

LIFE & STYLE

AUTUMN 2024





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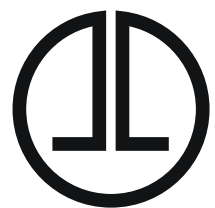
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LAZULI

A photograph of a modern, single-story house with large glass windows and a flat roof. In the foreground, there is a swimming pool. A person is sitting on a lounge chair on the left side of the pool. The background features a large tree and a clear sky. The text "REIMAGINED" is overlaid in the center of the image.

REIMAGINED

A P R I L 2 0 2 4

HUNT
PROPERTIES

THE THINGS THAT GIVE US PEACE

Friends, welcome to a new issue of Life & Style.



AS SUMMER BEGINS its Autumnal waning into the colder months of the year, I have started to make more of an effort to really savour every step of my regular sunset walks along the Sea Point promenade. These walks have become a cherished part of my daily routine and are often my only impetus for leaving the cluttered confines of my apartment on most days. No matter whether I have failed to accomplish what I have set out to do on any given day, I find comfort in knowing that there is still a chance for me to witness some kind of beauty before the end of the day.

Although I tend to prefer going on these walks alone, I do enjoy the unspoken company of people who also gather to witness the ways that the sky changes colour in the dwindling of the sun's light. For a moment, everyone turns away from each other to gaze into the softening horizon and there is an unspoken reverence shared among everyone who has taken the time to see something beautiful that day.

It might seem a bit insensible to be writing about sunsets at a time when the world appears to be sinking into an all-consuming darkness but, in a time when we are constantly being confronted with the violence and corruption corroding the corners of the globe, perhaps the small things that help us make it through to the end of the day have never been more important. Building a barrier around and protecting the things that bring you peace, is a sacred act and sharing those things with the people in your life has never been more important.

Of course, there are days when activism is necessary to move the needle forward, even if your activism only extends to the point of thinking carefully about which candidate is going to serve us well in the upcoming elections - but there are also days when all we can do is to nurture our own healing with our songs, our video games, our pets and our sunsets.

In the interview for the cover story of this issue, Thandi Ntuli told me that singing is actually a scientific means of stimulating the vagus nerve and calming the body's central nervous system. She believes there is an ancestral indigenous



wisdom that is being shared through music. I'm sure that there is a kind of wisdom in sharing anything that allows one to feel a sense of peace.

In that spirit, I wanted our friends from Studio MUTI to celebrate the pantheon of prestigious jazz musicians that Ntuli belongs to by paying homage to another great South African pianist and composer who has also been revered for his passing down of the ancient wisdom within their songs. The cover is an homage to the album art of Dollar Brand's 1971 album Peace that was painted by Winston Saoli.

Life & Style is full of stories that are in one way or another about people finding or sharing the things that have brought them joy or peace and we are all delighted to share them with you in this latest issue.

Yours gazing-into-another-sunset
Dan Charles



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ON AIR, ONLINE & IN PRINT

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CONTRIBUTORS

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.



Dave Charles – award winning broadcaster, television producer, editor, musician, and writer. 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.



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!



Cameron Luke Peters – is a long-suffering, erstwhile PhD candidate in Film Studies at the University of Cape Town who sunlights as a historical tour guide of the Western Cape under the alias @capetownheritagetours. When he's not procrastinating on various pieces of writing, you can find him yearning on a beach somewhere, shooting film in dodgy places and picking up plastic bottles off the street whilst shaking his head and tutting under his breath.



Dan Charles – is a writer, musician and therapy enthusiast based in Cape Town, and spends 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 Editor in Chief and feature writer for Life & Style.



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



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RAINBOW REVISITED

Thandi Ntuli



Words: Dan Charles

Photography: Andile Buka

DURING THE RECORDING of her latest album, *Rainbow Revisited*, in Los Angeles, lauded producer and percussionist Carlos Niño asked Thandi Ntuli to play him “something from home.” As a composer, pianist and singer who has captured the imagination of the South African music world through her eminence as one of the leading vanguards of the ever-evolving local contemporary jazz scene, Ntuli probably has a vast collection of South African standards that she could have conjured up from her repertoire in that moment. Instead, however, she chose to play a song written by her late grandfather called “Nomayoyo”.

Releasing “Nomayoyo (Ingoma ka Mkhulu)” as the first single from *Rainbow Revisited* allowed Ntuli to fulfil her desire to record some of the music that her grandfather would write for his family to sing together – something that she has wanted to do since she was still studying music at UCT.

However, in the context of the rest of *Rainbow Revisited*, the inclusion of “Nomayoyo” serves as more than a celebration of the music that was shared within her family – it serves as an act of reclaiming a core part of her identity amidst an album seeking to reclaim the feeling of hope that was promised with the dawn of The Rainbow Nation in 1994.

Understanding the use of the rainbow as a political symbol in South Africa, what is the significance of deciding to name your last album after your revisiting of the song “Rainbow”?

I was born in the late 80s and so this means that I am on the cusp of those who experienced apartheid first-hand and those whose only reality has been of a “free” and integrated South Africa. This means that for me, the legacy

*of Apartheid (and colonialism) has been experienced more viscerally than otherwise. One of the things I remember most about my childhood is the spark of euphoria in the country as we celebrated the “miracle” of the rainbow nation. A euphoria that, after some time, faded away as the toxicities of our society always found a way back to the social, economic and spiritual foundations of the Republic of South Africa. I wrote the song “Rainbow” as a response to my own inner conflict about this idea that the rainbow nation was a complete victory for our humanity, as it was sold to us and the rest of the world. Years later, having toiled with this and finding some semblance of closure with what has transpired, I felt *Rainbow Revisited* would be a great title as it carries a different energy and outlines my convictions that a reclamation of our dignity as African people will be achieved with a reclamation of, or a “fetching” of, ourselves and a return to the true meaning of uBuntu... and all that is connected to that.*

How does the feeling of this sparser rendition of “Rainbow” compare to the feeling you get from the previous versions that you have released?

I guess because I feel light, clear, less angry or sad than how I have felt in a long time, this version reflects that.

You recorded “Nomayoyo” after Carlos Niño asked you to play something from home. Had you been considering recording any of your grandfather’s compositions before Niño prompted you?

Yes, I’ve wanted to record his music for a very long time. I was still in university when I first thought of this. This is a small bit of heritage that has been retained, that I am proud of and that is so precious to me.







Thandi Ntuli

Blk Elijah & The Children of Meroë

"Nomayoyo" is a song that has received a great and very warm response from listeners (and rightfully so, the song is so beautiful and it is such a gift). How does it feel to share one of your grandfather's compositions and have it received in such a way?

Thank you. I love this song too and it warms my heart that people have received this song well. It's somewhat like a "nod of approval" from him and I'm grateful. Human beings are communal creatures, a win for the group is a personal win and vice versa. It is very affirming when something we belong to is celebrated and appreciated. The response that "Nomayoyo" has received has had the same impact on me and hopefully, my whole family. I also hope that it inspires people to dig into their own family archives. There are many unnamed / unrecognised musicians, artists, writers, sports legends etc. who belong to different families and communities, whose names never made it to the history books, often because of the times they lived in.

"Nomayoyo" is a song that is essentially about a cry for help and, yet, the song is very gentle and tender. What do you make of the dissonance between the song's lyrics and its composition? The song was also originally composed to be sung by a choir – do you feel that there is any change to the meaning by performing it using a singular voice rather than many?

The song is more a warning than a cry for help. The stories I've heard about my grandfather depict him as a very charming storyteller with a great sense of humour. And, to some extent, I think humour has been a tool for survival for a lot of our elders. He was a school principal and some songs he wrote were for the students at the school where he was a principle. So my interpretation of this song's meaning is not necessarily a serious or heavy one because of how it is sung when we sing it at home, even when the lyrics denote some kind of danger. Though that could also just be because a lot of the time, African music sounds lighter than the lyrics shared.

I think the version on the album, which is less four-part choral harmony and therefore less energised, is what actually gives it more of an introspective tone where the meaning of the lyrics become more apparent. I'm not sure what he intended when writing it but I think the meaning, in the context of the album, can be both humorous and sad.

"I think the version on the album, which is less four-part choral harmony and therefore less energised, is what actually gives it more of an introspective tone where the meaning of the lyrics become more apparent. I'm not sure what he intended when writing it but I think the meaning, in the context of the album, can be both humorous and sad."

Your work deals a lot with interrogating the generational trauma experienced by Black South Africans. Do you find that the act of sharing songs such as "Nomayoyo" that was composed by your grandfather to be sung by your family serve as sharing a sort of generational coping mechanism? In a way, "Nomayoyo" is also a revisiting of an older song kind of like how you revisited "Rainbow" in this album – does revisiting these songs reinforce their meanings and effects and make them stronger?

Absolutely a coping mechanism. Singing is actually scientifically a means of stimulating the vagus nerve and calming the nervous system. So I do think there is ancestral and indigenous wisdom that is being shared.

I've never made the connection between revisiting songs and revisiting our individual and collective traumas. But I do believe that it is important to ask questions, seek out answers, reflect and hopefully make peace with what has happened so we can make choices about how to move forward. It helps us see, more clearly, the root of the problems we often treat as "new"... as though they are personal failures rather than symptoms of a broken system. In my own journey of healing, I've had to really comb through what is "mine" and what is "systemic" and I think until you become aware of yourself, a lot of how you think and therefore feel is actually inherited conditioning. That, for me, has been the first step to feeling a sense of true liberation, understanding why the Rainbow Nation was not a complete victory, and the revisitation of this song really has expanded the idea and meaning of what freedom might actually require to be fully realised.

How has the experience of composing a very stripped-down solo-piano album affected the way that you might look at composing new work in the future?

The process was very different to how I've worked before as this was a fully improvised session... though I brought in some ideas and songs to work with, the process itself was not predetermined as it usually is when I work with a well-rehearsed fuller band and written scores. I think it showed me a different side to how my performance on a recording plays out in the absence of pre-meditated ideas.

THANDI NTULI

@thandi_ntul



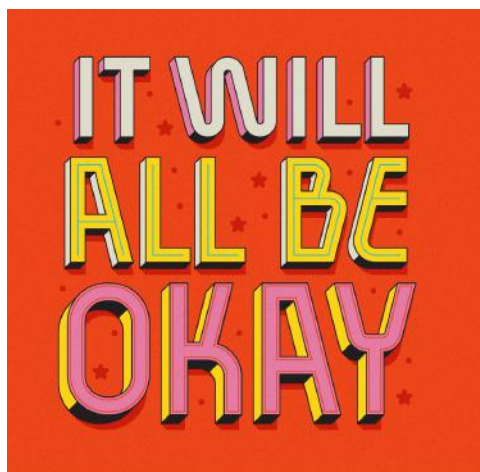
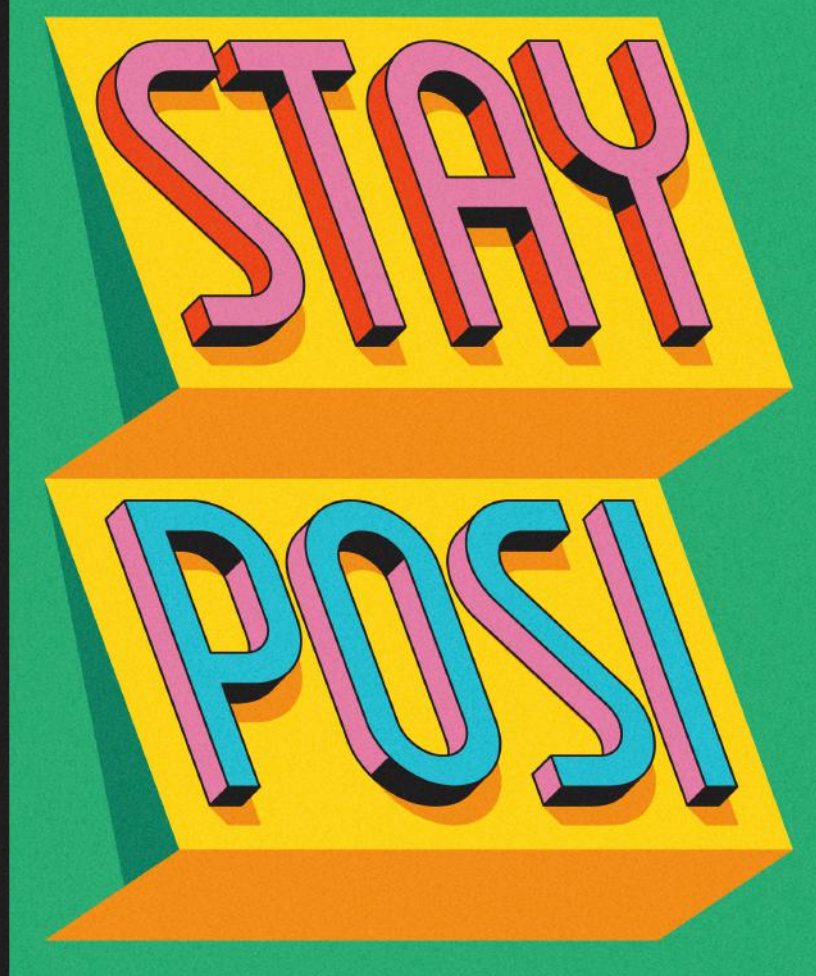
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ESCAPE TO THE MOUNTAINS

Words: Dave Charles

*In the heart of the majestic Drakensberg mountains,
two hidden gems await those seeking a retreat into nature's embrace.*

IT'S A PROPOSITION that is hard to resist and we recently fired up the wagon and headed for the hills. I love a road trip and despite the extensive roadworks currently happening on the N2 and N3, once you hit Pietermaritzburg, the world changes and the holiday begins.

CLEOPATRA MOUNTAIN FARMHOUSE:

Nestled beneath the regal gaze of the Cleopatra Mountain, this farmhouse exudes an authentic simplicity that harmonizes with its rustic surroundings. Renowned chef Richard Poynton has created menus bursting with flavour, sourced from local producers and the farmhouse's own greenhouse. I first met Richard when we cooked over a fire deep in the heart of Zulu War country at the Fugitives' Drift, preparing a feast to celebrate the birthday of a dear friend who has now crossed the Dark Mountains. He and his creatively talented wife, Mouse, established a magical getaway called Granny Mouse's Country House in the Midlands and then, later, turned their attention to the family farm called Cleopatra, right up against the stairway to heaven.

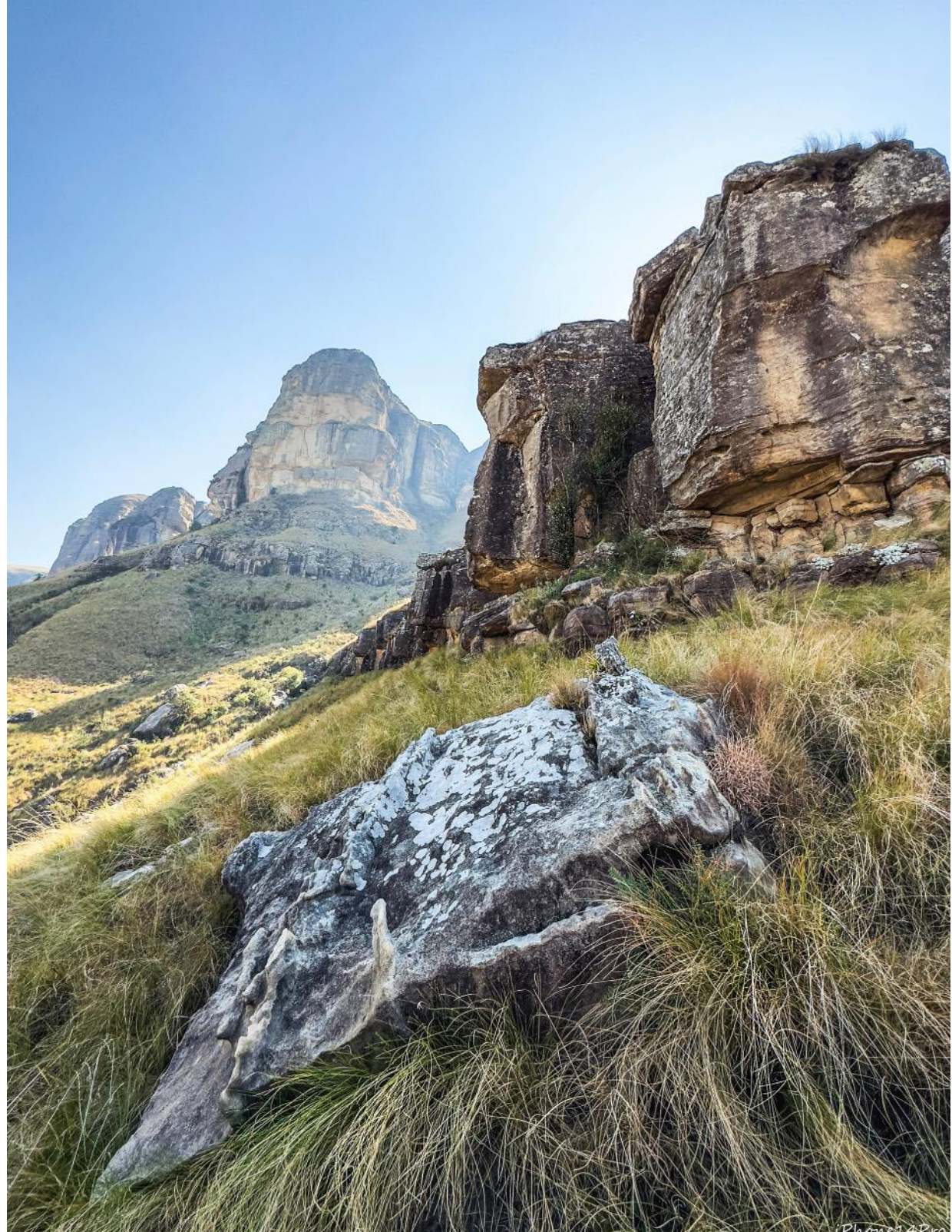
With only eleven rooms, Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse ensures a memorable stay, complemented by roaring fires, an underground wine cellar, and a dining room perched over a dam that reflects the natural beauty of the location. In its mountain setting, Cleopatra offers what your soul is longing for.

Explore the walking and hiking trails on the property and the neighbouring Highmoor Nature Reserve, part of the Mkhomazi Wilderness Area, home to a host of rare, endemic and endangered species. Swimming in the mountain pools is a joy, as the waters are cool and clear and untouched by human habitation. Trout fishing is also available in the river and in nearby dams.

We didn't really do justice to any of that and, except for a leisurely stroll along the river and a drive up to the top of the mountain, we chose rather to savour the gourmet delights and quirky surroundings of Cleopatra that offer an enchanting escape from the ordinary.

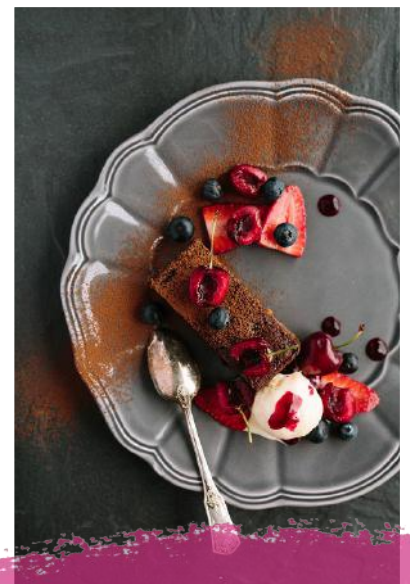








CLEOPATRA MOUNTAIN FARMHOUSE





TASHDON HOMESTEAD



But we did make a rather awesome discovery next door.
It's called Tashdon Homestead & River Cottage.

Tucked away in a yellowwood forest beside a flowing river, Tashdon Homestead offers five bedrooms with stunning mountain views. The homestead is a haven of comfort and charm. Wander through rose gardens, swim in crystal-clear river water, or embark on hiking trails to encounter the diverse wildlife of the region. Whether exploring the outdoors or getting lost in the treasures within, Tashdon offers a retreat that captivates the soul.

The separate River Cottage, nestled 200 meters away, provides additional accommodation, ensuring an idyllic escape for families or couples seeking solitude amidst nature's splendour.

If my ship comes in soon and I'm not at the airport, my next adventure will be to put a group of friends and family together and take over this special destination to make the kind of memories that will last a lifetime.

IN CONCLUSION

Both retreats promise unforgettable experiences, where nature's beauty intertwines with warm hospitality, creating havens for weary souls to rejuvenate in the dramatic beauty of the Drakensberg mountains.



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Highmoor, KwaZulu Natal

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Johannesburg: Approximately 450kms, 4.5 hours

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3 Farmhouse Luxury Suites

3 Farmhouse Executive Suite

2 Farmhouse Executive Cottages – self-catering options:

River Run Cottage – (6 guests)

The Homestead – (10 to 12 guests)



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RIVER COTTAGE.



Clockwise from left:
Shoji screens from one of Shōgun's many sets; Tadao Ando's Ishihara House (1978); Actor Hiroyuki Sanada in character as Yoshii Toranaga in Shōgun.

IN 1980, a 9-part television miniseries captivated international audiences with its rich and brutal depiction of Japanese history. Now, some 44 years later, *Shōgun* has returned to screens in a shiny new remake (currently streaming on Disney+) that aims to add even more depth and authenticity to its lavish and violent story.

Set in the year 1600, when samurai warriors wielded their swords during a blood-soaked period of civil war, the new TV production serves up a visual feast of jaw-dropping costumes and production design. Featuring incredibly detailed set interiors and traditional Japanese architecture from the period, there is a particular feature of many of the show's sets that will surely catch the eye of international viewers (and possibly strike a chord of interior inspiration).

Behold the Shoji: the sliding screen doors and/or room dividers that have been a characteristic element of classical Japanese architecture for hundreds of years.

Shoji screens typically consist of sheets of translucent paper or cloth fixed on a lattice frame, allowing light to pass into private spaces. In traditional architecture, shoji are valued for being a soft barrier between the home's interior and the outside world... Exterior influences such as the swaying silhouettes of trees or the chorus of crickets and frogs can be appreciated from inside the house.

The noise factor might be a deal-breaker for those looking to incorporate a Shōgun-inspired touch to their home, but there are other potential drawbacks to consider too: sliding shoji doors cannot traditionally be locked; the traditional wood-and-paper construction is highly flammable; and shoji typically do not handle exposure to rain or moisture well.

Luckily, those looking to achieve shoji-like interior qualities without the practical limitations will find that the latest advances in architectural glass and aluminium systems provide a range of possibilities for introducing the essence of Japanese minimalism to the aesthetics of any space.

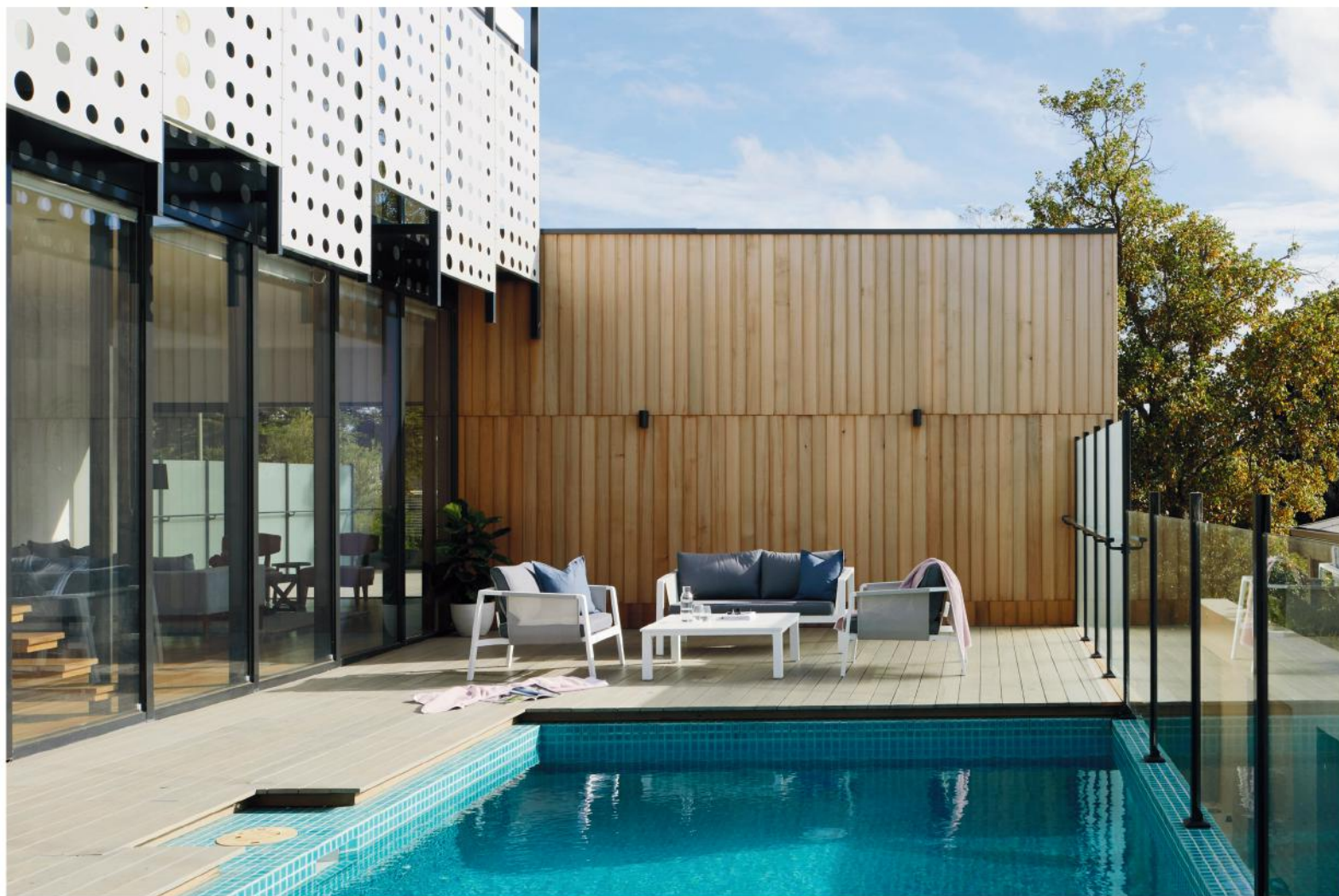
Indeed, in his iconic Ishihara House from 1978, the trailblazing Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architect Tadao Ando himself made prominent use of metal-framed, square glass windows that conjured up the light-bringing qualities of shoji screens with a nod to classical Japanese architecture.

Meanwhile, on the southern tip of Africa, one Ballito-based company has built a solid reputation as the go-to for bespoke aluminium and glass projects that would meet even Tadao Ando's exacting standards. North Shore Group (NSG) is regarded as one of South Africa's leading manufacturers and installers of architectural glass and aluminium – founder and CEO Deon Olivier confidently states that NSG has the experience, know-how and technical ability to manufacture and install anything his clients can dream up (even if it's inspired by 17th century Japan).

With a reputation that has attracted high-end work from coast to coast: you would be wise to consult Deon and his team for any job that requires samurai-sharp precision and an architectural eye for detail...

Learn more about NSG's innovation at www.nsgroup.co.za





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Black was the starting point, with black floors and ceilings. Free-gliding sliding doors and Louvre windows allows the manipulation of fresh air into the home.

/ SPACES /

GORGEOUSLY BACK TO BLACK

By Stephanie du Preez

WITH A FOCUS ON SEPARATE YET COHESIVE LIVING SPACES AND WELCOMING INDOOR GARDENS, THIS BLACK HOUSE WITH INDUSTRIOUS, OFF-SHUTTER CONCRETE AND RED BRICK, OOZES UNDERSTATED ELEGANCE...

As you approach, the home greets you like a bold, soaring bird with extended wings. Designed by Mabette Vermaak of Detail Architects, with interior design by home owner Schané Anderson of OLALA INTERIORS, this collaboration resulted in a truly unique space.

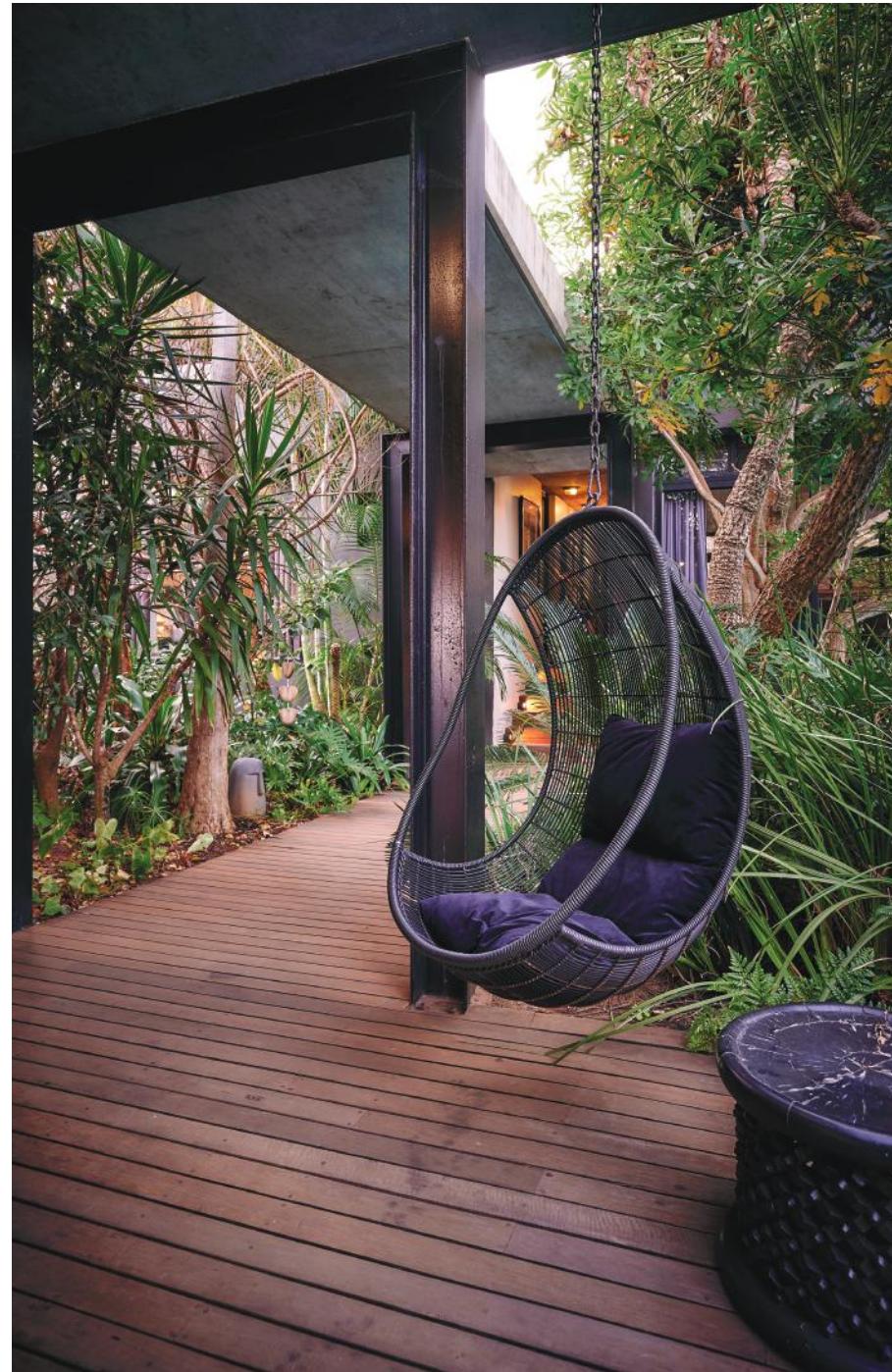
“The house was designed around two main parameters. Firstly, the requirements of the owners and secondly, blurring the boundaries between internal and external spaces. We pulled the living spaces apart to create internal rooms connecting to external courtyard ‘rooms’ yet

all functioning as one” says architect Mabette Vermaak.

The perspective, provided by a 25m open backbone running the length of the property connecting all the separate spaces, is phenomenal.

One of the zones comprises of a bedroom with study, chill lounge, bathroom and kitchenette for Schané’s son, Grant. The guest suite is also located here, allowing privacy for guests.

Walking down the indoor and outdoor boardwalk one passes





the heated lap pool and small outdoor garden area flanking the spine on either side.

The final space is the heart and soul of the home, showcasing Schanè's love to combine colour, texture and lighting with an industrial yet homely atmosphere, and long hanging pendant lights. A spacious black and stainless steel island kitchen, mampara brickwork, off-shutter concrete and reclaimed Baltic oak paneling provide a backdrop for pieces of furniture and art collected over the years. The double vaulted ceilings, also painted black, fade into nothingness allowing the lights to take centre stage. A covered patio with distant sea views leads off from here.

Because Schanè travels so extensively, all areas of the home feature something from everywhere. There is a lot of art - while unable to always afford the bigger pieces she always try to bring something home, and never buy for investment - she only acquires what she sees and loves. When buying art for clients, she has a similar attitude - if it doesn't speak to her or their homes, she would rather leave it.









A masculine palette was specified for the guest room. Achieved by using a range of textures, metallics, gun metal finishes and warmed through the added use of natural woods with a dark charcoal finish. The room is finished off with a state-of-the-art Bang & Olufsen TV and surround sound system. Mortised block-out blinds were applied as a window treatment in this compact room.

Charcoal stained, oak bedside pedestals on black steel legs complement the scheme, overhung with knurled and painted steel Tube Pendant Lights finished in urban grey with gold detailing.

The setting is grounded with the use of the Abstract Artist Rug, in gravel, creating contrast and interest over the existing wall to wall chocolate carpeting. &

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Willie and Urma Coetzer, Table View

PLAYTOPIA

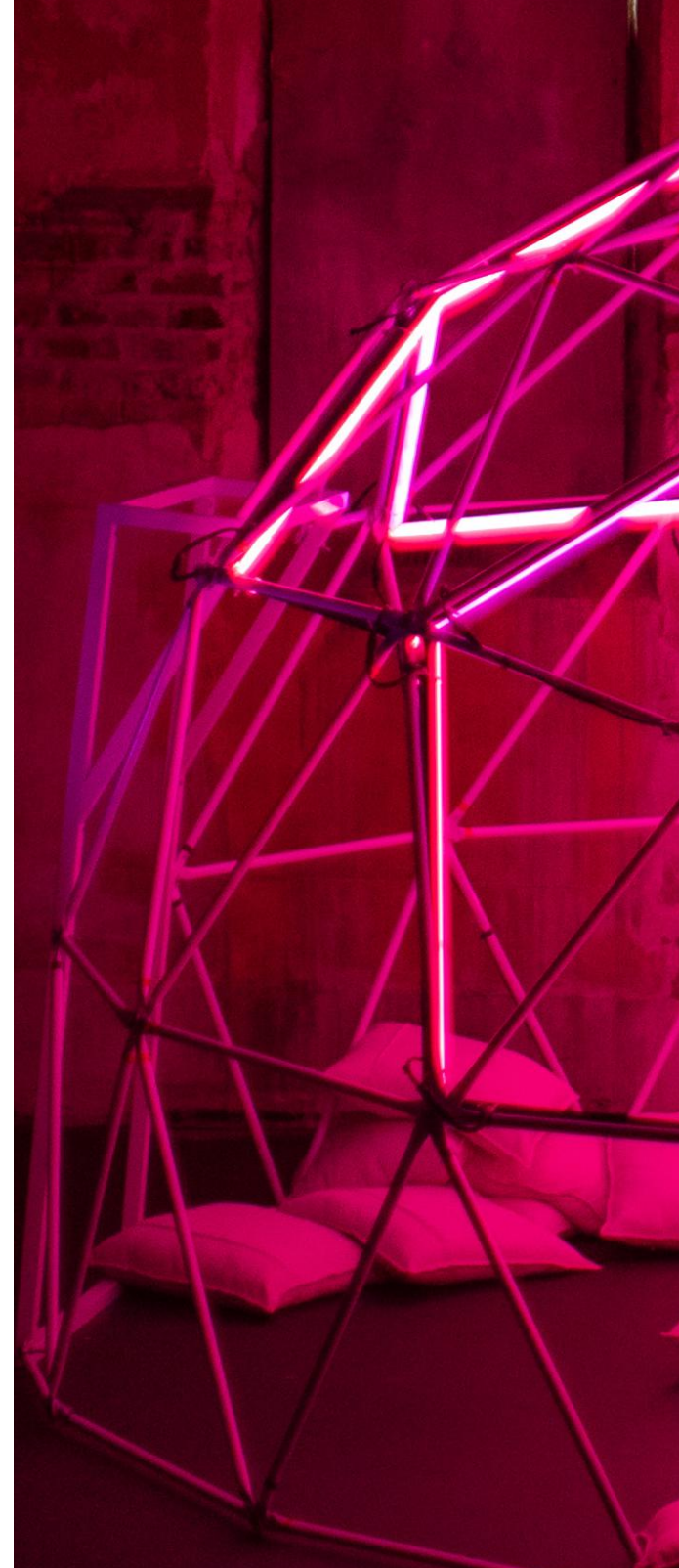
Words: Dan Charles

TOWARDS THE END of last year, my mother sent me a picture that she had just taken of the men in my family sitting on the couch and playing the copy of Mario Kart 8 Deluxe that came with the Nintendo Switch gaming console that they had just finished setting up. In the picture, my father is smiling with a look of awe and soft child-like glee. My brother is focusing intently on maneuvering through the rapid-paced virtual racetrack while my two-year-old nephew is nestled between the arms of his father, peering over the controller with his eyes transfixed on the luminescent television screen where all of the action is taking place – his young face beaming with the wonder of discovering something new.

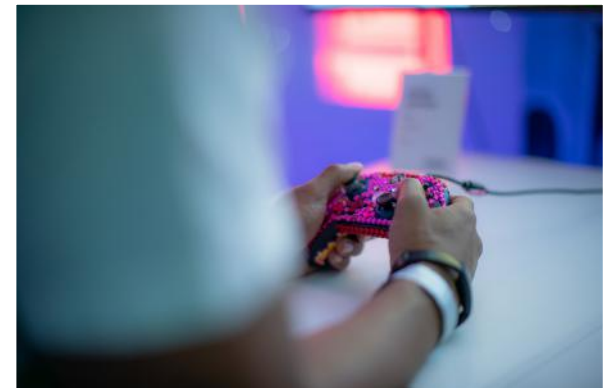
Attending Playtopia at the end of last year reminded me of the last time that video games had led me to feel a wonder similar to the kind that emanated from my nephew in that picture. Established in 2018, Playtopia is the first festival and conference of its kind to unite and celebrate the small but budding independent gaming scene growing in South Africa while also building bridges between the industry here and developers from industries across the African continent and the rest of the globe.

Over the course of three days, attendees of Playtopia 2023 were welcome to scour the grounds of Cape Town's Homecoming Centre that had mostly been converted into the festival's "Super Friendship Arcade" - a grand assemblage of indie games ready to be explored by anyone intrigued enough to immerse themselves into them.

The conference aspect included talks and panel discussions from some of the most lauded experts in the gaming field of South Africa and abroad. Although the talks did focus on the fascinating intricacies of certain aspects of game design, the talks that appealed to me the most were the ones that highlighted the power of immersive storytelling through video games. South African game writer Jon Keevy gave a short 5-minute "Hyper Talk" on falling in love with NPCs (Non-Playable Characters) and how that love is cultivated within







a game's story and how that reflects how love is expressed in the non-virtual world. Nyambura M. Waruingi, the Founder and Creative Director of Akoia & Company Ltd. elaborated on the design and production of hybrid immersive and interactive experiences with the audience journey and access in mind. Paolo Perdicini guided the audience through the 20 years of creating games under the critically lauded moniker Molleindustria while also exploring how the concept of dystopian worlds have shaped games in the past and how gaming can possibly help us explore ideas around what a utopia might look like outside of gaming.

Unlike other modes of storytelling, video games depend on your interaction with them in order to progress the story being told. A movie will play on in the background even while no one is paying attention to it. A song will do the same. You can skip to the end of a book without glancing at any of the

pages leading towards its conclusion, but a video game requires your full interaction in order to progress. It takes commitment. It takes investment.

It takes an intimacy between you and the world that you have entered. Seeing the groups of friends clustered around the blinking monitors of the different games in the Super Friendship Arcade also reminded me how sharing in that immersiveness is also an act of intimacy.

I have always felt closest to my brother when we played video games together. When I was born, my parents presented my brother with a Golden China gaming console that they told him was "a gift from the baby" in the way that parents sometimes do when attempting to ease the introduction of



MEETLING

EMOTIONS

COLOSSAL
LEVEL 1

Drag onto the grid to play

1 Think	1 Junk	1 Move	1 Hammer	1 Dash	0 No weapon, Picked
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a newborn child into the life of an older sibling who might be resentful of having to share the love and attention of their parents. I was born to be his Player 2. By the time I was old enough to participate more actively in the world around me, my brother had graduated from the Golden China to the slightly more advanced Sega Genesis console that would form the core of some of my earliest memories. I was still too young and my hand-eye coordination was still not developed enough for me to play well alongside him, but I was more than content to sit by his side and watch him spin-dash through the world of Sonic the Hedgehog 2. I was endlessly enthralled by his ability to tactfully maneuver through each level as they became more and more treacherous and being by his side made me feel like I was a part of his heroic journey. The camaraderie cultivated between us in those early days would carry on as we aged into the more complex and narrative-driven 3D games that were introduced to us via the PlayStation 2 and then the Xbox 360. At this point, I had honed my own skills as a fairly competent gamer in my own right but I would still gladly take my place at my brother's side as I accompanied him through darker and more mature stories that unfolded in the games of his choosing – stories that intrigued me but also intimidated me unless my brother was leading us through them together.



As one gets older and the world continues to seemingly fall apart around us, the simple joy of something like playing video games can tend to be written off as insignificant.

However, there is absolutely nothing insignificant about the things that bring you closer to the ones that you love by immersing yourselves into each other's worlds. And I am glad to see that my brother and his son have discovered new worlds to share with each other. After rediscovering my love for video games at Playtopia, I am also glad to know that there might be a controller still waiting for me at my brother's side.



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“GET OLD, BUT DON’T GET BORING”

the wisdom of Iris Apfel

Words: Mia McCarthy

IN A WORLD that is increasingly threatened by the insidious rise of the sad beige aesthetic, Iris Apfel was a welcome grenade of colour and texture. “More is more and less is a bore,” she declared to an Instagram audience of over three million followers, representing a fraction of the wider fashion and style community who are celebrating her long and fabulously decorated life after her death on 1 March.

Apfel became a world-renowned icon of the fashion world after flouting many of its rules. She was visibly aged, wearing her grey hair, wrinkles, and outlandishly oversized glasses as boldly as she did her signature red lip. She signed her first modelling contract with IMG Models aged 97, insisting that retirement was a fate worse than death. “I don’t think a number should make any difference and make you stop working,” she said.

If Apfel’s hope was to inspire older women to embrace style, beauty, and work in old age, she was extraordinarily successful. After she went viral on social media as a self-proclaimed “geriatric influencer”, a crop of fashion influencers over the age of fifty bloomed on Instagram and TikTok. Now, the likes of microbiologist-turned-fashion icon Grece Ghanem are walking the runway while Heidi Clements rocks an updated shag with salt-and-pepper locks, proving beyond doubt that confidence and style do not expire with age.

Apfel was a fashion icon, but she sharpened her remarkable eye for style in the world of interior design. She co-founded Old World Weavers in New York with her husband, Carl, shortly after their marriage and became the interior designers of choice for the White House. Old World Weavers did restoration work over the course of nine presidencies, a job that Apfel reports was the easiest of the lot as they generally only wanted to replicate what had been in place before.





Bidding farewell to fashion's rare bird, Iris Apfel

The one exception, Apfel said, was Jacqueline Kennedy. "She employed a very famous Parisian designer to gussy up the house and make it real Frenchie, and the design community went bananas. After that, we had to throw it all out and start again. But I did like Mrs. Nixon. She was lovely." One shudders to think what Apfel would say about millennial-age minimalism, a movement whose lesser crimes include rebranding beige as sand, taupe, fawn, stone, or wheat.

Iris Apfel's death should feel like a loss, but the legacy of her vivaciousness will enliven fashion and style for generations to come. It took courage and joy to flaunt a wardrobe like hers, a powerful inspiration in an industry that regularly falls prey to the dangers of ageism, conformity, and trying to make beige happen.

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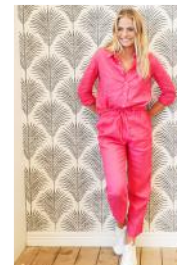
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TALKING WITH ANIMALS

Pet Psychics (And Why We Hire Them)

Words: Shannon Devy

THE FIRST PET psychic I hired was a gruff woman called Diane. I booked her because a good friend of mine who works for a respected Cape Town rescue organization told me a story that I found completely irresistible.

It goes like this: A family had to emigrate, and for whatever reason, they couldn't take their male dog with them. He went to stay with his grandparents, whom he loved. But for months after he arrived, despite being surrounded by people whom he trusted and adored and having all the treats, love and toys he could hope for, he seemed very depressed and refused to respond to even the simplest commands.

Diane was called to the scene. After a quick consultation with the dog, she asked "Where's his toy with the one big eye?" The grandparents, of course, had never heard of it, but they remembered that their son had left a box of the dog's things in a cupboard in the spare room. They retrieved the box and – lo and behold – inside they found a stuffed squid toy, with an enormous big eye. The pup perked right up when he saw it. He told Diane he didn't necessarily want to play with the squid toy, but he did want to be able to look at it when he wanted to. So, they placed it carefully on a shelf at his eye level, and every day from then on, they'd catch him sitting in front of it for a few minutes. Almost immediately, he was back to his boisterous, happy self.

Diane had a simple explanation for his refusal to respond to simple commands, too: the dog, she said, was Afrikaans.

Diane arrived at our house one evening with a toolbox full of essential oils and a very business-like manner. By then, we had two young dogs: Edie – extremely anxious, with big feelings and a long list of things that frightened

her (including but not limited to, the wind, the vacuum cleaner, washing baskets, and her food bowl), and Maggie – confident and self-centric, with a palpable devil-may-care attitude. We all gathered in the living room, my partner, our two dogs Maggie and Edie, and Diane, and our session began.

Edie had some concerns she wanted to address. Were we going to send her away? Is the train she could hear nearby following her? Why do humans like going in cars so much? She also mentioned that one of our mutual friends murdered her in a past life, which was why she barked so fiercely at her whenever she came to visit.

Maggie, on the other hand, wanted to know when we were going to get her some chickens. She'd heard from the neighbourhood dogs that the pigeons turned into chickens when they grew up, but she had never seen one, and she wanted a chicken of her own, please, and soon. Also, could she please have a strawberry cupcake, and next time we get wood-fired pizza, could she please have a slice?

Years later, I found myself in need of a pet psychic once more. By this stage, I had broken up with my partner, and was well into a serious relationship with the friend Edie claimed to have been murdered by in a past life. Edie was in incredible distress whenever my partner was around. Such was her intense and continued fear, I moved her in with my parents, whom she adored. In the calm, murderer-free routine of my parent's home, she flourished. But one day, she had a small scuffle with one of my Mom's dogs – a dominant but otherwise lovely leggy rescue called Holly, who had a big personality and didn't like to share. Despite being the best of friends, a full-blown fight broke out between them the next day. My mother was bitten so badly trying to separate them she needed surgery on her hand, and both dogs needed urgent

medical care. We kept the dogs apart and hired a top behaviourist to try and help us reintroduce them, but while Edie appeared to have forgotten the whole thing, Holly would lunge, growl and snap in Edie's direction whenever she saw her, hackles up, for weeks after the incident. It was a heartbreaking (and very serious) situation, which put the family under incredible strain. Out of options, we reached out to an old family friend – an animal communicator called Claire.

Claire arrived one Saturday morning, and when the session began, I was still a skeptic. By the end, I was sold. Claire simply knew things she had no way of knowing. Her messages from each of the dogs reflected so closely each dog's unique personality – something you really only come to know living with them – and the various little private details of family life in the household, it was nothing short of uncanny. Holly, Claire said, was fascinated by men with beards. She says it's like they have forests on their face (what Claire couldn't have known is that Holly has an obvious and well-established affinity for men with beards, following them on walks). Nina the collie hated that her dad was on the phone all the time (what Claire couldn't have known is that my stepdad Ian is constantly, relentlessly on his cell phone). Sassy, the old, slower golden retriever, loves the place with the big trees and the pine needles, but she wants more sniffing and



less marching on walks (a perfect description of our regular forest walks, and Sassy's attitude toward them). My mother's Siamese cat, Tao, who had recently and upsettingly absconded to a neighbour's house, was staying there because the neighbour needed her. He'd been ill, Tao said – something to do with his chest (what Claire couldn't have known is that the neighbour had suffered a heart attack). Edie, Claire said, was the most anxious dog she had ever connected with, but she loved it when I held her face, looked into her eyes and told her how special she was – a secret ritual between Edie and I which nobody else had ever witnessed.

I've relayed my experiences with pet psychics to many people, including friends, family, colleagues and strangers in bars, and without fail, whoever I'm talking to asks for a number so they can arrange their own consultation. What makes the prospect of talking to our animals so appealing? The same impulse driving the global pet industry to almost \$500 billion by 2030: love.

We want our pets to be happy, we want what's best for them, and we want to love them well, at whatever cost. Cats, dogs, birds and beyond – how strange it is, how wonderful, that we can love and be loved so deeply, in a language without words, but never without meaning.



OPEN MIC

at the Lifestyle Centre Ballito

THE LIFESTYLE CENTRE in Ballito KZN is one of the biggest supporters of local music and musicians in the region. Live music is a feature of this upmarket lifestyle shopping centre, with three performance areas offering almost continuous live performances during operating hours during weekends and holiday periods. Some of the best talent in the country has been known to perform at the Lifestyle Centre and for many aspirant musicians looking for an opportunity to audition for a slot, there's the monthly Open Mic.

Hosted in collaboration with **Radio Life & Style 88.0FM**, Ballito's popular commercial music radio station, the Lifestyle Centre Open Mic takes place in The Market, a large communal food court surrounded by a variety of food vendors, all of which offer special discounts for those coming to enjoy the event. It happens on the third Thursday of the month from around 6pm – 8pm.

The backline amplification and sound engineering is supplied by the radio station and local radio personality, Mike Charles, introduces the acts and keeps things moving. The performance slots are keenly contested by those eager to impress the crowd and the members of the Lifestyle Centre team in the hope of possibly securing a professional slot on the performance roster. To add to the excitement, a top local act is selected to top the bill. This raises the game and ensures the quality of performance at each Open Mic.

It's a lot of fun and with the excellent specials enticing the audience to linger and enjoy the occasion, Open Mic has become a firm favourite on the Lifestyle Centre regular events calendar.

Those wishing to perform are invited to submit their details and a performance clip to marketing@ballitolifestylecentre.co.za

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THE RASTAFARI MESSIAH & THE HONKY TONK NUN

The Ethereal Music of Emahoy Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou

Words: Mia McCarthy

IN THE 1930s, an exceptionally talented Ethiopian pianist named Yewubdar Guèbrou became the civil servant and singer of Emperor Haile Selassie. Incidentally, the Emperor is believed by some followers of the Rastafari movement to be the returned messiah, destined to lead the peoples of Africa and the African diaspora to freedom. In life, the Emperor politely denied these assertions of his divinity.

Messiah or not, the celebrated Emperor attracted the servitude of Guèbrou, who herself would come to dedicate her life to twin spiritual pursuits: a relationship with God, which would earn her the honorific “Emahoy”, and a relationship with music, which would earn her the BBC-bestowed nickname “the Honky Tonk Nun”.

In early childhood, Yewubdar and her sister, Senedu, were sent to boarding school in Switzerland, where Yewubdar studied violin and piano. She returned to Ethiopia to continue her musical studies, but Mussolini had other plans. In 1937, Yewubdar and her family were taken prisoners of war during Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia and deported to islands near Sardinia.

Some time after the war, while she was working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the appointment of Emperor Selassie, Yewubdar was offered the opportunity to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London. It fell through for reasons that Emahoy never disclosed.

The outcome would have a profound impact on her life. Yewubdar secretly fled Addis Ababa to become a nun, took on the religious name Tsegué-Maryam, and spent the next decade of her life in a hilltop monastery in the Wollo region. “No shoes, no music,” Guèbrou told BBC journalist Kate Molleson. “Just prayer.”



Guèbrou maintained a monastic life for decades but, eventually, she found her way back to music. She relocated to a Jerusalem convent in the 1980s where, in austere quarters that housed little more than a bed, she resumed composing and practising music.

Although Emperor Selassie had helped Guèbrou release her first record in Germany in 1967, it wasn’t until 2006 that she achieved widespread recognition. A compilation of her piano compositions

was issued on the Éthiopiennes record to critical acclaim. Writing for Pitchfork in 2020, Alex Westfall described her music as “the sonic equivalent to infinity — untethered by conventional meter or rhythm, as if Guèbrou’s instrument holds more keys than it should.”

Indeed, Guèbrou’s fingers are as fluid as water on the keys. Once, as a school-girl in Switzerland, she was asked by passers-by what she was playing on the piano. “The storm,” she answered, simply. Perhaps her gently tempestuous style was informed by the passage to Europe, which she described as such: “There was only heaven and sea for one month.” More broadly speaking, her musical journey reflects the riverine progression of her remarkable life. Musical prodigy, Emperor’s favourite, prisoner of war, servant of God: Guèbrou’s capacity for transformation was akin to water itself.

Guèbrou died last March, aged 99. During her life, she composed over 150 songs for piano, organ, opera, and chamber ensembles, compositions which she stored in crumpled Air Ethiopia bags. Her contributions to music are a poignant reminder of how the richest of lives spring from humble beginnings.



SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PICTURE PALACE

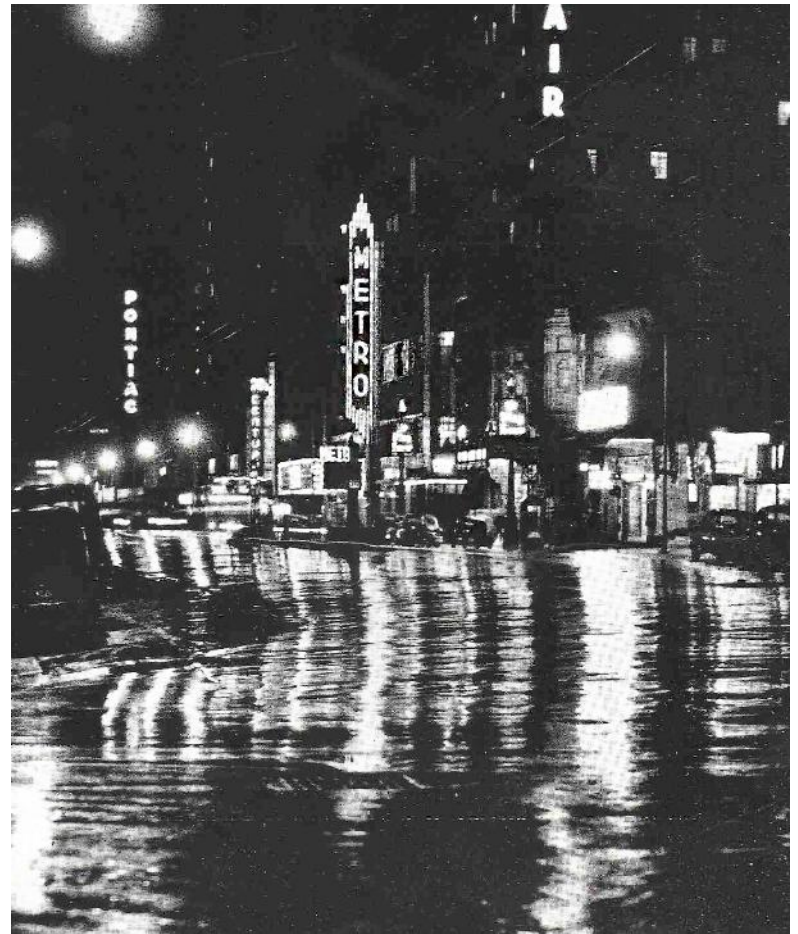
A Brief Gallery of Natal Queen Screens

Words: Cameron Luke Peters

WHY DO WE accept the death of movie-going? I suppose cinema will be with us for as long as our lounges have surround-sound speakers, but most of us seem to assume that Ster-Kinekor's belle époque is long past, especially after Covid. But I refuse to believe it. As a dyed-in-the-wool film scholar at UCT, I blame Hollywood for more recently inundating us with films they can't pay us to watch. If it's worth seeing, we'll move heaven and earth (and pay the petrol price) to go. Whenever I ramble down to the Labia Theatre on Orange Street in Gardens, I allow myself to dream that movies will eventually start to sell themselves like vinyl records - as renascent boutique experiences, a tangible tonic to the streamlined airlessness of streaming. We'll rediscover society, and rediscover our youth, by gathering in new palaces for new classics.

Nostalgia, however, is meaningless without verification. I have my childhood memories, but could KZN ever boast venues to rival the Everyman or Grauman's Egyptian? No and yes, it turns out. In authenticity and venerability, Durban can claim the first permanent cinema in the proto-Union of South Africa: the 'Natal Electric Company', opened just opposite the City Hall on West Street in May, 1909. It was, of course, a whites-only institution from the very start. This was just 14 years after Edison-style 'Kinetoscopes' were rolled out to miners' camps on the Witwatersrand (and those just a few months before the Lumieres had their first private screenings in Paris). Already by 1913, however, every film in the country was shown at the behest of one man: the American oligarch Isidore W. Schlesinger. Like a cross between Cecil J. Rhodes and Louis B. Mayer, he 'fixed' the industry by bringing every film retailer under his 'African Films' label, producing hundreds of newsreels and dozens of colonial epics. Until 1956, writes Martin Botha, "Schlesinger had the monopoly on film distribution from the Cape to the Zambezi."

If you happened to live in Pietermaritzburg around this time, your theatrical options were equally confined: "there were two picture houses in Maritzburg





Smith Street, Durban,

through the silent era,” writes William Bizley, the Rinko (so called because it was converted from a Victorian roller-skating rink) and the Excelsior. The latter, the ‘bughouse’, was built, it was said, out of wattle and daub” while the former boasted its own resident orchestra (with prominent local performers) who half-improvised scores whilst watching each movie along with the audience. The Rinko was also a slightly more sophisticated institution thanks to its iron roof, although this proved a liability when sound films came along and the plunking of raindrops drowned out all recorded dialogue. Its loss was no disaster, though. The Pride of PMB, the Grand, soon superseded it and was, by all accounts, “the most opulent building that Maritzburg had seen, with plush seating, ornate panels and even twin projectors - now you could show a film without stopping to change reels.” In typical imperial style it hosted music-hall singers and military bands through the Thirties and Forties before crumbling in every sense of the word in the Seventies.

In Durbs, on the other hand, every cinema was a bughouse (as well as a ‘biscope’). By mid-century, the Victorian logic of segregation mandated two entirely separate movie districts for Whites and Indians (it would take decades more for permanent screens to reach the Black townships). These were, respectively, the ‘Cinemaland’ strip on Smith and Aliwal Streets and the ten picture houses that star-studded ‘the Casbah’ in and around Grey Street. Both areas, however, spun off daily contrasts of glamour and baseness that remain hard to fathom. The Scala Cinema on Warwick Avenue, for instance, transitioned from being a genteel sanctuary in the early Sixties to how Phyllis Naidoo describes it:

“Don’t be fooled by its high-class name - it was a bug house. All the vermin in town - human and otherwise - took shelter in that cinema. You bought a drink (cool), and you could sit there till midnight. All the night criminals slept here during the day. Periodically when the police searched they rolled out several wheelbarrow loads of knives, bush knives and other deadly weapons (no guns). Naturally the language picked up here was not kosher.”

Today, the building that once was the Scala forms part of the Steve Biko Campus for DUT.

More surprising to me is that what we call the Playhouse Company today on Anton Lembede Street is partly the ghost of two classic cinemas. The entrance was built in 1928 as the facade of the Princes (later renamed the Colosseum) and the body was built as the Playhouse Cinema in 1935, boasting “a very ornate interior which transported the audience from the mundane world outside to the wonderland of the interior. It was the largest cinema in Durban with seating for 1900 people. During the 1970’s the bar lounge became a very rough and bawdy drinking den popular with visiting seamen and the police succeeded in having the



liquor license withdrawn” thus signalling the grand dame’s death-knell.

Within skipping distance, of course, were the Embassy, the Metro, the 20th Century (with its large ‘20th’ sign in buzzing neon lights), the Roxy, the Capri and the Piccadilly Cinema next to Kempster Sedgwick Motors, which Gerald Buttigieg remembers thusly: “on each side of the big screen, there were two large paintings - one of Piccadilly Circus and the other of shipping tied up in the Thames. These pictures would glow in the semi dark light. I have clear memories of seeing the Tommy Steele Story there as well as Cliff Richard in the movie Summer Holiday in the late 50s and early 60s. Going to the movies was a very swish affair on Saturday nights. Everyone dressed up for the occasion and when the 007 movies first came out, the crowds were enormous. When the Beatles movie Hard Day’s Night played at the Playhouse it was booked out weekend after weekend. The noise in the cinema as The Beatles played their famous hits was ear shattering. Great days to remember!”

And just a few blocks away, around today’s Dr Yusuf Dadoo and Victoria, were the Naaz, the Topaz, the Liberty, the Isfahan, the Shiraz, the Albert, the Avalon (later renamed the Dreamland after the famous seaside cinema in Margate) and - the one I dream of visiting - the magisterial Shah Jehan. Indian cinemas had started from small beginnings, from which far better fortunes followed. The first Indian-owned bioscope, opened in the Twenties, was Rawat’s Bio at 71 Victoria Street, which later became Schlesinger’s Royal Picture Palace. This was a misnomer of note: “Seating was on ‘hard wooden benches, “Globe” kitchen chairs and basket chairs were for the more discerning patrons who were prepared to pay a little more’. It was, indeed, a bug-infested, murky hall with uncomfortable ragged seats”.

Thankfully, two major dynasties of picture-house moguls, the Moosas and the Rajabs, would arrive to raise the game through friendly competition. At one time, patriarch AB Moosa owned 14 cinemas around the country and held the edge through “the super, super deluxe” fittings of the Avalon, which even hosted weddings and political summits. (The Moosas are actually still in the industry today as owners of the screens at Suncoast). But I’d say the Rajabs edged them out through sheer grandstanding luxury. As Mamoo Rajab recalled:

“Cinemas were popular but Indians were given a rough deal regarding the cinema experience. There was a gap in the market for upper-end cinemas for the Indian public.” The Shah Jehan, opened in 1956 at 275 Grey Street, filled it and then some. As Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed lovingly describe, the cinema “boasted exquisite decor, air conditioning, an upper gallery, box seats, lush ruched velvet screen curtains and uniformed ushers equipped with torches who guided patrons to their seats, which had built-in ashtrays”.



Each and every ballie today seems to use their own superlatives. As Damon Heatlie surmises, “these places, with their exotic Persian-inspired names, [were] described as ‘palaces of excess and enjoyment’ and became semi-sacred sites where Indian-South Africans were “able to marvel at what they held to be their glorious heritage and affirm their “Indianness.”” Echoing Buttigieg, Baboo Jawat remembers: “Every Saturday, can you imagine how we used to be? I will use the word “stupid” because we dressed to kill to go and sit in the dark. Who is going to see you dressed to kill in the dark? But we would park there and then go home.” The crucial difference, of course, was that, according to the law, whites always got to see every premiere first. This could lead to particularly absurd moments. Farouk Moosa remembers how, “the Embassy would begin showing a film like From Russia with Love at midnight and the Avalon would begin screening it from 12:45 am. Each reel ran for about twenty minutes, and they allowed some lag time for the taxi to take each reel from Smith Street to Victoria Street. It was stressful to co-ordinate.”

The last whiffs of this world were still around when I used to catch Dreamworks films with my Nana at the Aztec-style three-screen Berea Centre in the mid-2000’s. I don’t remember ever going to the Wheel or the Workshop but my Mum assures me we dropped in in their heyday. I admired the low-key papier-mâché Egyptian tomb fittings of the old Pavillion Nu-Metro. But naturally, the cinema that changed my life was the nearest one to my childhood home, the Ster-Kinekor at Musgrave Centre - a glorified bughouse in its own right, though like so many others I shed a tear when it closed a year or two ago. It’s not at all surprising that I’ve been describing a lost world. If we were teleported back to the Sixties, the lack of a home-screen culture would probably rankle our sensibilities nearly as much as the ‘Slegs Blankes’ signs. But it’s clear that, besides being havens of aspirational luxury and cheap escapism, the Durban cinemas often served too to ennoble their patrons and connect them to their particular heritage. What can we make to replace them?

P.S. If you want to shout at me for not including or misreporting your favourite KZN cinema, I’d love to hear it (and use it for a follow-up article). Please e-mail me at cameronlukepeters812@gmail.com.



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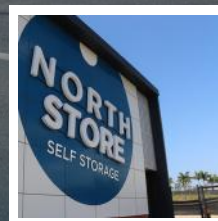
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BUYING AN OLDER LUXURY CAR

Why it Makes Perfect Sense



Words: Michael James

IN A WORLD where newer, shinier models dominate the roads, there's something uniquely appealing about owning an older luxury car. Sure, it might not have all the bells and whistles of its modern counterparts, but there are plenty of reasons why investing in a well-maintained older ride could be the best decision you'll ever make.

Here's why - There's a timeless elegance to older luxury cars that modern designs often lack. From the sleek lines of a vintage Mercedes-Benz to the unmistakable presence of a Range Rover, these cars exude sophistication and style that never goes out of fashion. Plus, driving a vintage beauty instantly sets you apart from the crowd, turning heads and sparking conversations wherever you go.

They don't make 'em like they used to! Older luxury cars were built with quality craftsmanship and robust engineering, designed to stand the test of time. Unlike some newer models that seem to depreciate in value the moment they leave the lot, a well-maintained classic can actually appreciate over the years, making it a savvy investment for the future.

Let's face it, luxury cars come with a hefty price tag, but buying used can help you snag a premium ride at a fraction of the cost. With depreciation factored in, older luxury cars often offer incredible value for money, allowing you to enjoy the finer things in life without breaking the bank. Plus, lower insurance premiums and

maintenance costs mean you can indulge in luxury without worrying about draining your wallet.

Modern cars are loaded with complex electronics and high-tech gadgets, but sometimes, simpler is better. Older luxury cars offer a more straightforward driving experience, with fewer distractions. There's a certain joy in mastering the art of driving without relying on a touchscreen interface or semi-autonomous features, allowing you to truly connect with the road and your car.

Owning an older luxury car is like joining an exclusive club of passionate enthusiasts who take pride in maintaining these automotive icons. With a wealth of online resources, forums, and DIY tutorials available, tinkering with your older ride can be a rewarding hobby that brings you closer to your vehicle and fellow enthusiasts.

While the allure of a brand-new luxury car is undeniable, there's something special about owning an older model that's steeped in history and character. From its classic charm to its enduring quality, investing in a classic luxury car is not just a purchase – it's a statement. So why settle for the ordinary when you can drive something extraordinary? Embrace the beauty of the past and make your own luxury legacy on the road.



TIME TO PACK UP AND GO HOME

There is a place in my mind that I return to whenever I think about happiness.

Words: Dave Charles

IF SOMEONE TOLD me that they had just done a 400km round trip to rescue an ecologically and commercially irrelevant small fish, I would probably consider them challenged. It makes no sense and yet that is what I have just done, and I feel quite emotional about it. Here's the story.

There is a place in my mind that I return to whenever I think about happiness. It's where my dad taught me how to tie a fishing knot and bait a hook, where my mother lovingly applied Sea and Ski to my four-year-old freckled face and showed us how the sea anemone closes if you tickle it. This is where my cousins and I fought imaginary battles based on the Commando and War Stories in Pictures comic books and where my sisters and I bought sweets from the Happy Days trading store opposite the narrow-gauge railway along which the terrifying steam engines thundered, flattening the coins that we put on the line and dropping sticks of sugar cane. This was Hibberdene in the old days.

To get to the beach you had to run the gauntlet down concrete stairs through thick coastal bush teeming with imaginary green mambas and other unseen terrors to the sand that was too hot to walk on barefoot.

We bought green cold drinks and Simba Chips from a hatch in the Bar where our dads were engaged in a raucous game of darts while our mothers were taking tea on the veranda.

We had meals in the children's dining room until we were considered old enough to graduate to the main dining room – how I longed to be old enough to enjoy that privilege.

It wasn't fancy, but to me, it was the finest hotel in the world. Owned and run by a great aunt and her husband, The Alexander was a typical family hotel in Hibberdene on the South Coast in the days before air conditioning and highways.



Every year we made the pilgrimage from our smoky East Rand industrial hometown to reconnect with extended family and friends who came together from other parts of the country to enjoy the Christmas or Easter holidays at the seaside.

The journey was part of the adventure, always leaving in the darkness before dawn, hoping to get to the coast in time for afternoon tea. The road trip was interminable, stopping only for petrol and the occasional break to stretch the legs and enjoy a sandwich or hard-boiled egg – travel food before the advent of fast-food outlets at filling stations.

Holidays at Hibberdene were magical – lying in bed listening to the crashing of the breakers until the tea tray arrived, delivered at the appointed hour with a knock on the door. Then, it was down to the sea for a swim in the tidal pool before the gong announced that breakfast was served. The gong was ceremonially played to announce every meal as well as morning and afternoon tea. I loved that gong.

There was nothing really to do by today's standards, and yet there was so much...and the days passed in a whirlwind of fishing and swimming and eating and fun. I loved our holidays at Hibberdene and to this day, those memories fill me with a longing for what can never be relived.

My cousin, Mike, who also lives in Ballito now, is similarly drawn to the ghosts of X-mases past on our beach of dreams and this prompted us to plan a sentimental day trip from Ballito to the South Coast to visit them.

We set off with high expectations. Little did we know that these would shortly be shattered.

The drive down the coast was quite enjoyable, but Hibberdene has not weathered well and almost nothing remains of what we remember. The old

hotel buildings have been replaced with budget style rental apartments and everything looks a little run-down and sad. The lush coastal milkwoods, a protected species that were so ubiquitous there, have been hacked out with the rest of the coastal bush, leaving the beach quite desolate and exposed.

We stood on the almost empty beach, near the ruined tidal pool watching a fisherman reeling in and discarding a toby – a little puffer fish – that we had caught so many of as kids when the sea turned bad. The toby was a sign that the fishing conditions were sub-optimal and that it was time to pack up and go home.

I looked at the little puffer lying helpless on the beach and almost without thinking I retrieved it and returned it to the sea, happy in the notion that this great, great, great, great.... great-grandfish of the toby I once caught there would live to swim another day through the gulleys and reefs of my dreams.

But for us, clearly, it was time to pack up and go home.



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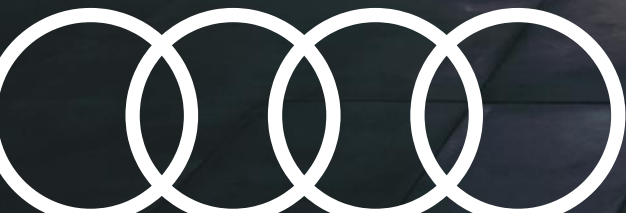
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