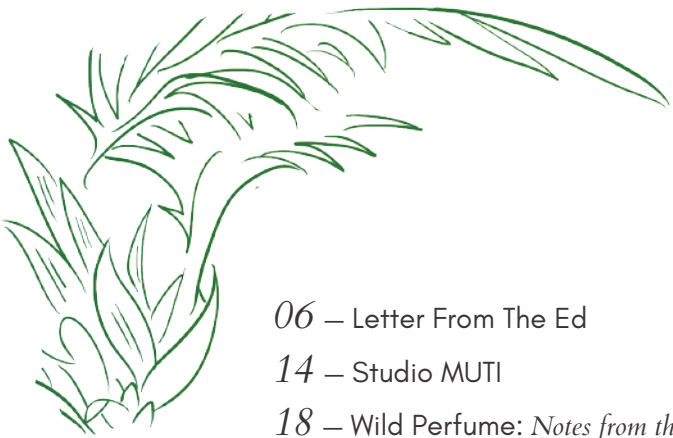
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ON AIR, ONLINE & IN PRINT



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Below is a collection of artworks for an upcoming project showcasing a series of digitally rendered vases.

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WILD PERFUME

NOTES FROM THE VELDT

Words: Tara Boraine

IN THE SHADOW of Table Mountain, where spring winds carry the wild perfume of fynbos across the Cape, I've become an ornamental garden hermit. My world, once filled with the scents of nightclub smoke and spilled whiskey, has contracted to the space of a bedroom - a consequence of Long COVID that left me hypersensitive to pretty much everything under (and including) the sun. Yet in this forced stillness, I discovered something unexpected: as my external world shrank, my sensory world expanded exponentially. I underwent a metamorphosis, transforming from a bustling musician and bartender into a student of nature's most intimate language: scent.

THE SCIENCE OF MEMORY

The French perfumer Jean-Claude Ellena famously described perfume as "*poetry in memory*".

Indeed, the human olfactory system remains one of neuroscience's most-fascinating frontiers. Unlike our other senses, smell bypasses the thalamus, connecting directly to the limbic system - our emotional command center. This unique neural architecture explains why scents trigger memories with such startling clarity. We don't just remember a smell; we relive it.

Looking back, I realise I was unconsciously preparing for this olfactory awakening my entire life. My mother lost her sense of smell to head trauma when I was young, and I haphazardly became my household's designated 'nose'. As an undiagnosed autistic child, I experienced the world with an intensity that often overwhelmed. My unbridled brain, with its tendency toward synesthesia, turned every scent into a complex tapestry, encoding rich and formative early memories.



THE SCENT OF CHILDHOOD

When I think of my childhood in South Africa, there are couple of vivid autobiographical poems that spring to my mind:

- The autumn petrichor rising from rain on dusty earth mingling with the damp Cape Mountain Sage.
- The sappy sweetness of crushed pepper tree leaves.
- The summer City Bowl rush of warm pine, jasmine and petrol.
- My father's 10 PM coffee mingling with linseed oil as he painted late into the night.
- The lingering traces of lavender & rose geranium essential oils on my mother's pulse points as she read to us until we fell asleep.

Again, I am not surprised I turned out this way. Both of my parents are artists in their own right, and they inadvertently gave me an education in sensory perception that no school could hope to provide.



THE LONG SHADOW OF COVID

My life narrowed when my Long COVID began. From being a regular busybody Cape Town creative, I found myself quite suddenly isolated and disabled. Illness so often comes with a profound loss of the familiar. My previous world of smoky whiskey bars, fogged up stages, jovial dinners with friends, and even most nice-smelling skincare products slipped beyond my grasp.

Unable to tolerate synthetic fragrances, which triggered severe autoimmune reactions, I turned instead to nature's aromatic palette. My guide in this transition was Aftel's 'Essence & Alchemy' - a work that bridges the scientific and sacred in natural perfumery.

Unable to travel in body, I traveled instead through scent, each oil, each resin, each blend a portal to a new world, place or time. With an internet connection and a small but growing collection of botanical specimens, I embarked upon a journey back to my love of the natural sciences.

*And the end of all our exploring **Will be to arrive where we started** And know the place for the first time.*

T.S Elliot

THE ALCHEMY OF FRAGRANCE

What began as desperate experimentation crystallized into precise ritual. My bedroom sanctuary, with its growing collection of amber bottles, became both laboratory and time machine. Here, in this small space between mountain and sea, I found myself walking an ancient path - seeking, like the alchemists before me, to capture nature's fleeting whispers one careful extraction at a time.

My experiments began simply: tincturing whatever I could ethically source. Bladder-wrack seaweed from our coasts, oak shavings from wine barrels, dried artemisia from my herb garden. Each ingredient demanded its own approach, its own patience, its own respect for natural timing.

Master perfumers rely on four core extraction techniques, each suited to specific botanical materials:

- *Enfleurage: Capturing delicate floral scents in a neutral fat*
- *Steam distillation: The most common method for essential oil production*
- *CO2 extraction: A modern technique perfect for heat-sensitive materials*
- *Tincturing: Alcohol-based extraction for resins and tough materials*

One full moon, driven by romantic notions of traditional French perfumery, I began an attempt at enfleurage - an ancient method of capturing delicate floral scents in fat. For thirty nights, I became a respectful flower thief, carefully harvesting Natal Plum (*Carissa macrocarpa*) blossoms from the neighborhood bushes, laying them on a bed of denatured coconut fat & swapping the petals out each day. Though my first attempt succumbed to mold, the process taught me the patience essential to natural perfumery, where ingredients are both fragile & precious. These materials are alive after all - and their aliveness teaches us humility.

SOUTHERN AFRICA'S AROMATIC HERITAGE

South Africa's botanical heritage represents one of the world's most diverse perfume palettes, shaped by unique geological and climatic conditions. The Cape Floristic Region alone contains over 9,000 plant species, nearly 70% of which are found nowhere else on Earth.

At the moment, I have been drawn to explore our abundance of Helichrysum species. Known locally as imphepho, several species are used in traditional medicines and ritualistic incense. One particular species, *H. odoratissimum* (also known as kooigoed) is traditionally used by Southern Sotho women. They make a fragrant ointment from this plant, that serves a dual purpose - to both perfume and protect.

This idea of functional perfume is nothing new. These centuries of botanical wisdom from the cradle of humankind reflect an ancient pragmatism which is, in my opinion, overdue for a comeback.



A WHIFF OF SOUTH AFRICAN PERFUME INGREDIENTS

- *Cape Chamomile (Eriocephalus punctulatus)*: Offers a surprisingly crisp, apple-sweet scent with gentle herbal nuances. Known for its stress-relieving and anti-inflammatory properties.
- *Buchu (Agathosma betulina and A. crenulata)*: Herbal and camphorous with blackcurrant notes.
- *Rose Geranium (Pelargonium graveolens)*: Distilled from the leaves, it provides a lovely rosy scent at a fraction of the cost of rose essential oil.

Some traditionally South African smells like rooibos & honeybush resist conventional distillation, but innovative methods using CO2 extraction are opening new possibilities for perfumers to take advantage of.

A NOTE ON ETHICS

While exploring Southern Africa's rich botanical heritage, it's crucial to address the ethical considerations surrounding indigenous knowledge.

The Nagoya Protocol, an international agreement aimed at sharing the benefits of genetic resources fairly, is particularly relevant here. As we delve into traditional uses of local plants, we must ensure that indigenous communities are not only credited for their knowledge but also benefit from any commercial applications. This involves establishing fair partnerships, obtaining prior informed consent, and implementing benefit-sharing mechanisms. By doing so, we can help preserve both the botanical diversity and the cultural wisdom that make South African perfumery unique, while avoiding the exploitative practices that have historically plagued the relationship between indigenous knowledge and commercial interests.

THE FUTURE OF FRAGRANCE

Through the craft of natural perfumery, I've come to see that scent preferences aren't just about pleasure; they tell stories about identity, heritage, function, and personal evolution. In a world increasingly dominated by the mass-production and unsustainable synthetics, returning to nature's complex aromatic language feels both subversive and essential.

I think we need to remember that ethical sourcing and sustainable practices can be commercially viable. It might take a while to sniff them out, but there are niche perfume creators that care about preserving botanical legacy, supporting local farmers, and cultivating a deep respect for the land. Through them, the future of fragrance in South Africa may reflect not just the richness of our flora but our commitment to conserving it.

THE PERSONAL BECOMES UNIVERSAL

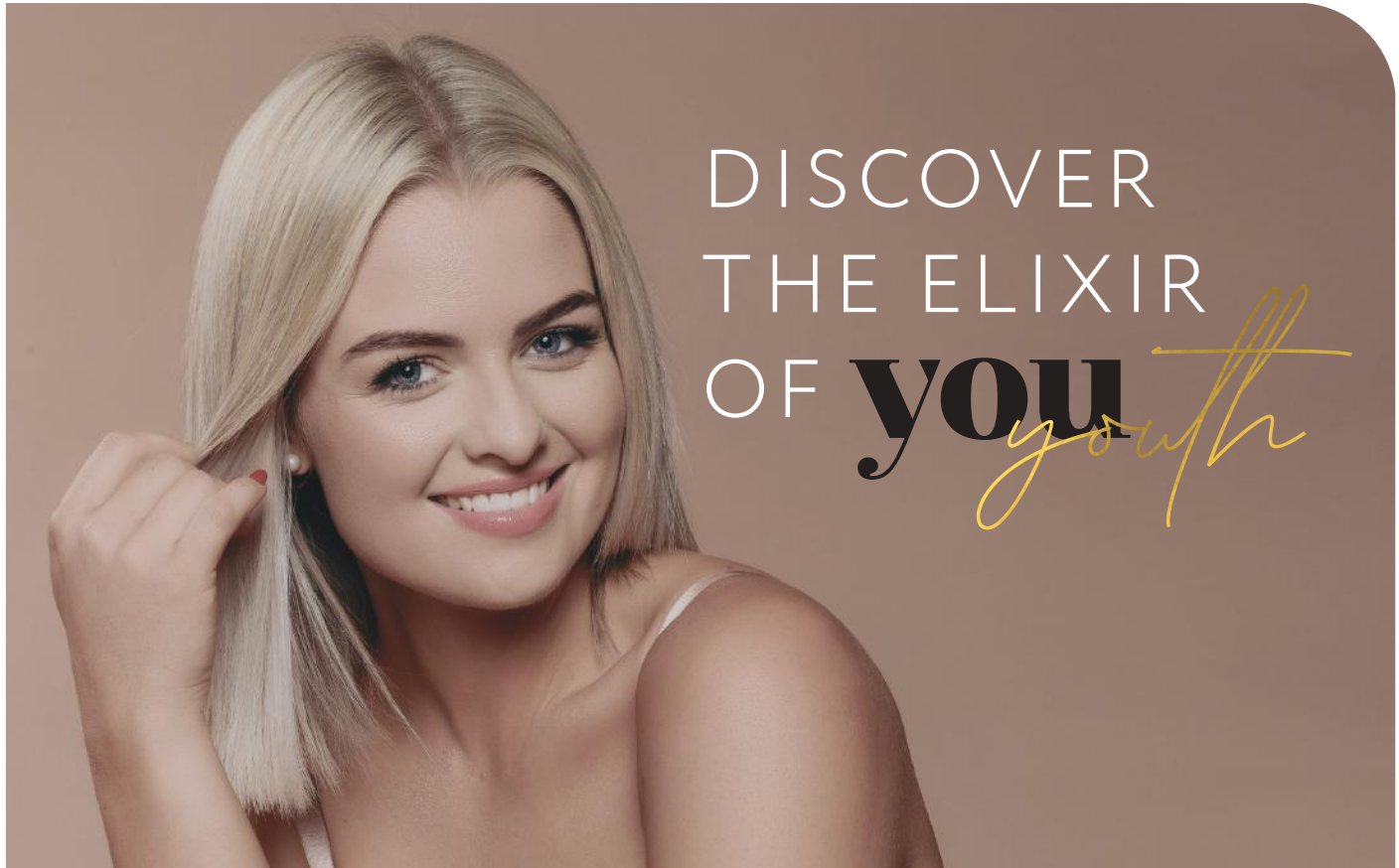
A year into this journey, I've created dozens of accords and formulations I'm proud of, including one that has become my personal signature (a local riff on the notes of Chanel's Chance: pink pepper, jasmine, fynbos bitters). While I'm focusing primarily on custom blends for friends and family, I've discovered something far more valuable than a new craft.

What began as a way to cope with the confines of illness has become a lens through which I understand both science and spirit. For natural perfumery demands both precision and intuition, a balance between the measurable and the mysterious.

Perhaps that's the real gift of working with botanical ingredients: they remind us that even in our most sophisticated and modern understanding of the world, there's still wild magic to be found.

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"BE STILL. THE HANGING GARDENS WERE A DREAM"

The 10th Anniversary of The Hanging Gardens of Beatenberg

Words: Dan Charles

THE HANGING GARDENS OF BEATENBERG is an impeccably crafted album. Lyrically, the songs balance irreverence and poignancy in poetic musings of moments from everyday life, incorporating parallels between tennis players and Renaissance painters, as well as quoting T.S. Eliot while visiting different shopping malls with a lover who will eventually have to leave you. The rich sonic tapestry of the musical arrangements immaculately weaves together threads of pop, indie, bubblegum, mbaqanga, jazz, reggae, as well as elements of classical music into a sound that is both tasteful and transformative, whilst nostalgically reverent of iconic South African acts such as Bright Blue, who also explored the same expansive musical terrain. The incorporation of Robin Brink and Ross Dorkins' affinity for local house and electronic music into the album's menagerie of influences led to their immensely successful collaboration with DJ Clock on "Pluto (Remember You)," which became the longest-running South African number-one single ever (with seventeen weeks on the local radio charts) and solidified Beatenberg's status as one of the country's most successful cultural crossover acts, perhaps since the days of Johnny Clegg and Savuka. It is an album of significant standing within the pantheon of great South African albums, which is an impeccable feat for an artist's debut. This is why its legacy continues to endure ten years after its release.

In 2014, Beatenberg's career was defined almost as soon as it began, with the critical acclaim that came with releasing *The Hanging Gardens*. However, the problem with the immediate achievement of a milestone that most artists strive toward throughout their entire career is the pressure of having to meet the colossal expectations they've set for themselves for the rest of their career. While speaking with singer and guitarist Matthew Field, he admits that it has been very difficult for him to write new music without constantly thinking about what people expect or want to hear from him. He expresses a sense of self-consciousness, feeling confused about what to put out and whether it will

deviate from the "true path" of Beatenberg. He explains that this struggle is not necessarily with the songs themselves, as he believes the band has continued to produce good work. However, the process of collecting the songs, finishing them, and preparing them for release has become fraught with internal doubts and uncertainty.

*"The beauty of doing **The Hanging Gardens** was that there was nothing,"* says Matthew Field, the vocalist and guitarist for Beatenberg, while discussing the tenth anniversary of their debut album. *"There was nothing, and we were creating for the first time. You know, everyone has a version of this story. I think anyone who's had any degree of success has gone through something resembling this kind of contour, but the way they handle it is different. Some handle it better than others. I think I haven't handled it nearly as well as I thought I would. There are still many things that I want to do and to do things that are true to the way that I felt 10 years ago. It's not like that's been lost to me entirely, but I think it's been difficult to be as confident in my own compass since then."*

In the years between 1975 and 1978, Bruce Springsteen languished under a similar kind of creative anguish. The release of *Born to Run* in 1975 saw Springsteen finally achieving the promise set by music journalist and eventual-manager Jon Landau when he famously claimed to have seen the future of rock 'n roll and that its name was Bruce Springsteen. The album was met with triumphant praise and critical acclaim and brought upon the success and recognition that he had mercilessly sought out. However, what followed was the







pressure. As well as dealing with legal disputes between him and his former manager in the wake of his great success, Springsteen toiled over writing what was said to be between 50 and 70 songs during recording sessions that were gruelling and often extended late into the night. Springsteen's perfectionism led to exhaustive revisions of lyrics and arrangements, with some sessions dragging on for months without ever being satisfied. His greatest accomplishment had turned into his greatest torment.

"There is a certain frightening aspect to having things you dreamed were going to happen, happen, because it's always more – and in some ways always less – than what you expected," said Springsteen in an interview that recalled this period, which would lead to the genesis of the 1978 album ***Darkness on the Edge of Town***—an album that embodies the lesson that your dreams might not come true and, even if they do, life will seldom turn out the way you hoped it would. *"I think when people dream of things, they dream of them without the complications. The real dream is not the dream, it's life without complications. And that doesn't exist."*

Following the success of ***Hanging Gardens***, Beatenberg went on to release their follow-up album ***12 Views of Beatenberg***, as well as join Senegalese singer Baaba Maal and Malawian British singer-producer combo The Very Best on British folk rock band Mumford & Sons' collaborative EP ***Johannesburg***. These releases saw Beatenberg begin to reach international acclaim, but not quite to the extent that their debut album reached back home in South Africa. So, they decided to take a break. Bassist and lead producer Ross Dorkin went to London to earn a graduate degree and produce for other artists; drummer Robin Brink moved to Berlin to further expand his interest and love for dance music; and lead singer and guitarist Matthew Field bounced between London and Cape Town while working on his own solo material under the name M.Field. This period of separating into their own new artistic lanes allowed them to explore their creative pursuits in a way that did not feel permissible in a band that rose to immediate prominence.

"If I do something that means a lot to me and someone listens to it and they're like, 'Okay, that's cool, but I don't really get it'—like that's kind of permissible, and that doesn't feel like it's permissible with Beatenberg. It's like if you send a kid to the wrong school, like if you send a kid who's a really good chess player to a sports academy—you know, they get bullied or whatever and they're not popular, but they actually have a real gift for something else. I kind of feel like a bit like that about a song. Some songs I have, if I'm going to put them in the Beatenberg thing and release them, and then they'll get like no real reception, maybe some people say it's cool, but you know, it's not, it's not going to resonate to the extent that the stuff we did at the beginning did. That's hurtful for all of us and for my feeling toward the song."

Of course, he acknowledges that this difficulty is his own personal issue, and it has also created challenges for the other members of the band, who have had to navigate his creative struggles. He feels that this professional context has made it hard for him to separate his personal identity from the band's work, as it is so intrinsically a part of who he is. But after spending 5 years cultivating an artistic identity outside of the immense legacy of Beatenberg, the band was ready to reunite and announce their return with a stellar EP titled ***“On the Road to Beatenberg,”*** perhaps signifying the band finding a way to continue moving forward together again.

Entering the year that marks the 10th anniversary of the band's debut album, Beatenberg released their long-awaited third full-length album ***The Great Fire of Beatenberg***, which is an album that demonstrates the noticeable growth shown by each of the members during their break from the path of Beatenberg and is arguably the best work yet. The band is also readying themselves to perform a series of shows to commemorate an album that, after ten years, they can see as something worth commemorating.

“I think since then, as I got older, I have gotten better at just focusing more on the present and the future and keeping the past as this kind of nurturing thing, rather than something that feels like a source of pain or loss. There might have been a time in these 10 years that, if I look back on the album, I would have felt much more conflicted and sort of upset about what I wanted to have done since then and hadn't done or whatever. I do have some of those feelings, but I think I'm much more able now to just see that time as something great and that album that we did is something I'm very happy to have done. I'm very proud and grateful to everyone else who is around who helped make it happen, and the other guys in the band, obviously, but also for that whole time and the friendship that we had, and the energy that was going around. It does feel like something quite special, and it's nice to have the distance to see that without sort of being too clouded by ways in which I would have wanted it to go afterward, or what it should have meant.”

The legend of the ***Hanging Gardens of Babylon*** is that King Nebuchadnezzar II constructed the fabled structure for the homesick Queen Amytis, who longed for the cool temperatures, mountainous terrain, and beautiful scenery of her homeland of Media. In a way, ***The Hanging Gardens of Beatenberg*** have come to serve a similar purpose. Like all great albums, it has a transportive quality—an album that reaches out to you and guides you toward a place that you otherwise could not have touched. Perhaps, for the band, it is a monument to the friendship and desire of three musicians who each wanted to preserve all of the things that they found beautiful in a sonic amber that can be revisited for years and years to come.

BEATENBERG

@beatenberg_band







INSPIRED RENOVATION

By Stephanie du Preez

THE OLALA INTERIORS TEAM RECENTLY COMPLETED A LUXURIOUSLY ELEGANT REFRESH OF A HOME IN ZIMBALI COASTAL ESTATE. TAKE A TOUR...

Tasked with a pretty open brief to revamp this outdated home, the OLALA INTERIORS team jumped at the opportunity to creatively bring out the very best each space had to offer.

The living room, dining area and kitchen were completely redefined to create the perfect balance between functionality and aesthetics. A moody colour palette contrasted with bold detailing features throughout, ensuring a calm and elegant, yet contemporary feel.

The walls in the living room have been beautifully adorned with a generously tactile wallpaper, which was used as a foundation for the rest of the space. Soft velvets, gorgeously patterned scatters,



BEFORE





OH SO BESPOKE!

The stunning kitchen - designed for enjoyable cooking and entertaining. No being cut off from your guests or family in this kitchen - its made to be social.



BEFORE



and bespoke upholstered dining and living room chairs upped the luxe effect. The team ensured that not only was this a place to relax and dine, but its entertaining qualities were perfectly balanced by a smooth transition between the three spaces.

The kitchen is an enthusiastic interpretation of the modern minimalist aesthetic with strong architectural interest points. The tailor-made (by OLALA INTERIORS of course!) matt black cabinetry artfully accentuates the sleek long-line white counter top. Statement and functional lighting have been skillfully placed for optimal effect.

The untapped potential of the two en-suite family suites and a separate guest bedroom with private amenities, were expertly redesigned to command beauty and comfort. The luxurious sleek bathrooms exude an understated opulence, with an almost art deco feel. Headboards upholstered in soft, touchy feely fabrics, glam faux fur throws draped over beds, absolutely gorgeous bespoke bedside pedestals and lighting to die for, bedtime anyone?



One of the highlights of the project for the OLALA INTERIORS team was the ability to design, manufacture and install custom built in cupboards and cabinetry throughout the home. The team loved working on this project, the end result, I'm sure you will agree, is a renovation success!



LUXE BATHING

A true oasis of relaxation. The reflective surfaces in this space are so on point!



BEFORE



A LOVE OF LINEAR

These bespoke built in cupboards were crafted with care and it shows!



BEFORE



UNWIND IN STYLE

An indulgent sanctuary for all the senses. The bedrooms and bathrooms have all been meticulously designed as a retreat from modern life, where dreams are realised.



Luxury, sublime and subtle, or bold and fabulously over the top. This underpins the design style of the OLALA INTERIORS team. With over 30 years of good standing in the interior design world, OLALA INTERIORS celebrates crafting and curating interiors that radiate responsive, mindful design.

With meticulous attention to detail, an unrivaled luxury design expertise, and a unique approach to interiors, this award-winning team of designers and craftsmen create perfect habitats for discerning clients. Quality workmanship and luxurious finishes underscores each and every installation.

OLALA INTERIORS know the importance of authenticity and treat all projects in a unique way to develop their own personality, signature and style. Clients are assured of always receiving the very best service.

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GLASS & GLAMOUR

Once primarily industrial materials, the glisten and gleam of glass and aluminium now stand as staple fixtures of the modern architectural design landscape. These versatile elements have come to redefine the spaces where we live, work, and play, offering a blend of style, sustainability, and functionality. Here are 5 shiny design trends to watch in 2025.

A Window to the World

Architects are embracing glass facades that blur the lines between indoors and out. Imagine soaring, floor-to-ceiling windows that bathe your living space in natural light, offering breath-taking views of the cityscape or serene countryside. These architectural marvels not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of a building but also promote energy efficiency by reducing the need for artificial lighting.

Sleek and Sustainable

Slim, minimalist frames are the order of the day. These sleek designs maximise glass area, allowing for unobstructed views and a contemporary look. Moreover, advancements in technology have led to the development of energy-efficient glass coatings that regulate temperature, reducing reliance on heating and cooling systems.

Smart Spaces, Smarter Living

Smart technology is seamlessly integrating into glass and aluminium applications. Imagine windows that automatically adjust to optimise natural light or doors that respond to voice commands. These innovative features enhance convenience, security, and energy efficiency, making our homes and workplaces truly smart.

Nature's Embrace

Biophilic design, which seeks to connect people with nature, is inspiring architects and interior designers to incorporate natural elements into their projects. Think large glass windows and doors that bring the outdoors in, fostering a sense of well-being and reducing stress.

Personalise Your Paradise

Customisation is key in modern design. With a wide range of colours, finishes, and styles available, you can create personalised spaces that reflect your unique taste. Whether you prefer sleek minimalism or bold, contemporary accents, glass and aluminium offer endless possibilities.



The Future is Now: A Partner in Design Innovation

An architectural vision is only as good as its execution, and in the South African design context, North Shore Group (NSG) stands out as a trailblazer. Specialists in the design, manufacture, and installation of architectural aluminium and frameless glass systems, NSG's portfolio spans residential, commercial, and high-end architectural projects. Their commitment to delivering cutting-edge products has made them the go-to choice for architects, developers, and homeowners alike. Visit www.nsgroup.co.za to find out more about NSG's world-class architectural glass and aluminium products and services, and let them turn your creative vision into a stunning reality.

Visit www.nsgroup.co.za to find out more about NSG's world-class architectural glass & aluminium products and services.



SAVE THE PENGUINS

They Say It's Impossible To Look At A Penguin And Feel Sad

Words: Duncan Pritchard

JUST A CENTURY AGO, the African Penguin population was estimated at around one million birds. Today, it has dwindled to fewer than 9,000 breeding pairs. This alarming decline has made the African Penguin the first of the world's eighteen penguin species to be classified as 'critically endangered' ...a rather unfortunate claim to fame that no species particularly wants.

It seems it is possible to look at a penguin and feel sad. But before we descend down the road of despair, let's take a moment to consider what a marvel these unusual birds are. Of the 18 species of penguins in the world, the African Penguin is the only species native to the African mainland. Until recently they were known as the Jackass Penguin, due to its call which is reminiscent of a donkey doing its thing, until some jackass decided that all penguins kind of sound like this so we better change its name to African Penguin. I liked Jackass Penguin – it had a fun ring to it. Nomenclature aside, it seems these trusting birds have bigger problems than their name to deal with.

Penguins evolved over 61 million years ago and according to fossil evidence, some species were giants, growing almost as tall as humans. Over time penguins slowly evolved to have denser bones, their wings become paddles, they grew layers of fat to help keep them warm and pretty soon, you're one heavy bird, no good for mastering flight like other birds did, but super adapted to life in the cold oceans and mastering the art of swimming.

But back to African Penguins in particular. History is riddled with interesting tales of their abundance. In the 1800's, before we had artificially produced fertiliser, guano was considered a high-quality fertiliser rich in nitrogen and potassium. Small islands off the cape coast were reputed to be 5 meters deep in penguin guano. This led to a gold rush of sorts. The guano was an extremely valuable commodity and so were their eggs, which were considered a delicacyand so begun the demise of the African Penguin.

Fast forward a century or two and rapid coastal development has taken up much of the Africa penguin's breeding habitat. Oil spills, noise from increased ship traffic and disease don't help. But hands down, the biggest challenge is food scarcity from competition with commercial fisheries along with warming ocean temperatures that are causing fish to move away from their normal ranges. Penguins now have to travel further and further to find food. Judging by the rapid population decline, many never return from these unnaturally long foraging journeys.





Fitch & Leedes

BESPOKE MIXERS

Some may say, so what? It's a penguin! But the economic value of these birds in South Africa is rather staggering. An assessment undertaken by the Endangered Wildlife Trust and Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment found that the Boulders Beach Penguin colony in Simonstown is estimated to be worth over R200 million to the local economy. If you take the tourism value, existence value, property benefits, educational as well as media-related benefits, the study found the total value of the penguin colonies of South Africa to be between one and four billion rands!

Economic value aside, these trusting, monogamous, charismatic birds shows no natural fear of humans, and can even be considered curious when humans are about – a rather unusual anomaly for any wild animal. Surely they deserve a better deal?

There are many organisations such as BirdLife South Africa doing amazing work to try pull our African Penguins back from the brink of extinction. Why not consider reaching out and seeing how you can support their work?

Maybe there is something you can do to make sure we can in fact continue to look at penguins and feel happy...

CAPE TOWN'S BELOVED PENGUINS

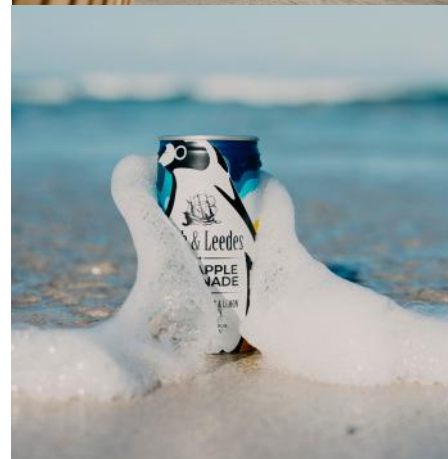
A Conservation Story from Fitch & Leedes

Cape Town's vibrant landscape is not just scenic—it's a sanctuary for incredible biodiversity, including the much-loved African Penguin. Now, **Fitch & Leedes** and **SANCCOB** have partnered to protect these iconic seabirds whose numbers are rapidly declining, inspiring South Africans to join in a conservation effort rooted in local pride and purpose.

For both **Fitch & Leedes** and **SANCCOB**, the African Penguin is more than just a critically endangered sea bird; it's part of Cape Town's identity. Together, they're using their Cape Town roots to bring awareness and action to the cause. Jody Francis, Brand Ambassador for **Fitch & Leedes** says that they celebrate everything South African and that their partnership with **SANCCOB** allows them to give back to the wildlife especially the penguins, that make the city unique.

African Penguins, often spotted at Boulders Beach, are loved by locals and visitors alike, but they're facing extinction. Melissa Knott, Head of Operations at **SANCCOB**, confirms that their work with **Fitch & Leedes** is about more than conservation—it's about preserving our unique heritage. By spotlighting penguins in their iconic setting, they're sparking pride and responsibility in South Africans to protect this endangered species.

Fitch & Leedes has just launched a special Pineapple Lemonade to encourage everyone to rally around the campaign. Each six-pack comes with a QR code, making it easy to support **SANCCOB**.



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MAGIC AND SCIENCE

A conversation with André Pienaar of the Pienaar & Son Distilling Company

Words: Mia McCarthy

JUNIPER BERRIES, angelica root, lemon peel — these are some of the botanicals you might expect to savour in a spirit like gin. However, if you purchase any of André Pienaar's boundary-pushing tipples, you're likely to encounter increasingly unexpected flavour agents ranging from oyster shells to pine needles.

"I like doing stuff that people haven't thought of," confesses André, sitting across from me at the distillery premises in Makers Landing. One year, Pienaar & Son collaborated with local meat merchant Frankie Fenner to produce a limited run of vodka that had been washed in gammon fat, a technique that involves infusing a spirit with a liquid fat to impart a rich texture and silky mouthfeel to the drink.

Part-chemist, part-artist, and full-blown mad scientist, André seems to be inspired by local muses. Many of the flavours he infuses into his products are inspired by a visit to the Oranjezicht City Farm Market, a walk in Newlands Forest, or the historical influence of the Eastern spice trade in the Cape. As a result, the Pienaar & Son distillery doesn't just produce quality liquor; it also distills the cultural essence of Cape Town, starting with the municipal water that flows through its stills.

These local influences are hardly surprising, especially considering that the distillery has origins that are even closer to home for André. Day-to-day operations at Pienaar & Son may be run by André, but the business came to fruition in partnership with his father. If there is a signature botanical featured in the spirits produced by Pienaar & Son, it is cut from a family tree.

"The best way I describe the Pienaar & Son thing is my dad made the stove, and I'm the chef," explains André. His father, a now-retired chemical engi-

neer, designed and built the stills that produce Pienaar & Son's vodka and whiskey. André accredits his ability to play boldly with flavour and texture to the rock-solid foundation provided by his father's expertly engineered stills.

"No one else can buy what we have," says André. *"What we have is kind of a different way of distilling to 99.99% of other small distilleries, so it's like — even when he's not here — we're using his still and I can trust that the end product is a high-quality product. His expertise has made me a better distiller."*



Pienaar & Son is a distillery that is richly shaped by local and family histories, but it is far from traditional. *"A lot of the booze industry is really old school,"* reflects André. *"What we try and do is do new, interesting stuff, and push boundaries where we can."*

What André has identified is a fascinating contradiction. When consumed responsibly, liquor has the effect of inducing near-magical experiences; yet, it is the product of a meticulously scientific process and a tightly regulated industry. As a result, some liquors are associated with an ironic purity culture. Why else would introducing olive brine to a crystalline gin martini make it "dirty"?

Part of what Pienaar & Son is doing is reacting against the pomp and circumstance that dictates what is acceptable or even tasteful in the world of spirits. This is a distillery that produces an Ugly Gin, a product that is stripped of all marketing to deliver a quality product to the discerning consumer. Pienaar & Son also produces premixed cocktails in cans and single-serve pouches, making classic drinks like the negroni and the martini more accessible to those who enjoy a drink in more adventurous places than an indoor bar.



The liquor produced by the Pienaar & Son distillery is about pushing creative boundaries, but André has retained a keen appreciation for the science behind booze. *“It’s always a bit of a magic show,”* he tells me. *“If you’re an audience member, you know the magician is doing some technical shit with his hands that you can’t see. You know that there’s a lot of logic, a lot of practice behind the spectacle but, as an audience member, you just get this show — it’s an illusion.”*

From where I’m sitting, with a chilled effervescent Cherry Bomb from the Pienaar & Son Savour range in my hand, the magic is in the open-faced authenticity of the founder’s approach to creativity and taste. *“It doesn’t have to be complicated,”* advises André. *“The only way to be authentic is to practise authenticity. Just make shit that you think is cool and the rest will take care of itself.”*

Pienaar & Son
www.pienaarandson.co.za
 @pienaarandson



EAT STREET

A CULINARY DESTINATION AT BALLITO LIFESTYLE CENTRE

FOR THE PERFECT al-fresco dining experience look no further than *Eat Street at the Lifestyle Centre in Ballito. With its elegantly comfortable atmosphere and exceptional dining options, Eat Street is the ideal place to indulge in delicious food, enjoy the outdoors, and soak up the lively ambience. Each restaurant along Eat Street offers the choice of indoor or outdoor seating, enhancing the street-side dining experience.*

BEIRA ALTA

Beira Alta's family tradition is to cook from the heart with recipes handed down from generation to generation, which has evolved into Portuguese cuisine with an African influence. The menu has earned a reputation for its flame grilled chickens and platters piled high with pan-fried prawns, smothered with a blend of spices, olive oil, lemon juice and garlic. Traditional recipes to tickle your taste buds are served plain or spicy.

45 ON EAT STREET

The finer things in life, such as friends, family and food, should always be enjoyed and never hurried. That's the philosophy at 45 on Eat Street, where every single detail matters. This is a place for Ballito families and friends to connect and feel comfortable in a sophisticated yet casual environment. Make your reservations and experience discernment made simple at 45 on Eat Street.

ZARAS CAFE

A trendy daytime hotspot with a fantastic menu featuring a fresh fusion of continental-style dishes with Greek, Italian, and South African influences, including unique breakfasts, salads, specialty meals, pastries, breads, and aromatic coffees.

Dear Custard, located within Zaras Cafe, aims to delight custard enthusiasts with a variety of mouthwatering custard desserts and pastries that will keep you coming back for more!

PERON PERON

An authentic Argentinian grill with an emphasis on the flavours of Buenos Aires and a focus on different cuts and choices of beef. Their forte is aged steaks cooked in front of you on open fires over wood and charcoal. Peron Peron serves up Argentinian cuisine, with authentic flavours and cooking techniques, but also carefully considers the cuts and style that South Africans enjoy.

ATTIKOS

Attikos Mediterranean Grill is passionate about fantastic food, hospitality, long Greek meals, and making it easy for you to relax and enjoy a celebration of sun, sea and casual dining. Many of their dishes are designed for sharing, thereby bringing the authentic feel of the Mediterranean to Ballito. Share a mezze, a succulent dish from the Souvla Coal Grill or Yiro Bar, or indulge in a traditional Greek meal from the family kitchen.

LUPA

A neighbourhood Osteria where one feels comfortable enjoying a casual affordable family dinner of pizza & pasta with a carafe of house wine, or dining on shellfish, fresh fish & veal with corporate clients. The experience at Lupa is not limited to modern Italian food indulgences. With a warm and energetic vibe, the inviting bar is a great place for pre or post dinner cocktails or a pizza and a craft beer. From their pasta and sauces to their pizza bases, everything is made from scratch.

YORI OKI

An intimate, beautifully designed space in which to indulge in the flavours of Japan. Yori Oki prides itself on flavour, precision and perfection. Their approach is focused on representing the time-honoured art of sushi and presenting the distinctive flavours of contemporary Japanese fusion as part of a unique and immersive culinary and sensory experience.

SOI 55 THAI EATERY

Soi 55 is igniting the culinary scene with its unique Thai fusion cuisine. This exceptional Thai eatery promises to take your taste buds on a journey through the alleys of Thai street food culture, presenting a harmonious fusion of traditional dishes with contemporary flavours and an upscale ambiance. Soi 55 has become the go-to destination for food enthusiasts seeking an authentic Asian culinary adventure.

ALCHEMY

Come for the cocktails, stay for the vibe! Crafted to perfection with local flair, Alchemy's cocktails and small plates are anything but ordinary. At Alchemy you can enjoy your favourite cocktail while nibbling on a selection of snacks ranging from topped Bruschetta to a deliciously spicy prawn bowl.



TIGER'S MILK BALLITO

Tiger's Milk Ballito is the best destination for 'dude food', made good. With a menu that takes pizza, grills and burgers to the next level, pair these with their locally made Tiger's Milk Lager and you're sure to leave satisfied.

WAXY O'CONNORS

Waxy O'Connors is a new addition to the Ballito Lifestyle Centre, bringing the charm and warmth of a traditional Irish pub to the heart of Ballito. With a menu that pairs hearty, robust dishes with the quintessential Irish stout, Guinness, Waxy O'Connors offers a truly authentic Irish experience. The bar also serves a wide selection of local and imported beers, including Castle Tank beer, which is delivered fresh from the brewery to your glass.

THE POTTERY

The perfect spot to unwind and let your creativity flow as you explore the colourful retail space or get hands-on by selecting and painting your own ceramics.

They offer a fresh menu featuring specialty coffees, smoothies, smoothie bowls, juices, and indulgent milkshakes.

Whether you're looking for a casual evening out or a special gathering, Eat Street's variety of fine restaurants offer something for everyone. Additionally, why not meet at Eat Street for sundowners, between 4 and 6pm, any day of the week? The great food, local mood and superlative sundowner offers from all the restaurants make it an experience not to be missed. Enjoy against a background of live local DJ vibes from 4pm – 6pm from Thurs – Sat.

BALLITO LIFESTYLE CENTRE

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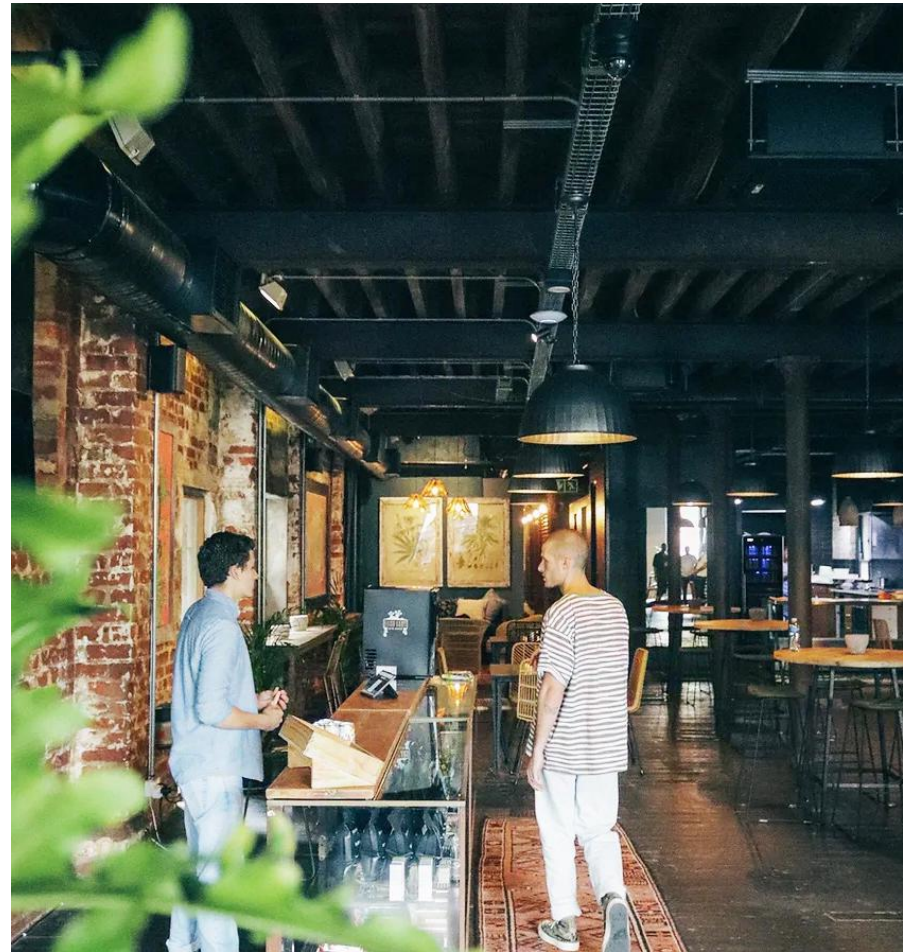
The Rise of the South African Cannabis Club

Words: Shannon Devy

PAST THE ENORMOUS bouncers and up the narrow staircase, you take a left at the top of the stairs and enter a large, warmly lit industrial space littered with lush ferns, Persian carpets, deep sofas and low coffee tables. There are ashtrays and chess boards on every surface. Through a distinctive atmospheric haze, you'll notice the bar ahead of you. No bottles of wine, vodka or whiskey glint in the lamplight here. In their place, a neat line of glass jars, each topped with a magnifying glass in the lid, so you can better examine the delicate trichome crystals on the cannabis buds within.

This is The Blind Tiger – one of many new private members-only cannabis clubs cropping up all over the Cape Town CBD (no pun intended). These clubs operate in what many consider a dubious legal grey area to supply cannabis enthusiasts with expertly-grown, creatively-named buds, joints, tinctures, snacks and vapes in all manner of strains and strengths for consumption on the premises, or at home. Like its famous Amsterdam counterparts, The Blind Tiger serves coffee and food, but no alcohol (although you're permitted to bring your own, if you so wish). To become a member is easy. You simply pay a low membership fee (about R50) on top of whatever it is you're purchasing, and you're good to go.

So how did South Africa, a country which used to arrest an estimated 200,000 people a year for cannabis-related offences, get here? The journey to marijuana decriminalisation in South Africa began in 1997, when Gareth Prince – a practicing Rastafarian – applied to the Law Society of the Cape of Good Hope to become an attorney, only to be rejected because he had two criminal convictions for cannabis possession. Prince argued that his use of cannabis was religious, and this denial violated his right to religious freedom. The case went to court. Prince lost that round, but in 2017, along with two other cannabis activist, Jeremy Acton and Jonathan Ruben, Prince again approached the courts, arguing that the Drugs Act and Medicines Act that criminalised the cultivation and possession of marijuana for personal use violated South African citizens' rights to privacy as enshrined in Section 14 of the Constitution.





This time around, Prince and his associates were successful, and on the 18th of September 2018, the use and cultivation of marijuana by adults in a private space was decriminalised by the Con Court, followed by the publication of the Cannabis of Private Purposes Bill of 2020, which has since passed parliamentary scrutiny and is expected to soon be finalised into law.

While the sale and distribution of marijuana is still illegal, the decriminalisation of private cultivation and use has created enough of a loophole for clubs and dispensaries to thrive. By purchasing a membership to a club or a dispensary, customers are technically pooling resources for the private, personal cultivation of cannabis, and when buying the products on sale, they're technically paying the club to grow and prepare these products on their behalf. In this way, customers are essentially purchasing the use of land and equipment, gardening services and expertise – not the weed itself. It's an interesting workaround, but as the industry becomes more legislated and the regulations tighten up, it's likely that these institutions will face a number of legal issues in the future. For now, they're striking while the bong is hot.

The update to cannabis regulation in South Africa mirrors a shift in public perception around the drug. The government is actively working to address the stigma around the drug in order to unlock the massive economic potential

of a formal cannabis industry, which some estimates predict could create over 25,000 jobs and add about R28 billion to the national economy. That's not to mention the economic and employment opportunities that could be created through a thriving hemp industry, or the millions of Rands saved by ending arrests and prosecutions for minor cannabis offences. In his 2023 State of the Nation address, President Ramaphosa pledged to create a fully-fledged cannabis industry to capitalise on this potential, and National Cannabis Master Plan is currently in development. How long this will take to roll out remains to be seen – the government seems to be dragging its feet – but the prevailing opinion is that, in the end, marijuana will probably be legislated in a similar way to alcohol, using many of the same frameworks.

For now, cannabis clubs and dispensaries are flourishing in the gap. If you're in Cape Town anytime soon, I'd encourage you to visit The Blind Tiger. It really is a lovely venue, and whether or not you're imbibing directly, you may notice that comedy shows there are suspiciously funny.

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Lifestyle
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"Our work is to create beauty, to make the land more fertile, to make our living, to leave the world better than when we came into it." *Bill Carte, 1941 - Founding Grandfather*

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I believe that happiness is within every person's reach - and that we all have the power to spread joy to others. For me, design is more than a profession; it's a way to create happiness. The process of designing brings me immense joy, and through my work, I aim to bring that same happiness to those I design for.

As a designer, I've always considered myself a rule-breaker, challenging both myself and my clients to step outside their comfort zones. It's in these moments of pushing boundaries that we discover new possibilities for happiness and growth. When we dare to explore the unknown, we unlock deeper connections to our true selves and often find a sense of balance.

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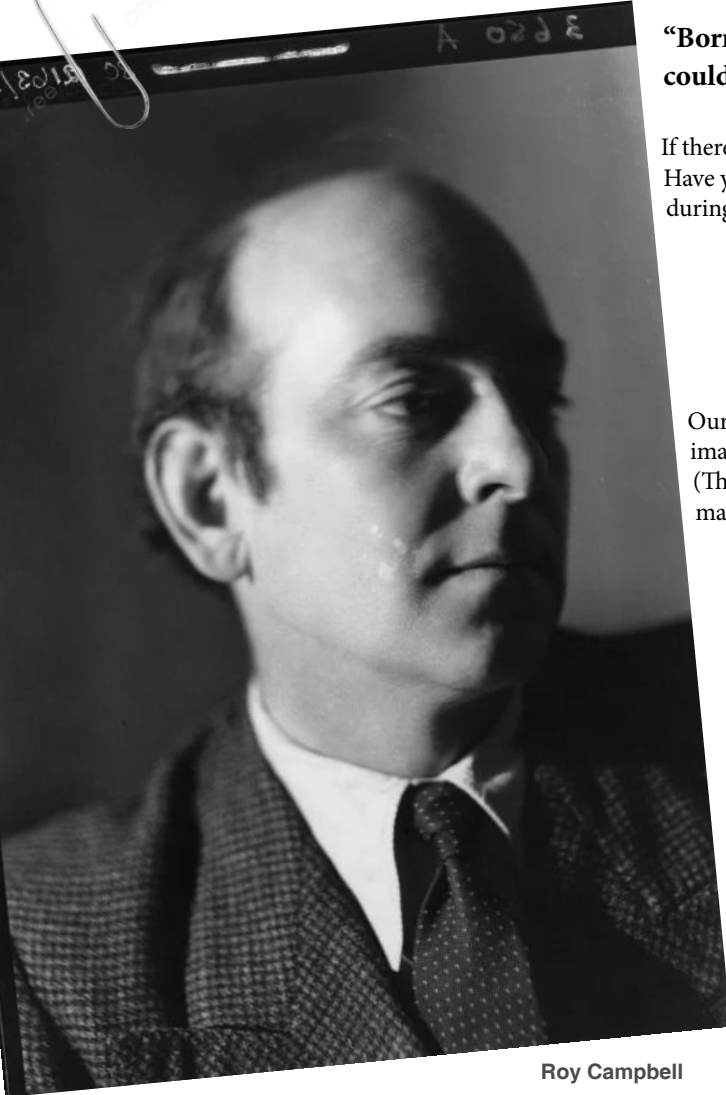
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DURBAN'S ROYAL TENENBAUMS:

THE LIVES AND TIMES OF THE STRANGEST CLAN IN AFRICAN HISTORY

Words: Cameron Luke Peters



Roy Campbell

“Born on fire, it was as if his whole being had already irrevocably accepted that he could only live by burning himself out.” *Laurens van der Post*

If there is any one character from the past who has truly haunted my life, it's Roy Campbell (1901-57). Have you heard of him? Did you read his poems in second-year English? He it was who wrote the enduring lines:

*Attend my fable if your ears be clean,
In fair Banana Land we lay our scene -
South Africa, renowned both far and wide
For politics and little else beside...
(From 'The Wayzgoose' (1926))*

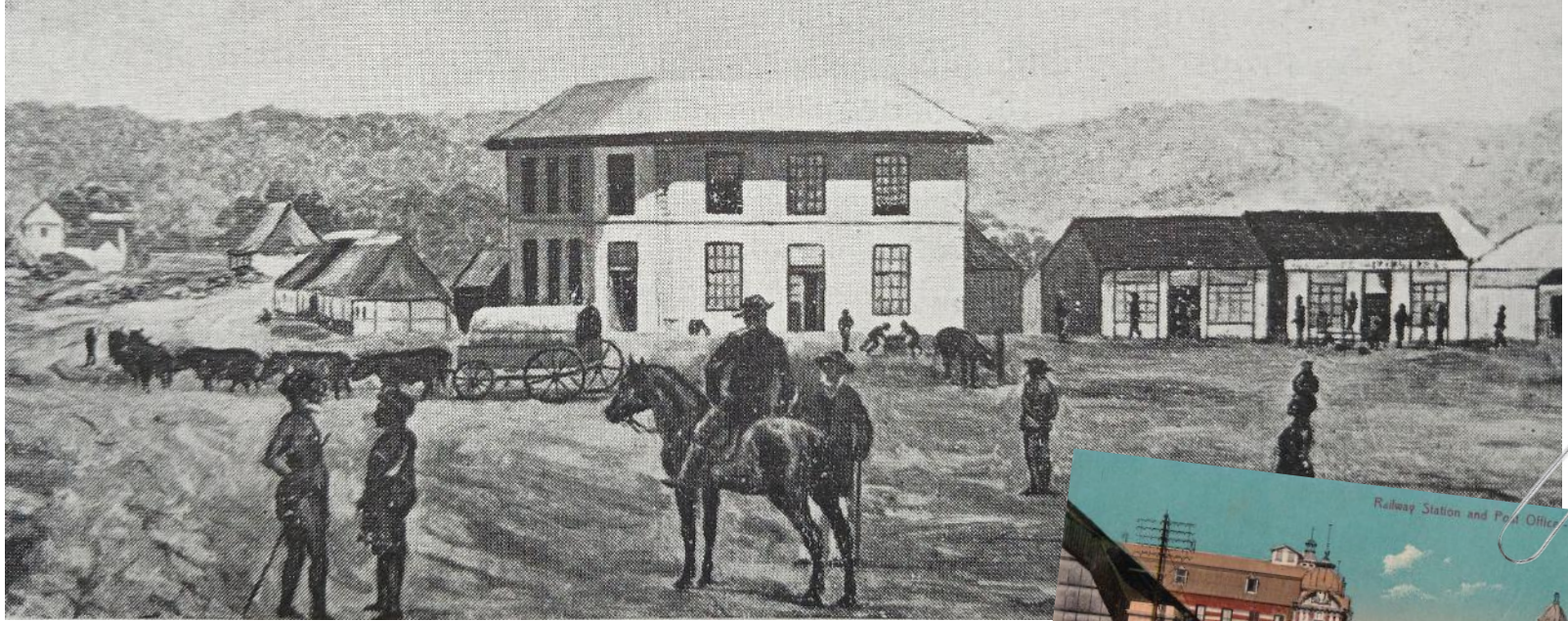
Our country has produced many exemplary writers over the last century-and-change, but it's hard to imagine very many others receiving fan-letters from T.S. Eliot. Or having their first book of epic verse (*The Flaming Terrapin*, published when Campbell was 23) reviewed like this in a prominent London magazine:

“Full circle! We have spun back ... back to an exuberant relish of the sheer sonority and clangour of words, words enjoyed for their own gust, and flung down to fit each other with an easy rapture of phrase.”

This is still dead-on. Campbell's lyrics slap. Here's how he describes sailing past Adamastor, the mythic monstrous double of Table Mountain, in 1926:

*Faint on the glare uptowers the dauntless form,
Into whose shade abysmal as we draw,
Down on our decks, from far above the storm,
Grin the stark ridges of his broken jaw.*

*Across his back, unheeded, we have broken
Whole forests: heedless of the blood we've spilled,
In thunder still his prophecies are spoken,
In silence, by the centuries, fulfilled.
(From 'Rounding the Cape')*



And I have a special affection for 'The Sleeper', which Campbell wrote to his wife and equal, Mary, in 1930, which always reminds me of the friend I fell in love with when I was 21:

*She lies so still, her only motion
The waves of hair that round her sweep
Revolving to their hushed explosion
Of fragrance on the shores of sleep.
Is it my spirit or her flesh
That takes this breathless, silver swoon?
Sleep has no darkness to enmesh
That lonely rival of the moon [...]*

Later in life he turned to translation work and managed to produce some of the most nuanced and spiritually accurate renditions of Rimbaud, Baudelaire and Federico Garcia Lorca on the books. In a more obsessive article, I might dive into my theory that Campbell is, indeed, the missing link in the Western Canon between John Keats and Ernest Hemingway.

Like his fellow colonials Olive Schreiner and Katherine Mansfield, he was flabbergastingly renowned and influential in the dead centre of the English literary world during his lifetime, but the century since has seen him marginalised and footnoted. Peter Alexander's page-turner biography of him (1982) is a fiesta of name-dropping, with extended cameos from the likes of Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, W.H. Auden, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Laurie Lee, Hart Crane and Dylan Thomas.

And just like so many of the greatest imaginations of his generation, he repressed his bisexuality, lived far beyond his means, drifted from country to country to avoid his creditors, put his family through hell several times, wrote extended poems to take revenge on a woman his partner had an affair with, abandoned his early socialist ideals to sympathise with fascism, said many extremely anti-semitic things and otherwise survived dozens of personal failures. Can you cancel an artist who's already half-forgotten?

We shall see.

What fascinates me is that he grew up on Musgrave Road, just around the corner from my childhood home in Morningside, Durban.

If ever there were proof that truth is stranger than poetry, the Campbells would be it. They are the old Durban family to end all Old Durban Families. And naturally, like so many other emigres, they were swindled into coming. The patriarch was William Campbell, Roy's grandfather. He was a 29-year-old Scottish railway engineer who - along with his wife, three kids and 122 other marks - was convinced in early 1850 to give up his life savings and set off from the Glasgow docks aboard a brig named the Conquering Hero. Three months later, their boat parked by the Bluff and the Campbells clattered onto



the Back Beach to discover that their long-awaited Eden was a mangrove swamp and their banker was bankrupt.

Actually, their banker was an Irish con-man named Joseph Charles Byrne. So successful had he been over the years at seducing settlers into trusting his visions of the warm south that he'd 'died' at least twice, before being resurrected as a new gambit each time. One of the first Campbell poems in South Africa is William's own rueful piece of doggerel recalling the dream he'd been sold on:

*'One day, said old Byrne, 'when I'd journeyed out there,
I was taking a jaunt and enjoying the air:
My stick, as I wandered, got stuck in a sluit
And I found it next morning all covered with a fruit [...]'*

In his memoirs, Roy compares these small beginnings to the French fable 'Donogoo-Tonka', in which a village of dupes is lured to Brazil by the promise of El Dorado. A few years later, the villains behind the scheme travel up the Amazon, curious to find any sign of survivors. Instead, to their shock, they find the would-be conquistadors have taken the gap to build El Dorado all by themselves in the middle of the jungle.

Of course, in the real world, the Campbells were helped by the fact that William's wife, Margaret, like a true Presbyterian, hadn't taken any chances and had sewn 120 gold sovereigns into the lining of her clothes just in case. But with this windfall, they did basically build the foundations of the Durban we know (aided by the sweat of dozens of disenfranchised Zulu labourers). They started by building Muckleneuk, one of the first profitable sugar estates on the site of the present-day Mount Edgecombe Country Club. Then William engineered and built the first breakwater in the Port Natal harbour, which still forms the base of the North Pier to this day. Additionally, in the process he designed and ran the first railway line in South Africa along the Point, which started by using oxen and wooden carts to pull stones along its tracks from one end of the bay to the other. More than anything, the couple focused on having six more kids and building a dynasty.

These included William the Second, who would become a chief magistrate of the colony of Natal, standing guard over the border with the Zulu Kingdom; Archie, who would work for Cecil Rhodes and join the 'pioneers' who crushed the Matabele people and brought Zimbabwe under white rule; Agnes, who aspired to be a missionary and wrote mystical letters like Santa Teresa but died at just 17; and Jessie, who dutifully took on Agnes's mantle and



became a kind of dotty Florence Nightingale to the prisoners and vagrants of Durban - smuggling alcohol into hospitals, bursting into army hymns at public gatherings and refusing to wear eye-glasses for years because she was waiting for express permission from God. She eventually got it.

In fact, the clan had so many cards that neither Roy's memoirs nor any of his biographies cover them all. Were the others just ordinary souties? I somehow doubt it. Likewise, I am bound by the limits of the record to focus on the two overachievers of the brood: Marshall and Samuel George. These boys were such larger-than-life figures that Roy introduces them with this anecdote:

"[O]n my way out [of Durban] in a convoy during [World War II], I spoke to one of the porters, who came aboard the troopship, in Zulu, and when, unable to conceal his surprise, he asked me: 'How did you, an English soldier, learn my language?' and I said: 'Am I not the nephew of Machu and the son of Sam-Joj?' - he replied: 'Like Hell you are - the nephew of Machu would be a colonel; so would the son of Sam-Joj - not a sergeant, like you.'"

If you haven't heard of any of the people I've mentioned so far, you have definitely read Sir Marshall's name or been affected by his life. He is the man who KwaMashu (literally 'Place of Marshall') was named for and he imported the first rickshaws to the Golden Mile beachfront from Japan in the 1890's. Both gestures started as private projects meant to uplift the housing standards and employment opportunities of the Zulu people displaced by decades of British land-grabs. He was the self-appointed king of the South African Sugar Barons, one of the first senators in the first white South African parliament in 1910 and a close confidante of the first Union Prime Minister, Louis Botha. Like his nephew, he also spouted his share of enduring lines regarding the fate of his nation:

"It seems monstrous to me that a Native, say, who has received a University education, settles in this Colony, the land of his fathers, and conducts himself properly, should have no say in the government or the welfare of his own people. [...] No country can prosper when the largest section of its people has no say in the government of the country."

In many ways, he and his nephew (despite his love for General Franco) were two of the star figures in the lineage of white liberal guilt that peppers South African history, all the way from Thomas Pringle to semigrant Capetonians like myself. These sentiments didn't stop Marshall's wing of the family from living a colonial fantasy.

In 1911, like Rhodes before him, Sir Marshall commissioned Sir Herbert Baker to design and build a lush Cape Dutch Revival mansion (perhaps the only one still standing in KZN) which he named Muckleneuk, in honour of the family homestead. His daughter Margaret the Second - or 'Killie' as she was universally known - then spent the next fifty-plus years filling its halls



Muckleneuk

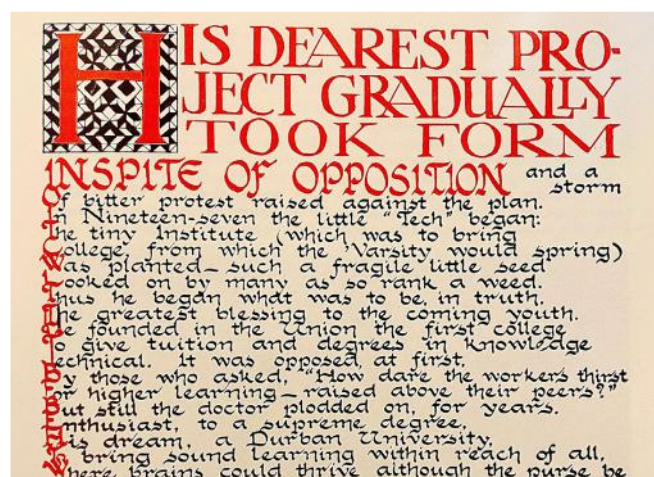


with one of the biggest collections of Africana in the world. Starting with suitcases of books she brought home from browsing London's antiquarian shops, she died amidst a pile of "32,000 volumes [...] and old photographs, manuscripts, paintings, maps, early Settlers' records, old Cape and British furniture and an extensive collection of Bantu beadwork, pottery and relics." Truly a woman after my own heart. This was donated to the Durban City Council, who gave it to UKZN. You can still visit it on Stephen Dlamini Road, though you do need an appointment.

My favourite Campbell though is 'cousin Ethelbert', presumably Killie's brother. Here was a man who managed to convince every newspaper and radio station in the city sometime in the early 1920's that he had spotted an iceberg floating down from the equator past Umdloti. Thousands of Durbanites believed the headlines and crowded the beaches in excitement. Needless to say, they were quickly disabused of that notion. Both by their eyes and by a local scientist. Likewise, here was a man who bought the entire stock of

the Durban Zoo during the First World War when the city was cutting its budget and had the animals trained up to Mount Edgecombe in a private locomotive. Roy takes pains to recount in horrific detail how one of the camels is said to have literally lost its head when it peeked out of its carriage to study an oncoming tunnel.

Not to be outdone by his brother's stature, Roy's father Sam founded DUT and the Durban branch of UKZN. Such an impression did he make on his offspring that after his early death in 1926 his daughter Ethel wrote and illustrated a faux-medieval manuscript detailing his life and accomplishments in rhyming couplets:



Ethel's illustrated faux-medieval manuscript

You can still buy a copy at Ike's Books on Florida Road if you're interested. But nor was this reverence confined to his family. Roy himself takes endless pride in quoting how the first Zulu-language newspaper in the country, *Ilanga Lase Natal*, reported Sam-Joj's recovery from a car accident in 1916:

"The Doctor is the most popular gentleman in Natal. His kind nature is so well known that a misfortune to him is a misfortune to the whole country. Much as his professional ability is esteemed, yet he could be of still greater use to the Union of South Africa as the Administrator of the Province of Natal."

Part of this admiration, of course, comes from the fact that he was an extremely skilled man in an educationally-deprived country. He had earned his medical

degree in Edinburgh and worked for a year at the Pasteur Institute in Paris when Louis himself still had his office just down the hall. Back in Durban, he seemed to take the Hippocratic Oath more seriously than anyone else alive. For decades he treated all people, regardless of their race or ability to pay him, and he is said to have swum across the Umhlanga river during a storm to reach a Zulu child in a critical state. When Samuel Clemens (AKA Mark Twain) visited Durban on a lecture tour in 1896, Sam Campbell offered to host him and they subsequently kept in touch for a decade. When he died, the authorities couldn't stop tens of thousands of black South Africans from streaming into the city to pay their respects to his funeral cortege.

Of course, with regards to education, you might be more familiar with Roy's brother George Campbell, who was content to live up to their father as both a medical man, a founder of technicons and the Chairman of the former University of Natal's academic council. Today, however, the most admired Campbell beyond eThekweni is Ethel, surprisingly enough - and if you knew her already, you're probably Australian. She was 'The Angel of Durban': a South African Lady Liberty.

As you might expect, given the environment I've described, she was a tomboy and spent her late teens hanging round a set of bright young things on the Berea who dubbed themselves 'The Hooligans'. She then had the luck to fall in love with one of them just before he signed up to go to the Western front at the outbreak of World War I. He died within months, followed by four of her best friends. While she grieved, she drove her father around his circuit of house-calls and imagined what she could do as a woman to serve the war-effort.

A few weeks later, the men aboard a coal ship pulling into the docks were taken by the sight of "a petite, slim young figure in a white middie blouse and sailor collar signalling with two flags from the Breakwater to assure them of a warm welcome at the West Street [Servicemen's] Hut." She would then wave them off a few days later by chucking oranges up to their decks and signalling "All is well, and cheerio."

Two years later, the imperial supply route through the Mediterranean was blocked and the whole British Empire had to detour through Durban. Ethel took the opportunity to become a star. She endeavoured to supply fruits, sweets and cigarettes to the tens of thousands of Australasian troops who briefly rested in the Bay and enlisted the national railways, the mayor, the newspapers and thousands of patrons all around the country to support her cause. But because she wasn't of sufficient rank for the Navy to give her the harbour's classified timetable, she lived on the breakwater, waiting in all weathers to welcome all the ships at sea.

More than she knew, her heroics had endeared her to an entire continent of young men. In 1923, when she visited Australia with her parents to see a



Ethel Campbell

long-lost aunt, word ran ahead and she was welcomed at every harbour like a returning saint. In Sydney, “a hundred pairs of hands shot out at her, and she stopped to reach out to some of them. A dozen hands clutched excitedly at hers, and held it fast till she was leaning far over the gangway, laughing, and trying to speak to 500 friends at once.”

Even in World War II, two decades later, some of the Australian servicemen who passed Durban made a point to make a pilgrimage up to Hilton, where Ethel was tending to her ageing mother.

When she died in 1954, the country observed a day of national mourning.

I have a close friend, who I’ve known for more than half my life, who refers to Durban every time I see him as a mediocre place full of mediocre people that we were lucky to get away from. A part of me agrees. But still I always wince - for a number of reasons. Firstly, I enjoy disagreeing with him. Secondly, I think it’s subtly self-aggrandising to say that everyone you knew growing up was mediocre - besides yourself of course. And thirdly, I have always found the mediocrity of English cities (and other foreign climes) far more galling and embarrassing given the history and expectations we’ve been taught as South Africans.

The Campbells were a lot of things, but they were certainly not mediocre. Like Roy himself, they come over today as being too European for Africa and too African for Europeans; full to the brim of vital, unbelievable love and energy for the world around them. But still invaders, of a kind. Many of



“THE ANGEL OF DURBAN”
 “Ah, the transports pass no more, dear girl—
 But wistful memories may;
 And the ghost ship creeps
 When the sea rim pales
 With souls ranked deep
 On her starboard rails . . .
 ALL’S WELL! AND chee - ri - o - o - o !”

Specially drawn by Jack Leyden.

them were ‘good whites’, and they embody for me the sadness and isolation of the ex-pat - South Africans who once wore kilts and played the bagpipes in Umhlanga Rocks and now sing ‘Shosholozo’ at Twickenham. Roy would eventually put down the family motto like this: “Better a broken head than a broken spirit every time!”

P.S. I tried to reach out in preparation for this article but couldn’t contact any living Campbells. If one of you is reading this, please reach out!

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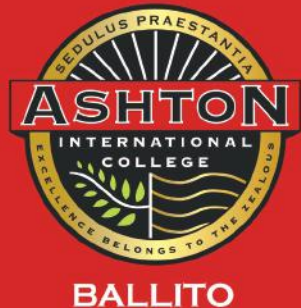
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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE OCEAN?

Words: Craig Harris

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TREES OF LIFE

Words: Dave Charles

IHAVE ALWAYS loved trees. As I child I loved to climb them and see the world from a different perspective. The giant bluegums that marked the boundary of a little farm that I could see from the home where I grew up were magnificent and somewhat frightening when the moon rose behind them. The leafy neighbourhood of Lakefield in Benoni, my hometown, was full of trees and the verge of each of the roads in our suburb was planted with a different species of exotic tree before it became popular to plant indigenous.

I lived in a little cul-de-sac called Westfield that ended at the farm wall and our pavement was planted with Australian Bottle trees – *Brachychiton populneus* – pretty trees with wide trunks and shiny green leaves. They produced little cream coloured bell-like flowers with red centres that tasted of sugar and these produced tough green seedpods that became brown and wooden until they split revealing yellow seeds covered with little prickly hairs that irritated the skin and were hard to remove. They were planted in the year that I was born, and we sort of grew up together. I loved those trees.

Many years later, after my life had taken a short left from the media career that I had been pursuing, I was offered the chance to become a sort of inn keeper and battlefield tour guide in Zululand. It was there that I met another remarkable tree.

*This was a giant Natal Fig – *Ficus natalensis* – on the derelict old farmstead that my wife Sue and I had acquired to convert into a rustic lodge. It was easily twenty metres tall and thirty metres wide and its giant roots had grown like a python over the loose rocks that had once been the wall of a piggery.*

I decided to build some of the guest rooms beneath its canopy because the view from there across the open rolling hills was spectacular, but this proved problematic. Work was halted on more than one occasion when a large reptile was spotted in the branches above and our Zulu team refused to return to



BRACHYCHITON POPULNEUS

work until the creature had been persuaded to depart.

The lodge, or Guest House as we called it, was finally completed just as our first international guests were arriving to celebrate the 120th anniversary of the Battles of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift and I fervently prayed that they wouldn't look up to see what might be lurking above them in that verdant canopy.

When we sold the Guest House and moved to Ballito several years later, Permit Mpanza, a much-loved member of our team who knew more about the bush than anyone I had ever met, presented me with a sapling from this tree to keep its spirit close.

Twenty-two years later as I write this story, I am looking at it with great fondness. It grows as a beautiful Bonsai in the hollow of an ancient Zulu isigayo grindstone. Permit is long gone now but lives on through our connection with this tree.

Four years ago, on a trip to Joburg to visit my mother, I did a quick detour to my old hometown to visit the places that I had known and loved as a boy growing up there. Almost everything had changed but the trees were still there, just as I remembered them. Although it was the wrong season for them, I managed to find some old pods from the tree outside our house that I had often climbed as a child. My mother was happy to hear this as she had loved those trees too.

On my return to Ballito, just one of the little yellow seeds germinated. My mother passed away soon after this.

It is a beautiful Bonsai tree now and a living connection to some of my most precious memories.

I have always loved trees.

They help me see the world from a different perspective.





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