

Merry Christmas! Wishing Everyone a Wonderful Christmas Time

Through my eyes

...improvement is an act of rebellion



by Kasia Yoko

So here we are. December. The season of glittery distractions and big promises to ourselves. Many of us are already looking toward 2025, wondering what needs to change and how we can make next year better, brighter, and—let’s be honest—more intentional. As John C. Maxwell wisely observed, “Small disciplines repeated with consistency every day lead to great achievements gained slowly over time.” It’s a truth we often overlook in the chaos of resolutions and quick fixes. Finally, the time has come to reset and retrace our roots. 2024 was brutal—brutal and educational. It held a mirror up to us, showing every crack, every scar, every lesson we didn’t think we were ready for. Life, as we knew

it, may never return to what it was before those years of lockdowns and loss, of fear and forced surrender. We were brought to our knees. Yet, here we are—standing, maybe not as tall as we once were, but taller than we were yesterday. We are emerging from the ashes. Struggling, yes, but surviving. Paying off the debts of yesterday, both literal and emotional. Functioning to the best of our abilities despite the scars and the weight of the past. 2025 looms ahead—new governments, new regimes, new uncertainties. It’s hard not to feel the fear of the unknown. But here’s the thing: we cannot allow the past to write our future. We cannot be prisoners of what broke us. We move forward. One foot in front of the other. One

challenge at a time. We reclaim our power, our voices, and our lives—not by sprinting toward some distant goal, but by walking steadily, faithfully, and with purpose. Before you get swept up in the New Year’s resolution industrial complex, let’s cut to the heart of it: you deserve more. You deserve a life that is anything but ordinary. A life that isn’t just about survival but about thriving, laughing, and living with unapologetic joy. 2025 can be your year. Not because of a list of resolutions taped to your fridge or a vision board filled with magazine cutouts, but because you finally choose you. You choose to step out of the shadows of what’s expected and into the light of what’s possible. You choose to believe that your

dreams are valid, that your voice matters, and that your life is worth living boldly. So, what will it be? The same tired script, or one that sets your soul on fire? The pen is in your hand. Write a story that’s unapologetically yours. Start small. Start scared. Just start. Because the truth is, we’re all a little broken. But broken things still shine. And maybe—just maybe—it’s through the cracks that the light gets in. Let’s make 2025 bigger, bolder, and a whole lot more fun. This is your year. Take it. Rewrite it. Live it. Thank you to all who, read our stories and support us. We are grateful. With love, Kasia Yoko

Dear Ed,
Re: Here comes the New Year

Here’s the thing about change: it doesn’t just happen because the calendar flips to January 1st. Left unchecked, life defaults to inertia rather than progress, and as the conveyor belt of mediocre decisions, mindless distractions, and justifications we half-believe keeps on rolling, the new year starts to quickly look a whole lot like the last one. So, if you’re serious about having a “new” new year, it’s time to confront the choices you’re making—and the ones you’ve been letting life make for you.

Step 1: The Default is Not Your Destiny
We live in a world that doesn’t default to improvement. Quite the opposite. The natural state of things—whether it’s your inbox, your calendar, or even your mindset—is chaos masquerading as busyness. If you do nothing, entropy takes over. You’re swept into the current of family norms, peer pressures, and societal expectations, leaving little room for thoughtful progress. Here’s the truth: “better” is never accidental. It requires deliberate, conscious choice. Improvement—whether personal, professional, or relational—demands you swim against the tide of convenience and complacency. And yes, that sounds exhausting. But the alternative? A slow drift into mediocrity, punctuated by a few frantic bursts of “What am I even doing with my life?”
Step 2: The Great Escape from the Life Script
I once got a piece of life-altering mentorship: “Your past doesn’t have to define your future.” That permission slip to change was revolutionary, but it was then on me to take the risk, do the work and make the change. Yet so many of us live as if shackled to a blueprint we didn’t draft but somehow feel obligated to execute. The truth is liberating, albeit uncomfortable: you can opt out.

But here’s the rub—if you choose to stay in that unsatisfying job, relationship, or routine, you’ll likely convince yourself you HAD to. After all, no one enjoys admitting they willingly picked the path of least resistance. The good news? By questioning those default choices, you can design a life you actually want to live. Sure, it’s scary. But isn’t it scarier to wake up one day and realize the choices weren’t really yours or that you didn’t actually need anyone’s permission to live the life you wanted? Step 3: The Power of Persistent Effort
Now, let’s talk about the hard work and what it takes to suit up and show up for yourself every day. The fear of failure paralyzes too many of us. But here’s a reframe: Swing, knowing full well you’re gonna miss. Champion hurdlers don’t ever contemplate quitting a race just because they knocked a hurdle. Every miss is just a data point, a recalibration, a nudge closer to the bullseye. Consistency might not win any awards for drama, but it’s what gets things done. If you keep trying, you’re bound to hit. But only if you keep shooting. Inconsistency kills every dream it touches. In short: don’t mistake effort for failure, and don’t mistake failure for finality. Wrapping It All Up
Life is both the greatest collaborator and the worst script supervisor. It will hand you a draft, sure, but it’s up to you to edit, rewrite, and sometimes rip it up entirely. * Opt out of the default everything. Improvement is an act of rebellion. * Reject the pre-packaged life script. Your choices, not the ones your parents, your younger self, or society picked for you, defines your life and legacy. * Keep taking shots. Every attempt is a step closer to mastery. Consistency might not be glamorous, but it’s undefeated.

With deep regards
Paige Williams
Durban

Dear Ed,
Re: I’m like sand here in the country

My good Editors I would like to inform All South African Students that as we are here in this country, we are like the sand all what we are planting is what we will reap up in all our processes as we are growing up. You are a Student who is listening very well for your Teachers if they are requesting you to come early in the morning for the morning Classes, saying pls let’s leave late this afternoon for Afternoon Classes, you are listening for your Teachers, do you think God can’t help you in all what you are writing at the end of the year? My Matric Students please remember very well that it is God who is giving us an opportunity to develop our future, all what you are doing and how you are developing for your future is what you will get in all your future. You are attending your Saturday Classes, Sunday Classes and Afternoon Classes, believe me God see anything you are doing and God going to give you a good success. You’ve been very lucky for the Parents God used to bring you in

the world and they are teaching you how to grow up with the power of God, they are Praying with you when they are sleeping at night and Praying with you when they are waking up in the morning, they are helping you to know that as you are growing up it is not because of cleverness but it is because of God’s Power. So please make sure you are alone at home you are Praying to God, you are reading God’s Holy Book to get what God is telling you, and you will try by all means to keep what God is telling you, if your friends they are trying to pull you inside their bad behaviour but because you are praying to God believe me even your blood can tell you, “don’t do this, God is not happy about those people who are dealing with these bad behaviours on their growing up processes”. It is all up to you, you’ve been given advise. You want to be alive long years in your Country, how devil is dancing but because you are with God, God will help you to stay even 100 years in your country. Please read verses of Psalms 49:20, you will get that you can be a millionaire or a billionaire but you are passing away without God what does it

mean if you never accepted God as your Creator, you were not going to the Church & never accepted God as your Creator what does it mean with your Eternal Life. Please South African Students try by all your powers to keep on your mind and in your conscience all what God advising you about, and make sure you attending Churches to listen what God is doing to those different people and you’ll get how other people survived on a very bad occasions, they’ll tell on the Church it was not because of their cleverness but it was because of God’s power. You’ll see by following all God’s advice what’s going to happen to you as you are growing up. I would like to Congratulate the Acting Principal of the Nonhlevu Secondary School by making sure that every day as Students is getting inside the School are starting by Praying before getting inside their Classes, it is then all up to them as they are already getting advice inside the School, they’ll need to understand it’s not only to Pray to the School but even at their homes.

Nkosinathi R. Ziqubu
KwaDukuza



Dear Editor,
Re: Chaos at the Umgeni Road Interchange

The ongoing roadworks at the Umgeni Road interchange have become a source of immense frustration for Durban motorists. While infrastructure improvements are always welcome, the lack of clear planning and proper signage at this busy junction has turned the daily commute into a nightmare. Traffic congestion has reached unprecedented levels, with delays stretching well beyond acceptable limits. Drivers are left navigating a maze of confusing detours, often with little to no warning about where the next turn might lead. One wrong

move, and you’re not just off course—you’re practically en route to Timbuktu! For an interchange of such strategic importance, the chaos is inexcusable. Commuters, delivery drivers, and even emergency services are bearing the brunt of this poorly managed situation. To make matters worse, there seems to be no visible urgency in completing the project. I urge the relevant authorities to prioritise this construction, implement clearer directional signage, and manage the flow of traffic more effectively. A little foresight and communication could make all the difference. Sincerely, A Frustrated Motorist



Durban is gearing up for a vibrant and bustling season



Attending the event; Buzz Bolton, Ken Wilkinson and Geoff Pullan

Durban Launches Summer Festivities Amid Challenges

By Kasia Yoko



Durban offers a unique blend of cultural, natural, and adventure-filled experiences

As the 2024/25 summer season approaches, Durban is preparing to welcome over 1.3 million visitors, cementing its place as one of South Africa's most popular holiday destinations. With an anticipated occupancy rate of 65% from December to February—rising to 80% in December alone—the city is gearing up for a vibrant and bustling season.

This year, international tourists are expected to make up 7% of visitors, while 13% will come from within KwaZulu-Natal. The remaining 80% will hail from other provinces, reaffirming Durban's allure as a domestic tourism hotspot. *A Fresh Take on Durban's Attractions*

The eThekweni Municipality's summer campaign is positioning Durban as more than just a beach destination, encouraging visitors to uncover the city's hidden gems. From stunning beach resorts to township tours and heritage sites, the city offers a unique blend of cultural, natural, and adventure-filled experiences.

"We want tourists to discover Durban's hidden gems and explore beyond the beaches," said municipal spokesperson Gugu Sisilana. "Our city is ready to host visitors safely while offering a variety of unforgettable experiences."

Durban Tourism has been actively promoting the city through domestic and international roadshows, ensuring travel partners have everything they need to showcase Durban as a premier holiday destination.

Tackling Beach Safety and E. Coli Concerns

Durban's iconic beaches remain a

cornerstone of its tourism appeal. However, concerns over E. Coli pollution have put the spotlight on water safety. The Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology at Durban University of Technology has flagged high E. Coli levels in certain areas. The city is conducting ongoing water quality tests, with updates available on the municipality's website.

Addressing the matter, Councillor Geoff Pullan remarked, "The tourism industry is really hard hit by the E. Coli pollution in our ocean. Fewer tourists and visitors affect hotels, B&Bs, guesthouses, and the entire accommodation sector. This leads to job losses, so the city must sort out our sewerage into the sea. Employment, or rather lack of it, is what brings our city to its knees."

Safety Initiatives and New Experiences

Durban has also stepped up efforts to enhance visitor safety with increased police visibility and smart policing initiatives, including CCTV monitoring, bodycams, and dashcams.

New tourism offerings include the redevelopment of the Coastal Lounge in Umgababa, the soon-to-open Anton Lembede Museum, and the much-anticipated relaunch of Durban's Hilton Hotel. Outdoor enthusiasts can indulge in activities like zip-lining, quad biking, and luxury boat rides, while food lovers can enjoy Durban's rich culinary heritage.

Despite challenges, Durban's resilience shines through as it embraces the festive season with renewed vigour, offering visitors an unforgettable summer experience.

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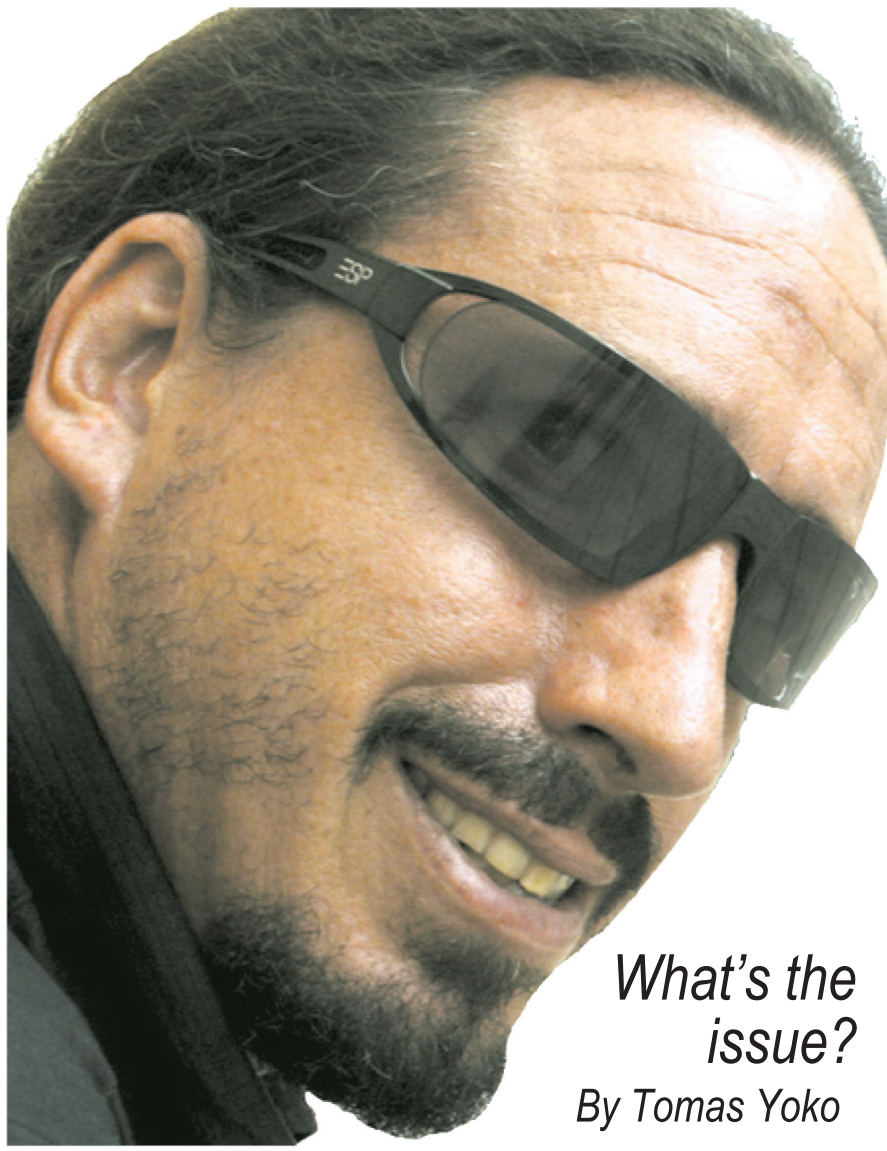
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"Christmas is a season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall and the genial flame of charity in the heart," by Washington Irving



What's the issue?
By Tomas Yoko

THE REWARD FOR CONFORMITY IS THAT
EVERYONE LIKES YOU EXCEPT YOURSELF.

- RITA MAE BROWN -

“West’s mask is off in fight for the soul of humanity – Roger Waters” Reads a headline in the media. Pink Floyd’s most famous member revealed his whole tin foil hat in a recent interview where he said things like “Criminal lunatics”, and accused Western powers of trying to create a world where genocide was okay. Roger was quoted as saying, “We are watching the machinations of possibly the end of an empire, the Western empire. The mask is off. We, the West, behave with unbearable brutality towards oppressed peoples all over the world,” adding that, “We, the people, hate it. We hate the brutality of our governments.” His tirade continued with the conspiracy that we are in an existential battle for the soul of the human race, “If the empire

wins this battle, our children and grandchildren and any survivors of this stuff will have to live in a future where we’ve just all agreed that a genocide is OK.” I don’t know if he was huffing and puffing by this stage but I would have been. “We are a gang of powerful gangsters here, and we are going to steal everything that there is in the world that is worth stealing,” accused Roger citing decades of dodgy oil dealings in Syria as outright “theft”. The Israeli Defence Force, or IDF as they are known are dropping bombs everywhere lately. Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, Yemen, there must be more, I just don’t know how they do it. The Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree, who is a marvel to watch on the podium, continued his attack on Israel and the West adding a dire warning of more

ballistic missiles to be expected from them. So not spreading the conflict didn’t work then. Turkey is massing troops on the Syrian border and the Kurdish look towards America for sanctuary. America are in it up their eyeballs in the Middle East with many saying that Bibi calls the shots and the US pulls the trigger. Here at home our political turmoil continues to take casualties as our fledgling Government of National Unity morphs into something completely new and exciting. The South African Communist Party seems to be going it alone in the next elections, splitting away from the tripartite agreement and maybe, just maybe taking COSATU with as they walk out the door. Then there are the seemingly endless defections from the EFF with their top brass almost all joining MK. Birds and feathers.

China recently executed Li Jianping for serious corruption and fraud that he was found guilty of, the problem is worldwide, this may be a deterrent to some extent at least in China. We would have a problem with those policies here in SA. And so this is Christmas, Candice Owen regularly points to the fact that Christians are being persecuted, murdered, marginalised and more, the world over. Peace on Earth, a regular wish and aspiration of Christian values, the Goodwill to All Men an extension of that intention, all hope of that seems totally elusive. However it is through challenges and issues like these that our faith is chiselled and our resilience is practised. Marry Christmas everybody, and a prosperous 2025.



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Sudoku

Last week's solution

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3	7	9	8	1	2	4	5	6
4	3	8	6	9	1	5	7	2
7	5	6	2	8	4	3	1	9
9	2	1	3	7	5	6	8	4
8	9	3	4	2	7	1	6	5
1	4	7	9	5	6	2	3	8
2	6	5	1	3	8	9	4	7

					5
1			9		
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3		9	1	4	6
	4		6	8	7
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8	7	3			9

"The greatest gift of life is friendship, and I have received it," By Hubert H. Humphrey



Cloud Cuckoo Land

"Into my mind leapt a vision of a palace of golden towers stacked on clouds, ringed by falcons, redshanks, quails...where tortoises circulated with honeycakes balanced on their backs..."

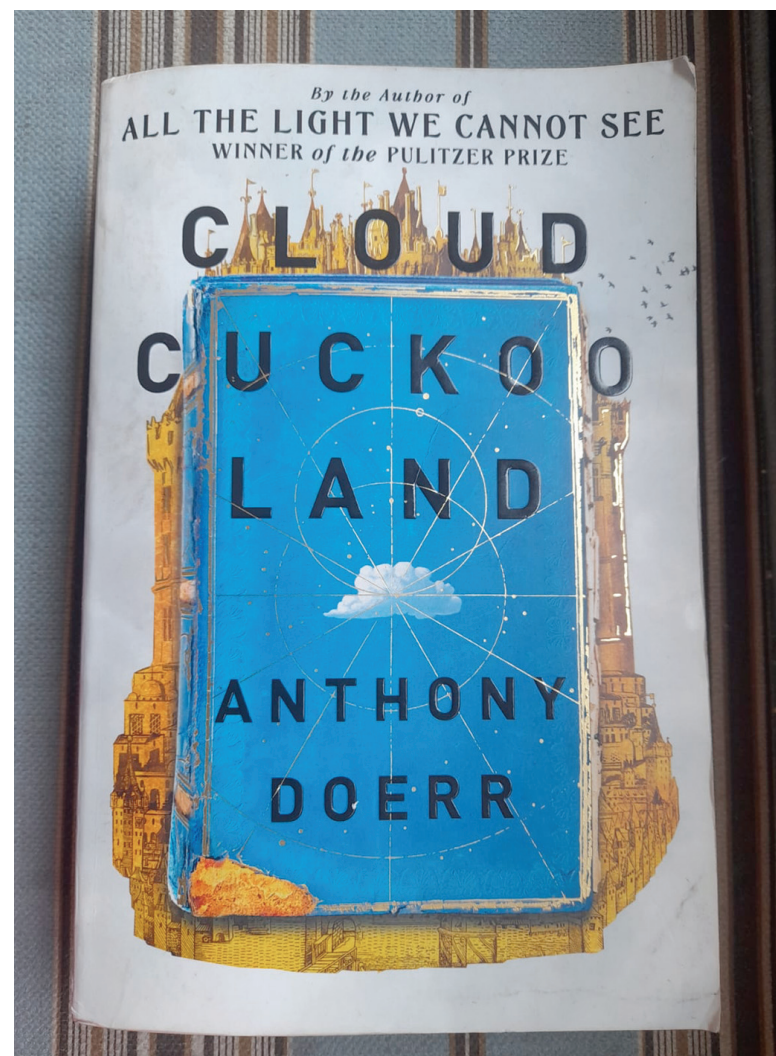
I have always been a believer in cloud cuckoo lands, my parents always finding me deep in books, imagining, floating through different times and place, building palaces and discovering hidden worlds. "Your head is constantly stuck in the clouds", their quizzical refrain. I never really came out of that cumulus phase. As 2024 draws to a close, I reflect on my year of reading. A bounteous one, two books a month, magical worlds opened. I discovered new authors; Karen Jennings, Samantha Harvey, Abraham Verghese. It was a sheer delight. But the writer who stole my mind and then released it into a series of mind-tingling adventures is Anthony Doerr. Once I read 'All the Light we Cannot See', I was hooked, floating through 'About Grace' and 'Seasons in Rome', and the ultimate journey, 'Cloud Cuckoo Land'.



In a world of fear, war, and turmoil, lose yourself in books

This is a profoundly moving book, the narrative spinning out of an ancient Greek tale by Antonius Diogenes of a quest for the golden land, intertwined with a plot and characters who swing between the siege of Constantinople, Idaho, a modern-day climate activist, and a futuristic spaceship. It is a love letter to books, to 'the Librarians, then, now and in the years to come.' In a world of fear, war, and turmoil, 'where the gods spin threads of ruin through the fabric of our lives, all to make a song for generations to come', Cloud Cuckoo Land is a book of connections, of lives where clocks do not stand still, spinning backwards, forwards. War becomes peace, death is life's constant companion and magic is truth.

Books can, and will always be able to sweep us away, into the clouds and onto the backs of tortoises. When you pick up a book, step back, be, gaze forward and remind yourself of Antonius Diogenes, who wrote of his fabulous tale, "Stranger, whoever you are, open this to find what will amaze you."



Ikes Books and Collectables can be found at 48a Florida Road, Greyville, Durban, Tel: 031 3039214. www.ikesbooks.com

When you pick up a book, step back, be, gaze forward and remind yourself of Antonius Diogenes, who wrote of his fabulous tale

KZN crowns Bunny Chow champion for 2024

Meet the maker of KwaZulu-Natal's best Bunny Chow. Café India was on Sunday 1 December crowned the winner of the 2024 the Coca-Cola Bunny Chow Barometer Challenge at a gala event at the Blue Lagoon in Durban.

An enthusiastic crowd cheered on as the 10 finalists battled it out to be crowned this year's winner, but it was Café India who ultimately walked away with the title of best Bunny Chow and a R50,000 cash prize as winner. In total, the finalists shared in R100,000 in cash prizes from competition sponsors Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa (CCBSA) Coastal.

An ecstatic Philicia Lalbahadur said of her Bunny Chow which featured her special homemade curry: "This is truly a dream come true. God has been at the centre of this achievement, and our whole team, and we are incredibly

grateful for His work. In 2023, we were awarded 3rd place, and the year 2024 became a source of motivation and dedication for the team to strive for the 1st place. The positive reviews on social platforms played a key role in fuelling that drive.

"Our family has been making this dish for so many years and to be recognised and rewarded for it in this way is truly special.

Café India saw off stiff competition from the nine other finalists to be crowned champion, with a large crowd on hand at the Blue Lagoon to cheer on the makers of their favourite Bunny Chow, a traditional Durban Indian dish consisting of a hollowed-out loaf of white bread filled with curry.

CCBSA Coastal's General Manager Richard Willington said: "This is the 15th annual Bunny

Chow Barometer Competition and every year the bar is raised higher. The competition is so intense and very little separated our top 10 finalists, but congratulations to Café India for being a very worthy winner for 2024."

He expressed the hope that the cash prize would help Lalbahadur build her business even further as part of CCBSA's commitment to supporting the SMME sector.

Richard added: "The Coca-Cola Bunny Chow Barometer Challenge is a wonderful event on the annual social calendar in Durban, but it also underpins the importance of supporting the SMME sector which is a key enabler of economic growth."

"The Bunny Chow Barometer Challenge is just one way in which CCBSA seeks to support and bring local communities together."



Meet the maker of KwaZulu-Natal's best Bunny Chow. Café India was on Sunday 1 December crowned the winner of the 2024 the Coca-Cola Bunny Chow Barometer Challenge at a gala event at the Blue Lagoon in Durban

Elf The Musical Jr, the modern-day holiday classic NOW on at ICC

It's not only Santa and his reindeer pulling a sleigh that will bring festive season gifts this Christmas – the Durban ICC will make merry and bring cheer to children and adults alike when it stages the hit family show Elf the Musical Jr.

Elf The Musical Jr, which has had record-breaking runs at Broadway, West End and other leading theatres globally, will add to Durban ICC's efforts to continually explore new and innovative revenue-generating streams to diversify its offerings and ensure sustainability. Lindiwe Rakharebe, CEO of Durban ICC, said Elf The Musical Jr, is a strategic addition to the Durban ICC's entertainment portfolio, aimed at attracting a broad audience during one

of the busiest periods of the year.

"December is a peak season for holidaymakers in Durban, with the city bustling with both local and international tourists. Hosting a beloved holiday production during this time offers an excellent opportunity to capitalize on the festive spirit, engage families, and attract a wide demographic.

Elf The Musical Jr, the modern-day holiday classic that has the magic to send you out of the theatre smiling and singing, will run for 20 performances at the Durban ICC from 16th December to 29th December 2024 as part of December activations.

"We are hopeful that amidst so much doom and gloom, wars in parts of the world, the rising cost of living, famine

and sickness, there is need for something that will make people embrace their inner Elf.

"Theatre-goers can expect a dazzling set design that brings the magic of the North Pole to life, alongside a talented cast that will evoke laughter and holiday cheers. This family friendly musical is not only a celebration of the season but also a reminder of the importance of love, acceptance and the joy of believing," said Rakharebe.

Elf The Musical Jr promises to put audiences in the festive mood and will remind them of the film's famous motto: "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear." Tickets are available now through www.webticket.co.za



"Christmas is a time to cherish those who make your heart smile all year long." By Unknown



Chickpea Pancakes with Wild Mushrooms and Sauerkraut

By Kasia Yoko

EST. 2009

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MERRY
CHRISTMAS

Wishing all our patrons, family and friends a prosperous and peaceful Festive Season

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A Delicious Christmas Cheat

Christmas in my Polish family has always been a celebration of abundance. The table, adorned with plates of pierogi, barszcz, and krokiety, becomes a reflection of our cultural heritage—rich in flavour, tradition, and the joy of shared meals. Yet, as much as I cherish those traditions, I often lean towards lighter, more nourishing options. Some may call it “boring,” but to me, it’s a way of honouring my roots while staying true to a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

This recipe is my modern take on krokiety—thin pancakes filled with mushrooms and sauerkraut—served with steaming cups of barszcz, a tangy beetroot broth. My version, however, is gluten-free, plant-based, and full of umami richness, making it both festive and nutritious.

The star of the dish? Chickpea pancakes. Paired with the earthy aroma of wild mushrooms I foraged last autumn in the Polish forests and the tang of homemade sauerkraut, this dish captures the essence of Christmas in a wholesome way. And if wild mushrooms or sauerkraut aren’t your thing, fresh button mushrooms and lightly cooked cabbage work just as beautifully.

Ingredients

- For the Chickpea Pancakes**
- 2 cups soaked chickpeas (soak overnight)
 - 1 cup coconut flakes
 - 3 large cloves of garlic
 - 1 fried onion
 - 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
 - A handful of fresh herbs: sage, marjoram, thyme, and green onion
 - 2 tablespoons coconut butter
 - Salt and pepper, to taste

- For the Mushroom and Sauerkraut Filling**
- 3 cups chopped wild mushrooms (or button mushrooms)
 - 3 cups sauerkraut (or 2 cups fresh cabbage, finely chopped)
 - 1 onion, finely chopped
 - 3 cloves of garlic, minced
 - 1 teaspoon paprika
 - Salt and pepper, to taste
 - Macadamia nut oil or olive oil, for frying

Instructions

- 1. Preparing the Pancake Batter**
- Blend the soaked chickpeas, coconut flakes, garlic, fried onion, smoked paprika, herbs, coconut butter, salt, and pepper until smooth.

- Adjust the texture: the batter should be pourable but not runny, resembling pancake batter. If needed, add a bit of water.
- Let the batter rest in the fridge for at least 1 hour or overnight. Before cooking, add more water if the batter thickens too much.

2. Cooking the Chickpea Pancakes

- Heat a non-stick frying pan over medium heat.
- Pour a ladleful of batter onto the pan, spreading it thin like a crepe.
- Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden and slightly crispy. No oil is needed if using a good non-stick pan.
- Set the pancakes aside and keep warm.

3. Making the Filling

- Heat macadamia nut oil in a skillet. Add the chopped onion and garlic, frying until soft and fragrant.
- Add the mushrooms and sauté until golden brown. Stir in the sauerkraut (or fresh cabbage) and paprika.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook until everything is tender and the flavours meld together.

Assembling the Krokiety

- Place a generous spoonful of the mushroom and sauerkraut filling onto each pancake.
- Roll the pancake tightly, tucking in the sides like a burrito.

Serving Suggestions

- Serve warm with a bowl of barszcz—a vibrant, sweet-and-sour beetroot broth.
- Pair with a fresh salad or a cooling beetroot and apple purée for a burst of colour and flavour.

A Note from Kasia Yoko
This dish is more than just food—it’s a bridge between generations. It honours my Polish Christmas traditions while embracing a mindful, modern approach to eating. The umami-packed filling, paired with protein-rich chickpea pancakes, ensures you can indulge in the season without feeling weighed down. So whether you’re savouring this with family by the Christmas tree or simply looking for a festive, gluten-free alternative, I hope this recipe brings a bit of Polish magic to your table.

Wesołych Świąt i Smacznego!

Kingsley Holgate Foundation Afrika Odyssey Expedition Completed



Afrika Odyssey Expedition reached some of the wildest and most remote regions on the continent navigating through volatile areas of Nigeria to reach the north of Benin in West Africa, which is on the frontline of jihadist insurgency spilling over from Burkina Faso and Niger

When it comes to adventure, geographic achievements and humanitarian efforts, it's hard to outdo South Africa's father-and-son explorers, Kingsley and Ross Holgate and their veteran team, who have recently completed their 41st expedition.

This latest quest – a year-long, 62,000-kilometre journey called 'Afrika Odyssey' – reached some of the wildest and most remote regions on the continent. Utilising two diesel-powered Defender 130s, the Holgate expedition team endured extreme weather and brutal terrain on a mission to connect 22 diverse wildlife areas in 12 countries spanning more than 20-million hectares, which are managed by conservation NGO African Parks in partnership with national governments.

"Over the past 30 years, we've witnessed the frightening loss of Africa's pristine landscapes and iconic wildlife," said Kingsley. "For many years we've been asking the question: is there hope for Africa's wild spaces and unique fauna and flora, as well as for the communities that depend on them?"

That's what spawned the idea for this expedition.

"The good news is we've seen first-hand, the incredible work being done across Africa to protect and restore vast tracts of wilderness, and stop wildlife poaching, illegal logging and mining. We've heard gut-wrenching, personal stories of loss from rangers on the front line, alongside uplifting stories of hope that bear witness to the revival happening thanks to proactive governments, and the positive impact this is having on both conservation and communities."

The expedition had to traverse 22 countries to reach all geographic locations. Starting in the Iona desert plains of Angola, it crossed seven southern African countries, reached the highest and furthest source of the Nile in the Nyungwe forests of Rwanda, tackled dense rainforests in the DRC and Republic of Congo and war-ravaged regions in South Sudan and the CAR, traversed the length of Cameroon to reach Chad and the Ennedi massif in the Sahara Desert close to the border with Libya, before navigating through volatile areas of Nigeria to reach

the north of Benin in West Africa, which is on the frontline of jihadist insurgency spilling over from Burkina Faso and Niger.

In addition, 2250 eye tests and reading glasses were provided to poor-sighted people in deeply remote areas. "It's incredibly heartwarming to witness the transformation a simple pair of spectacles makes especially for elderly people, as they are able to become productive members of their communities again," observed Kingsley.

"When we started out on this mission to find stories of hope for Africa's wildlife, wild spaces and the communities that depend on them, to be honest we weren't sure what to expect – or if we'd find anything to celebrate," said Ross.

"We found plenty. Despite the incredibly tough conditions, we feel very privileged to have journeyed to parts of the continent that we've never experienced before, and to have met thousands of extraordinary individuals all committed to preserving what makes Africa so unique and special, for future generations."

The Return of Bean Bag Jazz Lounge: Live Music, Good Food, Good Vibes



Bean Bag Jazz Lounge Bean Bag Jazz Lounge is a premier jazz venue located on Florida Road, Durban

The iconic Bean Bag Jazz Lounge is back and better than ever! Still situated on the bustling Florida Road, Bean Bag Jazz Lounge has returned to reclaim its spot as Durban's premier. Bean Bag Jazz Lounge is back to bring you the ultimate culinary and jazz experience.

Bean Bag Jazz Lounge offers a diverse menu featuring traditional African dishes with

a contemporary twist, alongside popular international favourites. With a fully stocked bar and an inviting ambiance, it's the perfect spot for an unforgettable night out.

Bean Bag Jazz Lounge offers a unique combination of live music, diverse cuisine, and a lively atmosphere, making it the perfect destination for jazz enthusiasts and food lovers alike.



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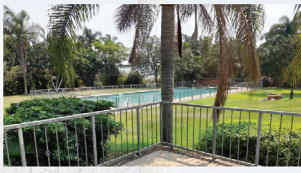
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Property Talk

By:
Andreas
Wassenaar

Be aware of high incidence of holiday rental fraud



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ANDREAS WASSENAAR
082 837 9094 **WEB REF: NDS51**
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Ballito and the North Coast has a magical feeling about it. Extraordinary beaches offer beautiful coves to explore with warm water and balmy summer days. Locals and visitors enjoy the incredible shopping, restaurants and coffee shops. Why would anybody not want to own property here?

With our general economic fundamentals poised for growth in the new year, the timing of an investment within the area is perfect. Each season brings incredible demand for holiday rental opportunities and with that, a high incidence of fraud as unscrupulous people try and prey on those trying to book their holiday accommodation.

Not a day will go past at this time of year when I do not receive a call from a person who has been defrauded. Please be aware of these seven tips to ensure you never become a victim of this.

1. Be aware that fraud is rife on major platforms such as Bookings.com and Airbnb. Most people trust the information presented on these large platforms, and a listing on them carries a level of credibility. This is exploited by fraudsters. There are many fraudulent listings. Always do your due diligence before making any type of payment. Ideally only deal with established accredited rental agents.

2. Fraudsters will always try and solicit some level of payment for a "deposit" outside the platform and directly to their own bank accounts. While bona fide and accredited rental agents do often require larger damage deposits for higher-end properties, always check their credentials with the estate management and double-check their credibility. Only make payments to larger accredited rental agencies.

3. Fraudsters will typically only have a cell and Gmail email account. They will have no physical business address and no other channels of communication. As soon as payment is received, the cell number will be non-contactable and Gmail account closed or non-responsive.

4. As part of your due diligence, check on Property24 if the same property presented as a rental opportunity appears listed as a sale opportunity by a mainstream and active estate agent in the area. An active estate agent will immediately be able to identify the property and confirm if it is, in fact a rental property. The fraudsters will steal images off other listings and use part of the information to piece together their online listing on either Bookings.com and Airbnb. 5. Before making payments, request additional information on the business and bank account. If you suspect fraud, immediately contact the respective bank's fraud department to verify the bank account, how long it has been open and if it belongs to a person or business in the field of holiday rentals.

6. If the offering is too good to be true, it invariably is. Rental rates quoted below market for the level of property are the hooks fraudsters use to create a sense of urgency around the offering and to divert attention away from the missing and unverified detail.

7. As fraudsters typically do not know the area well enough and do not understand Google locations well enough, they will make mistakes like include a pet-friendly

LEGAL TALK

by Fawzia Khan



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Thinking About Leaving Your Present Employment?

We wrap up 2024 with a focus on restraints of trade. Restraints of trade are valid and binding, and would be enforceable, unless it can be shown that the enforcement is unreasonable. A restraint is only reasonable and enforceable if it serves to protect an interest, which, in terms of the law, requires and deserves protection.

On October 2024, an employer "SPPE" applied to the Labour Court for an urgent application to enforce a restraint of trade covenant against its former employee "H", [who commenced employment with another company]. H had been employed by SPPE as an information infrastructure coordinator and had signed a 12-month restraint of trade and a confidentiality agreement during his employment with SPPE.

The employer applied to court for an interdict to stop H from continuing his employment with his new employer company and also asked for an order compelling H not to disclose certain confidential information. H denied that the new employer was in competition with

them and said that there was no propriety or confidential information in existence which could be exploited by him.

He also said he has no trade connections which he could similarly exploit. The Labour Court found that the system which SPPE operated did contain valuable information and data. The court said that when it comes to enforcing restraints of trade, the employer had to prove the existence of a restraint obligation, secondly that there was a breach and finally that the enforcement of restraint is restraint would be reasonable in the circumstances. The Labour Court said that confidential information must be objectively worthy of protection and have value.

As far as trade connections were concerned, the court said that this existed where the employee has access to customers and is in a position to build up a particular relationship with the customers so that when he or she leaves employment and becomes employed by a competitor, the employee could easily or readily induce the customers to follow

the employee to the new business. It said the seniority of the employee is important where it comes to evaluating the existence of a protectable interest.

The more senior the employee, the more likely it is that the employee would be entrenched with what can legitimately be considered to be a protectable interest based on the above two considerations. Seniority also includes factors such as the influence, knowledge, expertise, nature of duties, relationships and even the particular person of the employee.

After weighing all the considerations, the court dismissed the employer's application for the interdict, but ordered the employee H not to disclose directly or indirectly, any confidential information which he acquired from his erstwhile employer.

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Let The Suzuki Grand Vitara AllGrip Grab You

By: Tomas Yoko



The Suzuki Grand Vitara AllGrip offers an intelligent 4x4 system with a comprehensive package of safety, performance and luxury, test drive it with Nathi, call him on 078 772 7968

I recently had the pleasure of taking the Suzuki Grand Vitara AllGrip on a long road trip, and I must say, this SUV delighted me in so many ways. The moment I slid into the driver's seat, I felt a sense of capability, a feeling of connection, a sense of control.

The AllGrip system, which is Suzuki's latest advanced 4-wheel drive technology, ALLGRIP SELECT, provided a large part of this sensation. It gripped the road like a vice, even on the most slippery of surfaces. I took the Grand Vitara over a variety of terrain, from smooth highways to rocky inclines to soft sandy roads with fat middelmannetjies, and the Grand Vitara AllGrip tackled each with gusto.

The 1.5-liter petrol engine provided ample power, and the 5-speed manual transmission was smooth and responsive as were the changes in the four drive modes. The cabin was

surprisingly quiet, given the rough terrain I was covering, the 9" touch screen so user friendly and the seats were comfortable and supportive.

The Grand Vitara's ability to seamlessly transition from on-road to off-road driving. With the flick of a switch, I could go from cruising down the highway to tackling extreme off-road conditions, all while maintaining a remarkable level of control and stability.

Along with the bold body styling and dual-sliding panoramic glass sunroof the Grand Vitara is both functional and stylish. The interior is tastefully appointed, with all the modern amenities you could expect from a modern SUV.

Contact Nathi Mhlongo from CMH Suzuki Ballito and they will tailor make a deal from trade in to finance, delivery and beyond. Call him on 078 772 7968 or visit CMH Suzuki Ballito at 35 Moffat Drive, Ballito.

The Value Crammed Haval Jolion Pro

By: Tomas Yoko



The Haval Jolion Pro with extra extras and added power, oodles of luxury and all at an amazing price, contact Mbulelo on 072 306 9168

I have never had the opportunity of putting the Haval Jolion Pro through its paces, however I remain impressed by Haval's relentless pursuit of value and features. From the outside, the Jolion Pro's angular design and bold body styling makes a statement on the road, with 18-inch alloy wheels and LED headlights you can sense the sophistication.

On the inside, the Jolion Pro is like a revelation in cabin design. The cabin is spacious with a futuristic style of premium materials and thoughtful touches, like adjustable ambient lighting and a massive 12.3-inch touchscreen display. Haval have crammed the Jolion range with tech and luxury. The six-way adjustable driver's seat is so

inviting, comfortable and supportive, and there is plenty of room for five all occupants.

On the road, the Jolion Pro has proven to be a capable and confident compact SUV. The 1.5-liter turbocharged engine in the Pro provides 130 kilowatts of power and an impressive 270 Newton meters of torque, while the 7DCT gearbox, (7-speed dual-clutch transmission) shifts smoothly and quickly. The ride is smooth and refined, even on rough Durban roads, thanks to the advanced suspension system.

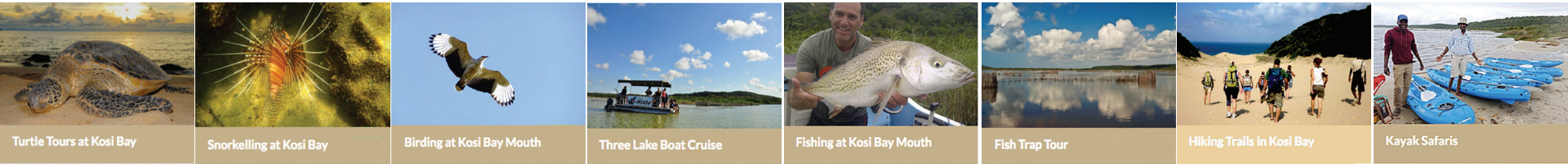
For me, what really makes the Jolion Pro stand out is its amazing value for money offering. With a more than generous list of standard features, including advanced

safety features like lane departure warning and blind spot monitoring, this SUV is an absolute steal. Add to that the comprehensive warranty and maintenance package, and you have a deal that's hard to beat.

The Haval Jolion Pro is a compelling choice for anyone looking for a feature-packed and reliable SUV without breaking the bank. With its impressive spec list, comfortable ride, and affordable price tag, it's a serious contender in the competitive compact SUV market. Contact Haval Umhlanga for a test drive and more information about this awesome model. Call Mbulelo on 072 306 9168 or visit their showroom at 2 Canegate Road, La Lucia Ridge, Umhlanga.



Come, Relax and Explore our Slice of Paradise...



Make your trip to Uthshwayelo Kosi Mouth Lodge & Camp and Kosi Bay unforgettable by exploring the natural beauty of this pristine location.

Kosi Bay is a playground waiting to be explored, whether it is snorkeling in the estuary or rockpools or exploring the lake system by boat. You will have more than enough to do and enjoy.

Besides making the most of the gorgeous beach, estuary and rock pools, an absolute must is the three-lake boat cruise and kayak safari on the estuary. Turtle Tours are another big highlight. Turtle Tours are available from mid March -mid November.

Kosi Bay Kayaking
A kayak trip is one of the most fun and exquisite ways to explore the Kosi Bay estuary. It is suitable for all ages. You will paddle with our guide around the fish traps of the estuary and into Lake Kahl. You will meander through the age old fish traps, learn about the mangrove forests and enjoy the birdlife of Kosi Bay Mouth.

The excursion leaves from the wooden bridge parking and is approximately 2-hours long.

Kosi Bay fishing
Whether you're a seasoned saltwater angler, keen fly fisherman or weekend cast fishing enthusiast, fishing at Kosi Bay

Mouth is a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

Turtle Viewing at Bhanga Nek
You can take a guided tour to Bhanga Nek beach to watch the female leatherback and loggerhead turtles coming out of the surf to lay their eggs on the beach or, approximately 70 days later, see the baby turtles or hatchlings emerging at night and making for the safety of the sea.

Birding at Kosi Bay Mouth
The Kosi Bay Nature Reserve is a tropical paradise of crystal-clear blue water and marshland, raffia and wild date palms, mangrove swamps and sycamore fig forest that combine to provide a home for

approximately 250 species of birds.

Hike in the Kosi Bay Mouth
Tailor-made Hikes for the family and for the more seasoned hikers Kosi Bay Mouth is a beautiful part of the world for hiking, offering spectacular scenery, cultural insights, very diverse vegetation and incredible birdlife.

Cruise the three Kosi Bay lakes
Join us on a boat cruise on "Hleke Imvubu" traversing the Kosi Lake system, the most pristine series of interconnected lakes on the South African coastline which stretches some 18km. It is made up of four lakes – Makhawulani, Mpungwini, KuNhlanga and Amanzanyamal –

connected via channels which drain via a sandy estuary into the Indian Ocean.

The best way to experience these Kosi lakes is by boat where you will float between the famous fish traps of the traditional Thonga that trap fish moving in and out of the estuary with the tide.

Kosi Bay fish trap tours
The Thonga people, who have made this land their home for more than 1 000 years, are experts in fish traps and have been constructing these traditional woven traps and palisade fish kraals for over 700 years. Embark on a guided tour of the fish traps where a local fisherman will explain the process. You may even be lucky to spear your own fish!

A Window Onto Nature's World

To Follow The Royal Star Renewal Of Hope, Faith And Peace

Once again the Guiding Star is here to follow, with our hedgerows echoing the Christmas theme with an abundance of white stars. Here flourishes *Carissa macrocarpa*, *Amatungulu* with a festive array of white star petals, already to bear juicy fruit with pickling potential! The evergreen Forest Toad Tree nearby decked with fragrant scented white star clusters. In forest shade the tall star-clad stems of *Chlorophytum bowkerii* shimmering with blooms.

The prophecy records three Wize Men carried gifts of Myrrh reaped from the Myrrh Tree Family, then plentiful in the East. Our local habitat celebrates *Commiphora harveyi* with orange peeling bark still evident in Estates and Reserves. Eight other *Commiphora* species make up the composition northward, through to Swaziland. The gift of highly prized Frankincense originates from the *Boswellia* Family, is gathered for its quality of oil and perfume with Ethiopia a key source of export today, also present in Oman, and Yemen. Where deserts have spread in the middle East no doubt the *Boswellia* species may be declining and under threat of survival.

This year has not been without positive events, with our Sports men and women holding high the Flag at the Olympic Games, our Springbok Rugby Team maintaining top accolade, and in many regions our Tourism continuing to uphold the unique attraction our Landscape offers and deserves including the well-kept Blue Flag beaches of Blythedale and Thompson Bay. Conversely, too many sad incidents of accidents with careless loss of life, and departure of loved ones through sickness have marred the year for many families. Reflection and thanksgiving will assist to heal the void in time.

While the Sun shines from the Heavens the increase in Solar Power to off-set our daily failing Power Supply problems continues apace. Where there is excess rainfall capture into Reservoirs and Storage Tanks is increasing to enable sustainability of communities both large and small, rural and urban.

These trends will no doubt become even more critical and essential as we progress into 2025 and beyond with no sign of abatement to "Climate Change" and excessive carbon pollution. The current COP30 Conference is giving focus to "DESERTIFICATION", with increase in temperatures and spread of desert areas Worldwide, causing extreme concern.

Along the Coastal Regions we continue to receive bounteous rainfall for our Homes and Gardens, enhancing Estate Living, maintaining our lush Parks and Gardens, the College grounds and 'Open' Spaces. Of particular note at Christmas is the arrival of the Festive Conifer or Christmas tree to be adorned with bright baubles, lights and crackers. The red *Poinsettia* blooms combine happily with *Holly* sprays with red Berries, then hang up the *Mistletoe* — the final romantic touch. For young folk the arrival of Father Christmas with his reindeer presents endless excitement with Wi-Fi messages to The North Pole". Church bells ring out, while our waysides blossom with *Mackaya Bella* — River Bells, together with *Rothmania globosa* large cream bells, often in profusion. In northern Climes where a "White Christmas" is cherished, the Christmas rose traditionally should be white in keeping with the snowfall!

So once again may the joyful Christmas

celebration embrace the Guiding Star which heralded the Birth of baby Jesus at Bethlehem. A star-decked pageant like the Pavetta lanceolate - Weeping Brides-bush, with a profusion of Unity, Health, Happiness, Gratitude, Hope, Faith and Peace.

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By Environmentalist and Green Campaigner Jill Theunissen

Season's Greetings

Seasons greetings and best wishes to everyone. May all of us in Mzansi, including visitors and associates of our beautiful and beloved country, have a Happy Christmas and a blessed New Year (2025) and beyond. May peace, goodwill, justice and love abound, in terms of godly governance as indicated in Isaiah 9:6 and 7 (BIBLE).

May all fortunate to be on vacation or leave have happy holidays and well deserved rest, away from work, business and studies. Have fun, rest, peace and enjoyment and take time to recharge.

Regrettably many amongst us will not be enjoying the festive season due to factors such as having to be at work/business, being

unwell, studying, being in mourning or being in abject poverty and suffering extreme hardship.

As we end the challenging year of 2024 and enter 2025 (new year) it is vital to give heed to the undermentioned:

- Be vigilant, wise, alert and discerning. Trust with wisdom and not blindly or foolishly.
- Take positive and deliberate steps to improve ones self and be a credit to and asset in your community. Like Abraham, we are blessed to be a blessing.
- Be loving, caring, compassionate and people serving, as you have means and opportunity, especially to the needy, down-trodden and under-privileged.
- Be wary of criminals, fraudsters and imposters and scammers who seek to make a quick buck preying on foolish, desperate

and gullible persons who sadly end up as victims. Do not let one's guard down, avoid being distracted and use common sense (ways). Take heed to red flags. Avoid negative and ungrateful persons and be wary of smooth talkers and con artists.

It is my fervent prayer that peoples lives will be improved, especially the poor and needy, those unwell will be healed, those mourning will be comforted, jobs will become available for the jobless, people will be provided basic but proper services such as decent housing and water and energy supply.

Furthermore the 3 tiers of government (local, provincial and national) must administer clean and accountable governance with timeous and effective service delivery. We don't want any favours from those in authority. They must just do rightly and properly what they have been employed to

do or entrusted to do by the electorate

The 3 P's — police and allied forces, politicians and priests and persons of the cloth - must also serve with integrity, diligence and trust, instead of being corrupt, tainted, mammon and self serving. These categories are normally ones to be respected and trusted but sadly some have turned rogue and corrupt.

Also may humanitarian endeavours abound not just as a Christmas initiative but as a year long outreach in the true spirit of Ubuntu. Well done to the many altruistic and philanthropic individuals and organisations for their ongoing magnanimous and humanitarian efforts in this important but sometime neglected issue.

May GOD continue to bless South Africa as we trust Him and serve Him and humanity.



By Simon T Dehal

No Room for Roommates



ROOF RATS Pest Proofing Experts



"Christmas is the day that holds all time together." by Alexander Smith



A fantastic new rendition of a masterpiece, the new Audi Q2 is sure to catch your eye, take one for a drive.

A New Audi Q2

By: Tomas Yoko

Audi's latest addition to its SUV line-up, the new Q2, brings an air of refinement to the market, challenging stayed design queues. This stylish compact crossover from Audi represents a bold departure from the German marque's traditional conservative styling, and I was drawn to it instantly.

The Q2's chiselled lines, angular creases, and coupe-like silhouette drew a lot of attention on the road. However, it's not all about looks - the Audi Q2 is packed with clever tech and premium features that make it a joy to drive and own.

The interior is a masterclass in minimalist chic, with Audi's renowned Virtual Cockpit digital instrument cluster and an ever eager 8.3-inch infotainment screen that took centre stage. The materials are top shelf, and the space is surprisingly generous for a car of

this size.

I drove the Q2 35 TFSI 110kW Tiptronic, equipped with the 1.4 litre turbocharged 4-cylinder petrol engine and a beautifully calibrated suspension that the sharp brakes and facilitated the 110 kilowatts of power and 250 Newton meters of torque with a sense of joy and enthusiasm. And with advanced safety features like autonomous emergency braking and adaptive cruise control, this little Audi is as safe as it is stylish.

Adding more feature with every turn, the customisable ambient lighting package is an example of the lengths that Audi has gone to in making the new Q2 prefect for you. From the panoramic sunroof to the digital instrument cluster, this compact SUV will raise your eyebrows when you tramp on the accelerator.

Volkswagen T-Cross R-Line – The Stuff of Dreams

By: Tomas Yoko

I recently had the delight of putting the new Volkswagen T-Cross R-Line 1.0 TSI through some rigorous testing, and I was impressed by this pint-sized crossover's big aspirations. The T-Cross is Volkswagen's smallest SUV, however its character is large. As small as it is it has a spacious interior, the suspension setup provides very agile handling, and a list of impressive tech features are.

The 1.0-liter turbocharged petrol engine is a gem, producing 85kW of power and a whopping 200Nm of torque. Paired with the highly accomplished 7-speed DSG gearbox, the T-Cross is capable of delivering rapid acceleration and effortless cruising on the highway with only 5.6 litres per hundred in a combined cycle. The R-Line trim adds a sporty edge, with unique styling cues, 18-inch alloy wheels, and a more aggressive suspension setup. The test unit I drove came with a removable and lockable trailer hitch and was equipped with VW's IQ Drive Package, which

includes Travel Assist made up of Lane Keeping assistance system, Forward Collision Warning Front Assist, Autonomous Emergency Braking, Adaptive Cruise Control and Pedestrian monitoring.

On the road, the T-Cross is a breeze to drive, zero to a hundred in 10.2 seconds, with light and precise steering, a comfortable ride. There's sophistication with the Navigation system, Wireless App Connect and Voice Control, even Digital Cockpit Pro with a 10 inch screen. The cabin is remarkably quiet, and the premium materials and modern design add to the luxury feeling.

The T-Cross's biggest strength, however, is its practicality. With a generous 430-liter boot, and rear seats that fold flat to create a massive 1,281-liter cargo area. The T-Cross comes standard with a 3 year / 120 000km warranty and a 3 year / 45 000km service plan. Make one yours.



The eye popping new Volkswagen T-Cross R-Line fits perfectly into today's lifestyle requirements. Take one for a test drive

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GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH THE MOST FEARED PREDATOR OF THE OCEAN

The KwaZulu-Natal Sharks Board Maritime Centre of Excellence (KZNSB) was established in 1964, and strives to be a leader in the environmentally sensitive protection of bathers against sharks, as well as capacity building in the maritime sector.

KZNSB safeguards thirty seven beaches on the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) coastline with shark safety gear, owned and maintained by the KZNSB. The organisation positions itself as "The Only Organisation of Its Kind in the World". KZNSB has achieved distinguished accomplishments in its operations, defining the organisations successes towards achieving its mission.

Get up close and personal with the most feared predator of the ocean, 'The Shark', during our very educational dissection shows activity at KwaZulu-Natal Sharks Board in Umhlanga. The 26-minute Audio Visual presentation is designed to entertain, it is also educational, providing information on subjects such as the sensory biology of sharks and their role as top predators in the marine environment. The presentation is then followed by another 30 minute actual shark dissection where you can see the internal anatomy of one of the ocean's most feared predators.



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(Sunday shows are subject to change),
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Contact us at:
www.shark.co.za or call
(031) 566 0435 for more information



KWAZULU-NATAL
SHARKS BOARD
Maritime Centre of Excellence

The only organisation of its kind in the world



Boat Trips

Curio Shop

Museum

Dissection Show

Audio-Visual

SHOW TIMES:

Tuesday - Thursday
09h00 & 14h00

Every 1st Sunday
of the month:
14h00 - 16h00

BOAT TRIPS:

Monday - Friday
Contact Number
+2782 403 9206

FOR BOOKINGS

Contact: +2731 566 0435
(closed on recognised
Public Holidays)

031 566 0400

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