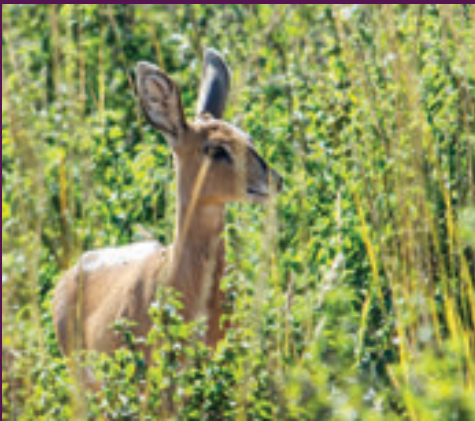




# *The* Villager

Issue 1 • 2017







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# Contents

*The Villager* focuses on Irene Farm Villages. The magazine is delivered to the home of each resident on the Estate. The magazine is co-ordinated and published by Estates in Africa (Pty) Ltd on behalf of the Home Owners' Association of Irene Farm Villages. The opinions of workers and personnel of Estates in Africa (Pty) Ltd do not necessarily reflect those of the HOA of Irene Farm Villages.

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Cover – cover images from 2016



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**Jonathan Koen** ♥ 073 206 3877 ♥ 012 662 5663



**SOME AGENTS LIKE TO TELL YOU HOW GOOD THEY ARE, I PREFER TO SHOW YOU**



Devine design meets exceptional finishes and unmatched build quality in this dream property. Open the front door and this stately home reveals finishes that will take your breath away, from the solid wood kitchen, imported porcelain tiles, modern bathrooms, underfloor heating and gas fireplace. The designs of the living areas are the perfect setting for entertainment, open plan that incorporates the kitchen, 2 lounges, and dining room. Sliding door opens up to a patio with built in braai overlooking the garden and adjacent park. All bedrooms are upstairs – the main suite radiates style and provides the occupants with enough cupboard space and a beautiful en suite bathroom. One more bathroom and 3 bedrooms with a landing/ study area. In addition to the majestic look and feel of this home, it also offers the owner practical features like: 3 garages with enough space for a work bench, servant quarters with bathroom, automated sprinkler system and a generous stand for the kids to play. Situated in the award winning Irene Farm Villages.



Situated in a quiet part of this award winning estate, this property offers everything and more. The location is perfection, adjacent to a green belt with natural veld grass overlooking the roaming wildlife guarantees tranquility and privacy, as there is no neighboring properties overlooking the entertainment area and pool. The home offers an open plan design that consists of 2 lounges, a dining room and stunning kitchen all with porcelain tiles. Study with built in cupboards is the perfect setting for working from home. On the first floor there are three bedrooms – the main bedroom offers an en suite bathroom with bath and shower. Enjoy your morning coffee from the balconies overlooking the green belt. The two rooms share a guest bathroom with bath and shower. The light and airy property also features a guest toilet, servant's quarters, double garage and air conditioning in the main bedroom.



Completed renovated beauty. Come and experience top notch finishes perfectly combined with an open plan layout that will please even the most discerning buyer. Step into the front door and be greeted by a spacious lounge area with air-conditioning. The open plan kitchen features granite tops and a separate scullery. Adjacent the dining room is a sunny, spacious entertainment area. Another scullery area with stack doors invites in the landscaped garden or provides the family with an informal living space to kick back and relax. The patio area features a built in braai overlooking the garden. Upstairs, the layout for family living is perfection. 4 bedrooms, 2 en suite bathrooms and a family bathroom. The main suite offers a Juliet balcony with the look and feel of an expensive hotel room, the en suite bathroom features both bath and shower with double vanities. The family bathroom and the other en suite bathroom both have beautiful finishes and gorgeous layout. Other features include double garage, servant's quarters, sprinkler system, air-conditioning units and a street appeal second to none.



**If sold is what you want, it's Jonathan you call!**

### Dear Residents

I was surprised when I received a call from Martin Fourie from Estates In Africa (Pty) ("EIA") just the other day. He enquired whether a 12th issue could be published for 2016. Usually there are only eleven issues. We agreed, keeping in mind that the HOA would like to share a couple of matters with its Residents at the beginning of 2017. Although the time schedule at the Estate Office was quite limited at the time, due to specific year-end duties and activities – and personnel going on leave – I managed to find the time to attend to the writing of this article. There are important matters that will be addressed in this article, hence Residents are kindly requested to take note thereof.

The annual Irene Farm Villages HOA 2016 Fun Day took place on a beautiful sunny Saturday on the 3rd of December 2016. The day was characterised by some of the following highlights:

- After a sudden appearance, the Bidvest Protea Coin helicopter was

landed with precision by George Tonking in the Prim Rose Street cul de sac, where it was displayed until it departed on its next task, however not before making a few low bypasses.

- The classic Irene Farm Villages activities were organised by Christa Janse van Rensburg, one of our Residents. For over two hours, children and adults took part in many family fun activities, including sack races, hoola-hoop

dancing, three-legged races, the water worm, water balloon tosses and tug-a-war.

- The water slide that was specially designed by Daryl Hardy, a resident of the Estate, was in great demand.
- A total of 30 stalls were on exhibition on the day, which attracted many visitors and reported good sales. A special word of thanks to all our Residents who supported the stalls.
- The paint ball shooting tunnel was introduced for the first time and was very popular, especially amongst the young boys.
- The horse rides of the Bidvest Protea Coin Horse Patrol Team, which was arranged by Marchell.
- The food stall was organised and run by Freshly Cooked.
- The toy train made many trips with the younger kids.
- The exhibition by Sandton Audi attracted a lot of interest.
- The arrival of Santa Claus in the toy train was special to the many children, who received presents from Santa.

I would like to thank all our Residents, who took part in the Fun Day, especially the children with their smiling faces, as well as the HOA Community Investment Committee ("CIC"), the Office staff, especially Madeleine, the Co-ordinator of the Fun Day, and the Security personnel.

The following HOA projects are in progress:  
The Fibre-To-The-Home ("FTTH") project is progressing well, with Vodacom and its sub-contractors to do their site establishment during January 2017. The Residents will be updated regularly as the FTTH progresses.



At van Niekerk





Hand in hand with the FTTH project runs the power solution, which makes provision for the installation of electricity to the entire 4.2 kilometre fence, required to run the cameras. The electric cable will be laid in a trench, which will be burrowed by Vodacom as part of the FTTH-project. The company, SPECTRA PROJECTS, was appointed by the HOA Board, after going out on tender.



Following the FTTH and the mentioned power solution projects, the CCTV project will be finalised. The CCTV project, which was approved at the 2016 Annual General Meeting ("AGM"), makes provision for the installation of the FLIR thermal detection cameras, with the analytics information being fed to a central control room through the fibre network supplied by Vodacom. This project will be financed through a rent-to-own agreement. The HOA Board, appointed X-ON Systems as its preferred supplier after going out on tender.



The Infra-Structure Development Plan ("IDP"), that was approved at the 2016 AGM, will make provisions for the upgrading of the main and the north gate buildings, as well as the operation and maintenance yard, adjacent to the main gate. The HOA Property Management Committee ("PMC") will manage this project. The CCTV project will be funded through the special levy of R11,280 per Member that was



approved at the AGM. This special levy will be collected over 36 months from the Members' levy accounts through a monthly payment of R313,33 from December 2016. The PMC is currently finalising the appointment of the professional team. The HOA will go out on tender

for the appointment of the building contractor, once the bill of quantity has been drafted by the Quantity Surveyor. A regular update of the ongoing income and expenditure on all the projects will be given with the monthly financial statement published in *The Villager*.

The HOA Board approved the re-registration of all household workers for 2017, which include the domestic workers, gardeners, au pairs, drivers, etc. The registration forms are available on the home web page at [www.irenefarmvillages.co.za](http://www.irenefarmvillages.co.za). The 2017 re-registrations can be e-mailed with the proof of payment to [admin@irenefarmvillages.co.za](mailto:admin@irenefarmvillages.co.za) for the attention of Madeleine. The registration fee is R50 per worker per stand. If a worker is discharged and replaced with another worker, the R50 registration fee must be paid for the new registration. **All household workers must be registered before 30th January 2017, whereafter the bio-metric access of all the current registered household workers who have not been registered will be suspended, pending the 2017 registration.** We appeal to our Residents to assist with the early registration of all workers.

With recognition to Attorneys Smith Tabata Buchanan Boyes in their

weekly newsletter, your attention is drawn to the new **DOMESTIC WORKERS WAGE INCREASE:**

The Department of Labour has announced wage increases for all domestic workers (which include gardeners at private homes; persons who look after children, the aged, the sick or the disabled in private homes; and persons employed to drive the children of a household to school). This is effective from 1 December 2016 to 30 November 2017.

Those working more than 27 ordinary hours per week:		
Area	Metro Areas	Other Areas
Hourly Rate	R12.42	R11.31
Weekly Rate	R559.09	R508.93
Monthly Rate	R2 422.54	R2 205.17

## Those working 27 ordinary hours or less per week:

Area	Metro Areas	Other Areas
Hourly Rate	R14.54	R13.35
Weekly Rate	R392.58	R360.54
Monthly Rate	R1 701.06	R1 562.21

Residents are reminded to register their pets. The registration forms are also available on the web-page.

We would like to wish all the Residents a prosperous 2017, with the following message to all the scholars and students: "If you absorb every word spoken by your teacher, you will be successful".

*Regards.  
Estate Manager*







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**DUAL MANDATE**

**NEW LISTING**

**R3,150mil**



Lovely 4 bed roomed property with brand new kitchen.

# Security



Marchell Galant

## Dear Residents

It is with great pleasure that Bidvest Protea Coin could be given the opportunity to participate in your Family Fun Day.

On behalf of the Security personnel at IFV (Irene Farm Villages), I would like to thank each Resident Owner/Tenant for a very good year. For those Residents that went on holiday, we trust that you had a very pleasant holiday and safe trip.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the new Shift Manager, Joe Lubbe from BPC (Bidvest Protea Coin)

to IFV. Joe is an employee and has been working for the company for the past 8 years. Joe worked at an estate



called Estate D'Afrique. Joe is married and has one (1) child.

I want to thank each Resident Owner/Tenant and visitor who came and enjoyed the Family Fun Day with us on December the 3rd. We trust that you all had a very good time with your family.

Kind Regards

*Marchell Galant*

Contract Manager  
EPS Irene Farm Villages  
Tel: +27 12 665 5602  
Mobile: +27 82 300 1835  
E-mail: galantm@proteacoin.co.za

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

24HR SECURITY GUARD ROOM:

**012-662-1688**

24HR CONTROLLER:

**082-947-7610**

24HR SHIFT MANAGER

**082-838-7779**

SECURITY MANAGER

**082-300-1835**

*remember*

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- That all vehicles that are parked in driveways must be locked and all valuables (e.g. laptops, wallets, handbags and GPS navigators) must be removed from the vehicle.
- That alarm systems must be activated and in a working condition. Please test your alarm system regularly to ensure that it is in a good working condition and that it does

- send out a signal when activated.
- To be vigilant at all times in the Estate and report any suspicious activities directly to the Bidvest Protea Coin Security.
- To be law abiding citizens and prevent crime, register all domestic workers and gardeners and make sure that they have IDs or valid passport documents.

Residents can contact me directly should they be interested in having an alarm system linked to our Protea Coin 24hrs Call Centre in Highveld Techno Park.

Marchell Galant • galantm@proteacoin.co.za • 082 300 1835



# Happy New Year



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## IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOME OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

### Summary Income Statement November 2016

	November 2016		Year to Date		YTD Variance	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Value	%
<b>Operational Income</b>						
<i>Levy Income</i>						
Normal Levies	918 565	910 648	8 216 097	8 195 832	20 265	0.2%
<i>Other Income</i>						
Interest Received	49 547	10 000	404 185	90 000	314 185	349.1%
Contractors Permits	0	10 000	102 095	90 000	12 095	13.4%
Estate Agent Registration	0	0	129 960	129 960	0	0.0%
Post Box Annual Fee	0	2 500	11 970	22 500	(10 530)	-46.8%
	<b>968 112</b>	<b>933 148</b>	<b>8 864 308</b>	<b>8 528 292</b>	<b>336 016</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>Operational Expenditure</b>						
<i>Professional /Administration</i>						
Accounting Fees	55 671	56 655	569 239	569 485	246	0.0%
Audit Fees	33 000	33 000	299 280	297 000	(2 280)	-0.8%
Bank Charges	1 772	2 500	60 475	65 000	4 525	7.0%
Insurance	2 938	2 500	24 515	22 500	(2 015)	-9.0%
Legal & Professional Fees	11 064	8 655	104 257	94 985	(9 272)	-9.8%
	6 897	10 000	80 712	90 000	9 288	10.3%
<i>General Office</i>						
Office Equipment	23 208	11 200	98 408	109 100	10 692	9.8%
General Expenses	1 015	1 200	5 962	10 600	4 638	43.8%
Office Refreshment	12 540	1 500	22 555	23 500	945	4.0%
Printing & Stationary	1 051	1 000	4 893	9 000	4 107	45.6%
Telecommunication	1 242	3 500	20 903	30 000	9 097	30.3%
	7 360	4 000	44 095	36 000	(8 095)	-22.5%
<i>Operational Expenses</i>						
Municipal Charges	141 535	163 412	1 299 610	1 483 712	184 102	12.4%
Recycling	26 844	50 000	287 942	450 000	162 058	36.0%
Donations	8 909	8 662	75 550	77 962	2 412	3.1%
Meetings	0	5 000	35 000	45 000	10 000	22.2%
Salaries & Wages	488	750	2 878	9 750	6 872	70.5%
	105 294	99 000	898 240	901 000	2 760	0.3%
<i>Security</i>						
Access Control (ClickOn)	534 234	553 700	4 635 631	4 701 193	65 562	1.4%
- ClickOn Recovery	21 074	22 000	181 087	198 000	16 913	8.5%
Equipment Maintenance SLA	(10 812)	(12 000)	(83 713)	(108 000)	(24 287)	22.5%
Security Maintenance	20 873	19 500	150 717	175 500	24 783	14.1%
Guarding Services	0	7 000	50 923	63 000	12 077	19.2%
	503 100	517 200	4 336 617	4 372 693	36 076	0.8%
<i>Repairs &amp; Maintenance</i>						
Fuel	125 960	152 964	1 283 027	1 313 259	30 232	2.3%
General Maintenance	1 911	3 000	26 237	27 000	763	2.8%
	3 588	9 650	41 874	86 850	44 976	51.8%





## IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOME OWNERS' ASSOCIATION Summary Income Statement November 2016

	November 2016		Year to Date		YTD Variance	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Value	%
Infrastructure Maintenance	1 390	3 000	30 696	27 000	(3 696)	-13.7%
Park Facing Boundary Walls	4 379	12 500	109 940	112 500	2 560	2.3%
Park Maintenance	0	4 500	41 827	40 500	(1 327)	-3.3%
Park Maintenance Contract	114 492	118 814	1 010 989	1 004 509	(6 480)	-0.6%
Vehicles	200	1 500	21 466	14 900	(6 566)	-44.1%
	880 608	937 931	7 885 915	8 176 749	290 834	3.6%
<b>Operating Profit / (Loss)</b>	<b>87 504</b>	<b>(4 783)</b>	<b>978 392</b>	<b>351 543</b>	<b>626 849</b>	
<b>Non-Recurring Revenue</b>						
Special Levies	0	0	0	0	0	100.0%
Estate Penalties	4 000	0	30 650	0	30 650	100.0%
Late Building Penalties	0	0	53 250	0	53 250	100.0%
Late Payment Penalties	5 550	0	35 619	0	35 619	100.0%
Expense Recovery	0	0	14 374	0	14 374	100.0%
Sale to Members	790	0	3 083 321	0	3 083 321	100.0%
<b>Non-Recurring Expenses</b>						
Water Risk Management	0	0	23 180	100 000	76 820	76.8%
Traffic Management	0	0	73 918	75 809	1 891	2.5%
Social Development Projects	0	0	46 155	45 000	(1 155)	-2.6%
Water Tanker Roadworthy	0	0	0	50 000	50 000	100.0%
Park Development	0	0	48 428	60 000	11 572	19.3%
Historic Tshwane Accounts	0	0	1 375	408 000	406 625	99.7%
Environmental Development	0	0	70 976	153 500	82 524	53.8%
Cash Provision	0	25 000	0	145 000	145 000	100.0%
CCTV Project	0	0	46 672	0	(46 672)	100.0%
Stand Sales	0	0	35 786	0	(35 786)	100.0%
Net Positive/ (Negative)	10 340	(25 000)	2 870 724	(1 037 309)	3 908 033	
<b>Net Profit / (Loss)</b>	<b>97 844</b>	<b>(29 783)</b>	<b>3 849 116</b>	<b>(685 766)</b>	<b>4 534 882</b>	

### Account Ability

Office Address:  
Sovereign Drive,  
Route 21  
Corporate Park

Accounting Office Hours  
8:00 to 13:00  
Monday to Friday

Office Tel:  
082 780 0059

Accounts Email:  
accounts@aams.co.za

IFV Accounts:  
Winny Boshoff

“Actual year to date income exceeds the budgeted income by R301,000. This is mostly as a result of interest received on the investments from the sale of 4 stands and the cash reserves held by the HOA. Operational expenses for the first 8 months are R279,000 below budget which, together with our excess income resulted in an operating profit of R937,000 for the year to date. Our operational financial position is healthy with good control evident over spending and income”

### Summary Income Statement by Account Ability

“Do not be embarrassed by your failures, learn from them and start again.”  
– Richard Branson



# Fun Day







# Fun Day





# What's hot and happening in Gauteng in 2017?

The Gauteng Tourism Authority provides an impressive list of events for look out for in 2017.

**There are a host of exciting events taking place in Gauteng in 2017:**



## BMW South African Open Championship (Golf)

The 2017 BMW South African Open Championship will be held at the Glendower Golf Club in Ekurhuleni from January 12-15. This is the third event on the European Tour's 2017 schedule. The field is open to 156 competitors, who will fight it out for the winner's trophy over four rounds of 18 holes each. Rory McIlroy and Ernie Els will be among those playing for the R15m prize money. Tickets to the event can be booked through Ticketpro.



## Tshwane Open golf tournament

The Tshwane Open takes place at the Pretoria Country Club in Waterkloof from March 2-5. This highly anticipated 72-hole stroke play championship will see 156 professional golfers participating. The Tshwane Open forms part of the Sunshine Tour and is co-sanctioned by the European Tour. Some of the best local and international players will compete for the R18,5m prize money. Tickets for the tournament will be available through Ticketpro.

## Soweto Wine & Lifestyle Festival

The Soweto Wine & Lifestyle Festival takes place from March 3-5 at the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication in Klieptown, Soweto. The festival has become one of Africa's premium wine, food, music and lifestyle events. The event showcases wines from some of South Africa's most exciting vineyards and offers a platform for new producers trying to penetrate the market. Visitors can enjoy a variety of foods and shop for funky lifestyle products. Tickets will be made available to the public in December through Nu Tickets.





## Vaal River Meander Wine Route



The Vaal River Meander Wine Route takes place from June 24-July 30 (Saturdays and Sundays from 12h00 to 18h00). Dozens of wine estates are represented along the route – made up of 17 different venues in the vicinity – with more than 200 wines to sample. Each venue offers a minimum of eight wines, with some venues having 20 different wines to taste. There are options of wine tastings on a luxury river cruise, aboard a houseboat, in a wine cellar, a pub, an upmarket hotel and even in a township. Other options include a wine tasting lunch on a luxury cruiser, spa treatments and wine and food pairing. Visitors can make use of different modes of transport to get to the different venues, including a watertaxi, vintage car, or a chauffeur-driven vehicle. For info and packages email [info@vaalwineroute.co.za](mailto:info@vaalwineroute.co.za).

## DSTV Delicious International Food & Music Festival

The DSTV Delicious International Food & Music Festival, a festival for food and music lovers, takes place during the last weekend of September

2017. It will be held at a venue still to be confirmed. Attendees can expect delicious food, street chefs and an excellent music line-up of international and local acts. Tickets for the event can be booked through Ticketpro.



## RMB Winex 2017

South Africa's premier wine show, RMB Winex takes place at the Sandton Convention Centre from October 25 - 27. Visitors can sample wines from more than 100 local and international wine producers, learn about wine pairing and viniculture, and order bottles of their favourite wines to enjoy at home. There is also the Table Talk pop-up tasting programme where exhibitors talk about their wines and other topics. To book visit [www.winex.co.za](http://www.winex.co.za).



## Good Food & Wine Show

The Good Food & Wine Show takes place from October 27-29 at the Ticketpro Dome in Johannesburg. Visitors can expect innovative culinary experiences, cooking demonstrations by top local and international chefs and culinary master classes. Also on offer are baking classes, talks on healthy eating, a baking theatre where guests can learn to bake, a cake decoration lab and a wine theatre where guests can sample wines and learn about wine and food pairing. Details for bookings will be revealed at a later stage.

## Sansui Summer Cup

The Sansui Summer Cup is one of South Africa's premier horse racing events. It will take place at the Turffontein Racecourse in Johannesburg towards the end of November 2017 (date to be confirmed). Race goers can expect thrilling horse race action throughout the day. There are several hospitality and ticketing options available with the emphasis on family, food, fun and entertainment. Many of South Africa's well-known musicians will entertain the crowd. Bookings can be made through Computicket.

## Also on in 2017

- Decorex Joburg
- Soweto Derby
- Standard Bank Joy of Jazz festival
- 702 Walk the Talk
- FNB Joburg Art Fair
- Joburg Shopping Festival
- Arts Alive Johannesburg
- Telkom 947 Cycle Challenge
- BMW International Polo Series



The Jacksons

# South Africa's miracle game park

*I was cruising along the recently tarred road from St Lucia to Cape Vidal in what is now the iSimangaliso Wetland Park . . . one of Africa's most fascinating wildlife reserves.*

**“iSimangaliso” implies a miracle or wonder and comes from a Zulu legend. The name fits so well with what happened there in the 1990s.**

As we drove along I saw, on my left, a flotilla of pink-backed pelicans drifting on the gradually broadening neck of lake St Lucia – Africa's biggest estuary.

In the open grassland between the road and the lake waterbuck were grazing. On my right was an expanse of grassland and bush – a paradise for buffalo, reedbuck and other creatures. Beyond it was a long range of forest-covered hills. They were sand dunes – arguably, the highest forested dunes on earth and certainly the richest in terms of birds and mammals.

Their bases sloped down to the intertidal zone of the Indian Ocean, home of marine species quite as varied as the animals on the land. There are humpback whales and southern right whales, dolphins and a huge variety of fish including “old four legs”, the coelacanth that was around when dinosaurs existed.

My mind went back to 1990 when I spent some time in this area. In those days each side of the road was bordered by a sterile, kilometres deep, belt of government-planted pine trees. You could barely see the dunes. In any event the dunes seemed to be doomed. Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) had been given Ministerial permission to remove

them down to bedrock to extract titanium. The mine owners promised to pile the sand up again saying the indigenous forest would regrow, one day.

The government saw absolutely no use for the estuary. It had, in vain, drilled for oil there. Two decades earlier it handed the northern part of Lake St Lucia to the Army for testing its artillery. On the Western Shores of the lake vast areas were cleared of bush and planted to crops such as guavas.

RBM's open-cast mining would continue 24 hours a day using floodlighting at night. The company said it would create hundreds of jobs. I think the figure was 300. Maybe 600. It doesn't really matter. Today the park employs thousands.

In 1990, the environmental Minister was quite enthusiastic about it all.

I interviewed him in his Cape Town office in what turned out to be more of a confrontation. He showed me an obviously hastily drawn map crudely inscribed in freehand: “The Greater St Lucia Wetland Park”. He invited me to join him next day in the St Lucia dunes when he would announce his idea.

The first his staff, including the director general, knew of his idea was when they saw their Minister on television standing on the dunes.

The public was incensed.

Ten years before I started a petition to stop coal mining in Kruger Park – the biggest petition in the country's history. The 1990 petition to “Save St Lucia” was many times bigger. This was despite the Endangered Wildlife Trust and the Wildlife Society sympathising





with the mining company – RBM being their biggest donor.

That year saw revolutionary changes worldwide: the Berlin Wall had just come down, communist Russia collapsed, totalitarianism was under attack across the globe. That was the year South Africa ditched apartheid, “unbanned” the ANC and released Nelson Mandela. Thousands of exiles and activists like Andrew Zaloumis – now the chief executive of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park – could now live normal lives.

The ANC’s manifesto prioritised conservation. The interim government quashed the mining plan and stated that Lake St Lucia and its dune forest were, ecologically, not just of national importance but of international importance. The environment Minister went back to farming and RBM’s CEO found himself mining in the Far East.

There followed the daily sound of chainsaws as 14 000ha of alien pines were cleared. The seepage from the dunes, no longer sucked up by the pines, once again flowed into the natural system and the native vegetation, like the exiles, returned.

The 332 000ha iSimangaliso Wetland Park was proclaimed. In 1999 it became South Africa’s first World Heritage Site. No other estuary, as far as I know, has quite such a dynamic set of interacting ecosystems – eight in all. It has Africa’s largest estuarine system; South Africa’s largest freshwater lake (Sibaya) with its own unique living system. In fact it has three major lake systems. It has a coastal dune ecology and an intertidal ecology along its 220km of coastline.

Along its coast one can watch the world’s largest turtle – the leatherback that weighs more than a family car – hauling itself ashore at night to lay its eggs. One can also watch, depending on the time of year, its hatchlings, each the size of a computer mouse, racing towards the breakers. The smaller loggerhead turtle is also unfazed as people stand around with torches watching it scraping a hole and depositing its eggs.

On this trip we did not have time to explore Sodwana Bay nor iSimangaliso’s northern regions up to Kosi Bay and the Mozambique border. There’s a chain of lakes up there and one can snorkel along a reef. It is a wonderland of birds. The entire reserve has as many bird species as Kruger Park’s 2-million hectares – well over 500 species.

One afternoon on the estuary, just outside St Lucia town, we spent time on a barge, birding and watching hippo pods – up close. We walked kilometres along the beach and found one of the rarest of birds in South Africa, the Eurasian Oystercatcher.

The megafauna in the wetland comprises many superlatives such as the world’s biggest land mammal (elephant weighing up to 7 tons); the second largest, the 2.5 ton white rhino (the hippo doesn’t fall far short); the tallest (giraffe) and the fastest (cheetah) and, soon, the world’s largest antelope, the eland, will be reintroduced.

The park does not fall under the South African national parks authority and nor does it fall under the provincial game reserves system. It falls under its own authority – the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority and has a government appointed board. Its chief executive, Anthony Zaloumis, is the son of a dentist and dedicated naturalist, Dr Nolly Zaloumis, who played a pivotal role in the 1990 battle to save St Lucia. While Zaloumis senior was campaigning, his son, a town planner by training but a conservationist by preference, was, as an anti-apartheid activist, living, for seven years, in a hut in KwaDapha (Kosi Bay) near the border in Mozambique. His association with Mozambicans is proving most useful for he envisages, one day, the St Lucia wetlands becoming contiguous with Mozambique’s Maputo Elephant Reserve as well as reserves in Swaziland – a great land and sea international reserve. All three areas are already preparing high grade roads towards this eventuality.

Zaloumis’ extraordinary touch is evident everywhere. For instances,

each viewpoint and picnic site has the cleanest toilets I have come across in any reserve in the world. They looked new but have been there three years. Maintenance in the reserve is of a high order. There are wheelchair ramps at various sites. Each site has its own unique knee-high signpost individually named – “Bejane” for black rhino; “uMkhombe” for white rhino; “iNyathi” for buffalo; etc – and each is inscribed with its GPS co-ordinate and code for those with iPods who want, there and then to get more information. The posts are designed bearing in mind the tendency for rhino and elephant to destroy them or, at least, to use them as a scratching post. The posts have data so that visitors, using their iPads, can obtain, there and then, information relating to the site.

I saw a “photo-site”: a discreet off-the-track space where one can park at a water hole and have a dark background to enhance the image of the whatever is at the water.

Although there are cabins at Cape Vidal we chose to stay in a delightful B&B (Eco Lodge) in St Lucia – a clean and neat little town with a population of 800. Half the houses offer B&B. The town is unique in that it is owned by its inhabitants and is totally surrounded by the wetland’s virgin forest and it’s not unusual for a hippo to be seen wandering down the shopping street.



Andrew Zaloumis, chief executive of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and James Clarke.

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## BORN TO RUN

By Bruce Springsteen

"Writing about yourself is a funny business...But in a project like this, the writer has made one promise, to show the reader his mind. In these pages, I've tried to do this." - Bruce Springsteen, from the pages of Born to Run.



With disarming candor, he also tells for the first time the story of the personal struggles that inspired his best work, and shows us why the song "Born to Run" reveals more than we previously realized. Born to Run will be revelatory for anyone who has ever

enjoyed Bruce Springsteen, but this book is much more than a legendary rock star's memoir. This is a book for workers and dreamers, parents and children, lovers and loners, artists, freaks, or anyone who has ever wanted to be baptized in the holy river of rock and roll.

Rarely has a performer told his own story with such force and sweep. Like many of his songs ("Thunder Road", "Badlands", "Darkness on the Edge of Town", "The River", "Born in the U.S.A.", "The Rising" and "The Ghost of Tom Joad" to name just a few), Bruce Springsteen's autobiography is written with the lyricism of a singular songwriter and the wisdom of a man who has thought deeply about his experiences.

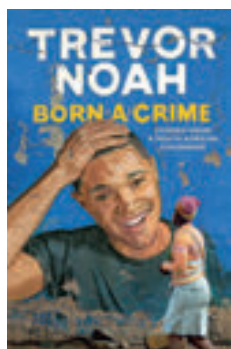
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## BORN A CRIME AND OTHER STORIES

By Trevor Noah

Trevor Noah's path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of The Daily Show in New York began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison.

Born a Crime is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of his relationship with his

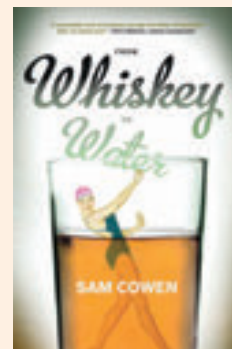


fearless, rebellious and fervently religious mother - his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.

The eighteen personal essays collected here are by turns hilarious, dramatic and deeply affecting.

Whether being thrown from a moving car during an attempted kidnapping or simply trying to survive the life-and-death pitfalls of dating in high school, Trevor illuminates his world with an incisive wit and an unflinching honesty.

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## FROM WHISKEY TO WATER

By Sam Cowen

"My name is Samantha and I'm an alcoholic. At the time of writing, I've been sober for 13 years, 11 months and 16 days. And yes I still count. I promised I would never speak about it publicly until my children understood what that meant, that mommy was an alcoholic. I think they may have understood long before I did."

From Whiskey to Water is the no-holds-barred memoir by one of South Africa's most loved radio talk show hosts, Sam Cowen. Having kept her alcohol addiction well away from the public eye for over 14 years, in this tell-all tale, Sam finds the courage to talk about her struggle with her addiction to whiskey, food and finally to a passion that saved her life - marathon swimming. Told in her characteristically hilarious deadpan style, this is one of the bravest books you'll read this year.

"So this is a book on how I stopped drinking? No, it's not. It's how I stopped drinking, started eating, became clinically severely obese, stopped eating (everything that wasn't nailed down) and swam my way to freedom. No, it's not. It's actually about addiction and learning and sadness and anxiety and love and drive. It's about channelling the unchangeable into the miraculous. It's about dragons and learning how to put them to sleep when you can't slay them. It's about being my own Daenerys."

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