

SIGNATURE

The Diners Club International Magazine

EXPLORE THE ETERNAL CITY IN THE SPRING

*A Roman
Reverie*

Style Icon: Mercedes-Benz
GLC COUpé

Exploring the Kruger
National Park in Pictures

Romaria Knitwear
in Porto, Portugal



COME HOME TO EXTRAORDINARY

Experience the extraordinary at Steyn City Parkland Residence, spanning 2000 acres of lush indigenous parkland. This award-winning lifestyle estate boasts world-class amenities, including a Nicklaus Design Championship golf course, Equestrian Centre, AAA-grade commercial office park, and Steyn City School. Enjoy an indoor aquatic centre, 300m lagoon, and the exclusive Steyn City Ultimate Helistop. For outdoor enthusiasts, there's a 50km mountain bike track, 45km walking and jogging promenade, children's play nodes, and outdoor gym stations. Indulge in a variety of eateries right at your doorstep. Visit Steyn City for a life of luxury and leisure.



A PROPERTY TO SUIT
EVERY LIFESTYLE

City Centre Apartments
From 2.7M
Stands & Homes



STEYN CITY

PARKLAND RESIDENCE

steyncity.co.za

NWWealth
2023

Proudly ranked among
the world's top ten
lifestyle estates.

MASERATI GRECALE AND LEVANTE



DOUBLE DOWN ON ELEGANCE AND POWER. ELEVATE YOUR DRIVING EXPERIENCE WITH THE MASERATI GRECALE AND LEVANTE.

Grecale Trofeo – engine: V6 90° 3000 cc – max power: 530 hp – max torque: 620 Nm – max speed: 285 km/h – 0–100 km/h acceleration: 3.8 secs – fuel consumption (combined cycle): 11.2 l/100 km – CO2 emissions (combined cycle): 254 g/km.

Levante Trofeo – engine: V8 90° 3799 cm3 – max power: 580 hp at 6750 rpm – max torque: 730 Nm at 2500–5000 rpm – max speed: 302 km/h – 0–100 km/h acceleration: 3.9 secs – fuel consumption (combined cycle): 15.9–16.0 l/100 km – CO2 emissions (combined cycle): 359–363 g/km.



Bryanston Boulevard, William
Nicol Drive, +27 080 006 0077
za.maserati.com



MASERATI JOHANNESBURG



a timeless vintage
series c 2021 is now available
vilafonte.com



vilafonté



Travel Together

UNLOCK A WORLD OF BENEFITS WITH THE DINERS CLUB BEYOND CARD.

Traveling is one of the most gratifying experiences life has to offer. Whether you're exploring a new city or taking a once-in-a-lifetime vacation together with friends or family, the Diners Club Beyond card will make your travels even more enjoyable. So why wait? Start your journey today.

Apply today.



from the MD



Welcome

Esh Naidoo
Managing Director

Being a Diners Club member means so much more than holding one of the most respected payment instruments in the world. It also means that you have access to some of the most exclusive experiences in South Africa and abroad.

Some of the most enchanting experiences you can enjoy with your Diners Club card, is access to the best restaurants both locally and abroad. In this edition, we shine a light on two of South Africa's finest dining establishments - the Saxon Hotel & Spa and Verdicchio's Restaurant & Wine Cellar.

Besides being two of South Africa's

most well-known establishments, both are the proud recipients of the 2023 Diners Club Winelist Icon Awards - the highest accolade of its kind in the country. For this edition, we spent some time at each, exploring their extensive wine offerings, and I am proud to share this with you in this edition of *Signature* magazine.

Also in this edition, we travel to faraway places and sample the latest that the world of technology, motoring and fashion has to offer.

Join Diners Club on this journey of discovery, and rediscover just how powerful your trusted Diners Club card can be.

🐦 @DinersClubSA

📘 Diners Club SA

Member Service Centre 0860 Diners (0860 346377) or +27 11 358 8406

Email signature@dinersclub.co.za

in this ISSUE



54



22



50

TRAVEL

- 16 **Go There** / Signature Selection of the Finest Travel Hotspots
- 18 **Explore** / Five Top Things to Do in Melbourne
- 22 **Cover** / The Lingering Romance of Rome in Spring
- 28 **Travel Regional** / A Return to The Seychelles
- 34 **Travel Local** / Samara Plains Camp at Samara Karoo Reserve

- 38 **Travel Local** / Doing Business at Walkersons Hotel and Spa

LIFESTYLE

- 42 **Style** / A Signature Selection of Lifestyle Must-haves
- 48 **Design** / Owning Your Compact Living Space
- 50 **Fashion** / Romaria Knitwear in Porto, Portugal
- 54 **Motoring** / The Alluring Mercedes-Benz GLC Coupé

Relax | Refresh | Refuel



**All the Bidvest Premier Lounges
are now open and operating at
100% seating capacity.**

bidvestlounge@bidvestcatering.co.za
www.bidvestlounge.co.za

[f](#) @BidvestLounge [i](#) @BidvestLounge [t](#) @BidvestLounge

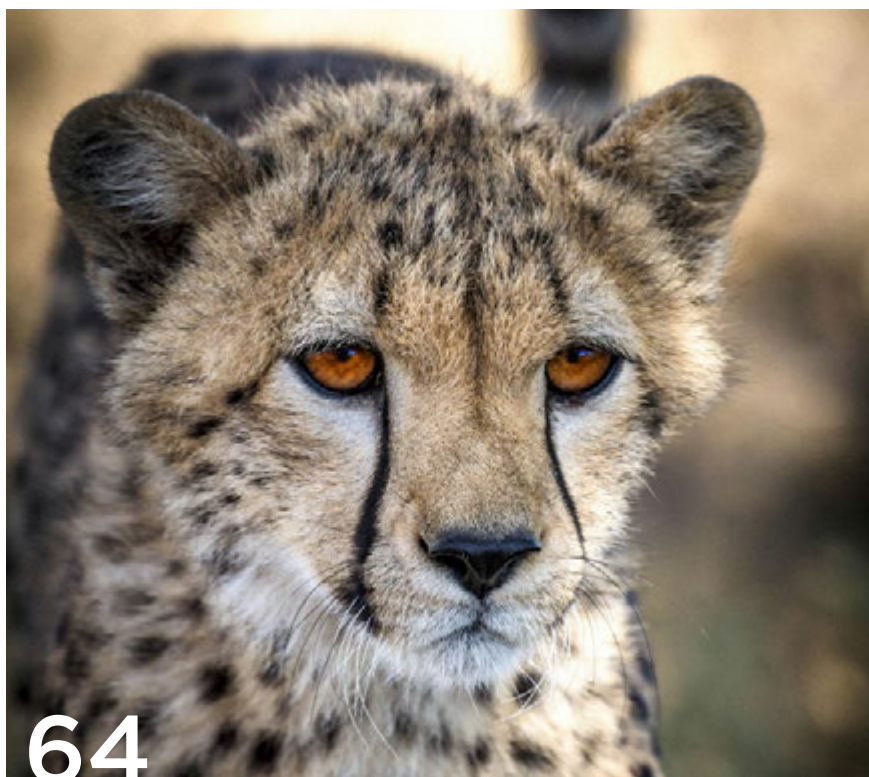
Individual lounge operating hours are available
on the Bidvest Premier Lounge website.
A reminder to all visitors that the food and drink
is only for consumption inside the lounges.

 **Bidvest**
Premier Lounge

in this ISSUE

WINE & DINE

44 **Wine** / Uncorking the Top Wine Trends of 2024



ENTERTAINMENT

62 **To Entertain** / Snippets of Fun for the Mind, Body & Soul

64 **Photography** / Celebrating the Kruger National Park in Pictures

70 **Wellness** / Understanding Identity Intelligence



INVEST IN KRUGER'S MOST EXCLUSIVE ADDRESS



LUXURY RIVER SUITES IN ELEPHANT POINT'S 5 STAR HOTEL

ONLY 5 RIVER SUITES LEFT BEFORE PROJECT IS SOLD OUT

NOW SELLING

- Situated on the banks overlooking the magnificent Sabie River, Kruger National Park.
- Rare & Exclusive Opportunity - Only 30 Ultra luxurious Hotel Suites being sold to private investors.
- Turnkey Investment which includes land, building and furnishings.
- Expected to generate great monthly returns for investors.
- Fully managed & operated by the Legacy Hotel Group.
- Each double suite measures +-200sqm in size and boasts its very own private rooftop pool and terrace overlooking the Sabie river.



Scan QR. code
to view our **brochure**



www.ElephantPoint.co.za

Contact Ewan Dykes: Mobile: +27 83 755 8944

Email: edykes@magicb.co.za



in this ISSUE

DINERS CLUB

- 07 **Welcome /** Letter from the
Managing Director
- 72 **Winelist Awards /** Cheers to
the 2023 Icon Award Winners



DINERS CLUB INTERNATIONAL

Managing Director
Esh Naidoo

Marketing and Events Manager
Gerda Burger

TJT MEDIA (PTY) LTD

Publishing Director
Bernie Hellberg Jr / bernie@tjtmedia.co.za
+27 82 350 2857

Editor-in-Chief
Deidre Loots / deidre@tjtmedia.co.za

Design & Layout
Virtual da Vinci Creative Room

Media Traffic
Chantal Barton / chantal@tjtmedia.co.za

Accounts
Ilze du Plooy / accounts@tcbmedia.co.za

ADVERTISING SALES

National Sales Manager (Business Development)
Chantal Barton / chantal@tjtmedia.co.za
+27 79 626 0782

National Sales Manager (Regional & SADC)
Bryan Kayavhu / bryan@tjtmedia.co.za
+27 83 785 6691

GAUTENG
286B Hennops Drive, Irene Glen Private Estate,
Irene, Pretoria, 0157

www.tjtmedia.co.za
www.freemagazines.co.za

PRINTING
Business Print Centre, Pretoria

Submissions of articles and photographs for publication are welcomed, but the publisher, while exercising all reasonable care, cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage.

Please ensure that all material is sent by email to bernie@tjtmedia.co.za.

Copyright © 2024. All copyright for material appearing in this magazine belongs to TJT Media (Pty) Ltd, and/or the individual contributors. All rights reserved.

Signature magazine is published quarterly by TJT Media (Pty) Ltd. Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Diners Club International, TJT Media, its subsidiaries or affiliates, their strategic partners or their clients. Information has been included in good faith by the publisher and is believed to be correct at the time of going to print.

No responsibility can be accepted for errors and omissions. No material (articles or photographs) in this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in whole or in part, in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including a storage and retrieval system, photocopying or recording without prior written permission of the Editor.

TJT
TELEVISION JOURNALISM

BusinessPrint
reliable perfection

**Diners Club
INTERNATIONAL**



Sleep, eat & everything in between





VOCOTM

AN IHG[®] HOTEL

The Bank
Johannesburg
Rosebank

Contact Us

24 Cradock Ave, Rosebank, Johannesburg, 2196, South Africa
+27 (0) 10 023 2600 | stay@vocojhb.com
www.vocohotels.com

 @vocoJHB
 [voco_johannesburg_rosebank](https://www.instagram.com/voco_johannesburg_rosebank)

Together Belong

JOIN THE CLUB THAT PUTS YOU
IN TOTAL CONTROL OF YOUR DESTINY.



DINERSCLUB.CO.ZA



Every card comes standard with a 24/7 Digital Lifestyle Assistant, for convenient access to an exclusive world of incredible experiences.

Apply today.





GO THERE



STAY CONNECTED ABROAD

Next Travel Connect is here to rewrite the rulebook for global connectivity. Say hello to South Africa's ground-breaking global travel SIM, the ultimate solution for travellers who crave convenience, affordability, and unwavering reliability. This isn't just any SIM card, it's your key to hassle-free, budget-friendly, and rock-solid connectivity in over 90% of the world's tourist destinations. With Next Travel Connect, you snag the most competitive rates on unlimited global data and voice plans and unlock a world of comprehensive travel connectivity solutions. You may have heard about travel eSIMs before, but Next Travel Connect leaves the competition in the dust with one global travel SIM and one unbeatable unlimited data and voice calling plan. Plus, you can choose between an eSIM or a physical SIM, ensuring compatibility on any mobile device. www.nextsim.travel

PLANT-CENTRED DINING AT THE NELLIE

Cape Town's beloved Pink Lady is undergoing a remarkable transformation as it gears up to celebrate its 125th anniversary, and its culinary realm is no exception. The



LARGER THAN LIFE LAVISHNESS

Embark on an extraordinary journey to Gorah Elephant Camp, a lavish tented retreat, amidst Addo Elephant National Park, which is home to the densest population of elephants on Earth. The opulence of the 11 luxury tented suites, nestled under thatched canopies, transports you to the golden era of safaris in the early 1900s. Experience glamour and spacious comfort while enjoying silver service afternoon teas, thrilling wildlife encounters and soul-stirring bush sunset setups. Gorah, the sole private concession

in the original park, offers a malaria-free haven to witness the iconic Big 5 in their natural habitat. Immerse yourself in once-in-a-lifetime elephant sightings at the bustling watering hole, just in front of the historic Manor House. Expertly guided game drives, three daily meals of gourmet gold and access to all lodge facilities ensure a five-star adventure, blending luxury with natural wonders. Book this South African safari gem for a coveted addition to your 2024 travel wish-list.

www.gorah.hunterhotels.com

chefs at the helm of the various kitchens of Mount Nelson, A Belmond Hotel, continue to reimagine their culinary offerings through a plant-centred lens, while two of the legendary dining destinations have undergone a considered revamp as part of this gastronomic metamorphosis. The new menus at the Chef's Table, Planet Bar, Oasis, and Harvest Table include vegan and vegetarian dishes, featuring Cape Wild Foods – local ingredients that add delicate umami flavours to its recipes. The culinarians leading the charge at the Nellie are Executive Chef George Jardine, Executive Sous Chef Kyle Burn, Sous Chef Brinelle Cunningham, Sous Chef Lloyd Destadler and Sous Chef Lyll Manuel.





The Seychelles Islands



MAKE IT MELBOURNE

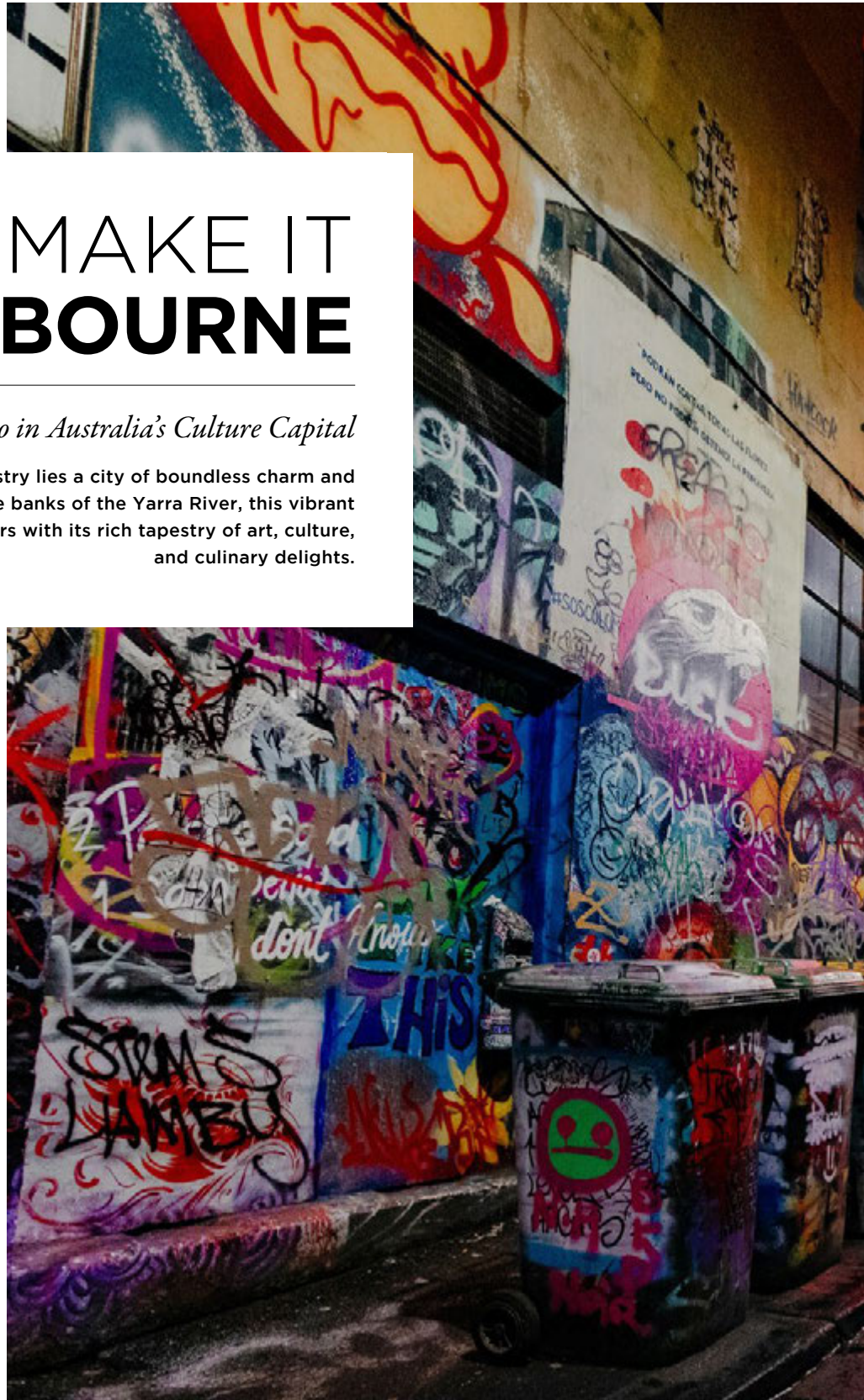
Top Five Things to do in Australia's Culture Capital

In the heart of Australia's cultural tapestry lies a city of boundless charm and allure – Melbourne. Nestled along the banks of the Yarra River, this vibrant metropolis beckons travellers with its rich tapestry of art, culture, and culinary delights.

From hidden laneways adorned with street art, to sprawling parks and bustling markets, Melbourne offers a plethora of experiences to captivate the senses and nourish the soul. Here, we unveil the top five things to do in Melbourne, each promising an unforgettable journey of discovery and delight.

1. WANDER THROUGH THE ENCHANTED LANEWAYS

Step into Melbourne's labyrinth of laneways and lose yourself in a world of whimsy and wonder. From the iconic graffiti-lined streets of Hosier Lane to the quaint cobblestone pathways of Degrares Street, each laneway tells a story of creativity and community. Marvel at larger-than-life murals and intricate stencil art adorning every corner, while the scent of freshly brewed coffee wafts through the air, enticing passers-by to linger a little longer. Embrace the spirit of exploration as you meander through these hidden gems, discovering charming boutiques, quirky cafés, and bustling bistros at every turn.





Hosier Street, Melbourne



2. INDULGE IN A CULINARY EXTRAVAGANZA

Prepare your taste buds for a culinary journey as you explore Melbourne's diverse dining scene. From world-class restaurants to bustling food markets, the city offers an array of flavours to tantalize every palate. Sample authentic Vietnamese pho in the bustling streets of Richmond, savour freshly shucked oysters at the iconic South Melbourne Market, or embark on a gastronomic adventure through the famed laneways

of Chinatown. With its vibrant mix of cultures and cuisines, Melbourne is a food lover's paradise, promising an unforgettable feast for the senses.

3. IMMERSE YOURSELF IN ARTS AND CULTURE

Experience the beating heart of Melbourne's cultural scene as you explore its myriad galleries, museums, and theatres. Lose yourself in the labyrinthine halls of the National Gallery of Victoria, home to an extensive collection of



Axil Coffee Roasters

Australian and international art spanning centuries. Marvel at the awe-inspiring performances at the iconic Melbourne Arts Centre, where ballet, opera, and theatre combine to create moments of pure magic. And don't miss the chance to wander through the bustling stalls of the Queen Victoria Market, where local artisans showcase their wares, from handcrafted jewellery to intricately woven textiles.

4. ESCAPE TO NATURE IN THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Step into a tranquil oasis amidst the hustle and bustle of the city at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Spanning over 38 hectares of lush greenery, this verdant sanctuary offers a peaceful retreat for weary souls. Wander along winding pathways shaded by towering trees, where colourful blooms and fragrant blossoms paint a picture of natural

beauty. Relax beside serene lakes and ornamental ponds, or find solace beneath the graceful arches of the historic Melbourne Observatory. Whether you're seeking a quiet moment of reflection or a stroll through nature's embrace, the Royal Botanic Gardens is a haven of serenity in the heart of Melbourne.

5. DISCOVER MELBOURNE'S COFFEE CULTURE

Embark on a sensory journey through Melbourne's thriving coffee culture, where every cup tells a story of passion, craftsmanship, and tradition. From cosy cafés tucked away in hidden laneways to sleek espresso bars lining the city streets, Melbourne is a mecca for coffee aficionados seeking the perfect brew. Savour the rich, velvety textures of a perfectly poured flat white, or indulge in the bold, aromatic flavours of a meticulously crafted cold brew. With

its vibrant coffee scene and passionate baristas, Melbourne invites you to sip, savour, and experience the essence of authentic coffee culture.

In Melbourne, every street corner, every laneway, and every hidden gem holds the promise of adventure and discovery. From the vibrant street art adorning its laneways to the tantalizing aromas wafting from its bustling markets, this dynamic city captivates the senses and nourishes the soul. Whether exploring its eclectic neighbourhoods, savouring its culinary delights, or immersing yourself in its rich cultural tapestry, Melbourne promises an unforgettable journey of exploration and delight. 📍

by **bernie hellberg jr**
/ photography by **unsplash.com**

A ROMAN REVERIE

Embracing Springtime Splendour in the Eternal City

In the heart of Italy, where history whispers through cobblestone alleys and the scent of blossoms dances in the air, lies the Eternal City – Rome. As the sun casts its gentle embrace upon ancient ruins and Renaissance palaces, springtime unveils Rome in all its ethereal splendour, beckoning travellers on a journey of enchantment and discovery.

In the embrace of spring, Rome awakens from its slumber with a flourish of colour and vitality. As the warmth of the season kisses the city awake, bougainvillea cascades from terracotta balconies, and vibrant markets burst with the season's bounty. Wander through the labyrinthine streets of Trastevere, where the scent of jasmine lingers in the air, and every corner unveils a new treasure – a hidden piazza adorned with blossoming trees, a quaint trattoria echoing with laughter, or a sun-dappled courtyard where time seems to stand still.

With each step, the city reveals its secrets, inviting visitors to lose themselves in its labyrinth of history and charm. The Tiber River flows languidly, a ribbon of silver winding its way through the heart of Rome, while ancient bridges beckon with promises of adventure and discovery. Across the city, the sound of church bells mingles with the laughter of children playing in sun-drenched





squares, creating a symphony of sights and sounds that's uniquely Roman.

A SYMPHONY OF SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Step into the heart of ancient Rome and be transported back in time amidst the grandeur of the Colosseum, where echoes of gladiator battles still reverberate through the ages. Lose

yourself in the labyrinthine ruins of the Roman Forum, where each stone tells a story of emperors and triumphs, and the whispers of history linger in the air like a haunting melody.

Ascend the Spanish Steps in the soft glow of spring twilight, where the scent of roses mingles with the strains of a street musician's serenade. At the pinnacle, the iconic Trinità dei Monti

beckons, offering a panoramic vista of Rome's rooftops bathed in golden light, a sight that has inspired poets and dreamers for centuries.

A TAPESTRY OF TREASURES

In the heart of Vatican City, the majesty of St. Peter's Basilica rises like a beacon of faith, its marble façade illuminated by the morning sun. Within



St. Peter's Basilica

its hallowed halls, Michelangelo's *Pieta* stands as a testament to divine beauty, while the awe-inspiring dome of the Sistine Chapel transports visitors to the realm of celestial artistry.

Meander through the Vatican Museums, where masterpieces by Raphael, Caravaggio, and Leonardo da Vinci adorn every wall, each brush stroke a testament to the enduring

legacy of human creativity. As sunlight filters through stained glass windows and echoes of Gregorian chants fill the air, one cannot help but be moved by the profound awe and reverence permeating this sacred space.

INDULGING IN LA DOLCE VITA

As the day gently fades into night, Rome comes alive with the vibrant

energy of the *passeggiata* – a stroll through the city's bustling streets and lively piazzas. Join locals and visitors alike in savouring the simple pleasures of Italian life – a scoop of creamy gelato enjoyed on the steps of the Pantheon, a sip of velvety wine at a cosy enoteca, or a plate of pasta alla carbonara savoured al fresco beneath the stars.

As the moon casts its silvery glow upon the Tiber River and the sounds of laughter drift through the night, one cannot help but be captivated by the timeless allure of Rome – a city that beckons travellers to lose themselves in its embrace, to wander its storied streets and bask in the beauty of its springtime splendour.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

While Rome's iconic landmarks and bustling piazzas captivate the imagination, the city also harbours hidden gems waiting to be discovered by intrepid travellers. Venture off the

Spanish Steps Covered in Azaleas



Fontana di Galleria Borghese

beaten path and uncover the secrets of Rome's lesser-known neighbourhoods, where ancient ruins mingle with vibrant street art and traditional trattorias serve up authentic Roman cuisine.

In the charming district of Monti, cobblestone streets wind their way past boutiques, cafés, and art galleries, offering a glimpse into Rome's bohemian soul. Stop by the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, one of the city's oldest churches, and marvel at its opulent interior adorned with glittering mosaics.

To sample Roman street life, head to the Testaccio neighbourhood, where the bustling Testaccio Market offers a sensory feast of fresh produce, artisanal cheeses, and fragrant spices. Afterwards, wander through the nearby Monti dei Cocci, an ancient artificial hill made entirely of broken pottery fragments, and imagine the lives of the Romans who once frequented this storied area.

REVIVING ROMAN TRADITIONS

Springtime in Rome is marked by a calendar of lively festivals and celebrations, each offering a glimpse into the city's rich cultural heritage. Join the locals in celebrating Festa della Primavera, a joyous spring festival held in the charming neighbourhood of Trastevere. Here, the streets come alive with music, dance, and colourful processions as revellers gather to welcome the season's arrival.

For a taste of Rome's culinary traditions, don't miss the annual Sagra del Carciofo Romanesco, a festival dedicated to the artichoke, one of the city's most beloved ingredients. Sample a variety of artichoke dishes prepared according to age-old recipes, and discover why this humble vegetable holds a special place in the hearts of Romans.

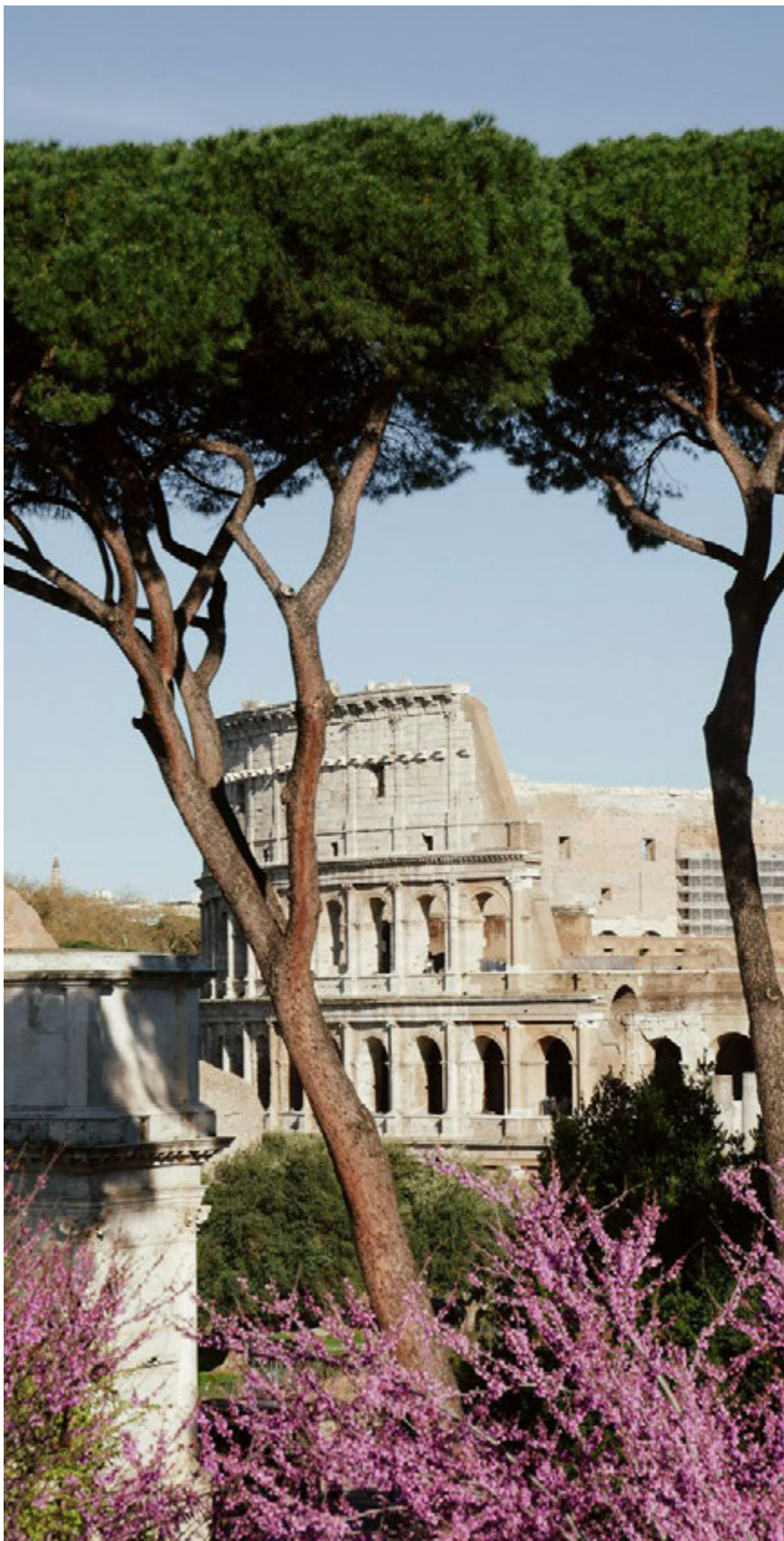
IMMERSE YOURSELF IN ROMAN CULTURE

Rome's rich artistic heritage is on full display in its myriad museums, galleries, and cultural institutions. Explore the Galleria Borghese, home to a stunning collection of Renaissance and Baroque masterpieces, including works by Caravaggio, Bernini, and Raphael. Wander through the halls of the Palazzo Barberini, a magnificent palace-turned-museum that showcases a diverse array of paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts.

For a glimpse into Rome's ancient past, visit the Museo Nazionale Romano, a network of museums dedicated to preserving and celebrating the city's archaeological treasures. Marvel at intricate mosaics, exquisite sculptures, and priceless artefacts that offer insights into the daily lives of ancient Romans.

Rome's Monti Neighbourhood





SAVOURING ROMAN CUISINE

No visit to Rome would be complete without indulging in its legendary cuisine, a celebration of fresh ingredients, bold flavours, and time-honoured traditions. Begin your culinary journey with a classic Roman breakfast of cappuccino and cornetto, enjoyed at a local café as you watch the city come to life.

For lunch, head to a traditional trattoria and sample Roman classics like cacio e pepe, a simple yet sublime pasta dish made with pecorino cheese and black pepper, or supplì, golden-fried rice balls filled with mozzarella and tomato sauce. Wash it all down with a glass of crisp Frascati wine, produced in the nearby hills of Lazio.

In the evening, treat yourself to a leisurely dinner at a Michelin-starred restaurant, where innovative chefs put a modern twist on traditional Roman fare. Indulge in dishes like tonnarelli alla gricia, a hearty pasta dish made with cured pork cheek and pecorino cheese, or saltimbocca alla Romana, tender veal cutlets topped with prosciutto and sage.

As the sun sets on another magical day in Rome, one thing becomes abundantly clear – the Eternal City is more than just a destination; it's a journey of the soul. From the grandeur of its ancient monuments to the charm of its cobblestone streets, Rome captivates and inspires at every turn, inviting travellers to immerse themselves in its rich tapestry of history, culture, and beauty.

Whether you're exploring its iconic landmarks or wandering off the beaten path, Rome never fails to enchant with its timeless allure and boundless charm. As you bid farewell to this ancient city, carry with you the memories of its sun-drenched piazzas, fragrant gardens, and whispered secrets, knowing that you've experienced the true essence of la dolce vita – the sweet life – in the Eternal City. ⑩

by **bernie hellberg jr**
/photography by **unsplash.com**

PARADISE REVISITED

Chronicling A Return to Seychelles

The tropical island group in the middle of the Indian Ocean may have a diverse and convoluted history but despite geo-political upheaval and ongoing human intervention, the unique ecosystem of Seychelles and its breathtaking natural beauty makes it the place closest to paradise on earth, writes Ferdi de Vos.

Walking on the white sand of the pristine Grand Beach of La Digue while experiencing the peacefulness of the picturesque surrounds and breathing in the humid sea air, it was difficult to believe that over centuries past this piece of paradise – the stuff of dreams – was the centre of great social upheaval and political turmoil.

Maybe this type of human intervention is to be expected, as everyone wants a slice of heaven but luckily the machinations of man have had minimal influence on the cycle of natural evolution







– presenting visitors and residents with a small enclave of extraordinary beauty on an overcrowded planet.

The history of Seychelles is as diverse, convoluted and complicated as its unique collection of plants and animals. Traders from the Persian Gulf knew about the islands for centuries, but the first recorded landing on the uninhabited island group was in 1609 by an expedition of the British East India Company.

The archipelago, known as Mahé, was then explored, and finally annexed by the French in 1756 and named Isle de Séchelles in honour of Viscount Jean Moreau de Séchelles, Minister of Finance during the reign of Louis XV. Later it became the name of the entire archipelago (anglicised to Seychelles), while Mahé became the name used for the main island.

War between France and Britain led to the surrender of the archipelago to the British in 1810, and it was ceded to the British by the Treaty of Paris two centuries ago, in 1814. Initially cotton and grains were cultivated on the islands but in the 1830s with the abolition of slavery this switched to crops such as coconut, vanilla, and cinnamon.

In 1903, Seychelles became a separate British crown colony (the reason why the Seychellois drive on the left side of the

road...) and an elected legislative council was introduced in 1948. Then, sixty years ago, the United States built a satellite tracking station on Mahé, and this brought regular air travel to Seychelles... and opened it up for tourism.

The archipelago was granted self-government in 1975 and gained independence in 1976, within the British Commonwealth. A period of political instability followed with coup d'états galore before the situation stabilised in the late 'nineties – also the first time I visited the islands.

MODERN SEYCHELLES

Revisiting Seychelles as part of a media group from the television programme *The Insider SA* on SABC3 (www.theinsidersa.co.za) the first thing that struck me after we disembarked the Air Seychelles aircraft in Mahé (besides the hot and humid conditions), was the amount of construction and building sites in the capital city Victoria, and the amount of vehicles – new and old – on the narrow island roads.

This was in stark contrast to conditions three decades ago when we explored Mahé in drop-top BMWs and encountered very little traffic. Also noticeably different was expansion of the city now boasting a new



international conference centre, a new port, and the world-renowned Eden Island residential development.

BOUTIQUE LIVING

Our abode for the duration of our short visit, courtesy of Tourism Seychelles and Air Seychelles, was the new Laïla Hotel, a Tribute Portfolio Resort – a boutique type abode with every possible amenity on the Anse Royal (Royal Beach) of Mahé.

A huge plus to the hotel is the beach bar where you can put your feet in the soft sand while sipping on a cocktail, or go for a leisure swim in the calm, lukewarm sea, or appreciate the surrounds from a kayak or paddle board, or even go snorkelling, if so inclined.

The full itinerary included a drive up to the highest point of the island (close to where the American satellite tracking station once was situated) with a stunning view over Victoria and the

smaller islands close to Mahé, including Sainte Anna, Moyenne, Ile Rondo, Ile Longue, and Ile Aux Cerf.

Our driver, Mo, was very professional and this added to the experience, as he safely transported us from one destination to the next on the island. This included the recently unveiled (2021) Liberated Slave Monument at the Venn's Town Mission Ruins, better known as Mission Lodge at Sans Souci, and a visit to the fresh produce market in town – now much smaller than how I remembered it from before.

We also visited the Jardin du Roi (The Spice Garden) located high up in the mountain – home to a large variety of tropical plants and flowers, some indigenous to the Seychelles, bursting with colour, beauty, and fragrance. It also has rows of vanilla vines, citronnelle, cinnamon (Seychelles' most exported crop) and other spices – in keeping with the original French tradition of the 18th century spice trade.





A DISTILLED HIGHLIGHT

Perhaps the highlight of our Mahé excursion (and also something that did not exist when I first visited here) was a visit to Takamaka Rum Distillery in La Plaine, St. Andre. Here we were met by bubbly and vivacious South African born Retha d'Offray who took us on a highly informative and interesting tour of the distillery.

Inspired by the original Creole speciality, Rum Arrangé, the brothers Bernard and Richard d'Offray (both originally from South Africa) started the Trois Frères Distillery in 2002, and soon after they distilled and delivered their first order of Takamaka dark rum. Nowadays, Takamaka Rum is available around the world (but interestingly, not in South Africa).

We also took the catamaran ferry (an experience in own right) to Praslin Island for a short tour of the Cote d'Or and Anse Lazio area, and while I would have dearly liked to again visit the tropical forest including the Coco de Mer trees again, there was no time for this.

Then it was onwards to La Digue via small boat for a quick trip from La Passe to the charming and rustic L'Union Estates with its traditional

copra mill and kiln, Plantation House, and the indigenous giant tortoises, as well as the world renowned, legendary beach of Anse Source d'Argent.

Personally, I would have liked to spend much more time on Praslin and La Digue, as the pristine landscape, the near-Jurassic Park feel (the big fruit bats reminds one of prehistoric birds) and rustic, traditional abodes truly appealed to me.

However, we had to return to Mahé for a final day of exploring the surrounding islands while enjoying a traditional fish braai and some exemplary snorkelling admiring the multitude of multi-coloured tropical fish species frolicking in the aquamarine water, as well as visiting Moyenne ("middle") island, renowned for its purchase by newspaper editor Brendon Grimshaw in the 1960s.

Grimshaw (and a creep of giant tortoises) was the only inhabitants of the island until his death in 2012. For me, it was quite nostalgic to again retrace the walking route around the island with its supposedly pirate graves from the 18th and 19th centuries, its small chapel, beautiful coves, and pristine plant life, as I was fortunate enough to meet Grimshaw during my previous visit to the island.

For me, it was quite a sentimental return to paradise, something I have wanted to do for a long time, and it was definitely worth the wait. Seychelles remains a bucket list item for every avid traveller but beware, it is not a cheap destination (more so when paying in Rand) so make sure you have a big enough budget when you decide to go. But go you must!

Our thanks to Air Seychelles, Tourism Seychelles, and The Insider SA for making this trip possible. You can follow my companions Jonathan Boynton-Lee and Gabriella Benedicte Roumega's Seychelle antics with an 89-year-old tortoise on facebook.com/TheInsiderSA. 🐢

Immerse Yourself...



Experience...

*the best classical &
contemporary cuisine,
rare wine vintages,
breathtaking views,
unsurpassed service,
the finest cultivars...*



*A combination so
refreshingly satisfying,
it should be savoured,
every day...*

Baia Seafood Restaurant is upstairs at the Victoria Wharf • V&A Waterfront • Cape Town

Tel: 021 421-0935/6/7 • Fax: 021 421-0933 • baiarestaurant@wof.co.za

Fully licensed. Open for lunch and dinner daily as well as light terrace lunches.

baiarestaurant.co.za • [photographer: brunorosa.co.za](http://photographer:brunorosa.co.za)



BAIA
SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

RECONNECT WITH NATURE

Plains Camp at Samara Karoo Reserve

Samara Karoo Reserve near Graaff-Reinet in the Eastern Cape's Great Karoo region is one of South Africa's most diverse safari destinations – a landscape of space, stars and silence brought back to life by a pioneering rewilding project. Now home to the Big Five, 60 mammal species and 225 bird species, Samara provides a uniquely soulful safari for discerning visitors.

One of Samara's latest launches in the ecotourism space, is the explorer-style Plains Camp that evokes the era of mobile safaris with a focus on grounding experiences in nature for up to eight guests.

Located in the southern section of the reserve on the Plains of Camdeboo and nestled against a low hill with sweeping mountain views, the camp benefits from undisturbed privacy and no light pollution. Designed with sustainability in mind, the camp comprises a mess tent, swimming pool area and four guest tents, with the spectacular landscape as a backdrop.

The surrounding area teems with wildlife. Large resident herds of zebra, black wildebeest, springbok, gemsbok, and red hartebeest meander the plains, alongside giraffe, blue crane, and smaller creatures like bat-eared foxes. Nearby thickets and waterholes provide opportunities for tracking elephants, white

rhinoceros, and black rhinoceros. Cheetah and lion are also often found in the area.

Guided bush walks depart every morning, focusing on the little things often unseen from the safari vehicle. Tracks, flowering bushes, ostrich eggs and beetles are identified by the knowledgeable guide and tracker team, bringing to life the semi-arid landscape. Afternoon game drives with wildlife tracking, sundowners and stargazing complete the experience.

Back at camp, guests have access to home comforts including fully-catered meals cooked over the fire, a well-stocked bar, a deliciously refreshing plunge pool and comfortable areas in which to relax – all furnished in a Karoo style by local artisans. Each of the four guest tents comprises a spacious bedroom area leading to a bathroom with indoor loo and outdoor "bucket" shower with hot water provided on request. Tents are warmed in winter by a small fireplace and cooled with a fan in summer.





As a purpose-driven business committed to sustainability across its operations, Samara's focus with Plains Camp was to create an ecologically sensitive camp that rests lightly on the Earth and embodies a uniquely Karoo experience. To this end, innovative technologies to manage environmental resources and minimise carbon emissions have been deployed, and the majority of furnishings have been sourced from within the Eastern Cape Karoo.

With no Wi-Fi or electricity, Samara's Plains Camp is a space to switch off from modern life and reconnect with nature in elegant simplicity.

ABOUT SAMARA KAROO RESERVE


Award-winning Samara Karoo Reserve is a conservation journey on 67,000 acres of born-again wilderness in the heart-stoppingly beautiful Great Karoo. Located 270km from Gqeberha

(Port Elizabeth) and 53km from Graaff-Reinet in the Eastern Cape, Samara is easily accessible by road or by air yet retains a remote wilderness feel.

Three intimate lodges with a true sense of place welcome guests for slow, meaningful, and exceptional safari encounters. Karoo Lodge, a lovingly renovated farmstead overlooking an amphitheatre of mountains, sleeps 24 guests. The Manor, an elegantly appointed villa in a Karoo contemporary style, sleeps eight. Plains Camp is an off-grid tented experience focusing on walking safaris for up to eight guests.

Activities on offer include game drives, bush walks, wilderness picnics, conservation activities, a star bed, fly camping, mountain biking and photographic safaris. Children of all ages are welcomed with a dedicated children's programme.

A member of The Long Run, Samara strives to achieve sustainability across the 4Cs: Conservation, Community, Culture and Commerce. Staying at Samara acts as a direct contribution to this vision.

For more information on Samara Karoo Reserve, or to make a reservation, email reservations@samara.co.za or visit www.samara.co.za. 

*by **samara karoo reserve**
photography by **malke mcneill***



Standard Bank



XPATWEB

Work Permit & Expatriate Solutions

BESPOKE IMMIGRATION & EXPATRIATE SERVICES

FOR CORPORATES & PROFESSIONALS



WORK PERMIT SOLUTIONS IN COLLABORATION WITH **STANDARD BANK**

Require assistance? Email us on standardbank@xpatweb.com

THE BUSINESS OF TRANQUILLITY

Creative Conferencing at Walkersons Hotel & Spa

Nestled in the rolling hills of Mpumalanga, just beyond the picturesque hamlet of Dullstroom you'll find a place of mist, magical views, and soul-soothing tranquillity.

Built in 1993, in a style inspired by a Scottish country manor, the five-star Walkersons Hotel & Spa, well known for its exceptional fine-country cuisine, personalised service and excellent facilities, has created a classic, refined ambience where guests feel truly welcome. Its luxury accommodation comprises luxury lakeside suites, a honeymoon suite, the perfect-for-families Manor Suite, and two self-catering cottages. It also boasts two restaurants, the Colonel Potter bar, a spa, and conference facilities.

MORE THAN A TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

Definitely not only a retreat for discerning travellers, Walkersons Hotel & Spa is also a desirable conference venue for those who desire superb accommodation and spectacular views within an exclusive environment.

Conveniently located only 2.75 hours from OR Tambo International Airport, its seeming remote location in the tranquil country setting is what attracts the many companies looking for a space that transforms effortlessly into a place of strategy for creative conferences.

"We have learnt that there are 'types of spaces' that encourage creativity and innovation in business. Space for inspiration, space to reflect or think, space to share and collaborate, and

space to connect, explore and enjoy... and here at Walkersons, we have all that and more", says Band.

It's the tranquillity of the surroundings that allows delegates to recharge and refresh, and this ultimately lift spirits and connects people. While it may seem that Walkersons is somewhat remote, their conference centre is perfect for any business meetings.

The spacious Walker Room, which seats up to 80 delegates, dependent on seating arrangements and configurations, comes equipped with necessary stationery, a data projector and Wi-Fi, and fully catered refreshment stations.

Walkersons conference packages include Basic and Deluxe packages for half day or full day, while overnight conferences are also offered (rates on enquiry). What's more, the Walkersons team can offer alternative options or bespoke packages according to your specific needs.

Walkersons' other facilities include two restaurants - The Flying Scotsman where dining is an indulgent affair, and The Terrace where dining is a more casual experience. Executive chef, Guy Nahman, and his team, caringly craft meals and cater for all dietary preferences. There's the Colonel Potter Bar for sundowners and pre- or post-dinner drinks and the spa for that always needed indulgent spoil. And, if you're in the mood for watching sport, there's the newly kitted-

out entertainment library.

TAKE AN OUTDOOR BREAK

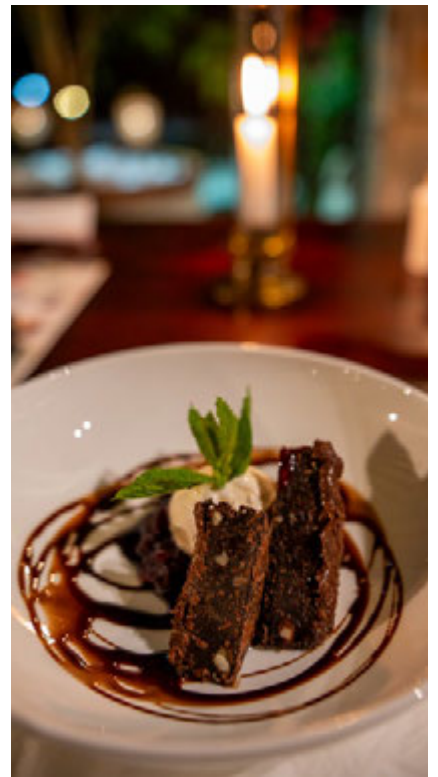
With a wealth of outdoor delights on offer, delegates can enjoy a great variety of fun downtime activities, from horseback riding where you can take in the views on horseback, to fly fishing in Walkersons' lakes that are fully stocked with rainbow trout.

For those who prefer to go the more energetic route, there are mountain bikes and more strenuous hiking trails over the hills where the views are amazing, and where you can get close to the estate's wildlife - there's an abundance of birds and game. Off-site you can also pop into Dullstroom for whisky tastings or visit the Birds of Prey Centre. For golfers there's the Highland Gate Golf and Trout Estate with its magnificent Ernie Els signature golf course (rated as one of the best in South Africa), which is a mere 30 kms away.

Walkersons Hotel & Spa, a haven of natural beauty and arguably one of the best country venues in South Africa, is perfect for your business conference.

For more information, visit www.walkersons.co.za, call reservations on +27 61 272 6185 or +27 13 253 7000, or email reservations@walkersons.co.za. Find them on Facebook or Instagram at Walkersons Hotel & Spa. 

by **di sparks** / photography by **walkersons hotel & spa**



Explore Together

JOIN THE CLUB THAT PUTS YOU
IN TOTAL CONTROL OF YOUR DESTINY.

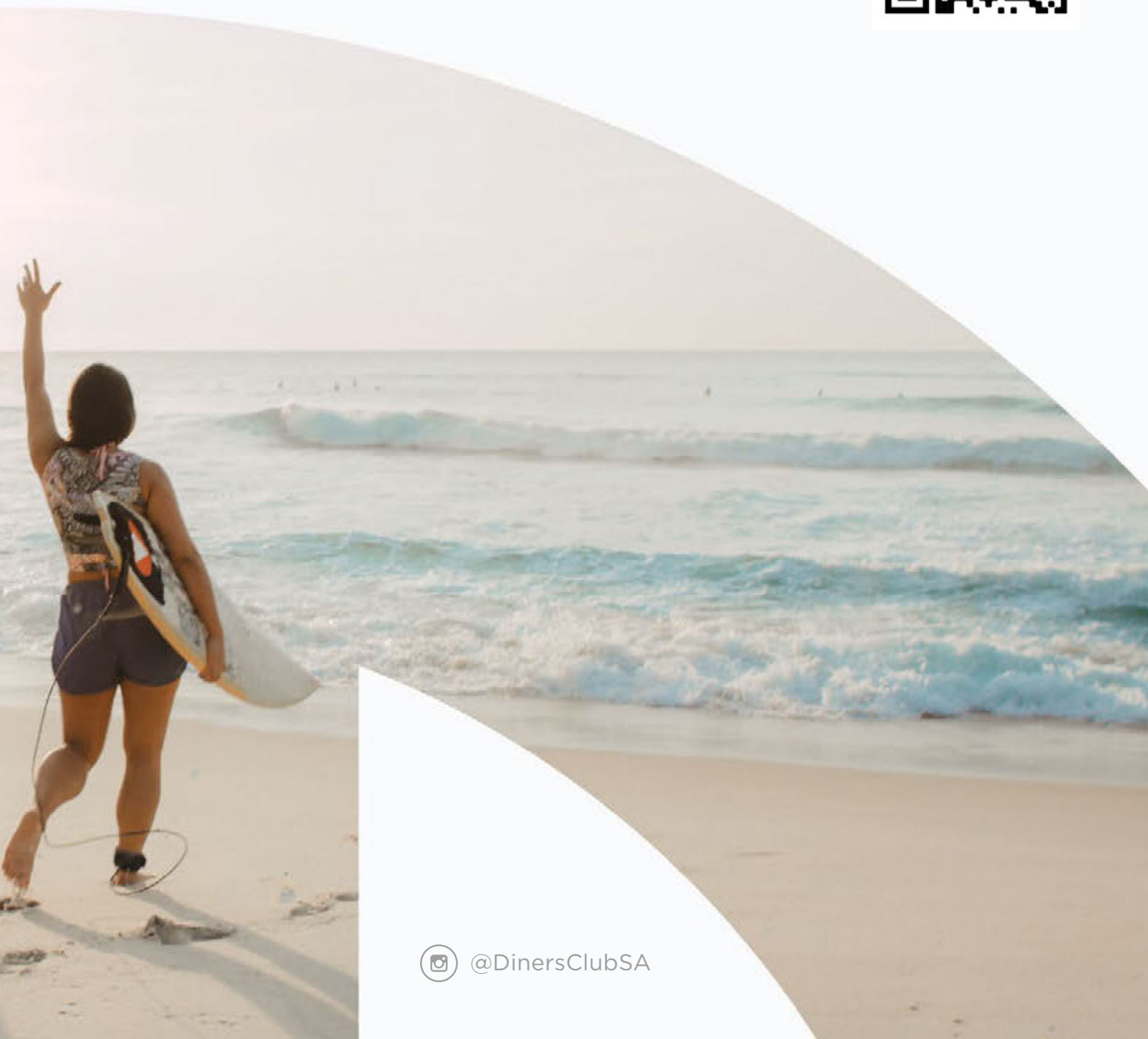


DINERSCLUB.CO.ZA

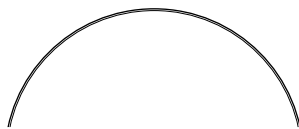


Press play on your biggest adventure yet.
The world is yours to explore with the
Diners Club Beyond Card.

Apply today.



@DinersClubSA



LIFESTYLE

BESPOKE BENTLEY LUXURY

Bentley Motors and Contest Yachts have collaborated to create a customised Bentley yacht interior for the Contest 67CS, blending craft, excellence, and quiet luxury. The Bentley design team, known for Continental GT and Bentayga interiors, utilised Bentley car materials and techniques to craft a fully matched Bentley auto yacht interior. The collaboration pushed creative boundaries, incorporating

3D printing and iconic diamond quilted hides. Bentley Home furnishings and unique designs, including a bar and vanity unit, further enhance the yacht's opulence. Contest CEO Arjen Conijn expressed excitement about this elevated cooperation, while Bentley praised the precision and innovation achieved in yacht interiors. www.bentleymedia.com



THE GOLD STANDARD

Gold Bar Whiskey offers an unparalleled sensory experience that embodies luxury and sophistication. Each uniquely numbered bottle is accompanied by a removable solid brass "Lady of Fortune" coin, which not only adds an element of exclusivity but also symbolises good luck and prosperity. Crafted at America's oldest private mint, these individually minted coins contribute to the exceptional craftsmanship of this award-winning American whiskey handcrafted in the San Francisco Bay. The whiskey's unique finishing process, using former wine barrels from Napa Valley, results in a rich and refined blend that has garnered global acclaim. Carefully selected grains and pristine water sources culminate in a smooth and refined spirit. The meticulous distillation process ensures that each sip of Gold Bar Whiskey is rich in flavour and texture, delivering a truly exceptional drinking experience. Available from major retailers at an RRP of R1,599.

GIVE HER STRENGTH

Adidas by Stella McCartney recently unveiled its hero drop for Spring / Summer 2024. Entering the strength space for the very first time, the collection is designed to celebrate the beauty of strong women embracing their physical power, incorporating everyday sports performance pieces to support the next-gen community through every stretch, stride, and stance. Exploring fresh dimensions of workout wear, the modular apparel capsule pays homage to 1980s workout wear through a fusion of bronze and mauve metallics, with a contemporary twist of structured silhouettes and cut-outs. Designed for next-generation athletes to express their individuality through buildable, layered looks, the collection blends signature adidas technologies such as HEAT.RDY to keep athletes cool as they move, while key pieces in the collection have been consciously crafted with up to 79% recycled polyester and 100% organic cotton, as part of adidas' ambition to help end plastic waste.





The Cape Gallery, 60 Church Street, Cape Town

seeks to expose fine art that is rooted in the South African tradition, work which carries the unique cultural stamp of our continent. Rotating exhibitions add to the diverse and often eclectic mix of work on show.

featured artist: Peter Gray



60 Church Street Cape Town, open Mon - Fri: 9h30 - 16h00, Sat: 10h00 - 14h00
0214235309. web@capegallery.co.za, www.capegallery.co.za

The Cape Gallery cc
Reg. No. 1998036895/23

UNCORKING THE TRENDS

Top Wine Trends for 2024 by Mike Manning

2024 looks set to be one of the most exciting years in wine, with environmental, social, and technological changes catalysing big shifts across the local vino landscape.

Restaurateur Matt Manning, whose email signature proudly declares “wine drinker”, is the owner of Culture Wine Bar and Culture at TimeOut Market, Cape Town, and is the Chef Patron at Grub & Vine, while also being credited with having a talent for combining the country’s fantastic produce with the world’s finest wines.

He maintains that one of the biggest shifts we can expect to see this year is that wine consumers are increasingly prioritising both quality and value.

“Ostentatious displays of wealth and prestige are becoming scorned – no doubt driven by a growing sense of community and kinship with those who are suffering the world over, says Manning.

“As a result, there’s increased demand for quality wines by smaller producers – but at great value. In terms of bubbly, for example, consumers are learning what constitutes real quality, and are moving away from commercial producers such as Moët, favouring grower Champagnes and South Africa’s own fantastic MCCs.

“We’re also returning to the values of traditional winemaking – with an emphasis on terroir – while consumers look for sustainability and social responsibility. They want to know what the producer of their chosen bottle stands for,” says Manning.

GREEN LIGHT ON LIGHT RED

Traditionally, red wine was seen as the beverage of choice for cooler weather (and for heavier foods), while white wine was the go-to for summer. That archaic notion is now firmly in the past, says Manning, as refreshing, light red styles become more prevalent.

“Internationally, the popularity of varietals like Gamay Noir and Grenache has grown, thanks to the rise of territories such as Beaujolais and the Rhone Valley in France, while Red Burgundy (Pinot Noir) remains perpetually in demand.

“Locally, we’ve seen a simultaneous rise in the demand for lighter red styles such as Cinsault and South Africa’s own Pinotage, a crossing of Cinsault and Pinot Noir grapes. These styles are best served chilled and are really refreshing in the warmer months. They’re convivial





and incredibly versatile in terms of food pairing, working well with a wide variety of dishes – from vegetarian to fish, chicken and even lamb.”

Manning adds that Radford Dale Imports also recently hosted a Beaujolais tasting at Culture Wine Bar, which was the bar’s best-attended tasting to date. Two of Beaujolais’ top winemakers flew-in to present the tasting, reflecting the growing interest of South Africa as a fine wine destination.

“The ultimate red grape for serving chilled is Gamay, which is passionately championed in South Africa by our friends at Radford Dale, who were also the first to plant Gamay in the Cape for over two decades.

“It’s definitely light reds’ time to shine,” he adds.

THE ERA OF ANYTHING GOES

Today’s South African winemaker

has more opportunity to travel, and thus greater exposure to different winemaking techniques around the world. “They’re bolder, braver, and open to experimenting with different styles and varietals. Thanks to this ‘new generation’ winemaker, we’re seeing some really interesting grape crossbreeds and non-traditional matches, such as Chardonnay grapes added to Beaujolais (traditionally purely Gamay Noir).”

THE RISE OF THE GLOBAL WINE DRINKER

Winemakers are not the only ones benefitting from this growing global exposure – wine drinkers are too. Consumers are travelling to some of the world’s best winemaking regions (luxury travel company Virtuoso recently found that there was a 70% increase in people booking food and wine-focused trips) and want to experience back home the

same wines they enjoyed on holiday.

“As a result, expect to see a greater international wines focus on local wine lists, with far more choice across the board.”

However, Manning maintains that it’s not a matter of eschewing local wines in favour of international, saying that South Africans are loyal to local producers – “we know how good we have it here! It’s not either-or; it’s a case of giving South Africans more access and choice, so that they can put one of South Africa’s best wines on a table alongside a comparable French vintage, providing them with the opportunity to see just how well SA wines stack up against the world’s best. 🍷”

by **matt manning**
/ photography by **unsplash.com**

Grow together

JUST BRING YOUR IDEAS & YOUR
DINERS CLUB CARD.



Exploring sideways is all about getting off the beaten track and experiencing the South African Winelands like never before. Enjoy unforgettable moments with Diners Club.

Apply today.



SPACE FOR LIVING

10 Simple Tips to Owning Your Compact Living Space

“Our living spaces, they’re not just a collection of square metres. They’re a feeling, a self-expression of identity from a person’s quirks and culture to their signature style. And there’s nothing small about the choices we make in how we organise the place we call home – no matter the size of the apartment, writes Jacques van Embden, CEO of Blok.

So, just how compact are today’s spaces? The typical Micro or Studio apartment is a single room – no larger than between 20 to 40 square metres – that combines a bedroom and dining room with a small kitchenette and bathroom. Blok developments in Sea Point also offer added amenities such as a laundry, a communal gym, co-working spaces, meeting rooms and a deli – serving delicious delights to digital nomads and locals alike.

Here are ten ways you can make your own compact living space original, just like you.

1. MAKE AN ENTRANCE

You don’t need a formal entrance hall to make a statement for anyone entering your Micro or Studio apartment. All you need is a statement accessory like art, a plant, or even a hat and coat stand. It’s that simple.

2. DOUBLE DUTY

Dual functioning furniture is a Blok favourite. Furniture that folds out, folds up, and doubles as shelving, seating or storage is perfect for rooms with limited floor space. You’ll be surprised at how many combinations you can create with the right pieces of multi-purpose furniture.

3. FLOOR SPACE

Talking of floor space, open as much of it as you can, even (and this may sound odd) by choosing furniture with legs. Some experts advise choosing a couch with tapered legs while others opt for slim to make ceiling height work hard, and hidden storage pieces with a compact footprint are a win. Another solid piece of advice is to let your furniture ‘float’ by not pushing all of it right against the walls.

4. COLOUR CO-ORDINATE

Catch the right colour co-ords by

keeping colours cohesive from wall colour to accessories and furniture. Choose just two to three colours for your home palette. Colour plays a big part in the energy of a room so pick the ambience you want to come home to after a busy day – and bring that to life.

5. GO ‘GALLERY’

Be bold by making one feature wall a “gallery wall”. This could be just one large piece of art or a collection of images that make up a larger collaged picture. Find the perfect piece for your ‘Gallery Wall’ at Art on the Blok, a free-to-visit pop-up gallery in the heart of Sea Point, where creativity meets connection through the powerful medium of art and photography. A bridge that brings people closer, sparks conversations, and fosters a sense of belonging. Located at 146 Main Road, Sea Point, open Friday to Sunday from 9am to 4pm until the end of March 2024.



6. SCREEN IT

TVs can swallow up space in even the biggest room. There's a two-fold solution for compact rooms here. Go for a wall-mounted TV and conceal it with a fold-across artwork screen so that it isn't an eyesore black hole in the wall.

7. REFLECTIVE GENIUS

Mirrors really do work to open up a closed space. But before you go out and buy a room full of reflection, decide on one or two clever walls and angles from which a mirror will do its best work in adding the illusion of more living room.

8. TRIM DOWN

In a home of any size, clutter and over collection of things just makes for a mess. Keep spaces calm and centred and let your favourite essentials in your living space breathe.

The best home making suggestion is always "a place for everything and everything in its place."

8. TIDY UP

Seriously, tidy surfaces and floors. This cannot be overemphasised as it creates organised and collected home spaces.

Avoid the temptation to keep collecting new goods. Instead, for every new candle you add to the coffee table, take one item away.

10. LIGHT FIX

Then there's light, which is largely what this year-end season asks that we share with others. In our compact living spaces, light is an all-important provider of good energy. One practical piece of advice here is to make sure you have at least three working lights in a room and if your Micro or Studio apartment has good window space, consider adding to this flow of natural light with blinds, shutters, or light voile curtains to ensure you literally let the light in.

Remember, it's your living space. It's only you who calls it home – make it your very own space of joy. ☺

For more information, please email sales@blok.co.za, call +27 66 186 1658, visit www.blok.co.za, or scan the QR code below.



ROMARIA AND THE CITY

A Designer's Guide to Porto

Discover the enchanting allure of Porto, Portugal with local luxury knitwear duo Romaria as they weave their South African roots into the fabric of European design.



When Romaria knitwear was established in Joburg in 2019 by Zydia Botes and her partner Carla Pinto as a collaborative venture, they took inspiration for the name from Carla's Portuguese roots, translating to "pilgrimage" or moving forward together. They thought it fitting for a brand that believes in the art of "weaving" together a better-designed and more sustainable future.

Fast forward a couple of years, and after living abroad for almost 20 years, Carla and her family decided to move back home to Portugal in 2021. Since then, Romaria has started expanding into Europe, and their dream to create effortlessly cool knitwear pieces (that they would wear themselves) has evolved.

Their full circle moment happened when, after too much time apart, Zydia packed her bags for a trip to Portugal to reunite with Carla in her new hometown and explore all the city had to offer.

Together, they hit the cobbled streets and savoured the culinary delights, immersing themselves in the rich heritage of Porto, and discovering the extraordinary beauty of a city that resonates so profoundly with Romaria's commitment to beauty and timeless craftsmanship.

This guide is their way of sharing this exciting new chapter, inviting you to join their journey as they step into new places and try to find home wherever they go.

TRAVEL DIARY

Port, Pastéis De Nata & Patterned Tiles

The Douro River passes through the city into the ocean, dividing the city into two parts connected by several bridges. Carla lives on the western side of Foz, where they were based. Starting from the lighthouse where the river meets the ocean, experience one of the most scenic walks along the river to get your day started.

The first order of business is a stop at Nola Kitchen, located in the heart of the city centre, for an easy-



Porto, Portugal

going, organic breakfast. Explore historical monuments and buildings here, including the São Bento Train Station, with its magnificent blue and white patterned Azulejo tiles. The tiles inspired the design of their new collection of knits, like the Oversized Porto Wrap and Porto Cropped Cardi.

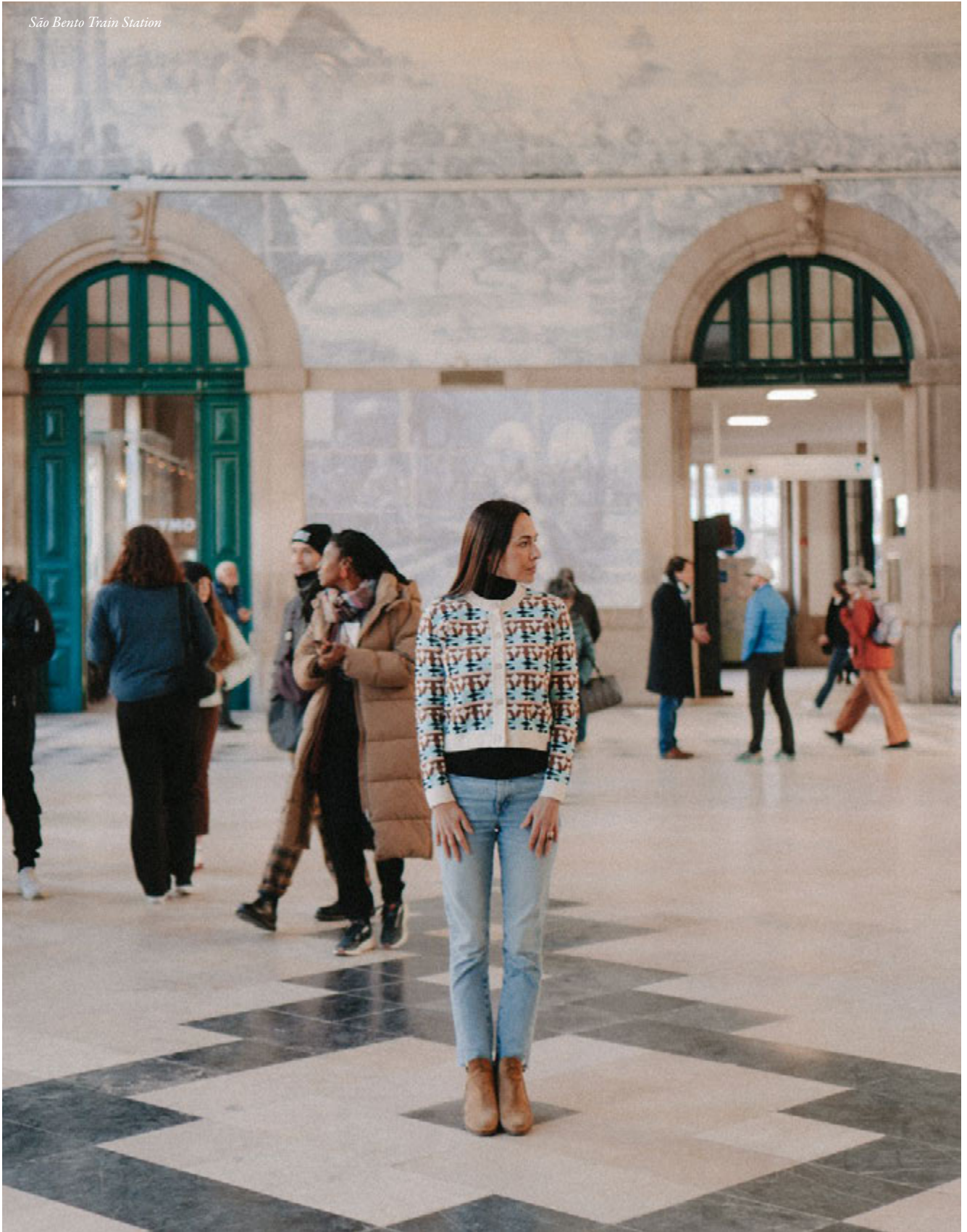
Stroll down the cobblestoned streets until you reach the shopping hotspot, Rua Das Flores, which boasts an assortment of “proudly made in Portugal” fashion and design shops. A

street also well-known for its strip of incredible restaurants.

While you’re there, we insist that you make a stop at Castro – it’s compulsory. A picturesque little atelier with only two things on its menu: Pastéis De Nata and coffee, that’s it. We promise there will be no regrets.

Pass through the area’s narrow streets to downtown, an area next to the river called Ribiera, to soak in the city’s nostalgic charm.

São Bento Train Station



São Bento Train Station



DESIGN YOUR DINING

Of course, no Porto trip is complete without a traditional Portuguese cod fish dish. You can savour this at a restaurant named Bacalhau, which translates to “codfish”. It’s their thing, and it is delicious.


Cross the Luís I Bridge over the river (hello vertigo!) to an area called Vila Nova de Gaia, the home of traditional Portuguese Port. Here, you will find an assortment of wineries representing the wine farms of the inland winelands, Douro.

If you have more time, we highly recommend visiting the wine farms in the Douro Valley. Boats travel back and forth from Vila Nova de Gaia, so it is really easy to get there.

Back at Vila Nova de Gaia, check out the WOW (World Of Wine) building, it is brand new and magnificent. End your gallivanting with a glass of Port at The Yeatman Hotel to enjoy eagle-eye views over the city.

If you have some time left, don’t forget to add the Serralves Foundation to your itinerary to get your art fix. It’s one of Porto’s great art museums, and is surrounded by beautiful gardens. Inspiration is guaranteed.

After this whirlwind trip, they returned to Johannesburg starry-eyed and inspired with two main lingering thoughts. There is power in specialising in only making one thing – but really, really well. And that there are always patterns for those who want to see them.

Follow their journey as they expand into Europe and across Africa at @romaria_knitwear (Instagram), or visit www.romaria.shop. 



Douro River

by **zydia botes**
/photography by **joana cordeiro ferreira**

PURE SENSUALITY

The New Mercedes-Benz GLC Coupé

As the sporty sibling of the GLC SUV, the 2024 Mercedes-Benz GLC Coupé completes the German automaker's best-selling vehicle series.

"A contemporary masterpiece with a dynamic design for a progressive lifestyle" – that's how Mercedes-Benz describes the latest edition of its top-selling GLC SUV range. Officially available to South African buyers from the first quarter of 2024, the GLC Coupé adds an aura of style to an already elegant range of premium compact SUVs.

At first glance, the GLC Coupé's striking proportions, dramatic surfaces and precisely moulded edges define an unmistakable look, complemented by a clearly laid-out, high-quality interior. Although purpose-built for the urban adventurer, in true GL-inspired form, the GLC Coupé also promises a surprising level of off-road ability to boot.

EDGY AND DESIGN ORIENTATED

The GLC Coupé combines sporty performance with high efficiency. All models are equipped with electric drive technology in the form of a mild hybrid system with 48-volt technology and an

integrated starter-generator for an extra boost and energy recuperation. And the new GLC Coupé is at home on almost any terrain.

The optional 4.5° rear axle steering makes the vehicle even more manoeuvrable. It is offered in the Technology package along with Airmatic air suspension. Off the road, the Coupé scores with numerous features such as 4Matic all-wheel-drive and an off-road mode with "transparent bonnet" functionality as an element of the 360° camera system to enhance the off-road driving experience.

SENSUAL PURITY, INTELLIGENCE AND EMOTION

The defining feature of the new GLC Coupé is its sporty silhouette, although it retains the familiar Mercedes-Benz SUV family look. Standard equipment includes the Avantgarde exterior with 18" light-alloy wheels and the chrome package. Accentuating the car's width is the seamless transition from the headlights to the radiator grille.

Enhanced design over its standard SUV sibling, dramatic surfaces continue to define the Coupé's exterior design. It is enriched with precisely moulded edges accentuating the proportions and the muscular wheel arches that balance elegance and power. AMG Line is available on both Coupé models boasting 19- or 20" mixed-profile tyres, and wheel arch liners echoing the vehicle's exterior colour. Also offered as optional extras are easy-entry running boards and, from AMG Line upwards, Merc's sensuous Night package option.

At the rear, two-part taillights with black-coloured and dark red connecting elements accentuate the Coupé's width.

MODERN YET SPORTY INTERIOR

The interior of the new GLC Coupé is equipped with the modern AVANTGARDE line as standard. The dashboard is clearly structured. The upper section has a wing-like profile with new, flattened vent outlets. The lower section has a generous trim area that flows seamlessly into the curved centre





console. The 12.3" high-resolution LCD screen in front of the driver floats freely above the wing profile and trim surface. The 11.9" central display rises from the centre console and likewise floats above the trim surface. Like the dashboard, the screen surface is slightly angled towards the driver.

The modern, scaled-back design of the door panels frames both ends of the dashboard. The door centre panel with integrated armrest transitions from a vertical to a horizontal surface – reflecting the design of the centre console.

The seat design plays with layers and contoured surfaces, lending them visual lightness, while the enclosed head restraints have also been redesigned. Now offered as a unique feature (standard for the AMG Line) is a leather-lined dashboard with nappa-look beltlines. The surface innovations continue with interpretations of open-pored wood veneers in brown, anthracite and black, with aluminium inlays.

The GLC Coupé will swallow between 545 litres (45 litres more than the preceding model) and 1,490 litres (90 litres more) in all models. Mercedes also includes a powered tailgate as standard, which opens and closes conveniently at the touch of a button using the ignition key, the switch in the driver's door, or the unlocking handle on the tailgate.

Further standard equipment on the new GLC Coupé includes large displays, smartphone integration, wireless phone charging, and heated seats for both front occupants. In addition, Mercedes-Benz has significantly simplified its package offering, combining frequently selected optional extra choices into various packages.

Both the hardware and software of the latest generation Mercedes-Benz User Experience (MBUX) infotainment system have been improved to offer better user-friendliness. MBUX Augmented Reality for native navigation is available as an option, where a front camera registers the vehicle's surroundings to show moving images and superimposed virtual objects,



information, and markers, on the large central display.

ENGINES ELECTRIFIED

In the engine bay, the biggest improvement over the previous GLC Coupé is the inclusion of the same 48-volt mild-hybrid electrification system with a second-generation integrated starter-generator (ISG) as both the C-Class sedan and the GLC SUV.

We discuss this system in greater detail in the review of the GLC220d SUV in this edition, but for summary's sake, the integrated starter-generator in Merc's mild-hybrid variants supports the combustion engine, especially at low engine speeds. Complemented by the turbocharger, this improves power delivery and makes an additional power and torque boost available under hard acceleration. The 48-volt electrical system supports hybrid functions such as coasting, boosting, and energy recovery, thus also increasing efficiency. The motor also starts quicker and more comfortably with the help of the ISG,

with the start/stop function barely perceptible to the driver.

AGILITY AND SAFETY

The dynamically designed suspension system of the new GLC Coupé is based on a new four-link front suspension and a multi-link independent rear suspension mounted to a subframe.

The variable steering ratio is also standard across the board. On request, the new GLC Coupé is available with the Engineering Package that includes air suspension and active rear-axle steering with a 4.5-degree steering angle. The Airmatic system provides continuously adjustable damping for the compression and rebound stages of the shock absorbers.

The new GLC Coupé promises to be remarkably agile and stable with the optional rear-axle steering (included with the Engineering Package). At speeds below 60 km/h, the rear wheels steer in the opposite direction to the front wheels – and by up to 4.5 degrees when parking. In effect, this makes the car's wheelbase feel shorter, resulting in



better manoeuvrability and agility, and a reduction in the turning circle radius by 90 cm to 10.9 metres.

When speeds reach 60 km/h or more, the rear wheels steer in the same direction as the front wheels by up to 4.5 degrees, virtually extending the wheelbase for improved handling stability and safety at high speeds.

COMFORT AND SAFETY ASSISTANCE

The latest generation of the Driving Assistance Plus package contains additional and improved functions. These reduce driver workload in day-to-day situations for more comfortable and safer driving. When danger threatens, the systems can respond to impending collisions as the situation demands. The current speed limit can be selected as the speed setting at the push of a button. The active brake assist uses the sensors installed in the vehicle to detect imminent collisions with crossing or oncoming traffic or rear-end collisions. In case of danger, the system can issue an acoustic and visual alert, and if the driver fails to brake hard enough, it can also assist by appropriately increasing the braking force or initiating an emergency stop.

Regarding crash safety, all GLC models meet stringent Mercedes safety standards. Together with the familiar Pre-Safe protection concepts for frontal and rear impacts, the Pre-Safe Impulse Side

function forms a virtual crumple zone around the vehicle. It is optionally available with Driver Assistance Package Plus.

In all, the safety concept of the GLC Coupé is based on an intelligently designed body with an exceptionally rigid passenger cell, selectively deformable crash structures and situational interaction between the seat belts, belt tensioners and airbag systems.

OFF-ROAD WITH THE GLC COUPÉ

As before, the new GLC Coupé is also suitable for off-road driving and has several new features and systems designed for that use. Standard equipment includes an off-road driving mode and Downhill Speed Regulation (DSR).

In off-road mode, the GLC Coupé with the 360° camera offers a "transparent bonnet". The central display shows a virtual view under the front of the vehicle, including the front wheels and their steering position. This enables the driver to recognise obstacles such as large stones or deep potholes sooner and more quickly.

The off-road screen mode uses the two displays to clearly present information, controls, and key functions for off-road conditions. Among other things, the driver's display shows vehicle inclination, gradient, topographical altitude, geo-coordinates, and a compass, as well as road speed and engine speed when operating with an

internal combustion engine. The central display shows the current position on the terrain as well as the steering angle of the front wheels. If the vehicle has rear-wheel steering, it also shows the steering direction of the rear wheels. All the driving functions relevant to off-road operation can be controlled easily on one screen.

The GLC's optional air suspension system also brings comfort advantages to bear when off-road, offering additional benefits, including better ground clearance regardless of the load, and long suspension travel for the best possible traction. Rear-axle steering increases off-road manoeuvrability even further.

Mercedes-Benz has announced two models initially, with a replacement for the current AMG version expected later. As entry to the GLC Coupé range, the GLC220d will carry the same two-litre four-cylinder mill as employed in the GLC SUV, producing 145 kW (with 17 kW of e-boost from the mild-hybrid system) and 440 Nm of torque augmented by 200 Nm from the same system.

The GLC300d uses the same engine, but performance is increased to 190+17 kW of power, with a slight decrease of 400 Nm on the cards, although the latter also receives an additional 200 Nm of torque from the mild-hybrid system.

All models are available as standard in Avantgarde trim, with AMG Line specification as an option. ⓘ

Samsonite



PROXIS™

THE NEXT GENERATION OF LUGGAGE

LIGHT | STRONG | MORE SUSTAINABLE

MADE IN EUROPE



DISCOVER IT HERE

Shop online at www.samsonite.co.za • Connect with us on Facebook & Instagram - @samsonitesa

JHB - Sandton City • Nicolway • Fourways Mall • East Rand Mall | PTA - Brooklyn Mall | CPT - Tyger Valley • Canal Walk

Together Belong

JOIN THE CLUB THAT PUTS YOU
IN TOTAL CONTROL OF YOUR DESTINY.



DINERSCLUB.CO.ZA



Every card comes standard with a 24/7 Digital Lifestyle Assistant, for convenient access to an exclusive world of incredible experiences.

Apply today.





TO ENTERTAIN

THE SAGA CONTINUES

With the release of *Dune: Part Two* in Ster-Kinekor cinemas nationwide on 1 March 2024, the saga continues as award-winning filmmaker Denis Villeneuve embarks on the next chapter of Frank Herbert's celebrated novel *Dune*.

This highly anticipated follow-up to 2021's six-time Academy Award-winning *Dune* explores the mythic journey of Paul Atreides as he unites with Chani and the Fremen while on a path of revenge against the conspirators who destroyed his family. Facing a choice between the love of his life and the fate of the known universe, he endeavours to prevent a terrible future only he can foresee. Director Denis Villeneuve filmed *Dune: Part Two* for IMAX with the Arri Alexa 65 and LF model IMAX-certified cameras. Among

the highest quality cameras in the world, the sequences are captured with unparalleled clarity, colour and have been truly optimised for IMAX cinemas. Subsequently, once onscreen, these sequences are brought to life unlike any other moviegoing experience in the world – visually expanding to fill the IMAX screen with up to 26% more picture under the specific design of the director, and drawing fans right into the heart of the action. The film was photographed using IMAX's larger 1.90:01 aspect ratio to provide audiences with a greater canvas of the spectacular images captured specifically for the IMAX large screen format. That combined with next-generation IMAX precision sound, creates a truly immersive cinema experience.

www.sterkinckor.com

AROUND THE WORLD IN 50 PROVERBS

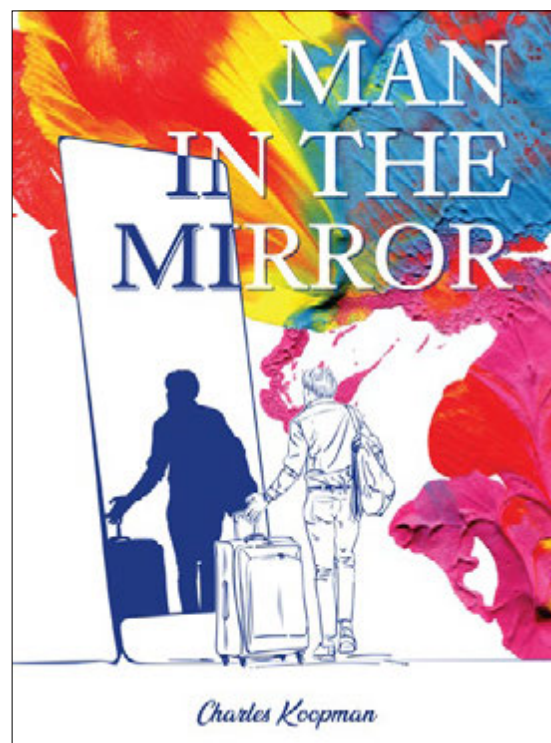
American teacher Charles Koopman has visited more than one-hundred countries where he has gained incredible insights about our world. In his travels, the self-described "man without a home" has come to understand how different cultures approach situations in their own way, not only in terms of how they live them, but also the attitudes they embrace on this journey. His experiences have taught him that certain commonalities do exist, however, and these often manifest as proverbs, some widely known and others less so.

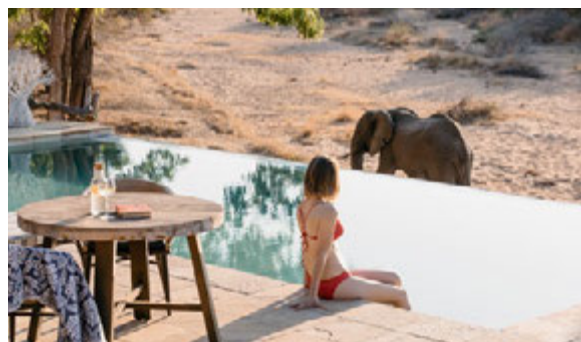
In *Man in the Mirror*, Koopman places 50 maxims under the microscope to explain how they relate to the societies and cultures he has encountered while teaching in South America, China, the Middle East and Africa, as well as his homeland of the United States. Ever heard the phrase, "the truth is

somewhere in between?" Koopman certainly has and uses it to explain the blurring of the lines between fact and fiction in traditional and social media. Or how about the classic "one man's trash is another man's treasure"? What better way to describe Western perceptions of Africa as "undesirable" when the beauty of its landscape and people is overlooked?

Koopman writes not from a place of separation but from first-hand experience of these countries. By pinning his ideas on proverbs, he is able to challenge the reader to move away from preconceived notions, and be open to the possibility that there is another side to every story.

Man in the Mirror is a fascinating examination of the world as it is today and why being mindful to put oneself in another's shoes is so vital if our planet is to ever achieve greater levels of peace and equality.





Shumbalala Game Lodge - An African Dream

In the vast wilderness of South Africa's hot northern plains, adjacent to the famous Kruger National Park, deep within an ancient tapestry of natural wonder, you will chance upon SHUMBALALA GAME LODGE.

From your early morning game drive or bush walk in the Big 5 Thornybush Game Reserve to lazy afternoons at the pool and a sunset safari, tales of the day are told in the wine cellar as you prepare for a sumptuous dinner fire-side al fresco or candle-lit indoors. Choose from four luxury suites or the Presidential Suite, all of which have private viewing decks and picture window bathrooms. Wake up knowing that each day will allow for the adventure and peace of Africa to enter your soul – in a place where the lion sleeps.

info@shumbalala.co.za | +27 (0)728122172

www.shumbalala.co.za

INTO THE HEART OF THE WILD

A Photographic Journey Through the Kruger National Park

In the heart of South Africa's untamed wilderness, where the sun kisses the savannah and the breeze whispers through ancient trees, lies a sanctuary of unparalleled beauty and wonder – Kruger National Park.

Amidst the vast expanse of African bushveld, nature reigns supreme, weaving a tapestry of life that captivates the soul and ignites the imagination.

As the gates of Kruger National Park open, travellers are transported into a

world where lions roam freely, elephants trumpet their presence, and leopards prowl in the shadows. It is a place where every sunrise brings the promise of adventure, and every sunset paints the sky in hues of gold and crimson.

Join us on a journey into the heart of the wild, where the rhythms of

nature echo through the land, and every moment is a testament to the beauty and resilience of life. Welcome to Kruger National Park – a place where dreams are made, and memories are forged amidst the splendour of the African bush. 📸







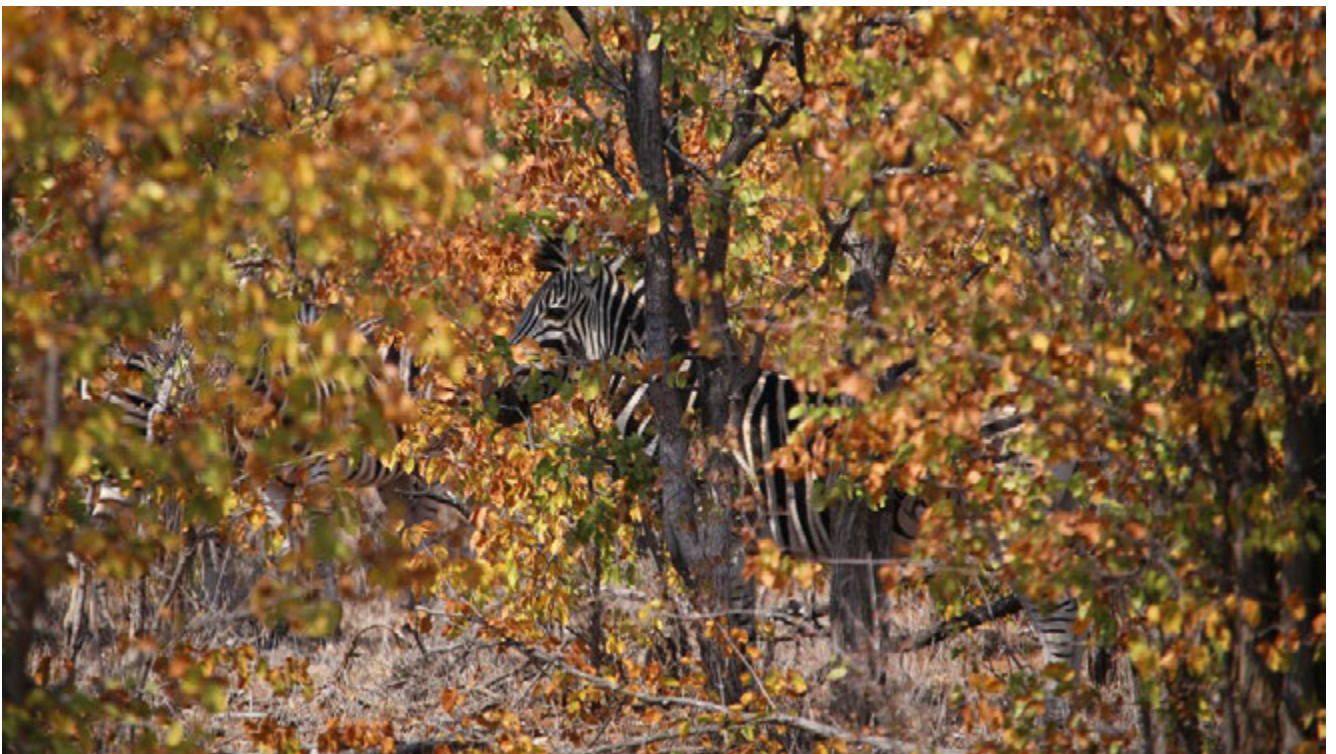
By Bernd Dittrich







By Bernd Dittrich



UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY INTELLIGENCE

Reflecting on Who You Were Last Year to Understand Who You Will Be This Year

Identity Intelligence Coach Alison Weihe has helped people set free and authentically connect with others by showing them the guidelines for identity intelligence and finding their true selves. It's time to reflect on "who we became" last year in order to understand who we can become in 2024.

All our achievements of the past mark significant milestones in our lives, serving as a testament to our hard work and dedication. However, their impact goes beyond mere recognition. Let's delve into why and how celebrating our achievements can deepen our identity and shape our personal growth.

Instead of drawing vision boards this year, start drawing celebration boards of what you've achieved because it is only in celebration that we deepen the identity we have created. We deepen our "why". It is only in celebration that we become our future selves.

Celebrating what we never realised we were capable of sets the tone and frequency of our identity for the next chapter of our lives.

ACKNOWLEDGING PROGRESS

One of the key reasons celebrating achievements is important, is that it allows us to acknowledge and

appreciate our progress. Whether big or small, each accomplishment contributes to our personal journey. By taking the time to celebrate, we honour the effort and dedication we invested in reaching our goals. It serves as a reminder of our capabilities and motivates us to strive for even greater achievements.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Celebrating achievements plays a vital role in building self-confidence. When we recognise our accomplishments, we reinforce a positive self-image. Each success becomes a building block, empowering us to take on new challenges with greater belief in our abilities.

By celebrating our achievements, we cultivate a sense of self-assurance that extends beyond specific accomplishments. It fans out into all aspects of our lives.

CULTIVATING GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a powerful emotion that can deepen our sense of identity. When

we celebrate our achievements, we cultivate gratitude for the opportunities, support, and resources contributing to our success. Expressing gratitude for the people and circumstances that played a role in our achievements fosters a sense of connectedness and humility. It reminds us that our accomplishments are not solely the result of our individual efforts, but in my case in particular, I live my life in tribes, and I am a product of the support, collaboration, and collective efforts of others. And so, I collaborate with all the tribes that got me "here".

INSPIRING OTHERS

Celebrating achievements not only benefits us individually but also inspires those around us. When we openly embrace and share our successes, we motivate others to pursue their goals and aspirations. By serving as a role model, we create a ripple effect that encourages others to strive for excellence. Our celebrations become a source of inspiration, fostering a culture



of achievement and growth. In a way, our followers become our fuel when our inspiration ignites their courage.

EMBRACE MOVING AS AN OPPORTUNITY

View relocation or any significant change as an opportunity for growth and self-discovery. It's a chance to reinvent yourself and explore aspects of your identity that may have been dormant. Be graciously bold and courageous, and compassionately curious about your transition. Suspend judgment and activate curiosity and anticipation.

CULTIVATE OPENNESS TO NEW EXPERIENCES

Be open to new experiences and people in your new environment. This openness can lead to finding a community that resonates with your evolving identity, just as Weihe did.

REFLECT ON PAST LESSONS

Reflect on what you've learned from your past experiences, but don't dwell on them. Use these lessons as stepping stones towards your new journey, not as anchors holding you back.

MINDFULLY BUILD NEW CONNECTIONS

Actively seek out and nurture relationships that align with your current values and interests. These connections can become a supportive network in your new path. Alignment to your new vision is crucial for your process of becoming.

MAINTAIN A POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Keep a positive outlook on the challenges and unknowns you face. A positive mindset can transform challenges into opportunities for growth and new discovery.

TELL YOUR STORY

Live in grace, find your voice, and tell your story. The world needs to hear the untold stories to take us all beyond a single narrative into colourful narratives enriched with the diversity of life. This is how we heal some of the anguish in the world, one conversation at a time, one day at a time. ①



Alison Weihe

by *alison weihe*
/ photography by *alison weihe* / unsplash.com

HERE'S TO THE ICONS

Recognising the 2023 Diners Club Winelist Icon Award Winners

Diners Club has always been more than a card. It's a gathering of people with many shared interests and objectives who love exploring, learning and discovering. The South African Diners Club Winelist Awards is one product of that journey.

When eating out, you would likely have noticed that select restaurants proudly display a framed Diners Club Winelist Award certificate on their window or wall.

That's because boasting a Winelist Award is a prestigious confirmation that this establishment has a fine and well-thought-out wine list that compliments the menu. And to anyone who has

discovered the symbiotic joy of well-matched food and wine, that's a big plus for the restaurant.

To proudly display a Diners Club Winelist Award is an invitation for discerning patrons to come in and enjoy a taste of greatness. It's a sign that they belong.

AT THE PINNACLE

While winning a Diners Club Winelist Award is, put simply, good for business, the pinnacle of these prestigious awards is the coveted Icon Award, given to establishments that lead the way in terms of their winelist.

In 2023, two distinctive establishments, Verdicchio Restaurant & Wine Cellar, and the revered Saxon Hotel & Spa, walked away with the Icon Award for their outstanding wine offerings.

DINING AT ITS FINEST

The Saxon Hotel & Spa

At the heart of the City of Gold, beneath the warm sunshine in the opulent, tree-lined suburb of Sandhurst, lies the enchanting Saxon Hotel.

A product of its South African heritage, the Saxon prides itself on having one of the country's most extensive selections of fine wines. Carefully curated by its sommeliers, guests at the Saxon can enjoy hundreds of local and international wines perfectly preserved deep within the heart of the Saxon. Their sommeliers' extensive knowledge of wines enhances the enjoyment of their guests' culinary

experiences.

The sommeliers spend a great deal of their time in the cellars, testing and tasting the wide range of proudly South African wines and classic international vintages to ensure that the perfect wine is paired with every meal.

For more, visit www.saxon.co.za.

A MEDITERRANEAN JOURNEY

Verdicchio Restaurant & Wine Cellar

Nestled in the heart of Montecasino, Johannesburg, Verdicchio Restaurant & Wine Cellar has been creating unforgettable dining experiences since 2000.

Once you step inside their doors, you are transported to a charming Mediterranean village. Their old charm feel has a modern twist, and whether you are looking for a romantic date night, a fun celebration, or a corporate lunch, we have the perfect setting for you.

Their incredible wine cellar features over 300 labels of assorted varietals, vintages, rare wines, champagnes, and whiskeys. We are proud to have been awarded the prestigious Diners Club Diamond Award for their extensive wine list, so you can trust that you are in the best hands.

Enjoy the Verdicchio experience and become part of the growing list of customers to wine and dine in their infamous wine cellar. With an unforgettable experience, you will book your next visit before you've even left.

For more, www.verdicchio.co.za. 📞



Saxon Hotel & Spa



Verdicchio Restaurant & Wine Cellar



Join the feeling

**JOIN THE CLUB THAT PUTS YOU
IN TOTAL CONTROL OF YOUR DESTINY.**

Press play on your biggest adventure
that's waiting for you with the Diners
Club Beyond Card. Apply today.

LEARN MORE AT [DINERSCLUB.CO.ZA](https://dinersclub.co.za) AND FOLLOW US ON
@DinersClubSA



Reimagine,
redefine,
reconnect.



Urban
apartment
living.



blok.co.za | [@blokliving](https://www.instagram.com/blokliving) | +27 66 186 1658