

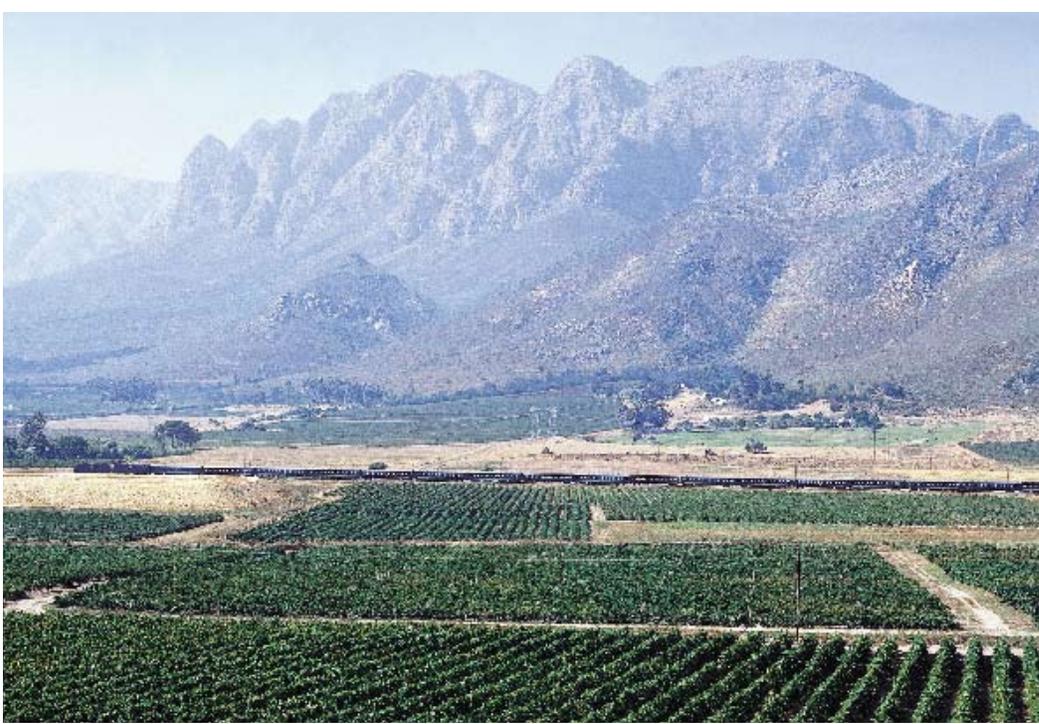
# AFRICA

## *Travel Magazine*

**South Africa  
Tourism  
Destinations  
and Events**

This sample insert scheduled for Best of Africa World Edition will appear online well ahead of final publication date. The following pages are from the issue's introduction. Many more pages will be added to this preview.

**Best of Africa World Edition**



# ALL ABOARD! BY LUXURY RAIL, FROM CAPE TOWN - V

by Jerry W. Bird

*"The design of the train has given us suites considerably larger than the world's famous trains such as the Orient Express, the Blue Train, Royal Scotsman in England and El Andalus in Spain."* Rohan Vos

One of the first lessons one learns on entering the wonderful world of Rovos Rail is that this "tour of a lifetime" is not just a South African experience -- its routes extend to five countries on a network of steel rails. On this cool January morning, our destination is Pretoria, South Africa's capital city. Our two and half day trip north through the country's heartland, allows time to relax, lay back, sip the wine, smell the roses, think lofty thoughts and get to know some interesting people. At Cape Town station, owner Rohan Vos and Sales Manager David Patrick greeted us, and our baggage was whisked away in a flash



## **Celebrating the New Year in style!**

As we joined the other passengers assembled on the red-carpeted platform, a traditional toast of champagne and orange juice set the mood, while a trio of violinists provided soothing classical music for a memorable send off. Mr. Vos gave a hearty "bon voyage," announcing each guest's name in turn as we boarded the train. Many nations were represented that morning - the UK, Norway, Italy, Australia, USA, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, France, South Africa and Canada. These vintage coaches have

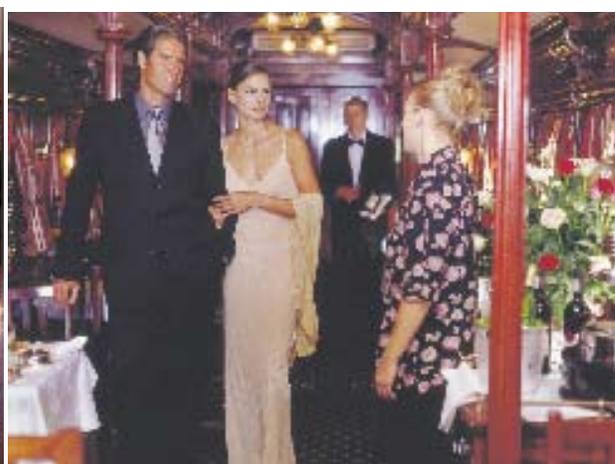
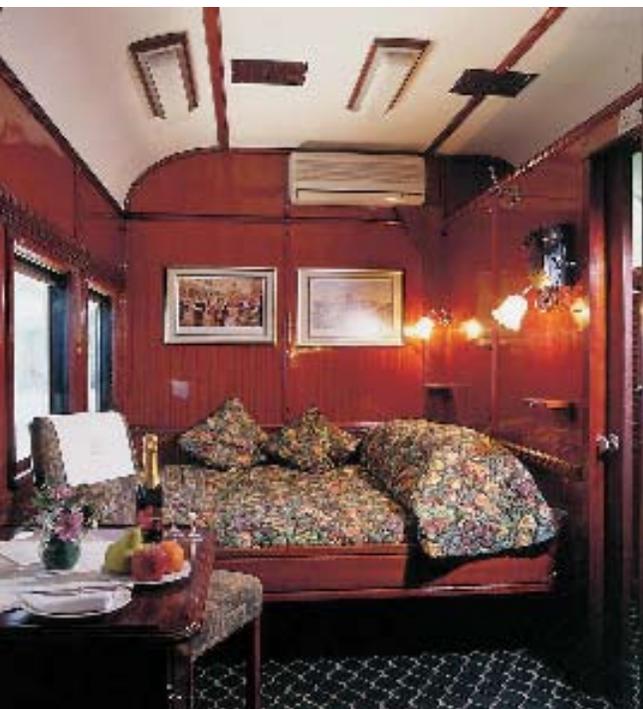
carried royalty on past tours, and we soon discovered there was a European countess among us, which reflects the company's claim "the most luxurious train in the world. A mild thunderstorm was brewing above Table Mountain, and as rain began to beat on the windows, the train pulled away from Cape Town station. Have no fear, I had a feeling that the trip would be even more enjoyable, looking out from our cozy cocoon on wheels. My intuition proved to be quite true.

## **Five Star Hotel on Wheels**

Talk about individualized service from Rovos' team of young, attractive hostesses. Our baggage was waiting in the cabins, plus champagne, a fruit bowl, chocolates and terry cloth robes. Private suites on Rovos Rail are spacious, elegant, fully equipped and finished in highly polished wood panels, with amazing attention to detail. Some of these vintage coaches date back to 1911, and all are beautifully restored. Full sized beds face three large picture windows that open easily, bathing the room with fresh air and daylight as you view the changing landscape, or allow perfect privacy as needed. The writing desk was ideal for my lap top computer, and the in-suite telephone came in handy. Outside Muguette Goufrani's suite, a brass plaque bore the title "The Cullinan," after the world's largest gem diamond, discovered in 1905, and named for mine owner Sir Thomas Cullinan. My private suite was titled "The Etosha," in honor of Namibia's national park.

## **Order of Good Cheer**

As Mr. Vos says, "It is an atmosphere of good food, good wine and good conversation that we are striving to create. " Like Pavlov's dog, and personal memories of cruises on the Alaska coast, a soft gong in the passageway signaled that dinner was being served. Naturally, on Rovos Rail, semi formal dress was the order of the day, and as we took our seats, a red roses was pinned on each lapel. After all, this was a glorious land cruise - and the superb menu featured such local game dishes as Springbok with lemon honey sauce, plus others



# VIA KIMBERLEY TO PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

like South African Botobie and Kingclip in Pernod cream. It goes without saying that the wine list was extensive, and drinks were complimentary for the entire trip, throughout the train.

**The Road Ahead:** The vistas were spellbinding. Having read *Covenant* by James Michener, several Wilbur Smith sagas and various other books on South Africa, I was aware that the 900-mile rail journey follows the old pioneer trail from Cape Town north, via Paarl, Worcester and South Africa's bountiful Winelands, wending its way through the Hex River Valley to the interior's higher, drier Karoo country. What I did not expect was the fact that there were some exceptionally long tunnels en route. Just imagine the engineering challenges and effort that was involved in early railroad-building in this area.

**History comes Alive:** A pleasant surprise was our brief stop at the historic village of Matjiesfontein, which resembles a romantic movie set, with its street of carefully restored buildings, such as the Victorian Lord Milner Hotel, with lush gardens and a friendly pub nearby. I couldn't help imagining that Miss Kitty of *Gunsmoke* would come through the red velvet curtains and descend the ornate staircase. Several of us could have spent all day at the nearby museum, checking out relics of pioneer days, before, during and following the Anglo Boer War and the frantic gold and diamond rushes. It was hard to imagine that the rich and famous of the world came here 100 years ago, when it was a thriving health resort. Well, we've been told a renaissance is underway.

**Kimberley's Diamond Legacy:** Speaking of journeys into history, our next major stop was at Modder River station, a lonely spot where the Boers and British once clashed in a major battle. Disembarking from the train, we boarded a bus for Kimberley, and received a history lesson, which set the stage for our visit to this provincial capital and luncheon at the exclusive Kimberley Club, once male only and frequented by Cecil Rhodes, De Beers and colleagues. Well-fed and ready for action, we were off to the famous

Kimberley diamond mine. A restored village surrounded what they call the "greatest hole in the world," a huge excavation that was once a gentle hill. Our final lesson included mining practices and replicas of world famous diamonds from South Africa.

## **Pretoria Capital Park Station**

The following morning our train passed slowly through the suburbs of Johannesburg, city of gold and South Africa's thriving metropolis. Beyond was Pretoria, our final destination. I will elaborate on these two great cities later, but it's important to mention the Capital Park Station complex, heart of Rovos Empire. While there, we explored the rail yards, workshops, museum and training area, which is like looking backstage at a major Broadway production. Mr. Vos sums it up in the following statement, "All our rolling stock, consisting of 60 carriages and 5 operating locomotives, our administrative operation and workshops are now based at Capital Park. We could indeed not have wished for a better location, especially as Capital Park has played such an important part in South African Railways History, and thus provides the perfect home for our trains. The site covers 25 acres and boasts 15 lines, totally a distance of 12 km of which 100 m section is under roof. It is our aim, not only to rebuild the site to world-beating standards, but also to transform it into a working railway museum. Our new Headquarters will cater to steam enthusiasts, tourists and local visitors alike."

It goes without saying that the Rovos team won our hearts and earned our respect as true professionals. A well earned credit to South Africa's travel tourism industry. Many thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Vos for such a wonderful lifetime experience; one we're proud to tell the world all about. Our Rovos Rail story continues online at [http://www.africa-ata.org/sa\\_rovos.htm](http://www.africa-ata.org/sa_rovos.htm), e-mail: [africa@dowco](mailto:africa@dowco).

# Discovering the diversity of South Africa

By Helen C. Broadus

Discover the immense diversity of South Africa, a land full of rich cultural heritage, friendly people, spectacular wildlife and stunning landscapes. South Africa is truly famous for its mixture of cultures, heritages and traditions that are blended together through its festivals, music and foods. You will also find that there is much more than a traditional safari experience to see the “Big Five” in South Africa. You can also enjoy first-class hotel accommodations, pristine beaches, luxurious train rides, or even a walking safari in South Africa. Coming back to South Africa brings back fond memories and a yearning to see even more of South Africa’s tourism treasures! South Africa is a land of breathtaking scenery - from the amazing mixture of bustling cities to the rural village life, to the cascading waterfalls to the colorful fields of wildflowers, to the majestic mountains to the awesome coastline, it is simply awesome. South Africa has perhaps the African continent’s most sophisticated tourism infrastructure which, combined with first world technology, creates tremendous comfort and convenience for American tourists. The following is a sample of what you can expect to discover as you attempt to experience the many venues of South Africa:

## Culture

South Africa’s greatest treasure is the cultural diversity of its people. The contrasting influences of the African, European and Asian heritages create a mosaic of influences throughout the arts, crafts, dance, music, food and sports of South Africa. There are many indigenous people who have lived in South Africa for thousands of years. Three quarters of South Africa’s 49 million people are Blacks whose ancestors ñ many of them farmers and herders ñ began arriving from Central Africa some 1,500 years ago.

Most fall into two major ethnic groups: the Nguni, which consist of Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi peoples, and the Sotho, which includes the Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho or Basotho and Venda peoples.

Blacks often speak several languages, including that of their own ethnic group and English. Many Blacks reside in cities and townships living a more modern western lifestyle, while rural dwellers often wear unique costumes and maintain their ancestors traditions and customs. In addition ceremonies play a very important part in the lives of Black South Africans.

The European influence of South Africa is primarily rooted in the Afrikaners, who were descendants of Dutch settlers. They developed their own language ‘Afrikaans’ which is based on Dutch, but also has Malay, French, German and Black influences. About 6 million people, or roughly 15% of South Africa’s population are of European descent. The British and Germans also played an important part in the country’s development. The Coloureds, a mixed-race people, are descendants of Europeans, Blacks and former slaves from Dutch colonies in Africa and Indonesia. Indians came to South Africa initially as indentured servants and today make up the largest community of Indians outside of India.

## Outstanding Variety

South Africa’s cuisine influenced by many different cultures, combines tasty African traditions with spices and cooking techniques from around the world. All of South Africa’s cuisine is built around the country’s abundant supply of fresh seafood, meats, vegetables and fruits. It also harvests its own internationally celebrated wines. Festivals are one of the best ways to experience the local cultures of South Africa. It is at these events where



locals are most dazzling, open, artistic and musical. In addition, the tribal art of South Africans displays great fashion objects of beauty made from simple materials using age-old techniques. You can purchase in

both the cities and villages a wide variety of colorful beadwork, brightly painted pottery, intricately woven baskets, fashionable jewelry made of metals and beads, striking batik dresses and fabulous carved wooden animals and bowls.

## Major Cities and Sightseeing Interests.

Johannesburg, located in the Gauteng Province, fondly referred to as Jo’burg or the “City of Gold” from the 19th century gold rush era is South Africa’s commercial center. When taking an educational tour of Jo’burg you can see the storied past of a gold rush town at Gold Reef City as well as visit the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Museum of Africa and National Museum of Military History to learn about the history and culture of the people of South Africa. If you are interested in a great shopping excursion don’t miss the inexpensive treasures at the flea markets of Bruma Lake and Randburg Waterfront. And most importantly, make a pilgrimage to Soweto (which is short for South Western Township). It is one of the 33 townships originally established as temporary dormitories for workers. Soweto became famous during the Apartheid struggle in South Africa.

Pretoria, also located in the Gauteng Province, is just one hour’s drive north of Johannesburg and is the administrative capital of South Africa. It was also the capital of the former Boer Republic and has many monuments in honor of the country’s Afrikaner past. In Pretoria you will find the Union Buildings,



the country's architectural masterpiece and site of Mandela's inauguration. Also you can visit the Kruger House Museum, which was the 19th century home of former president Paul Kruger. You can also visit Pretoria's Art Museum and see some of South Africa's finest art. Pretoria is a city known for its beautiful gardens and Jacaranda Tree-lined streets. It is also famous for its modern State Theatre complex which offers a host of performing arts to include opera, ballet, drama, choral and symphony performances.

Durban is the colorful capital city of the KwaZulu-Natal Province located on the eastern coast of South Africa. Indians, Zulus, British and Afrikaners have all influenced this cosmopolitan port city. Almost one million Indians live in Durban and you can truly experience the thriving culture of India here in South Africa. Following the beach for more than three miles is Durban's "Golden Mile", with shops, restaurants, parks, gardens and other attractions. Another 'must stop' is to the bustling Victoria Street Indian Market for craft curios, saris stalls and fragrant spice counters. Lively shopping arcades line the city's streets and lanes and local flea markets are all over the town. After dark, the city's many restaurants, discos, jazz venues and pubs cater to every known taste.

Sun City Resort, located in the Northwest Province, is known as the glittering 'Las Vegas' of South Africa. In the valley below Sun City is the 'Palace at the Lost City', a man-made fantasy world supposedly based on the myths and legends of South Africa. Sun City has its own 'water world' and 'jungle' theme park experience that can be great family fun. Adults will definitely enjoy the casino and exciting night-life in Sun City. Also, for the avid golfer there is the Lost City Golf Course, designed by Gary Player. Just next door to Sun City is Pilanesburg National Park, South Africa's fifth largest park. It has an extensive wildlife population and more than 300 species of birds.

### **The Historic Cape**

Cape Town, known as the 'Mother City' of South Africa, is perched on a lush peninsula that juts out into the Atlantic Ocean, which reminds me of the coastline of San Francisco in the United States. It is located in the Western Cape Province and has been rated as "one of the best places to live, and one of the more culturally interesting and dynamic places in the world to visit." With its dramatic Table Mountain backdrop and inspiring ocean views, Cape Town is unquestionably one of the world's most beautiful cities. It is also South Africa's oldest city. One of the highpoints of a city tour of Cape Town will be a visit to the renovated Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. Packed with pubs, restaurants, crafts markets, theaters, museums and movie houses it is very popular with both the locals and tourists.

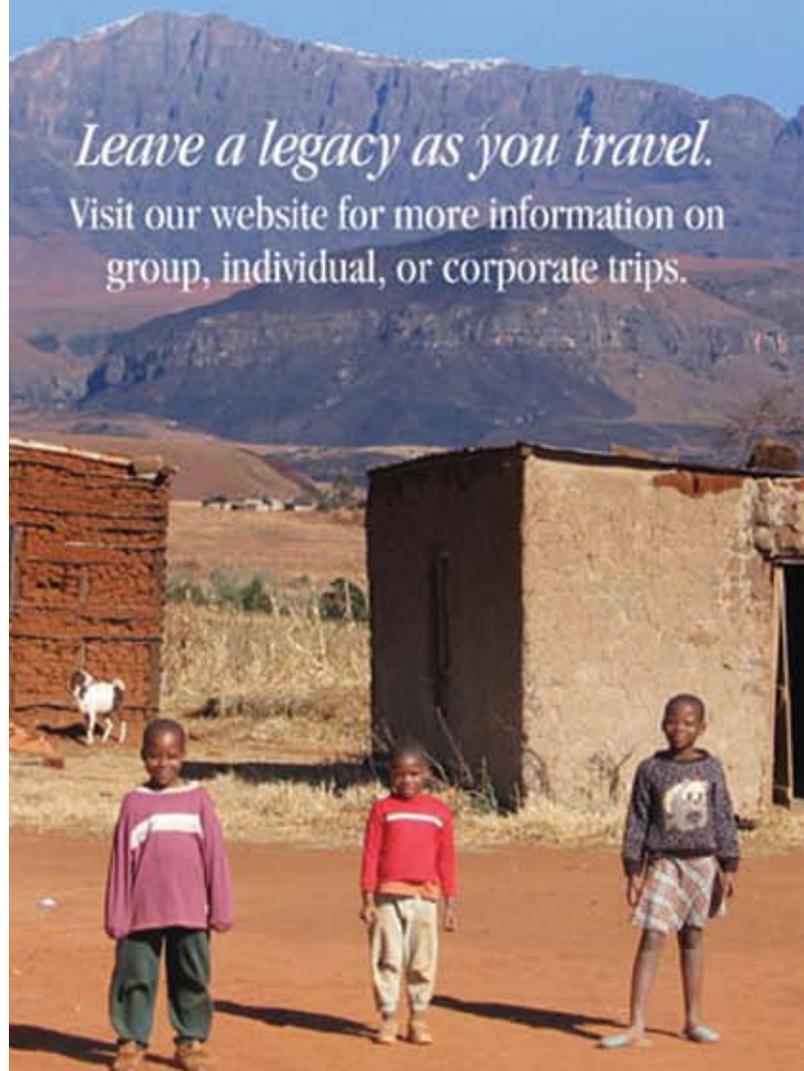
The Cape Peninsula is also packed with memorable sites, starting with the spectacular Table Mountain. You can take a cable ride or



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hike to the top for fantastic views. High on its slopes you can visit the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens, with some 6,000 species of plants. Near Cape Town are excellent vineyards featuring world-class wines. Again, your trip to South Africa would not be complete without a pilgrimage to Robben Island, the prison that housed President Nelson Mandela for 18 years. Interestingly, Robben Island is now a historical museum and was recently named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Also, along the southern Cape Coast is the area known as the ‘Garden Route’, which showcases breathtaking coastline views and lush vegetation.

**Adventure and Wildlife**

South Africa offers a tremendous variety of recreational activities to please the adventure seeker in each of us! In addition to fantastic safaris, you can enjoy hiking, snorkeling, horseback riding, canoeing, ballooning, bicycling, sailing, wind surfing and so much more. South Africa is a virtual paradise for viewing rare and exotic animals in their natural habitat and is one of the best places in Africa for viewing the “Big Five” – elephants, lions, leopards, rhinos and buffaloes. You will also see plenty of cheetahs, zebras, giraffes, hippopotami, wildebeests and antelopes in their natural habitats. South Africa is also one of the best bird-watching destinations in the

world. South Africa is a pioneer in wildlife conservation and an innovator in Ecotourism. The mission of South Africa’s national parks is to conserve and manage parks for the benefits of the country and its people. Because of South Africa’s commitment to protecting its wildlife, endangered species continue to flourish in their natural environment.

Within a few miles of South Africa’s major cities are incredible national parks and private reserves. A national park will have a more developed recreational infrastructure while a private reserve is set up to protect and conduct research on specific habitats. Generally, private reserves are more suitable for international tourists because of the dense concentration of wildlife, personalized service and top-notch accommodations.

For many visitors to South Africa, a ‘must see’ is Kruger National Park (KNP). It is the crown jewel of South Africa and one of the top ten national parks in the world. Situated in the eastern corner of the country above Johannesburg, it is the oldest national park on the African continent. South Africa has a total of twenty-five national parks and private reserves and its wildlife is amazingly accessible.

You can also enjoy many outdoor recreational activities while hiking and backpacking on



more than 300 trails arranging from easy to challenging including nature walks and wilderness mountain camping. Horseback riding and hot air ballooning are adventurous ways to either experience a different type of safari or simply enjoy the scenery. South Africa’s beaches offer fantastic surfing and water sport activities including big game fishing. South Africa’s many fresh water streams also provide great fly-fishing and leisurely canoeing treks. You can also scuba dive off the coast of South Africa and explore the abundant variety of tropical fish, sea turtles and dolphins. Whale watching is also a very exciting leisure sport and you can even take a shark safari if you are brave enough!

In conclusion, you are invited to join us in South Africa. This will be a great opportunity for you to discover the wonderful diversity of South Africa.





Additional Pages will be added to our  
South Africa World Edition Section