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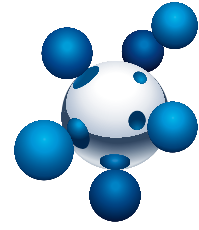
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Green Home Fair is an **exhibition** showcasing myriad eco product and service providers offering a range of **innovative ideas** to help consumers and households **reduce impacts** on people and the environment, and to **save money** too.

...living informed today



March mayhem and the mad hatter missed the tea party. Water, water, everywhere and not a drop to drink. Nursery rhymes and ditties aside, March was water month and the month that Earth Hour brought its message to the globe to choose renewable energy. Switching off lights around the world has become a symbolic act of disconnecting from the grid in a drive to raise awareness that there are alternatives and much of what we use, we don't need to. It amounts to a whole lot of waste. Dare I mention the big corporate(s) who like to sponsor green events but forget to turn off the office park lights, even for just that hour (needless to say it should be every day) . So when you talk about waste it starts to get interesting because it is the next big economic injection. The waste economy exists and is growing, slogans like 'waste into worth', 'trash into treasure', are starting to stick and the latent resources that are left by the detritus that is thrown 'away' is clearly the next game changer in terms of job creation and resource recycling. In the future there may indeed be a historical reference to P.W. – the Pre-Waste era and reflections on what was done about it by the civilisations creating it. As technology fast tracked telephony there is the option to fast track to the era of No Waste and have no need to rehabilitate the ecology because we did not destroy it in the first place. This is where the super hero enters the picture. Lewis Pugh has been defying his physicality to challenge the powers that be to reform. This is the big league, and whilst he is out there challenging super powers, in the many communities around South Africa there are other players who daily make a difference in wanting to regenerate and create a future worth striving for. To all the champions, heroes and other game changers...big up. Keep on keeping and thank you.

Melissa

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— April / May 2015

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Entries close on 29 May 2015 and the winner is selected via a lucky draw.

REUSE • REPURPOSE • REINVENT

We are too used to throwing things 'away' when in actual fact no such place exists. This is why I like to make use of items that would normally be thrown away and transform them into useful and lovely items for the home and for myself to enjoy. You can also take what you would normally trash and look at them as potential recycling projects that end up quite beautiful and unusual too.

BY **Lizl Naude**



HANG THAT JOE SOAP

Trying things for the first time is exciting. You give your mind and body the opportunity to venture where they haven't been before. I love experimenting and sometimes I get ideas that have never been tried before. This time around I tried reusing soap for the first time. Inspired by candy sweets, I decided to make a pair of costume earrings.

What you'll need:

- Left-over soap pieces
- Small cookie cutters
- Earring findings
- Clear sealer

Gather all your small pieces of leftover soap bars. You can use the same colour or a variety of colours it does not matter. Use small dainty cookie cutter shapes and after you have softened the soap (by dipping it in hot water) carefully press the cutter on the bar and steadily press out the shape. While the soap is still wet, draw another heart on the surface to give it some detail. Use a glue-gun or quick-setting glue to paste an earring finding to the back. Seal it with a gloss sealer. You can make all kinds of shapes and colours. Experiment and enjoy your new, affordable adornment! You're no regular Joe Soap with these little babies!



EASY STORAGE CONTAINER

This is literally a five-minute project. I do not like chucking out usable goods and have been collecting empty roll-on containers. The bottom part of the roll-on container is frosted plastic, and perfect as a storage container. It can be used at schools, at your desk or in your bathroom. Here is an easy way to reuse them as storage:

What you'll need:

- Empty roll-on containers
- Glue gun

Start by removing the labels off the containers. Leave them overnight in a small amount of water to soften the labels so you can remove them. Line up three of them and using the hot glue-gun, join them together. You can use the container in the bathroom for storing ear buds and nail clippers etc, while in the kitchen you can keep elastic bands and paper clips, and in the study; pens, pencils and even memory sticks.



EAT your DIY

A few weeks ago I made these "EAT" letters for my sister as a house-warming gift. She and her hubby built their first home and moved in recently. Using pieces of wood, I crafted the letters to adorn their kitchen walls. I decided to give it a distressed finish for a country-chic effect. Upon seeing the gift...she thought I had bought it. I definitely view that as a compliment!

What you'll need:

- Strip of wood
- Jigsaw
- Measuring tape
- Wood glue
- Panel pins
- Wood filler
- Sandpaper
- Paint
- Picture hooks

Start off by measuring the pieces you need. Besides the "A" letter, the "E" and "T" are straight-cut pieces. The "A" needs to be cut at an angle in order to join neatly. When done, glue and clamp together. Using panel pins, secure the pieces tightly. Fill all the holes with wood glue and sand down when dry. Paint the pieces between layers and sand it down to create the distressed look. Add the picture hooks at the back for easy hanging.

CREATING FOOD FOR YOUR SOIL

BY Matthew Koehorst

In Green Home issue 19, we discussed some of the key characteristics of soils and how to improve the conditions of various soil types. As promised we are looking at two different ways to create 'food' for your soil.

Composting

There are many different methods, approach, ingredients and recipes for creating a compost heap, but the underlying principles remain the same. Composting is essentially the breakdown of organic materials by fungi, bacteria and insects (the "FBI") to create accessible nutrients for plants. You can create aerobic (with oxygen) or anaerobic (without oxygen) compost heaps depending on your approach. Compost heaps are great if you have excess garden cutting to deal with or have a lot of space, but are not ideal for a small scale gardener or balcony gardener.

How to make an aerobic compost heap

To create an effective compost heap, you need to provide a balanced diet for the tiny animals and fungi that are going to be doing all the work by eating your organic waste and converting it into plant food. Organic wastes can be seen as either nitrogen rich or carbon rich materials. Examples of nitrogen rich materials include any green garden waste like grass cuttings, freshly pruned leaves, kitchen scraps and animal manure. Carbon rich materials include dried grasses, woody stems, newspaper and cardboard. The ratio of nitrogen to carbon in your compost heap will determine how hot it gets, how fast it composts and how much volume you use by the end. A slow compost heap would have a ratio of about 1:25, one part of nitrogen for 25 parts of carbon and a faster heap would have a ratio of around 1:5. Slow compost heaps require less turning and make more nutrients available, but faster and hotter compost heaps produce quickly and are more likely to kill unwanted weed seeds.

Steps to creating a compost heap

- Gather your materials- grass, vegetable scraps, old vegetables, weeds (before

they've gone to seed) are all good ingredients.

- Build your heap to 1 meter squared by creating alternating layers of 'green' to 'brown' materials. Remember that the more nitrogen rich materials you add the hotter and faster the heap will go, but with too much nitrogen you will get odours and unwanted pests attracted to the heap, so going with a higher carbon content is safer, though slower.
- Damp down each layer as it's made and cover the entire heap with black plastic.
- If you like, insert a pole or stick into the heap that you can use to check the temperature of the heap as it breaks down.
- After a day or two the core of the heap should reach temperatures up to 60 degrees C. This is a sign that the microorganisms are enjoying the meal you've created for them. Expect to find steam rising from the center of the heap.
- After around two-six weeks depending on your N:C ratio, the core of the heap should cool down. At this point turn the entire heap to provide more food for the animals and fungi at the core of the pile.
- Continue turning the heap until it has fully broken down the organic matter and formed a dark brown rich smelling organic material
- Apply to your garden as needed, especially to beds that have just produced a large crop of vegetables.

Worm farming

Worm farming is another fantastic way to create high quality nutrients for the soil and plants. The benefit of worm farming is that it can be done on any scale so is great for a balcony gardener or serious organic farmer. Worm farms provide nutrients in the form of worm 'tea' and worm castings that are created as the waste products of the worms that live and eat in the farm. Worms can be fed most types of organic materials, but steer clear of citrus, onion family vegetables, and meat as these can kill or harm the worms. Worm farms are a fantastic option for balcony gardeners or those with lots of food scraps to deal with

but the worms need the right conditions to live and a poorly managed worm farm may suffer from infestation from insects and bugs.

How to create a worm farm

Worm farms use a specific type of earthworm known as red wigglers to convert food waste into nutrient dense products. To create a worm farm, you need to build a home for the worms that will collect their by-products as they are produced. You then feed the worms all your uncooked waste.

Steps to creating a worm farm

- Find a suitable container or home for your worms. Anything from several tuppawares with holes drilled in the bottom of each and stacked on top of each other to an old bath will work great. The main aim is to be able to tap off the liquid that is produced by the worm farm as well as being able to access the worm castings in the main container from time to time.
- Put down a layer of 'bedding' for the worms. Newspaper or egg cartons and broken egg shells work well for this.
- Add organic waste like vegetable off cuts and coffee grounds. Start small and don't put too much food in. Red Wigglers can eat up to their body weight in food in a day, so use that as a reference for how much food to add.
- Add the worms to the farm. You can buy worms at many garden centers, or better yet, harvest a few from a friend's worm farm and save yourself the money!
- Once the population has grown, you can harvest the worm tea and dilute it with water at a ratio of 1:10 before applying directly to the soil. Worm castings, the dark rich material left behind can be harvested regularly too but should be bubbled through water for several hours before being applied to make the nutrients available to plants.
- Once the population has established itself, feed it roughly once every two weeks and reap the dark, rich rewards of your worm farm regularly!

Happy composting!

OPEN SOURCE

TAKING A PEAK INTO A MOST BEAUTIFUL BARN.

BY **Efychis** EDITED BY **Melissa Baird**



“ Materials kept in their raw state evoke the essentials of the understated design and enhance the effect of simplicity and purity while being ultimately seductive at the same time. ”

This courtyard house, built on a residential farm estate on the outskirts of the city, demonstrates the constant interplay between the immediate environment and the structural expression of the construction of the design.

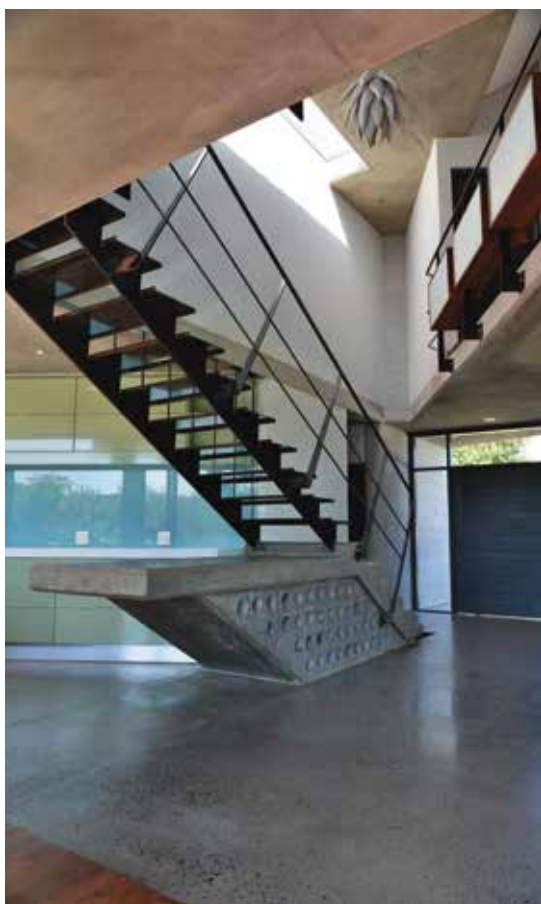
This rendition of a modern barn is situated on selected tracts of farmland that have been transformed into a residential node surrounded by conservation corridors.

South african architect Emilio Eftychis of EFTYCHIS, a boutique inter-disciplinary design practice based in Johannesburg, created the design and the harmonious relationship between the exterior and interior of the home is heightened and once inside it feels as if the space breathes and is animated by light and air.

The threshold between the interior and exterior is constantly blurred. The courtyard seamlessly binds the two wings of the house: the north wing comprising the living areas and the south wing; the guest bedroom, gym and staff quarters; and allows light to penetrate all the rooms.

The courtyard deck houses the pool, which can be covered by a retractable wooden lid, to extend the entertainment area. The interior open-plan living on the ground floor allows for maximum uninterrupted space. Cantilevered overhangs, around the north side of the house create a wrap-around veranda-type space below a feature in the vernacular farmhouse-style architecture of South Africa. These spaces are used as covered patios for typical South African outdoor living, and allow for shading in summer and direct sunlight in winter.

Materials kept in their raw state evoke the essentials of the understated design and enhance the effect of simplicity and purity while being ultimately seductive at the same time.

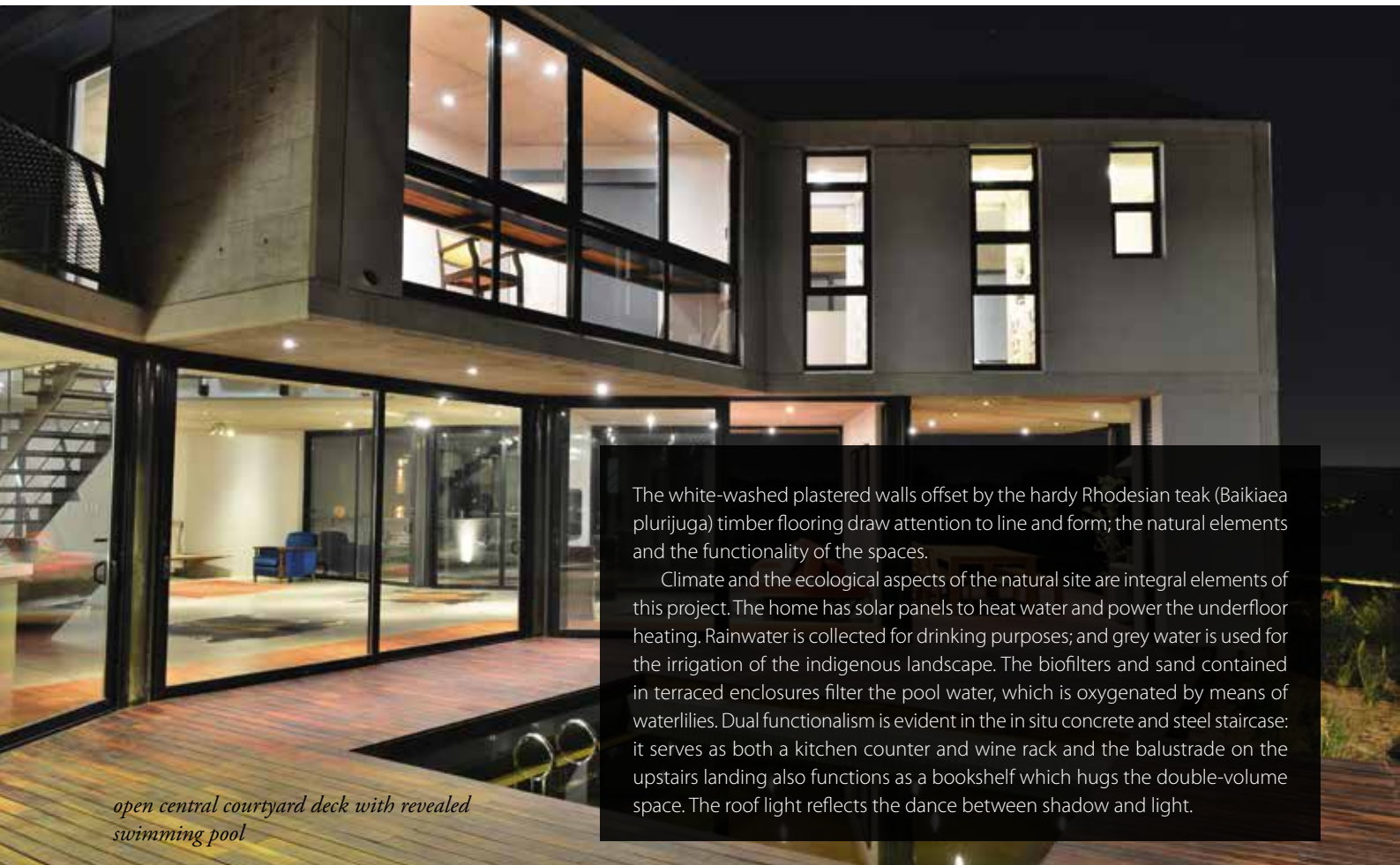


Opposite: Solid concrete mass sits above a transparent ground floor with a view of the filtration pond and pool, Veldgrass and Indigenous plants.

Clockwise from above: An interplay of exterior and interior spaces; "It breathes and is animated by light and air. The threshold between the interior and exterior is constantly blurred..." ;

Exterior deck penetrates through the interior spaces creating an open-air interior "...The courtyard seamlessly binds the two wings of the house. The courtyard deck houses the pool, which can be covered by a retractable wooden lid, to extend the entertainment area," ;

Convergence of both volumes, vertical circulation, main entrance and kitchen area.



open central courtyard deck with revealed swimming pool

The white-washed plastered walls offset by the hardy Rhodesian teak (*Baikiaea plurijuga*) timber flooring draw attention to line and form; the natural elements and the functionality of the spaces.

Climate and the ecological aspects of the natural site are integral elements of this project. The home has solar panels to heat water and power the underfloor heating. Rainwater is collected for drinking purposes; and grey water is used for the irrigation of the indigenous landscape. The biofilters and sand contained in terraced enclosures filter the pool water, which is oxygenated by means of waterlilies. Dual functionalism is evident in the in situ concrete and steel staircase: it serves as both a kitchen counter and wine rack and the balustrade on the upstairs landing also functions as a bookshelf which hugs the double-volume space. The roof light reflects the dance between shadow and light.

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Greyton TRANSITION



BY Jezebel

Two years, a few people and a whole lot of change.

A date with a dumpsite is hardly the romantic image most people have of Greyton. Known for its hiking, cycling trails and art galleries, its name conjures up images of quaint verandas and wide streets, healthy living and weekend retreats. Certainly, this is the case, but like any post-Apartheid environ, the case is also unequal distribution of wealth, disempowerment through poor government education and a deep disparity in civil services across economic divides. It's inspiring to know that there are people planting seeds of change in the hearts, souls and soils of the surrounds. Which is how I ended up hanging out in an old landfill on a summery Saturday afternoon.

Marshal Rinquest is a popular guy on Facebook. It's not just because he has dreadlocks and a band. He's a born-and-bred Greytonian and Vice Chairman of the Greyton Transition Town movement. Elbow-deep in community work uniting youth and sustainability, he can't remember a time without his own garden. His focus on empowering youngsters through dietary awareness and food security recently won him a place at the 2014 International Civil Society Week and in my news feed.

The 25 year old soul works with school children and teens in the area to ensure that the feeding programmes he himself once stomached now include vitamin- and mineral-rich organic, home-grown vegetables reared

by learners who take the lessons home to their families. "One of the most humbling experiences is meeting the parents of these children who tell me how their kids have changed through this. They're more focused and joyful, they say, and they're teaching their elders little things that make a big difference." Practising permaculture is also opening doors to new careers for those he mentors, as he hears about jobs for senior learners that these youngsters might otherwise neither consider nor qualify for.

Marhall is by no means alone. His energy and dedication is matched by his lovely wife and as well as by his partner in the Transition Town project, Chairman Nicky Hervey. She lives off-grid, runs an animal shelter just outside of town and is an active fundraiser. "It's about being the change you want to see," she says over a vegan dinner at the Transition Town headquarters, a repurposed municipal building that now hosts community gatherings, consultation rooms for wellness and health, concerts and conferences.

After just two years, the team has convinced local farmers to go organic and sell direct to consumers, set up independent recycling, and started a swap shop that exchanges recyclable goods for food and clothing. Not too shabby!

But back to me hanging out on a retired landfill. It's very rock n roll, actually; Greyton is home to the Trash To Treasure festival, using entertainment to bring attention to the

opportunities for land rehabilitation, upcycling and recycling in the least thought-of areas. Volunteers have cleared, sifted, separated, planted and built on this ground. There's something both Mad Maxish and sobering about a concert in society's trash can that luckily no longer smells. Can we do better by facing our mess? Do we have any other choice? It starts with one, two or a few, and it can grow.

Transition isn't only a collective effort based in the centre of town, however. Individuals are championing the cause in their own back yards. Angora van Doorn is based in Bereaville, a settlement 15 minutes' drive from vintage slopes of Greyton. She rents out a sustainably restored former missionary's cottage to holiday makers with cultural and environmental conscience, harvests and sells heirloom seeds and makes beauty products that don't sully the earth with chemicals or corrosive salts. "What is 'eco'?" she pondered over a late brunch, emphasising how easy it is to slap a word on a product. No greenwashing in her hood, however - even the paint in the beautiful cottage is environmentally friendly and the stay at Poespasrivier is by far the most pleasant I've yet had on my green trek. Let's keep exploring and building, fixing and planting, together.

Below from left: Youth use Eco Bricks (soft plastic in 2L bottles) to hand-build a permanent structure for the Trash to Treasure fest. It doubles as an on-site classroom on The Green Site, a reclaimed landfill; Marshall takes learners hiking on an adventure camp in nature to learn about the ecosystems that support our well-being as part of Greyton Transition Town's outreach



www.greytontransition.co.za
www.poespasrivier.com
 Images courtesy Greyton Transition Town

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MARINE HERO

FIVE SWIMS IN ANTARCTICA, ONE REASON...CAMPAIGNING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS.

BY **Melissa Baird** PHOTOS **Kelvin Trautman**

Lewis Pugh continues to rock records and draw attention to the fragile marine eco-systems that are being ravaged by over-fishing, oil prospecting and human-caused oil disasters, rising ocean temperatures and climate change. His latest super-human achievement was to complete five swims in the Ross Sea that was once home to thousands of Antarctic blue whales but now only 3% of the original population survive. (UNEP)'s Patron of the Oceans and in this mission to raise awareness of the need to create marine protected areas has found an audience in Russia who are key decision makers in this process.

In Antarctica, making use of Shackleton's early base, Lewis has swum the five seas of Campbell Island, Cape Adare, Bay of Whales (you can not swim any further south on the map) Peter 1 Island (in the Bellingshausen Sea and one of the remotest islands on the planet), to have the Ross Marine sea declared a Marine Protected Area.

In formidable conditions, Lewis broke the World Record by completing his swim in -1.7 degreesC water - the

coldest seawater can be before it freezes - with no insulation other than a swimming costume. Why would he do such a thing? In his own words "The Ross Sea is a place I care deeply about. It's the most pristine ecosystem left on our Earth, with wildlife found nowhere else, and of vital importance to science. But it's now being destroyed by industrial fishing. Our generation is driving species to extinction, irreversibly altering ecosystems and leaving our children with a planet that is unsustainable. We can change that. Please urge the 25 CCAMLR nations, responsible for protecting Antarctica's ocean, to set aside the Ross Sea as a Marine Protected Area forever."

The organisation responsible for creating MPAs in the region is the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), which is currently chaired by Russia. Lewis is asking the general public to show their support for the cause on Twitter using the hashtag #5swims and help him to raise awareness to protect this site before it is too late.

Follow: @LewisPugh

Above: Renowned Cape Town endurance swimmer and United Nation's Environment Programme (UNEP)'s Patron of the Oceans, Lewis Pugh, has today completed the final swim of his five swim challenge to champion the need for the conservation of the Ross Sea.



Above: Lewis Pugh and support boat driver



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We have looked for a range of products that work without electricity due to power outages and rising costs, it makes more sense than ever to be as efficient as possible when heating your home or cooking up a storm.

COMPILED BY **Melissa Baird and Jess Handley**



Eco Wash

Eco Wash, in conjunction with the University of Stellenbosch are the brilliant master minds behind a unique mobile dispensing unit that means a car can be washed wherever it is parked, without needing water and electricity. The car is cleaned with a specially formulated wash and wax product that, once sprayed onto the car, lifts and encapsulates the dirt upon contact. The dirt is then wiped off with a microfiber cloth and then the vehicle is buffed with a secondary cloth to give it a beautiful shine.

You only need one person to work the unit and it takes on average half an hour to wash one car. Eco Wash was awarded the prestigious Enviropaedia Eco-Logic Award for Water Conservation in 2012 and their growing success means the unit is operational at over 750 sites across the country growing a whole new sector of eco-entrepreneurs.
www.ecowash.co.za

FairTrade

During FairTrade Fortnight (30 March – 12 April 2015) South Africans can choose from a selection of FairTrade products that aim to seek justice with a chocolate bar, right wrongs with a glass of wine and change the world on their coffee break. The campaign's theme, THE POWER OF YOU, aims to inspire the new generation of leaders and decision-makers to activate the immense power they have as consumers by choosing the products that are making a stand for social justice and offering alternatives to the exploitation of small scale farmers and the land. By choosing Fairtrade wine you have the power to increase the opportunities for farm workers and their kids in the Cape Winelands. By choosing a bar of Fairtrade chocolate you have the power to fight child labour in cocoa farms in West Africa. By choosing Fairtrade coffee or tea, you have the power to incentivise small-scale farmers in Africa to improve the quality of their coffee and in using the land sustainably.

Visit the Fairtrade stand at the Taste of Cape Town between 10-12 April where you can taste a wide variety of the products that make a difference.

For a list of Fairtrade products available in SA visit www.fairtrade.org.za

Bosch 4 Burner Gas stove

In order to get cooking without electricity it would be worthwhile to invest in a few gas and fire friendly products to make this possible. Although they may be pricey to start with, a gas stove is a long term investment that will ultimately pay for itself in electricity savings. Anything that involves heat requires a lot more electricity than other appliances, therefore taking the stove out of the electricity equation might mean racking up less of a heavy bill. A reasonably priced gas stove on the market is the Bosch 4 Burner Gas stove that comes in silver, and is on special at Hirsch's Homestore for about R6,700.00. Gas canisters can be replaced at any petrol garage countrywide.
www.hirschs.co.za



Ina Paarman's Liquid Stocks

Life is too short to boil the bones! That is why we do it for you. What can be easier and more hygienically convenient than to squeeze an authentic low salt Stock Concentrate into a cup of hot water? According to the latest research bone stock from beef, chicken and fish, packs a great nutritional punch of proteins, iron, calcium etc. The mini-foil packs in which the stocks are sealed guarantees extended shelf life.
www.paarman.co.za



Sunfire cooking solutions

The SunFire Series Parabolic Solar Cookers work by concentrating the sunlight to a focal point. The pot or pan is placed at the centre of the cooker and there is easily enough energy generated to fry, braai and boil water. This form of cooking is as simple as can be and is the most effective cooking appliance powered by the sun. They require no fuel supply — ever and offer a comparable time to cooking on gas. Dishes ideally need adjusting with the movement of sun every 20-30 minutes for maximum affect and should be covered or placed flat when not in use. The SunFire Series comes in three sizes, the bigger the cooker, the more powerful its cooking range. The actual dish that focuses the sun's rays is durable and has a life expectancy of 10 years. You can watch information vimeos that explain all about solar cooking.

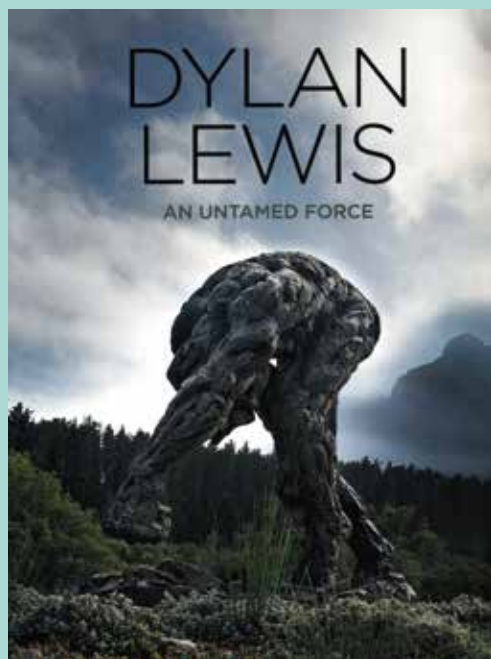
www.sunfire.co.za
www.mg.co.za/multimedia/2012-04-25-cooking-with-the-sun



BOOKS ETC.

Our book shelf suggestions for this edition take you through cultural journeys to the stars. There is a beautiful volume about the renowned South African wildlife sculptor Dylan Lewis, a history of orchestral music in Cape Town and the latest Sky Guide, the essential resource for skygazers. We also share some reading ideas for the young ones: a retelling of folktales adds to the cultural theme, while there is also a new series of fun books with stories about dinosaurs.

REVIEWS Lia Labuschagne

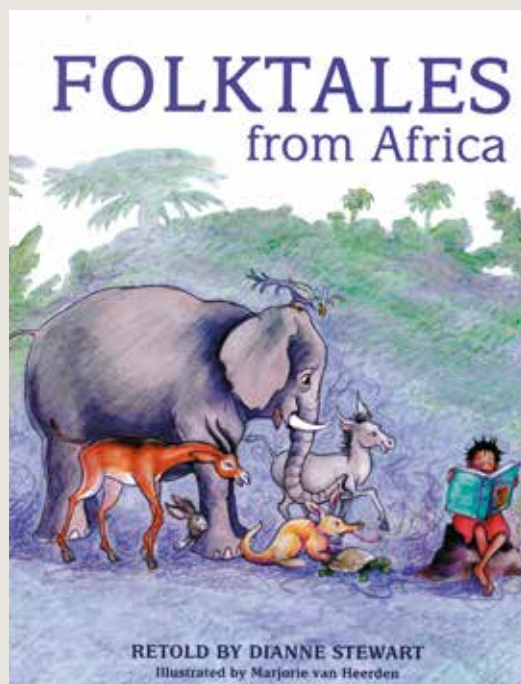


Dylan Lewis – an untamed force

Dylan Lewis has become established as one of the world's finest wildlife sculptors. His works are to be found not only in corporate halls and grand hotel foyers, but are probably best seen out in nature where they grace botanical gardens, golf courses and other outdoor settings – because it is the natural environment that has been the inspiration behind this South African artist. As the title of the book suggests, his works seem to grow out of nature, and reflect the fact that he started drawing as a child from wild, living forms, encouraged by his nature-loving and creative family. His sculptures illustrate where we come from – nature – and make the point that wildness and the wilderness is part of human identity.

Whether delicate birds, or big cats and buffalo, human beings or mythological figures, Lewis' work has been strikingly photographed by Gerda Genis and combine with sketches by the artist and quotes by Lewis or chosen by him to reflect his working methods and artistic philosophy. A beautiful coffee table book about the work of a notable local artist, with an insightful introduction by Ian McCallum, the founder of the Wilderness Leadership School in the Cape.

Fernwood Press ISBN 978-1-92821-301-7



Folktales from Africa

It is in the nature of folktales that they become timeless through retelling by different people over the ages, and enjoyed by adults and children alike. Although each one originates in a particular culture, folktales also gain universal relevance, and they tell us something in general about humans and the world we live in.

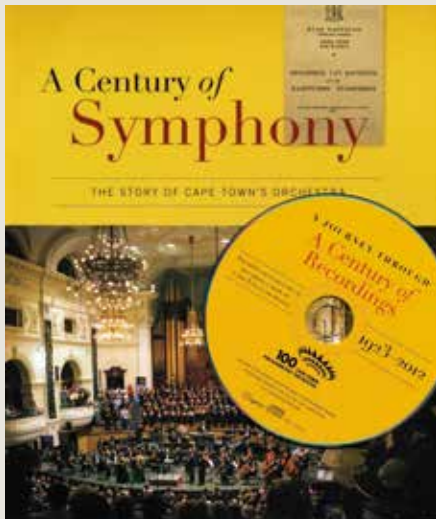
Award-winning South African author Dianne Stewart took twenty folktales from various countries of Africa and retold them to entertain young readers. The stories are about the animals, customs, living conditions and landscapes of Africa, and at the same time reflect the political and social backgrounds of their places of origin. Stewart has taken trouble to aid in the understanding of the contexts, among others by providing a fact file to accompany every story. She and illustrator Marjorie van Heerden also included a map of Africa at the beginning of the book for easy reference.

Folktales from Africa is aimed at those children who can read on their own with ease, although it would probably best be enjoyed during 'family reading time', or story-time at school or in a library. After all, folktales have always been enjoyed as a communal activity for people of all ages, with someone telling the story out loud.

Struik ISBN 978-1-43230-355-6

“ BOOKS ARE THE QUIETEST AND MOST CONSTANT OF FRIENDS; THEY ARE THE MOST ACCESSIBLE AND WISEST OF COUNSELORS, AND THE MOST PATIENT OF TEACHERS. ”

— Charles William Eliot



A Century of Symphony

The first symphony orchestra in Cape Town was founded by the Cape Town municipality in 1914, and since then, orchestral music has formed an integral part of the cultural life of the city. The journey was not always an easy one – but today the vibrant Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra is recognised for the excellence and versatility that has made it the most active in Africa. It has also invested in remaining relevant, and has been involved in pioneering work aimed at ensuring that orchestral music will remain part of the fabric of the city in the future, among others through the Cape Town Philharmonic Youth Orchestra and its successful education and outreach programmes.

Included in the book are reminiscences of, and anecdotes about orchestra members, soloists, conductors and others who formed part of the musical history of the city over the past century. Richly illustrated by photographs of the people, programmes and settings in which music has been performed over the years this is a valuable book for both lovers of classical music and those interested in local history. It is also fittingly accompanied by a special CD, "A journey through a Century of Recordings".

Jonathan Ball Publishers ISBN 978-1-86842-656-0

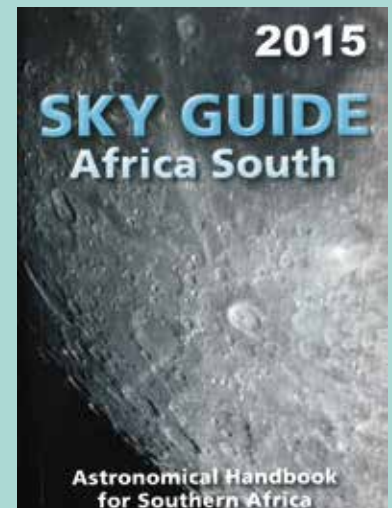
Sky Guide Africa South 2015

The Sky Guide Africa South has become the standard practical resource for anyone interested in 'looking up' at the night skies in South Africa. It is published by the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa in conjunction with Random House Struik and contains a wealth of information about the Sun, Moon and planets of the solar system, meteors, eclipses, the bright stars and more. The information is comprehensive, yet presented in such a way that even a novice skygazer would find it useful.

In addition to the general factual contents, the guide is primarily focussed on practical stargazing with useful information for basic skills, equipment, and useful contact details. Working through the year to give details about the most interesting events every month, it provides star charts to help you find and identify the constellations and interesting objects in the night sky.

This is a worthwhile investment for any amateur astronomer, guest house or library. Although intended mainly for South Africans, it might also be useful to get hold of a copy of this publication if you often have visitors from the Northern Hemisphere, since it will help answer questions about our beautiful night skies that look very different from those seen in Europe, Asia or North America.

Struik Nature, ISBN 978-1-77584-140-1



Saurus Street series

The Saurus Street books are about an ever-popular topic among kids – dinosaurs. Aimed mainly at children who can already read by themselves, the stories set in everyday family situations soon become fantasies about dinosaurs, and Australian author Nicholas Falk manages cleverly to weave useful facts into the text.

What makes these fun adventure stories special, is their well thought-out presentation. The publishers of these small, paperback-sized books have made them particularly entertaining through clever typesetting and layout. It is done in a way that combines simple text with words set in fun fonts to illustrate the relevant word, action or situation. Particularly notable are Tony Flowers' black and white illustrations that fit perfectly with the overall book design.

Struik Children ISBN 978-1-43230-457-7 (A Pterodactyl stole my homework) and ISBN 978-1-43230-456-0 (Tyrannosaurus in the veggie patch)

AN EVER CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Reconnecting with nature and the Elgin Valley

BY **Matthew Koehorst**

The Past

The recent history of South African landscapes is one intimately tied to the people who lived and still do live there. The Elgin Valley, situated 70km due East of Cape Town in the Overberg region, is one such example of a landscape that has been shaped and swayed, sculpted and molded, by the hand of mankind. Originally home to an estimated 70 000 Khoi pastoralists and some of the Cape's rarest fynbos plants, the region has since become South Africa's lead exporter of apples and pears and is a famed destination for cold climate wines, outdoor adventure and nature based getaways.

Dutch colonialists moved through the area in the late 1600s, setting up resupply stations for their ongoing trek into the hinterland. By the 1800s, the area was still a relatively small and isolated backwater serving as an area for

hitching oxen from wagons between the Bot River and Palmiet River on the long road from Cape Town to Caledon. It wasn't until the late 1800s that the area underwent a significant phase of development under the hands of two pioneer families, the Viljoens and the Molteno's that began farming vegetables and deciduous fruit successfully in the valley. Since then, the history of the area has mostly been one of large scale monocultural production of deciduous fruit like apples and pears along with cut flowers for the flower industry.

The present

Aside from the highly successful agricultural production of fruit in the region, the Elgin Valley holds a strong appeal to people looking for an opportunity to escape the hustle and bustle of the city for a few days. The region

is abundantly beautiful and hosts amazing hiking, mountain biking, bird watching and unwinding opportunities. Driving through the Elgin Valley over the summer period is stunningly beautiful, with apple trees covering the entire landscape with their delicate flowers or rotund fruits. However, like most human interventions on the landscape, the production of fruit has negative environmental consequences if done with an industrial mentality. In most cases, farmers rely on chemical pesticides and fertilisers to control disease and pest outbreaks and supply nutrients to their trees. This has the potential for serious environmental impacts as the potent chemicals may leach into the water systems of the area or work their way up the food chain.

The landscape's unique suitability for fruit production in the region is influenced by its microclimate, soil types and geographic location and has allowed for the massive colonisation of the natural vegetation in the area to serve human needs. However, these same factors had historically allowed for the simultaneous destruction of large swathes of the indigenous biomes in the area. The valley and the surrounding area used to be composed of fynbos and renosterveld, a unique fynbos sub-biome characterised by its exquisite geophytes, irises, orchids and hyacinths, before agricultural expansion and overgrazing had its way. These days, an estimated 7% of the renosterveld, remains in the world. Now, only small isolated pockets of renosterveld still exist within the greater Cape region, and of those pockets, many have been historically altered to some degree by grazing, man-made fires and other human



Opposite: Water plays a vital role in the Elgin Valley- Here a dam reflects the stillness and serenity at Porcupine Hills Guest Farm.

Unique plants and animals live an arms breadth away from humans who co-habit the area. The Diepklowe crags house a nesting pair of Verreaux Eagles, a threatened yet beautiful and important bird of prey.

Below: Working sensitively with natural systems is integral to human survival. Here, a tranquil natural pool pauses the flow of water through the landscape for period of enjoyment before it moves on down the valley.

Enjoy the fine creature comforts of the good life, while participating in a grand vision of living harmoniously on the land at Porcupine Hills Guest Farm, owned and managed by Cha and Tony Davenport.



interventions. So the history of the Elgin Valley and the surrounding areas is one of uniqueness, diversity, abundance and, at its core, disturbance, in many senses of the word.

The future

Currently, with a global shift towards more environmentally conscious and responsible ways of engaging with landscapes and the planet as a whole, there are some exciting opportunities to shift the course of history from one of destruction and enslavement of people and our earth, to one of custodianship, sufficiency and co-existence within our precious eco and social systems. The global movement of environmental re-awakening is making waves in the one-time backwater of the Elgin Valley and the greater Overberg region. Greyton, a sleepy, artsy, and beautiful village has taken up the mantle of the transition town movement and is aiming to embed sustainability and community into the core of its village life. Conservation groups and local conservancies are banding together to protect what remaining elements of renosterveld can be conserved, groups like the Whale Conservation Trust are making waves by raising awareness about the key issues of sustainability, not just at sea, but on land too, and individual land owners and business people are taking steps towards minimising their impact on the land as far as possible.

One fantastic example of individuals working towards becoming true custodians of the land lies in the hands of Tony and Cha Davenport of Porcupine Hills Guest Farm, located within the Diepklowe Private Nature Reserve 16km outside of Botriver on the Van der Stel's pass.

The Davenports have owned the 214 hectare property for three years and run a thriving 4 star accommodation business on the land that can accommodate up to 30 people and is an idyllic venue for a weekend getaway, a wedding or basecamp for hiking and exploring the area. It's a remarkably beautiful setting, stretching up a tributary of the Bot river that is fed by a bountiful spring on the land. Water is key to survival in the region, and Diepklowe has a fascinating history as a result of its abundant water supply. The name Diepklowe is derived from the large cliffs loom over the farm where a pair of massive, majestic Verreaux eagles nest and rear fledglings every spring. 200 hectares of the land are declared nature reserve and house rare renosterveld species, including the spectacular Gurnsey Lily and Spider Orchids as well as areas of fynbos and 'ecotones' where the two vegetation types merge.

For Tony and Cha the accommodation business provides the bread and butter for their

work on the land, but their drive to conserve and preserve the ecological and social histories, narratives and legacies of the area is what underpins their existence. Together with their two sons, Justin and Tobin, they have been working to transition from the grid dependent, traditional guest lodge business they purchased to a 'story of self-sufficiency' where visitors and guests can spend time reconnecting with nature and engaging with the stories of the land, its history and ecological conservation all while having a beautiful, classy and comfortable experience on the farm. Guests can enjoy fresh water swimming pools, a small organic fruit orchard, exquisite living quarters and share delicious meals around a massive farm style table with the fascinating hosts of the land.

Tony, an engineer by training, sees the key to the transition towards a regenerative and abundant system as one in which managing ones resources carefully and efficiently is integral to the whole equation. Managing water, food, energy, people and nature are the key points of focus for Tony's work and his engineer's mind has created some elegant solutions to reducing Porcupine Hills' reliance on the outside world. All the water used on the property is piped via gravity from the farm's spring, all buildings are being converted to solar geysers and solar power, and there are plans in the works for a biodiesel plant to supply the fuel needed on the farm. There is also a 2000 tree olive farm that produces the most delicious organic olive oil and large vegetable beds that produce abundant vegetables, though Tony thinks that particular system is still a work in progress and could do with some improvement.

The story of the land at Porcupine Hills is a fascinating one. It traces a history of mankind that went from living lightly on the land in the style of the Khoikhoi, to heavy overgrazing and exploitation at the hands of the early Dutch settlers, to extractive and destructive approaches to farming that ships out the energy and life of the land in the form of fruit to international markets, to an example of one family's efforts to move toward a future that reflects the distant past in it's gentle touch, while still providing abundantly and comfortably with modern life's best luxuries and amenities.

There are other fantastic opportunities for connecting with nature or simply enjoying oneself in the stunning Elgin Valley. For hiking fans, check out the Green Mountain Trail, a four day slackpacking trail that stops by Porcupine Hills. Mountain Bikers, wine aficionados, bird watchers and people just looking for a bit of quite time will all feel right at home in Elgin Valley.



CAREERS

CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVES...

AUTHOR **Jess Handley**

In a country that has many diverse cultures and diverse groups of people, naturally beliefs about certain things will differ. From what is considered normal social behaviour, what the best things are that one should eat, and most definitely how to look after one's health. In this kaleidoscope of a country, many South Africans understand the value of different methods of healing, and how medicine is not limited to a Western model of treatment. With such a colourful landscape also comes a great opportunity, as careers in traditional medicine and natural healing are slowly becoming more integrated into Western medical techniques, perhaps offering patients a more holistic form of treatment. Although in certain circumstances individuals are chosen by their people to become traditional healers, (or sangomas) there are other career paths one can choose in the realm of alternative healing that aim to provide people with the same level of care.

For example, homeopathy is something that has been available to study in South Africa for quite some time, and although a qualified doctor can do a diploma in addition to their medical degree specialising in homeopathy, there is a five year course available at two universities in South Africa where one can study to be a homeopath. Homeopathy is a medical science where the principle of 'like cures like' is followed; namely what causes the ailment can often be used to cure it. The remedies are available in highly diluted form to prevent side effects. Take for example the teary eyes you get when cutting an onion, the onion when diluted can be used to treat tears during a bout of flu. The cures to treat various ailments by homeopaths are based principally on natural ingredients, with the idea to cause as few side effects as possible. In homeopathy

the full characteristic and symptom picture of the patient is taken into account (on levels of physical, emotional and mental spheres).

As mentioned, homeopathy is not the only kind of alternative healing that one can practice professionally. Acupuncture is somewhat of a revered form of treatment in Eastern medicine, and over the last few decades has significantly worked its way into Western society as many people are beginning to see its benefits. Acupuncture works using fine needles that are inserted in the skin at specific points along what are considered to be lines of energy (meridians). This healing technique has been practiced in China for more than 2500 years, and has been a favoured treatment method by both emperors and workers alike. In order to practice as an acupuncturist in South Africa, only the University of the Western Cape has a traditional medicine department which offers a BSC in complimentary medicine with a postgraduate course specialising in acupuncture.

If you are particularly interested in the body's energy and how physical reactions become a result of a psychological manifestation, kinesiology and reflexology are two other streams of traditional healing that are worth considering. Reflexology works on the model that all our physical issues can be detected in one's feet, and as our nerve endings are all in the feet certain pressure points will be able to tell which part of the body is in need of care. Kinesiology is principally about listening to one's body, and how to change the energy in one's body in order to combat issues such as depression and stress.

Other information sourced from:
www.homeopathysa.co.za/Training.php
www.medicinenet.com/acupuncture/article.htm



To see what is involved in homeopathy and what one must study in order to practice as a homeopath, please visit The Durban University of Technology's website:

www.dut.ac.za

or The University of Johannesburg:
www.uj.ac.za/EN/Pages/Home.aspx

Both offer such courses.

One can study kinesiology at the Kinesiology institute of South Africa:
www.kinesiologysouthafrica.co.za/kinesiology-career
 and reflexology at the International Academy of Reflexology and Meridian Therapy
www.reflexologycourse.co.za

University of the Western Cape offers a BSC in complimentary medicine with a postgraduate course in acupuncture:
www.uwc.ac.za/Faculties/CHS/SoNM/Pages/Chinese-Medicine-and-Acupuncture.aspx





A TRUE MOVER AND SHAKER...

AUTHOR **Jess Handley**

“ ONE SMALL STEP FOR CLEAN ENERGY
IS ONE GIANT REASON TO CELEBRATE.”

A few issues ago we took a look at arguably one of the most productive people in the world, Elon Musk. Co-founder of PayPal and the brains behind SpaceX and Tesla, Musk has not let any time slip between the last time we checked in on him until now. Giant batteries, launching rockets and almost 10 000 electric cars shipped in the last few months are just some of the things that Musk has been up to (as well as a casual billion dollar investment from Google). Not too shabby for a guy who originally hails from Pretoria.

If taking your house off the grid and not having an electricity bill at the end of the month is something that is very appealing, one of Musk's latest brainwaves might be able to do just that. Tesla, his company that produces electric cars are in the process of trying to produce a giant battery that would be able to power an entire household. This doesn't mean fitting a giant AA looking battery into your home or onto your roof, but rather a slick flat design that is based on the principles of their electric car battery. Most of the design work Tesla has done on its car batteries will transfer easily to the stationary installation market. Musk's comments imply that the first generation of home battery technology will be directly derived from the Model S. Musk, "something flat, 5 inches off the wall, mounted, with a beautiful cover." Imagine never having to

pay for electricity again, as well as making a significant contribution to eliminating the use of coal-powered energy.

Speaking of contributions, Musk recently received a billion dollar investment from Google for the work that is being done at SpaceX. The new capital will be used to support continued innovation in the areas of space transport, reusability, and satellite manufacturing. "Just two days ago, SpaceX launched one of their rockets (a Falcon nine to be exact) into the night's sky, carrying two satellites that will provide communication around the world. The satellites made a successful connection after the rocket was launched. Although this is the Falcon nine's 16th launch attempt, this is a testimony to Musk's tireless efforts to improve communication around the globe that has a minimal impact on the planet. The satellite communication is completely electric, and although we are not entirely sure what that means, all we know is that it is fossil fuel free. One small step for clean energy is one giant reason to celebrate.

www.spacex.com

www.venturebeat.com

www.venturebeat.com



SUPER COOL ZERO EMISSIONS

BY Andy le May

Electric scooters have been in South Africa for over seven years already and I've been riding them for six; and while they were once a bit slow in acceleration, top speed and had limited range they are now fabulous.

The last three years have seen amazing developments in battery technology, motors and controllers and the bikes now have lots of power, so getting in front of the traffic at the lights and overtaking and hills are a breeze.

Some bikes have a top speed of 120 km/h and can maintain that speed over distances of between 80km -160km. How far you can travel between recharging the bike depends how smoothly you ride and at what speed but with the regenerative braking I can recover a lot of the potential energy back into the batteries when I stop and use less of my brake pads. I generally drive between 40km and 120kms a day and I can recharge at home or cafés and even some shopping malls because it's not necessary to fully recharge either. The charger is built into

the electric scooter and I keep a power lead under the seat with a normal 15 Amp round pin plug. This means there are around 100 million potential recharge places in SA today.

With the batteries and the motor being nice and low on the bikes they are very easy to handle and very manoeuvrable making parking (always for free) a breeze. There is also a reverse function on the bike to help get out of tight spots. What else makes these bikes amazing? They require very little maintenance, there are no belts or chains, filters or spark plugs and no hot exhaust or engine to burn yourself on. There are also no gears, all you do is turn it on and off you go.



For more about electric scooters and electric vehicles available in SA go to: www.ewizz.co.za and www.electrovehicles.co.za

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*References available on request



HARD RUNNING

Trail running is the perfect way to enjoy wide open spaces and run off a whole load of city stress. Karoline Hanks shares her experience of a wild, unmarked track and why this sport is not for *sissies*'

BY Karoline Hanks

Touching the sky – rock hopping in some of the most beautiful and remote countryside imaginable

Towards the end of last year I was privileged enough to participate in the 65 kilometre *Salomon Sky Run Lite*, which takes place in the extraordinarily beautiful trail-running playground that is the southern Drakensburg. I ran with my partner Filippo, who has run the race three times. He's studied the route profile, recced alternative paths and spoken to local landowners. I knew I was in good hands, which was a massive comfort to me, given that I have never run an unmarked race before! Race morning dawned and at 4am, I found myself standing at the starting line alongside 72 other Sky Run Lite runners. The other intrepid 134 guys and girls were bravely taking on the Big Daddy: Sky Run proper – a thoroughly daunting 100 kilometres.

The first leg was steep and dark. Runners and their bobbing head torches jostled and vied for a spot along a nasty, endless and uncomfortable rock-strewn single track. About an hour in the dawn light began to seep through, torches were switched off and the mountain tips glowed orange. After a fairly tough 7 kms we reached Check point 1 (the Tower). We shouted out our race numbers to a marshal with a clipboard and off we set. A further 14 kms on we hit Check point 2 (Olympus). We quickly replenished our already depleted water stocks and threw down some food. Another 8 kms on we hit Snowdon where we had to show all our compulsory equipment to a kit-check guy. One or two runners were having feet strapped, complaining of headaches and vomiting. We then hit the infamous and much anticipated 'Dragon's Back'. What a glorious section of the

mountain and most certainly the highlight for me. The name could not be more apt. It feels as though one is sitting on her, legs clinging to her heaving flanks, dodging clouds, her massive tail swooshing behind. She's a friendly dragon too. She wanted us there and was doing everything in her power to keep us astride. Not an easy mount, granted with a sheer drop either side of her, and the levels of exposure second to none. But compared to the mountain we were set to meet a couple of hours later, she was a delight!

While we were heading down the fairly steep descent into Check point 6 the heavens had started to darken, growl and grumble. Ominous thunder and the snap, crackle and pop of electricity in the air made me nervous. We were about to make a vertical 500 m ascent up what runners were calling 'The Wall' (Balloch) to find ourselves on a 2 400m ridge – the perfect target for a well-placed lightning bolt! Balloch was a Class A B@#!h. Where the Dragon had been friendly and youthful in spirit, this snarky little cow was just grumpy. Her mood mirrored mine. She tore at my hands and my fingers bled. The barbed wire strewn

across her paths tripped me up. She was the playground bully and I fought back. I kicked and screamed and swore out loud like a fish wife. Soon enough it was all over, we popped up onto the summit, slipped through a hole in the fence and headed down. By now my toes were on fire and blisters were blowing up, popping and rubbing. The descent was painful, but by now I could see and smell the finish at the Wartrail country club. Not so for Filippo. We parted at the 63km mark. He went on to run a further 37km – into the growing darkness. He had more than seven hours of slogging it out alone. (Rumour has it the man had a long, delirious conversation with a black sheep en route – as one does!)

I was just grateful to see the Salomon banners and my last 2km were comparatively fast and comfortable. I came in second overall and first lady in a time of 11:03. About an hour later after I finished my little jaunt, Ian Don-Wauchope trotted into the finish, bagging a new course record for the Big Daddy. My respect to him and all the runners who completed the full Salomon Sky Run knows no bounds.



Looking down at the finish - the Wartrail Country Club

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RENEWABLE ENERGY UPDATE

BY **Melissa Baird**

A round up of news relating to the growing need for energy solutions that are multi-faceted and able to manage local demand and supply as well as give back to the national grid. The private sector is ready and able to build renewable energy plants; it is now up to legislators to fast track the tariffs that will enable a mix of energy suppliers to offer their contribution to the nation's energy crises.

SA URGED TO INVEST IN HYBRID ENERGY SYSTEMS

Research, conducted by the South African Institute of Race Relations, shows that South Africa is in need of generating capacity the size of Medupi and Kusile every decade in order to continuously supply energy to the entire country. It is therefore in South Africa's best interest to invest in renewable energy projects, such as hybrid renewable energy systems, which will lessen the pressure on the national grid and create a sustainable supply of energy for the country.

The adoption of hybrid renewable energy systems is likely to become the next big trend for global power utilities as these systems increase the generating capacity of traditional power plants and sources due to the combination of two or more different types of energy sources.

These energy systems also enable the reduction of emissions from coal fired power stations that are increasingly a health and water risk to the country. So the environmental and social impact is improved in the drive towards developing more reliable and cleaner forms of energy to fuel the nation and achieve a more energy secure future.

Corporate players understand the risks and are building their own renewable powered buildings, like the Nedbank building in the Western Cape that makes use of solar and wind energy, converts this energy into electricity, and then feeds this electricity directly to the branch.

Hybrid systems are the answer to providing electricity to remote rural areas where the grid extension is a challenge and uneconomical. Fossil fuels, such as oil and coal, are the main source of energy in rural areas but are becoming increasingly expensive, while hybrid systems can provide electricity at a more cost effective price.

www.talesunenergy.com



KaXu Solar One forms part of 33 renewable energy plants which have been opened, and Patel is optimistic that within twelve months (the plant launched in March) plants will be built that will generate almost as much as Koeberg.”

First solar thermal electricity plant in SA

KaXu Solar One, is South Africa's first solar thermal electricity plant, and the biggest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. Based in Pofadder in the Northern Cape The KaXu Solar One plant will add 100 megawatts of electricity to the national grid – the equivalent of about 320 gigawatt hours of electricity a year. This is enough to power 80,000 houses, and can serve the needs of around 400,000 South Africans.

“In practical terms, this is the consumption of all the households in Mossel Bay, Oudshoorn, Knysna and Swellendam combined,” said Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel.

The plant covers an area of three square kilometres, and is made up of 1,200 collectors. Each collector has 10 modules, and each module has 28 mirrors. In total there are 336,000 mirrors on the plant which track the sun. What is absolutely amazing is that the energy generated can be stored for up to two-and-a-half hours in molten salt, which means power can be supplied to the national grid when it is needed most – at peak times after dark.

EARTH HOUR

On the 28th March WWF sends out their annual call for everyone in the cities to observe Earth Hour and turn off the lights. In South Africa Eskom is doing that for us on a regular basis which makes the call to action to join the call for renewable energy sources – more apt than ever. Load shedding notwithstanding on the 28th March – add your voice to the global call for renewable energy action from governments and if you have lights, turn them off, light a candle and step outside to find the stars for they will be able to show themselves that night.





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