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AIRLINK

November 1997

Skyways

**Magical Malawi –
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Skyways

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Welcome Aboard!

Teeth rattling, precipice-defying off-road experiences that leave your heart in your mouth are fine if you are sitting in the driver's seat, and you are in control. But if you happen to be a passenger in a bucking 4x4 bronco, with the only thing in front of you a moving dashboard and a very obviously pedal-less floor on which your wildly dancing feet seek desperate grip - it can be the stuff of nightmares, and believe me, I am no womanly wimp. Having been brought up in tow of two dare-devil brothers, where a Saturday afternoon's fun was to climb on the back of their scrambler and head off along the rocky road of the surrounding hills clinging to the back of their 250 motorbike, with my legs dangling alongside, I reckon I was well on the road to being an adrenalin junkie.

Now however, I am not so keen to be a mere passenger the next alternative? Buy my own 4x4 so I can be in control? Maybe, but I'd rather get a convertible at this stage for some dust-less wind through my hair and leave all the mud and dirt for all you real men out there! So, if kicking up the dust turns you on, this month's contributor Jacques Marais has all the down-right dirty tips on where to find mud, rocky terrain, test crossings, and oh, of course, some gorgeous scenery when you can rip your eyes away from the challenge in front of you. So if you haven't got the dust in your air-vents, mud on your chassis or wear on those treads yet, turn to page 10 and find out where it's all happening.

Explore your own little piece of Africa by either driving or flying just a bit further to Malawi. The Cinderella of the South African tourist market, Malawi intends to go back to the ball and reclaim some of its eligible tourists...namely us South Africans. Affordable, as idyllic and charming as ever, Malawi offers glorious sun, the third largest lake in Africa, good fishing, adventure kayaking, trailing and peace.... wonderful, smiling peace. With a new Ministry of Tourism in place, Malawi is intent on wooing the exchange-weary South African traveller back....try it, you won't be disappointed. Turn to page 14 for a taste of this beautiful land and its people.

Someone is tossing a million dollars around again.... in fact for the 17th year in succession 12 of the world's best golf players intend to buckle down and do some serious competing to win it at the Nedbank Million Dollar Golf Challenge in December. On page 18 is a line-up of the contenders, so diarise the dates and don't miss the chance to watch on the day when the Gary Player Country Club golf course puts the world's sharpest players through their paces.

Louis-Marc Germishuys once again sets the scene for the future of the technological arena with his in-depth article on the future of auditing on page 24. Thought-provoking and challenging, Louis-Marc spares no punches when he tells you it's time to get on the bandwagon for the future.

Corel Corporation is the co-sponsor of this month's SkyWare competition on page 35 and is offering five lucky readers some valuable software prizes. On page 32, SkyProducts has an interesting line-up of laptop computers to put on your wish list — as Christmas approaches keep an eye out for some discounted opportunities.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Skyways magazine and continue to write to us about your experiences with South African Airlink.

Mercédes Westbrook
Editor



Skyways is proud to announce that it received a Highly Commended Certificate of recognition in its category at the recent PICA Awards, the Specialist Press Association's annual ceremony to award credit to magazines of an outstanding and professional nature.

Please take your complimentary copy of Skyways,
S A Airlink's own in-flight magazine

A Heart in the K

by Mercée

Positioned at the heart of Africa, the small inland country of Malawi glows with an unaffected charm that welcomes the adventurous traveller and offers an affordable holiday with all the trimmings of an exotic island getaway but without the need for long haul flights. From the lake's idyllic palm-fringed golden shores to the lush highlands, with their fresh streams and forest glades, Malawi is a surprising discovery and a gracious host.

As I sat overlooking the water gently lapping the edge of southern Lake Malawi, from my poolside chaise longue, I sipped my MGT (Malawian gin and tonic) to the background sounds of what a fellow journalist termed 'Malawian trance' music. Curling my toes, I lay back and experienced utter, bone-seeping peace.

Earlier that day, our small entourage of 'journos', led by tour guide Dee-Jean, had ducked the stern Malawian officials on entry (officials hate words like 'journalist' and 'photographer') under such pseudonyms as 'secretary', and 'clerk'. We had camouflaged our cameras, boarded a Dash 9 headed for Club Makakola on the edge of the lake and bumped down onto the sandy runway, barely avoiding whiplash as our sudden stop saved the life of an unperturbed goat looking blankly for a leaf of grass on its sandy stretch.

With juicy cocktails thrust into our sweaty palms, we were welcomed with gifts of bougainvillea-bedecked grass hats (essential for avoiding the pounding Malawian sun) and were ushered to our cool lake-facing rooms. Enthusiastically, we shed our shoes, learnt the advantages of the rand-kwacha exchange rate in the open-air bar (about 3.8 kwacha for one rand) and entered into a dinner agreement with some crocodile tail and crispy chambo, fished from the very lake I now mused over. By ignoring the luxury cruisers and speed boats frolicking on the water, I could almost image back to a time around the late 18th century, before David Livingstone arrived for his Great Rift Lake discovery, to when Arab dhows stalked its lengthy shores, strong-arming its friendly and unsuspecting Malawian tribes into slavery.



Above: To make a bwato or boat takes one month, a strenuous process especially if your only tool is a pickaxe.

Right: Club Makakola overlooks the lake from a palm-fringed beach.

Thankfully, though, it was the late 19th century and I found myself in paradise. The palms swayed in the humid air, the golden sand was clean, the exchange rate was not just good, it was downright Sandton-shopping-sprees-good (and all handmade), and Malawi's people a smiling population of warmth and charm...and the sun was a glorious sun that drains the Johannesburg tempo from your veins.

Affectionately known as Club Mac, Club Makakola offers spectacular sunsets, lake views, and great service. Hedonists should discover this ultimate pleasure resort on the southern edge of the lake with a book, a lover or for the more enthusiastic, a menu of scuba diving, boat trips, skiing para-sailing, cycling, tennis, squash or mini soccer.

Owner André Bizzaro, assisted by general manager Nicholas Dumba (the man of the

dimple smile) has also seen fit to offer an exotic, if small golf course, populated with baobabs, streams and palm trees. If one can stand the heat away from the water's edge, there are also tours by car or cycle into the local villages. André also runs a flourishing plant nursery and nearby telapia fish farm (populated by a gaggle of squawking ducks which fertilize the water and produce plankton for the fish), and incu-



bates 2 400 duck eggs every three weeks, a practice sure to introduce duck as a local delicacy. As André explains, affectionately sifting the surface of the coconut husk compost imported from SriLanka, "we always like to do new things".

Natural beauty

We had found upmarket lake magic at Club Makakola, but adventure was still to come.... liberally-freckled and wind-blown, Clive of Kayak Africa breezed in and bundled us into his Land Rover and up to Cape Maclear for

Kingdom of Africa

Vestbrook

some kayaking and diving off his two tropical island camps. "A great idea", we thought as we entered the traditional fishing village of Chembe, and wound our way along the sandy track, between neat houses and vast drying racks set aside for the Chambo, Kampango and Kapenta fished from the lake, to arrive at Kayak Africa's idyllic headquarters. There, sided by a few local bars, a pizza hut, and camping loca-

tion we settled in for our crash course in kayaking. Clive assured our nervous bunch of jourmos (an unusual occurrence unless a bar runs dry) that we were going to paddle 15 kilometres to Mumbo island in the middle of the lake, on the slim kayaks awaiting us on the clear waters. Despite our misgivings, there was a breeze, aided by the distractions of calling pairs of Fish Eagle and the occasional rest alongside a lone Malawian fisherman in his dugout for a chat and a look at his catch of the day.

Arriving at the island, we were spellbound by a mixture of exquisite beauty and a paradise of privacy. With two natural bays hugging a rocky outcrop on which the camp rests, we were introduced to the innovative luxury of mattresses in double tents set on the edge of the cliff; ice, flush toilets and hot showers delivered in a simple yet effective manner, while still kidding ourselves that we were roughing it. Certain serenity and an escape from the madding crowd are to be found within Kayak Africa's Mumbo and Domwe island camps set within the National Park at Cape Maclear. The warm, fresh waters of the lake, are ideal for any type of activity as there is no current and with over 1000 species of fish it lends itself to diving and snorkelling.

Lush forests

Our next leg of the trip up to the Zomba Plateau by road portrayed the rich tapestry of people and landscapes that make up Malawi.

Along pot-holed roads, past rural villages and lurid Mosques, the vegetation changed, reflecting the agriculture of the poorer soil found on the edge of the lake, to the more abundant and lush vegetation of the moist highlands.

Just how untainted Malawians are was revealed as I spent the

afternoon waving to villagers from the back of our open Land Rover, who delightedly waved back at me. Such spontaneous smiles and unaffected greetings left me with a belief in human nature, unstudied and simple in a shared, if wordless communication.

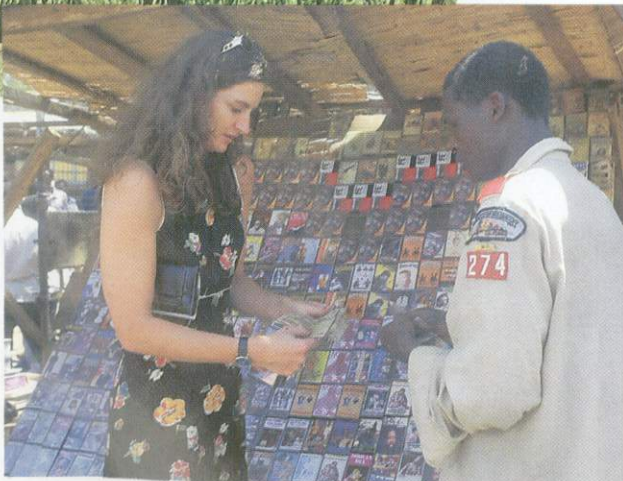
As bicycles are a major form of transport, any manner of activity can be observed upon these iron horses, from wives sitting side-saddle on handlebars to enormous grass baskets strapped to the back carrying a cargo of live goats or market goods. Thirty kwacha a day (about R8) is an average salary in Malawi, although a good living can be made from lake fishing. In the more rural areas, it is a simple subsistence which includes trading curios to tourists. While the tourist brochures do ask visitors not to trade Western clothing or items for curios, it is hard not to when one sees the delight in a trader's eyes at the sight of a Bic pen and notepad, such taken-for-granted items in our material world.

Ascending 900metres to the Zomba Plateau, above the small city of Zomba, nature's air-conditioner kicks in with the cool air of the forests and verdant greenery, delivering our sun-parched bodies to the luxury Ku Chawe Inn, which rests on the very face of the cliff and offers spectacular views from beautifully rendered interiors. Two vantage points in walking distance from Ku Chawe Inn are Emperor's View (the Emperor is Haile Selassie of Ethiopia) and the Queen's Views (Queen Mother of England) both worth the walk in the rare air of an early morning when the mists have lifted. The plateau is a magical one, diverse in the flora of Malawi where forest hikes produce glades and waterfalls for swimming in mountain streams and dappled sunshine.

For more information contact:

Jacqui at Wild Wet Tours on telephone (011) 791 0335 or fax (011) 791 0337.

E-mail: wildwet@iafrica.com →



Left: Bartering for local music is half the fun at the market, or curios along the roadside.

A memorable moment

by Arthur Bozas

Every photographer's portfolio carries a range of technically correct, and well-rendered photographic images which he presents to the world. Within the same portfolio however, are certain photographs that carry a story, a special moment, a dangerous occurrence, a particularly evocative or funny episode that happened while capturing the moment that remains special to the man behind the lens. SkyPhoto reveals those images to our readers - moments captured in time that carry with them an atmosphere, a memory and a special magic all of their own.



“**T**his photograph depicts a fond memory for me. It was taken on a trip to a friend's lodge in Botswana. Arriving in the late afternoon, we spent the evening around the campfire listening to bush stories amidst the distant roars of lions and laughter of hyena. The next morning we set off on a hike. We were advised to take along a rifle as the staff had found a leopard kill in a nearby tree.

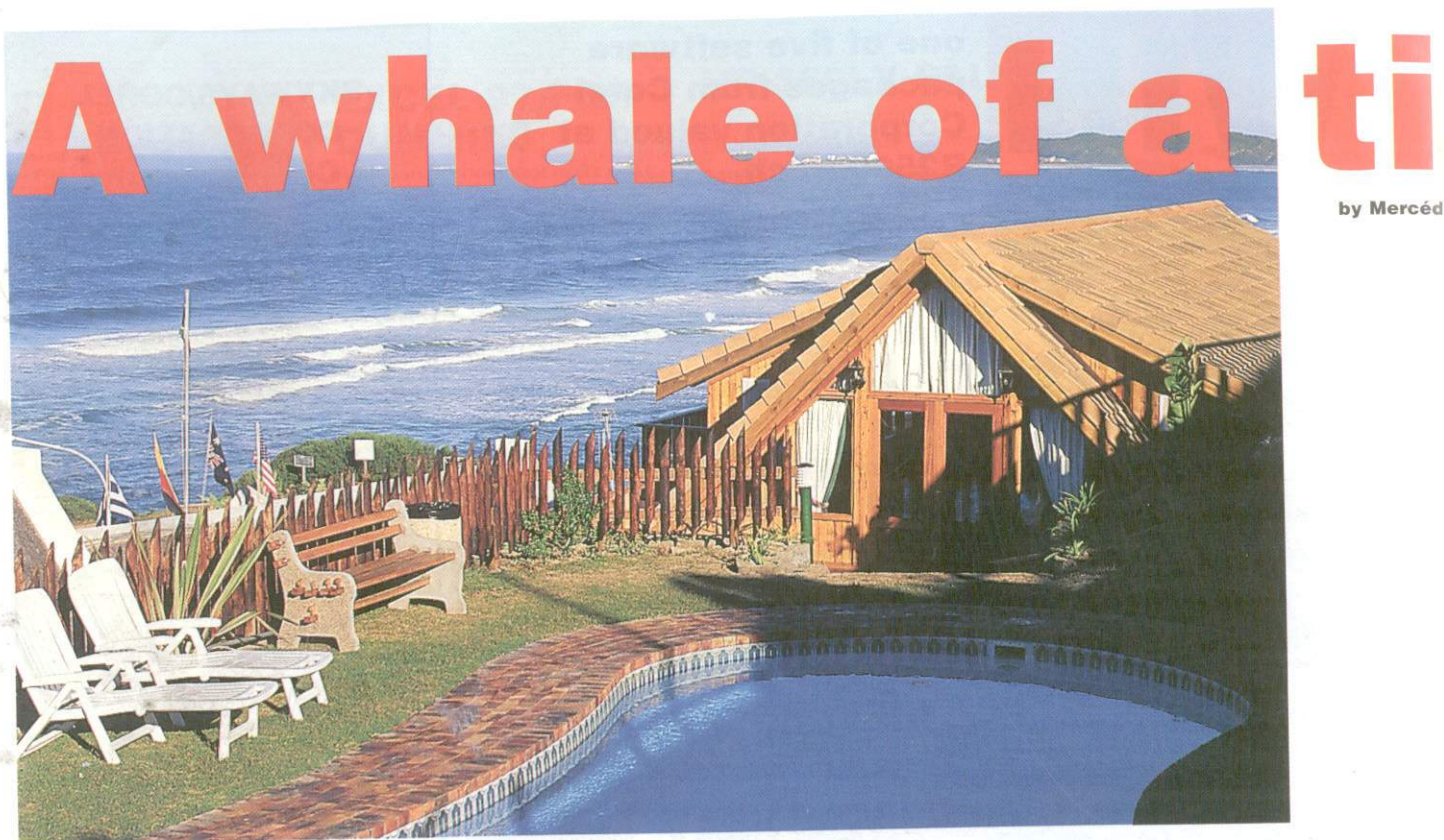
We had been walking for about two and a half hours when we came across a field of semi-precious stones. I sat down and lost myself in this field of 'wealth' for some time. When I looked up, my group of friends were gone. Here I was, all alone in the middle of nowhere, apart from a solitary white plastic bag soaring about 200 metres above in the blue sky. Where did it come from? Was it a sign? I started to contemplate my survival. As the shrubs and landscape offered no solution, I secured myself a weapon, a log small enough to swing. I realised my only option if confronted by a lion would be to charge it, screaming and brandishing this log.

After walking in the direction I hoped we had planned, for what seemed like an eternity, calling out their names... I suddenly heard a rustling behind me. I swung round to face my predator — only to find a whirlwind swirling the leaves of a single shrub skywards, the surrounding shrubs two to three metres away, untouched by its force.

Phew! What relief! With this new lease of life, I increased my pace, checked the direction of the sun and plundered forth. I eventually came to the edge of a plateau, where I spotted my friends about 400 metres downhill, out of earshot.

When I finally caught up with them, this Baobab tree land marked our reunion. It was great to be alive and I wondered how old this tree was.”

Arthur Bozas is a professional photographer hailing from Durban who has been involved in a number of exhibitions. He specialises in advertising, still-life, food, portraiture and landscapes. He is presently working with a project involving South African musicians.



by Mercéd

On the shore of the ocean where the tarred road stops and the sea starts, the Brenton-on-Sea Hotel looks to the ocean's horizon with all the bearing of a stately sea captain.

Set upon the incline of the western head in Knysna, the three-star Brenton-on-Sea Hotel overlooks a spectacular sweep of coast. Here, long white stretches of beach, and intriguing rock formations, surrounded by over-hanging cliffs, lure sunrise strollers, hardy fishermen, harassed city folk and locals alike to watch, look and listen to the beauty of the sea. Occasionally their past times are enhanced by the excitement of a glimpse of its natural creatures who live in her depths, and which raise their aquiline bodies for a brief view of our breathing world.

Not only is Brenton-on-Sea popular for its commanding positioning and opportunity for leisure, but also as a conference and business getaway within a friendly, inviting and relaxed atmosphere, offering an unusual variety of accommodation. With all the quaintness of Swiss chalets, without the snow, its chalets and log houses rest under blue skies, stalwart against the brisk breezes, and commanding a panorama of vast stretches of ocean in which visitors come to frolic.

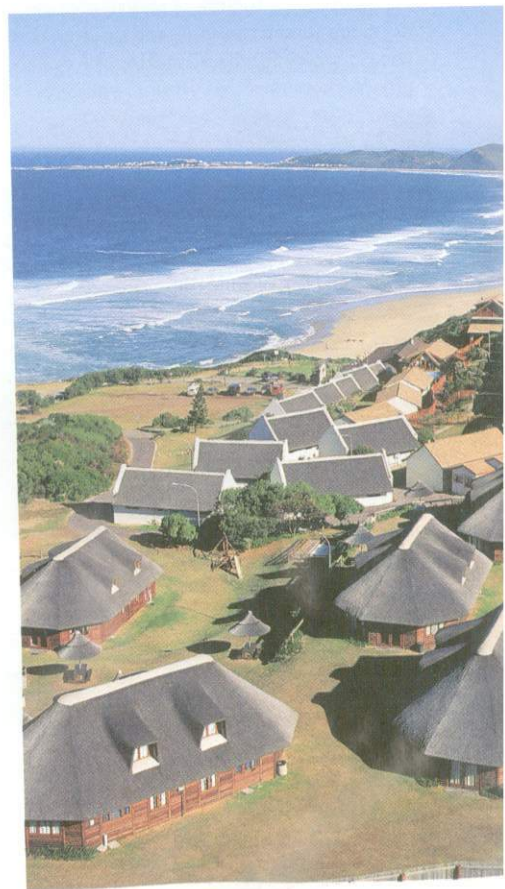
Accommodation

Brenton-on-Sea's ultra-luxury VIP House sits almost at the crest of the hill, where its three floors of glass-fronted facade provide majestic views of the sea. Offering full two suites, a single bedroom, and an enormous jacuzzi bath, it has a well-equipped self-catering kitchen, with the optional use of full service from the hotel.

Smaller, cosy chalets dot the hillside, surrounded by rolling green lawns, braai spots and a communal pool, rendered in warm timber which blends the buildings into the surrounding vegetation, interspersed with the fine pinks and lilacs of the naturally growing fynbos.

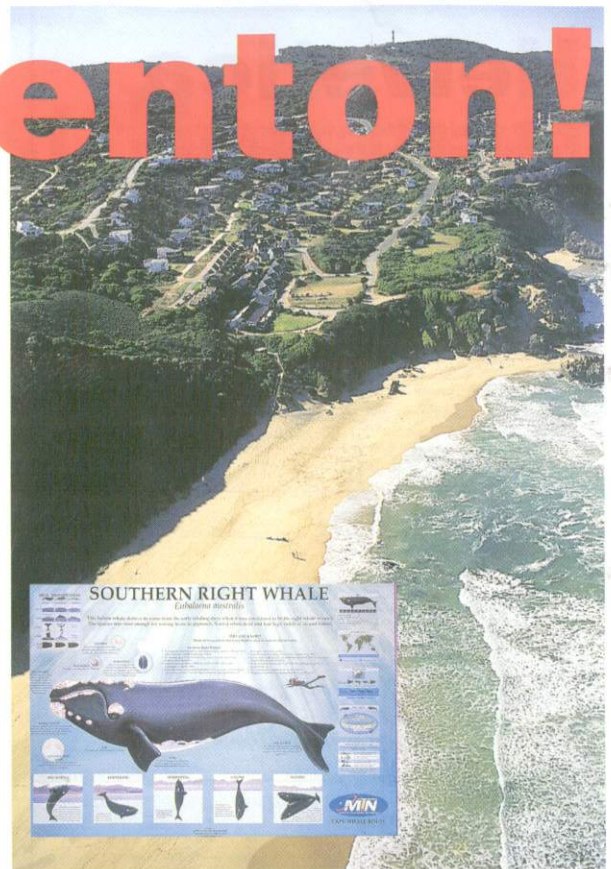
Facilities

Wooden walkways connect the double-storey conference hall and chalets to the main hotel building, where further conference facilities and full service hotel rooms are available, as well as the smart reception, pub and JJ's Restaurant, wafting with homely smells and run by the inimitable host Justin. With arms spread wide in a warm welcome, Justin is the epitome of the gracious host, inviting you into his family of top restaurant staff with a menu to dazzle. Care and absolute attention to detail are seen on the a la carte menu and superb wine list where wine accompaniments are highlighted alongside each dish. Aside from a delicious variety on the menu, JJ's also offers speciality evenings with a



me at Brenton!

Nestbrook



themed buffet where feasts of exotic delicacies are designed to tempt. The ambiance is cosy in the evening, with a cheerful fireplace should there be a chill, while at breakfast, the sun streams in and one is presented with a flower bedecked buffet, and a crisply dressed chef in attendance. Alternatively, one can breakfast outdoors on the patio and observe the breakers.

Evening sundowners are served in the inviting pub adjacent to JJ's restaurant, where one can choose a favourite cocktail.

General Manager Greg Vogt is the energetic personality and suave face behind the inviting atmosphere of Brenton-on-Sea. Buoyed up by life itself and his passion for his work, and surrounded by the stunning climes and scenery, his enthusiasm is ongoing and contagious.

A charming dinner host, Greg also has a vast knowledge of the surrounding area and with the assistance of his young and enthusiastic staff is a mine of information. His dedication to the environment is further reflected in his role as chairman of the MTN Cape Whale Route, which aims at developing awareness of what the coastline has to offer in terms of whale tourism.

Activities

Driving back towards Knysna, there is a magnificent view of the bay, where white yachts sparkle and bob – just a taste of the plethora of the activities. The Knysna Heads offer a wonderful viewpoint to observe both the bay and the open seas perchance to see the dolphins surfing

the incoming waves. On the opposite head, the Featherbed Nature Reserve is enjoyable, providing a non-too-strenuous walk into its nooks and crannies, where the waves beat dramatically against its rocky sides. Book a ferry ride to the Featherbed Reserve and enjoy the chance of

best land-based whale watching, as each year Southern Right whales migrate into its coastal waters to calve and nurse their young. The ani-

“Once a thriving port, Knysna boasts a fine natural harbour that requires skill and knowledge when entering its narrow heads from the open sea. While many a life has been lost trying to negotiate the tides of this turbulent and jealous sea, its sea creatures, especially its family of dolphins and whales, still come here to give birth to their young and surf the white horses of the coastline rollers.”

being on the water, as well as a cold beer and lunch served at the Restaurant which doubles as arrival and departure point.

Places of tranquil nature are abundant surrounding the Knysna area, from walks in the Knysna forests to a picnic on the outcrop of the Robberg Nature Reserve in Plettenberg Bay or even further north at the Keurbooms Nature Reserve. Nature's Valley offers forest trails coupled with some lazing on the beach.

Whaling

This stretch of coast also provides the world's

mals, often mere metres from the shore, provide unsurpassed whale watching opportunities between June and November. Humpback whales migrate through the region between May and December each year, while Bryde's whales are found slight further offshore all year round.

How to get there:

Fly South African Airlink Johannesburg/Plettenberg Bay, Durban/George or Cape Town/George, hire a car or arrange transfers with Brenton-on-Sea Hotel. ➔

by Mercedes Westbrook

Napoleon's lost Bonaparte

Isn't it strange how human beings have an acquisitive yen for gathering mementoes? Ashtrays with lurid imprints of far-off holiday establishments, logo-imprinted teapoons and stubby salt and pepper sets follow us back to our collective lives to live a desolate existence in some dark corner of a drawer.

While many of us only qualify as the straw hat and psychedelic (never-to-be-worn-again) beachwear collectors, there is a more dedicated animal who puts weight (and lots of money) behind this mania...especially those mementoes of personal effect to both the living and the dead of fame and infamy. Stolen, or auctioned for staggering sums of money, an item of personal effect such as Madonna's bra or Mohammed Ali's sweaty robe are lovingly preserved in glass cases, in temperature-controlled rooms or in bank vaults.

Perhaps the most personal effect to change hands and earn dollars is that of Napoleon the Third's (1808-1873) most private parts, whose authenticity seems to have reopened a debate.

According to an article in the Washington Post, reprinted in the October 7th San José Mercury News, the doctor, during the autopsy on the deceased emperor, and supposedly sick of dealing with Napoleon's ego and bad temper, docked the man's private parts when no one was looking. Today, someone is claiming to be in possession of them, almost 171 years on from the day the emperor and his Johnson parted company.

Labelled unsympathetically in the history books as repressive, a gagger of the press and prone to banning opposing political parties, Napoleon III was a poor imitation of his famous uncle Napoleon Bonaparte on whom he attempted to model himself. Napoleon III swept into power as President of France during the 1848 revolution on the magic of his uncle's name, after which King Louis Philippe was forced to abdicate and France became a republic. Three years later Napoleon made himself Emperor of the French. Described as a foolish man, Napoleon did seem to have some good ideas but he was never able to back

them up. Lacking the inspiration and judgement of his uncle, historians have denounced his role in the Crimean War (1854-56) which proved a heavy drain on France's resources, and an act done largely for national glory. Towards the end of his rule, several unfortunate acts gave Bismarck the opportunity to attack and begin what was for France the disastrous Franco Prussian War of 1870-71. Napoleon was captured by the Prussians and held prisoner until peace was signed. He was then deposed, the empire abolished and the Third Republic created. He fled to England into exile and died soon after.

Just prior to his death, however, in the spring of 1821, Napoleon's British doctor was fired and replaced by an Italian pathologist, apparently to make the autopsy easier after he had sighed his last sigh and frowned his last frown. He did so in May and the autopsy was performed under military guard. However, this may not have been sufficient to save the sovereign's most personal possessions - apparently the sight and particularly the scent of an autopsy performed during a hot summer would have forced even the most stout-hearted soldier from the room, enabling the Italian to snip off a little revenge.

This particular pickled piece of revenge is now purportedly in the possession of urologist John Latimer at the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Centre in the United States, resting in the depths of a murky brown jar. Having come into his possession roughly 20 years ago, for what Latimer calls a "substantial sum. I knew as long as it was floating around, it was subject to derision. I recognized all the perils, but my interest in buying it was to stop it from any further crude exposure".

Officially, the emperor's private parts are where

they have always been, with the remainder of the body, in his crypt beneath the gold dome at the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris. Unofficially though, there is growing concern among the French that their Napoleonic unmentionables may be elsewhere...and for Frenchmen to be caught without the possession of such tools could shake a nation. A bone of contention seems to exist between France and the United States that their noble heritage may derive in part from a legacy that is not so much gilded as gilded.

The curators at Les Invalides hang up on callers with questions as to the nature of Napoleon's body parts, and Latimer is not sure himself, but he says he can associate the world-conquering weenie with many better-documented bits of Napoleana. French historian Jean Tulard comments: "It is profane! Incredible but possible....There is not a single significant document authenticating this claim...only, perhaps a note from Vignali, a cleric Napoleon insulted when offered the last rites. The note reportedly said, "Voilà, I have it."

And if the whole thing gives you the 'willies', watch out when you next buy a litre of napoletana ice-cream and it offers a new improved flavour with extra chewy, nutty or chocolate bits!!!

