

# Bubbles take on starring role



Writer: Mervyn Minnaar

Photos: Courtesy Uhuru Communications

Language can be quite a challenge when it comes to description, especially when it comes to wine. But when, as the legend goes, a French monk called Dom Pérignon found in the 17th century that the wine which had fermented in his bottle turned out to be bubbly and delicious, he captured it exactly: “Come quickly, I am drinking the stars!”

It is that line of poetry that any good bottle of Champagne from France should conjure up today.

The same upbeat inspiration befell a man called Frans Malan, a wine entrepreneur of note, who created the first South African sparkling wine to properly parallel the traditional French version.

Malan, skilled and adventurous, had established his Stellenbosch family estate, Simonsig, as a major player in the wine business. He put another big pin into the unfolding wine culture map of southern Africa with his new product, inventing what was shortly to be formalised as wine made in the *Méthode Cap Classique* (MCC) style.

Clearly on a joyous roll as the bubbles popped successfully, he had the brainwave of naming his wine *Kaapse Vonkel*. Once again, the waywardness of language intervenes – should one simply translate this as “Cape Sparkle”? Yes, it is that too, but in Afrikaans there is a delightful, bright, melodious and theatrical ring to the appellation. Despite the pressures of market and language, after 40 years, Simonsig

*Kaapse Vonkel* remains one of the country’s finest and most acclaimed bottle-fermented sparkling wines, now in the hands of Frans’ sons.

Four decades down the line, one can hardly underestimate Malan’s achievement in terms of how the technicalities of grapes, cellar practice and the like were mastered. Today, South African sparkling wines are world-class.

It is said that there were earlier winemakers who tried bottle fermentation, but by the turn of 1970, the sparkling wines available on the market came from industrial production. The latter is produced by closed-tank fermentation (the so-called “charmat” method) or the simple addition of gas. Given the popularity of wine that



releases bubbles when opened, these methods are widely employed for low-end (and even very sweet) sparkling wine.

Making bottle-fermented sparkling wine requires a number of finely tuned stages in a long, patient process. Base wine needs to be made from early-picked grapes that will deliver the right acidity and, more importantly for the long time in the bottle, the right flavour components. Traditionally, in the Champagne region of France these grapes are mainly Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, with Pinot Meunier as a third possibility.

Once the first wine has been fully fermented, it is bottled and the individual bottles inoculated with yeast for a second fermentation. This “locked-in” process develops the carbon dioxide that will be released as fine bubbles, when the bottle is finally opened.

The yeast lees have a particular effect on the wine and have to be drained – sometimes after many years – from each bottle in a process called *remuage*, in which every bottle is slowly turned to trap the lees in the neck. The *dégorgement* stage is when, in a tricky step, each bottle releases the yeast lees and is quickly topped up and sealed. A ring of wire and a small metal piece called a *muselet* hold the cork steady against the bottle pressure.

Typically, the largest volume of wine is made in the “brut” style, meaning dry, at a maximum of 15 g of residual sugar in the wine. Extra dry is below six.

According to *Platter's South African Wine Guide 2011*, there are 145 genuine MCC wines available today. Of these, there are 29 in the popular rosé style,

and two full-blown reds.

To say real bubbly are booming in South Africa is an understatement. Local wine lovers, like their overseas counterparts, have taken to good sparkling wine in increasing numbers, providing an inspiration and good income – it usually sells for a premium – to many old and new producers.

For the adventurous, there are many splendid boutique bottlings, like tiny *Ambeloui* in Cape Town's Hout Bay, *Silverthorn*, *Topiary*, *Quoin Rock* and the excellent, prize-winning *Jacques Bruère blanc de blancs* from Robertson's *Bon Courage*.

Larger houses, too, provide fine products – often an extended range at good prices. The big players are the House of *JC le Roux*, *Villiera* and *Simonsig* estates in Stellenbosch and *Graham Beck* in Robertson.

These wine producers have been in the business for some time and their ranges of wines have wide appeal. They extend from the affordable and popular in volumes like *Pongracz* and *Kaapse Vonkel* to the premium-priced and rare – *Graham Beck Cuvée Clive* (the 2005 is only the second release), and *Villiera Monro Brut* (the 2005 is rated five-star).

All these wines are meticulously made from classic French grapes, according to the traditional methods. The expertise of South African producers in this delicate practice is evident not only in the consistency of the big players and large volumes, but in those small batches of blends, rosés and blanc de blancs with the most exquisite of febrile bubbles and dense, lingering aromas.

Superior sparkling wine has long

been established as a key presence at any celebration of importance. This is easy to understand when one considers the good Benedictine monk winemaker's original ecstasy when he discovered the bubbles in his wine, reminding him of the sparkling stars (and possibly the holy presence) in the heavens above. ☺

***This article first appeared in Sawubona inflight magazine***





Maye Rozani



**C**hristmas is traditionally a time for family, delicious dishes, lavish lunches and decadent desserts.

Chef Maye Rozani of Dan Dee Chefs loves combining Eastern and Western dishes to create flavours and textures from both cultures. She believes food is meant to be enjoyed and infuses her dishes with piquant, intense flavours. She shares a Christmas-inspired meal that is easy to create at home this festive season.

## Stuff the turkey

– try a new festive menu

Writer: Samona Murugan

Photos: Ntswe Mokoena

### Salad with red wine poached pears, avocado, walnuts and dried cranberries

#### Ingredients:

250 ml red wine  
100 g sugar  
A few cloves  
1 ripe pear, peeled  
50 ml balsamic vinegar

#### Method:

Pour the red wine, sugar and cloves in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Turn down the heat and place the pear in the saucepan. Poach the pear for 20 minutes, turning it every five minutes to get an even colour on all sides.

Once the pear is poached, remove it from the saucepan, slice and allow it to cool. Leave the red wine in the saucepan and cook until it reduces to half its volume.

Mixed salad leaves  
Rocket  
50 g walnuts  
50 g dried cranberries  
1 avocado  
50 ml olive oil

Remove from the stove, add the balsamic vinegar and leave to cool.

Mix the lettuce and rocket in a big salad bowl and sprinkle with walnuts and cranberries. Peel and slice the avocado and add the salad mix with the pear slices. Mix the olive oil with the red wine reduction and use as a salad dressing.



## Strawberry, balsamic and pepper fillet of beef, with long-stem broccoli and brunoise potatoes

### Ingredients:

100 g strawberries  
 50 ml balsamic vinegar  
 25 ml olive oil  
 20 g cracked black pepper  
 600 g beef fillet  
 2 medium potatoes  
 2 sprigs of rosemary  
 Broccoli

### Method:

In an airtight container, mix the strawberries, balsamic vinegar, oil and pepper. Place the beef fillet in the marinade and seal the container for a few hours.

Cut the potatoes into small blocks, place them on a roasting tray and sprinkle over pepper, rosemary, sea salt and a drizzle of olive oil. Cover with foil and place in the oven for about 20 minutes at 180°C.

Remove the fillet and fry in a hot pan with olive oil for two to three minutes.

Place the meat marinade in a saucepan and reduce it to form a sauce.

Blanch the broccoli for two minutes and sprinkle with sea salt. (To blanch, place the broccoli into boiling water for a minute. Remove and then immerse in cold water to halt the cooking process.)

Place the fillet onto a plate with the potatoes and broccoli, and drizzle with the strawberry and balsamic vinegar sauce.

\* Serve with Spier Shiraz

## Decadent chocolate salami – filled with Christmas!

### Ingredients:

25 ml fresh cream  
 25 g butter  
 25 ml brandy (optional)  
 1/2 tsp cinnamon  
 1/2 tsp ground cloves  
 150 g good quality dark chocolate  
 50 g pistachio nuts  
 50 g dried cranberries  
 50 g glazed cherries  
 Icing sugar

### Method:

In a pan, heat the cream, butter, brandy and spices. Once hot, remove from the heat and add the chocolate. Whisk until the chocolate is melted. Add the nuts and fruit. Pour the chocolate mixture in a bowl and place in the fridge to cool down completely.



When the mixture has cooled, place on a piece of cling film. Using the cling film as a "skin", mould the mix into a sausage shape. Remove the cling film and dust the chocolate salami with some icing sugar and cinnamon. Slice and refrigerate until ready to serve. 🍷

# Beach trends

It's time to let your body breathe and soak up some sun! Hit the beach looking bright, bold and trendy this holiday season.

Stylist: Nicole J Nel  
Photographer: Duane Howard

**R325**  
Lulu Belle

**R99.99**  
Woolworths

Bikini top,  
part of set  
**R299**  
Country Road

**R695**  
Spitz

**R95**  
Lulu Belle

Victoria Beckham  
sunglasses,  
**R2 700**  
Extreme Eyewear



**R399**  
Country Road

**R499**  
Trenery

**R79**  
Edgars Red Square

**R399**  
Country Road



**R695**  
Spitz

Mykita sunglasses,  
**R5 275**  
Extreme Eyewear

Marc Jacobs sunglasses,  
**R1 950**  
Extreme Eyewear

Suppliers:  
Country Road and Trenery at Woolworths: 021 415 3411  
Extreme Eyewear: 021 421 1179  
Spitz: 021 421 0148  
Lulu Belle: 021 418 6263  
Edgars Red Square: 021 419 8766

# Eat, write – make food diaries a healthy habit

Writer: Helen Ueckermann

**W**hether you are working towards fewer kilograms or simply want to eat a bit more healthily, there is nothing more effective than recording your eating habits.

Keeping a food diary of what you eat and at what times may sound like a lot of extra work for a busy person, but that is often exactly the problem. Being busy, chasing deadlines and keeping up with career demands does not leave much time for a healthy diet.

On the contrary, it often leads to eating on the run, devouring fast foods and heating up convenience meals, says Johannesburg-based registered dietician Lila Bruk.

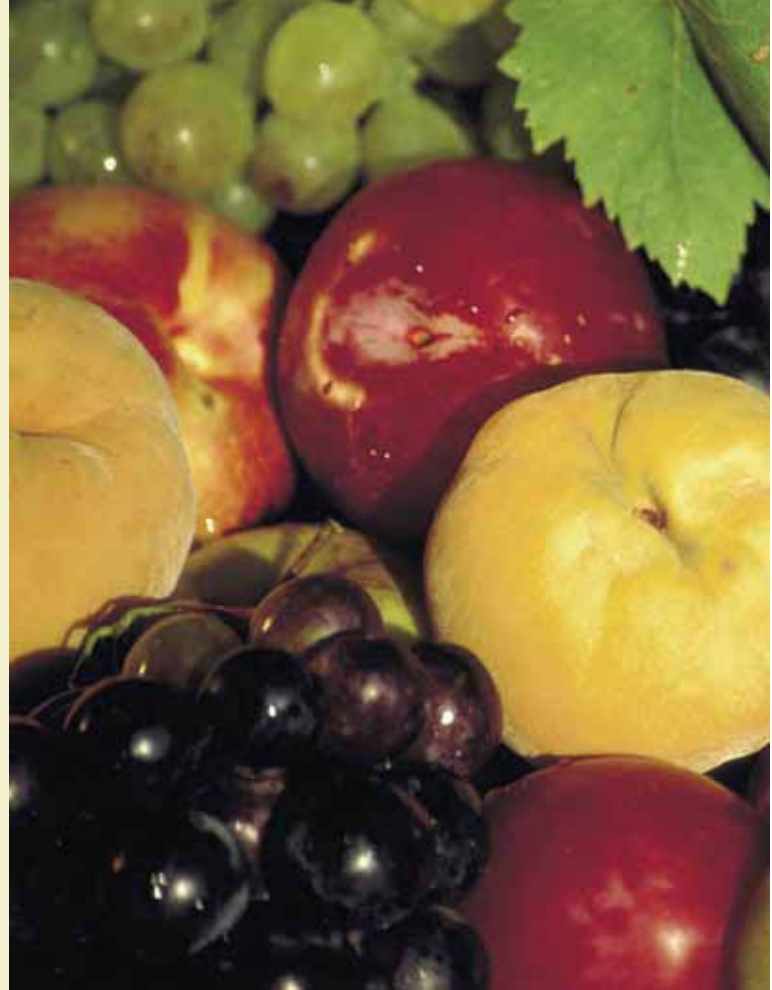
Keeping a food diary makes it easier to pick up where you go wrong with your eating habits, allowing you to change these behaviours.

“For example, your diary may reveal that you overeat when you get home from work before dinner. Knowing that, you could introduce a mid-afternoon snack to help you curb post-work nibbling.

“For emotional eaters, it can prove helpful to include in your food journal any emotions you experienced before or at the time of eating. You may find that you are eating out of boredom and once you’ve established that, you can distract yourself with another activity to keep you away from the fridge,” says Bruk, who is also the in-house dietician for the recently introduced South African weight-loss website SlimTrack ([www.slimtrack.co.za](http://www.slimtrack.co.za)).

Keeping track of what you eat can greatly benefit your weight loss, she says.

“A 2008 study of over 1 000 overweight adults showed that those who kept a record of what they ate lost double the weight of those who did not. Clearly, food diaries work. Knowing you have to write down every morsel that crosses your lips, will make you think twice before eating something simply because it is there, even if you are not really hungry.”



## Bruk points out these great advantages of keeping a food diary:

- Kilojoule check – A food diary helps you keep track of how many kilojoules you have consumed and what foods make up the majority of these kilojoules.
- Mindful munches – Food diaries force you to be conscious of what you are eating and stay aware of how much you are eating at a time.
- Binge beater – Knowing that you have to record what you eat makes you think twice before eating foods you should not.
- Motivator – If you log your food regularly, you have an excellent record of your improving eating habits and progress made with losing weight. Also, your food log shows you what you have eaten during those weeks that you lost weight, so it acts as your own, super-personalised eating plan that you can follow with success.
- Trouble-shooter – By looking back at your food diary, you can identify those times when you have a tendency to overindulge, as well as determine which foods you find hard to eat in moderation. In this way, you develop strategies to cope with those specific times of day and how to manage those specific foods.
- Keeping in balance – Your food diary allows you to determine whether your diet is nutritionally balanced or whether you are eating too much or too little of a specific nutrient (for example, too many carbohydrates or too little protein).

- Plateau-beater – Many people find that their weight loss slows down after a few months, despite them keeping to their diets and exercise regimens. Keeping a food diary makes it easier to be honest with yourself about those extra kilojoules that may be creeping in. Yes, those two spoonfuls of dessert, the remains of your child's cheese sandwich and that forgotten handful of crisps all add up to thwart your weight-loss efforts and could very well be the reason for your plateau. You may even unconsciously be having larger portion sizes than you were initially meant to, resulting in diminished weight loss. This, of course, means that you have to be 100% honest with your eating and record everything – yes, that means everything that you have eaten.
- Commitment-booster – When you fill in your food diary regularly, it is a daily reminder of the commitment you are making to yourself and your weight-loss journey and this in itself keeps you on track.
- Workout watch – By being able to record not only how many kilojoules you have eaten, but also how many kilojoules you have burned during exercise, you are able to determine
- Indulge in moderation. Rather have a small portion of a food you really want than force yourself to eat more of those you do not. No food is "off-limits" if you are mindful of your portion size.
- Rather than going for the traditional festive meal, why not try something different this year? Perhaps you could try cooking a healthy low-fat dinner or have a brunch with high-fibre cereals, yoghurt, fresh fruit, eggs and seed or rye toast.
- Choose low-GI foods wherever possible to stay fuller for longer.
- It is summer, so enjoy the warm weather by eating lighter meals, getting more active and indulging in delicious summer fruits. 🍌



whether you are perhaps overestimating how many kilojoules you really burned during your spinning class and whether you may be overcompensating for those burned kilojoules by eating too much.

With all these advantages, it is clear that keeping a food diary is an indispensable weight-loss tool. Visit [www.slimtrack.co.za](http://www.slimtrack.co.za) to create your own personalised online food diary and reap the benefits.

### Start the New Year feeling slim, healthy and energised!

To stay slim and on track over the festive season, Bruk has the following suggestions:

- Avoid starving yourself the whole day before a festive meal – you will only end up being too hungry and overeating later. Rather try to plan healthy meals and snacks on these days.

Here is a great way to take advantage of summer fruits: Summer fruit crumble (serves 10)

#### Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp low-fat margarine
- 3 tbsp canola oil
- 1 cup Nutty Wheat Flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 500 g sliced peaches, plums and/or nectarines
- 2 cups fresh or frozen berries

#### Method:

- Preheat oven to 180°C.
- Place margarine and oil in a pan and heat for five to seven minutes.
- Mix together flour, baking powder and salt in a large bowl. Add milk, sugar and vanilla; stir to combine.
- Add the melted margarine mixture to the batter and mix.
- Pour batter into a 20cm x 30cm baking tin.
- Place fruit on top evenly.
- Bake in the preheated oven until the top is browned and the batter has been cooked through. This should take approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Allow to cool for at least 15 minutes before serving. Serve with low-fat custard, low-fat ice-cream or some fat-free yoghurt.



## Bag a new look for you and your favourite toy

Writer: Helen Ueckermann

**W**hether you are on a business trip or just on your way to the office, stay stylish and safe with our selection of laptop bags that are good to have or good to treat as gifts – and will suit your pocket, too.

**1** The Kipling Noxobo lacquer black expandable working bag has a modern, relaxed look. The bag sports fixed laptop protection, a trolley sleeve and a removable shoulder strap – a great bag for everyday use and made of 100% polyamide. **Price: R999.**



**2** Busby's genuine leather messenger bag will make you look the business. Its attractive features include a slim design with an adjustable canvas strap, top zip, magnetic flap, front zip, one big compartment, mobile phone compartment, stationery compartment, printed lining as well as a back zip. **Price: R1 695.**



**3** The Tumi T-Tech Jonas E-W Laptop Crossbody comes in two sharp colour combinations – black and ice (featured here) or black and green. The 100% nylon bag is water repellent. The Napa leather exterior touch points, yellow leather interior detailing, custom rivets and zip pulls make for a must-have cool look. **Price: R2 999.**



**4** The strangely named Crumpler Dentist's Wife Laptop Bag holds a laptop of up to 13" wide. The bag has internal velcro and zip mesh pockets, pen slots, credit card slots, external slip pockets and shoulder-padded handles. The shoulder strap is detachable and adjustable. **Price: from R799.**



5 If you are looking for a slim design to fit your laptop, folders, books and other essentials, look no further than the Golla Script 16" backpack. The well-padded main compartment opens up completely, and the front compartment has see-through pockets to keep your things accessible and in order. **Price: R899.**

6 For style, functionality and affordability – all in one bag – the Krusell 15.4" Gaia laptop bag may just be what you need. Its slim, elegant and minimalistic design in high-quality leather and attention to detail make for a classy impression. **Price: R1 199.**



7 Sleeping over? Take along your Targus Metro XL rolling notebook case, comfortably storing your 16" – 17.3" notebook. The overnight luggage section is perfect for short business trips, while the zip-down workstation provides storage for your mobile accessories, pen loops, key clip and business card holder. You will love the removable mesh accessory pouch and a removable CD/DVD sleeve holding eight discs. **Price: R1 425.**

8 Knomo's Warwick full leather briefcase has a sleek, elegant design and can hold up to a 15" MacBook Pro. The two spacious zipped compartments – one for your MacBook in the dedicated quilted pocket and one for everything else – mean that you have everything you need within easy reach. **Price: from R2 999.**



9 The Incase coated canvas laptop shoulder bag features a reinforced compartment with quilted interior lining which fits up to the 15" MacBook Pro laptop. A durable cotton canvas construction and weather-resistant coating make it a bag for all conditions. Add to this a slip pocket for your iPhone, a large exterior pocket, several interior mesh and slip pockets and a rear zipped magazine slip pocket. **Price: R999. ®**

For more information on the featured products, visit [www.myistore.co.za](http://www.myistore.co.za), [www.bagitup.co.za](http://www.bagitup.co.za) and [www.busbyhouse.com](http://www.busbyhouse.com).

# Conquering Kilimanjaro, landing among the stars



Writer: Louise van Niekerk

Photo: Lester Fourie

***"As wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun." – American author, Ernest Hemingway, on Kilimanjaro.***

Conquering Kilimanjaro gives new meaning to sayings such as "reach for the stars", "the sky is the limit", and "your attitude determines your altitude". For Lester Fourie, Office Manager in Support Services at the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), the thought of climbing the formidable Kilimanjaro brought to mind the words of motivational speaker, Les Brown, who said: "Shoot for the moon, even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."

Realising a long-standing dream, Lester and his eldest brother, Deon, set out to conquer Kilimanjaro on a week-long expedition two months ago, from October 1 to 8.

Every year, more than 25 000 people set foot in Tanzania to climb Africa's highest peak. At 5 895 m above sea level and covering an area of about 355 km<sup>2</sup>, Kili, as the mountain is affectionately known, is also the tallest free-standing mountain in the world.

The snow-capped massif is a place of myth and folklore. Located a mere 325 km from the equator just inside Tanzania's northern border, Kilimanjaro boasts an amazing variety of landscapes; from rain forests and moorland terrain to Alpine desert and glaciated peaks. Kilimanjaro takes you through four climate zones, each varying in rainfall, temperature, flora and fauna.

Kilimanjaro was only "discovered" by the western world in 1848 when a German missionary, Johannes Rebmann, came within sight

of the mountain. After exploring the area and the lower slopes, he submitted his findings to the Royal Geographical Society.

But the experts were sceptical, as they did not believe a snow-capped mountain in eastern equatorial Africa was possible.

During the years that followed, a number of unsuccessful attempts were made by various explorers to reach the summit, and it was only on 6 October 1889 that Dr Hans Meyer and Ludwig Purtscheller conquered it. It took Meyer almost six weeks to reach the summit, six times as long as it takes the average climber today.

Fourie, who has been hiking since he was 11 years old, went on his first hike in 1982. He says the decision to climb Kilimanjaro has been long in the making. He had done various big hikes, including Tsitsikamma, Swellendam, Outeniqua, Amathole, Giants Castle, and Vergelegen, but in terms of altitude, Kilimanjaro was his first big one.

Climbing Kilimanjaro does not require any special sporting skills as no technical climbing is involved on most of the routes.



Lester Fourie (right) with fellow South African climber, Boy Matselela.



Descending from the majestic Mount Kilimanjaro.

"You don't need specialised equipment, but the journey is not to be taken lightly and you must be prepared for the extreme weather conditions," he says. "We started preparing in January (2011), mainly by acquiring equipment for the extreme mountain conditions found at Kilimanjaro.

"In terms of special clothing, we had to buy good thermal base layers, thermal mid-layers and a good soft-shell outer-layer. For summit night, I bought a down jacket, a rain jacket and a pair of Avalanche pants, as well as a decent pair of trekking boots, a headlamp and a down sleeping bag with a rating of -15°C."

Asked how he prepared himself physically for the journey, Fourie says physical fitness has never been his approach. "For me, it's important to have a 'mountain sense'; know your capabilities, learn to read the mountains and the weather; have the right equipment and get to know how to use it."

Fourie's advice to people who are considering similar expeditions is to make sure they are mentally prepared. "I think people do not make it to the summit, because

at altitudes above 5 000 m above sea level, the lack of oxygen could create irrational behaviour.

"For me, summit evening was a bit of a challenge. You start your summit ascent at midnight. You then climb a 1 200 m ridge, taking about seven hours to reach Stella Point at 5 730 m above sea level. So, during this time you really only have yourself to talk with, and you see many people turning back due to altitude sickness. The fact that I didn't get altitude sickness was one of the highlights for me."

A proudly South African moment for him was when one of the porters commented that South Africans were good mountain climbers, unlike the Americans and Japanese. "This was another highlight for me. It left me feeling proudly South African."

Those who have climbed Kilimanjaro know that the guides and porters are the heart and soul of the climb. They can mean the difference between making it and having to turn back, disappointed. Asked if he ever felt like turning back or that his life was in danger, Fourie commented that he was too busy "getting high" on the lack of oxygen. "Besides, the Tanzanian porters carrying the bulk of the equipment were the greatest. They really looked after us, every step of the way."

The best time to climb Kilimanjaro is from mid-December to end-March and from July to October. "We chose to take the Machame route, which takes six to seven days, giving us more time to acclimatise. The temperature varies between 15°C during the day and -5 °C at night. On summit night, the temperature can drop as low as -15°C."

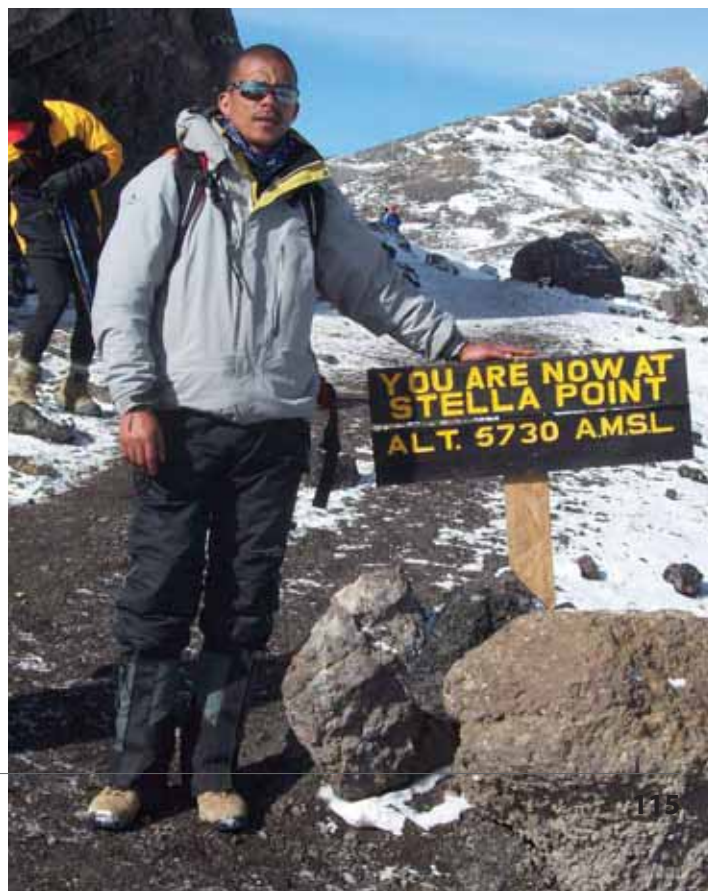
Fourie says the trip cost him around R40 000. He recommends that anyone who is interested in taking on this challenge should contact a travel agent who specialises in trips to Kilimanjaro as they will be able to provide a breakdown of costs and equipment needed.

"It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves," said Sir Edmund Hillary, the first man to summit Mount Everest.

Agreeing with the world's most famous mountaineer, future plans for Fourie include heading for South America where he hopes to reach even higher peaks. "I would love to do Aconcagua – maybe in 2013 – it's the highest peak in South America, at 6 962 m above sea level."

High hopes indeed! ☺

*Almost there – Fourie a few hours before reaching the summit.*



# Carmakers plug into a greener future



*Who said hybrids have to be boring? Here are two offerings from Lexus, but be prepared to pay*

*\*Writer: Ashref Ismail*

**D**eliberations and discussions at the recent United Nations Climate-Change conference in Durban (COP17) brought into sharp focus the fragile nature of our planet and its precious resources.

The motoring world has long been accused of being a major contributor to greenhouse gases and while many petrolheads remain in denial of protestations by “bunny huggers” and “prophets of doom”, the motor industry has commenced a quiet revolution of the internal combustion engine as we know it.

Resources cannot last forever. Climate change is happening and caring for the planet is not just a fashionable politically correct phrase, but an undeniable imperative. We cannot wish away motorised transport; what we need to do is adapt both our vehicles and driving style to save our fragile environment.

Almost every motor manufacturer currently has at least one “green” car that is either immediately available or in an advanced stage of being researched and developed.

So what constitutes a “green” car? A green car is a vehicle that uses less fuel and produces lower and less harmful emissions. The perfect green car remains elusive and, even if available, remains extremely expensive and somewhat impractical for normal application.

What manufacturers have succeeded in doing is to provide viable alternatives that point the way to future progress in the development of alternative energy sources. Green cars today consist of an assortment of hybrid vehicles, electric ones and vehicles powered by alternative biofuels.

One thing remains certain: motoring as we know it will definitely undergo a radical transformation in the next decade. So, let’s see what we could be driving in the not-too-distant future.

## **Hybrid cars**

These cars are powered by both a conventional engine as well as an electric motor. The clever thing about a hybrid is that at low, city speeds the fuel engine cuts out and the electric motor kicks in, allowing for huge savings in consumption.

Toyota’s Prius led the charge in this field; now Lexus and Honda, among other car makers, also have mainstream models with hybrid technology.

Honda’s sporty two-door CRZ proved that being green can also be oh-so-sexy. The downside of a

hybrid is the obviously high purchase cost, the additional weight of the electric motor that often reduces the luggage area and the silent engine that can catch pedestrians unaware!

The remarkable technology of the hybrid sees the electric motor being recharged when the conventional engine kicks in at higher speeds.

### **Electric cars**

Motor companies have been toying with electric technology for decades, but because the internal combustion engine was always relatively inexpensive and storage for the low-life batteries a major problem, the electric car never made significant progress (much to the relief of oil companies, I suppose!).

Things are set to change rather radically. General Motors has launched the Volt overseas, which apart from looking very modern, crisp and “cool”, also provides excellent range.

Nissan (South Africa) is seriously considering launching its Leaf locally and wants to engage government in a possible joint venture to develop infrastructure that will support this new technology.

The biggest drawback for electric vehicles remains high purchase costs, range and recharge points. Currently, most newly developed electric vehicles are only able to cover a distance of around 200 km (depending on a number of variables, of course).

### **Biofuel**

Biofuels are derived from recently decayed biological material rather than fossil fuels, like oil and coal. Believe it or not, sugars derived from

*General Motors launched its next 100 years recently by unveiling the much-anticipated production version of the Chevrolet Volt*



wheat, corn and cane are fermented and distilled and can be added to gasoline in about 15% amounts.

There has also been talk that cow dung could be used for a highly explosive turbo charge! South American countries like Brazil have long embraced cars powered by ethanol and even have public-transport vehicles that are driven by biofuel.

Apparently though, the cost-saving benefits are not that great and more research is needed, especially in developing countries where food production is infinitely more important than what driving machinery is.

### **Diesel engines**

Diesel engines were originally designed to run on vegetable oil, but were then adapted to run on a type of petroleum. Diesel engines of long ago were sluggish and emitted ugly black smoke.

Diesel provided excellent mileage and was significantly cheaper. Today’s high-tech diesels have come a long way – they are cleaner burning, as responsive as their petrol counterparts and with hardly any evidence of a noisy diesel clatter.

We now have what Mercedes Benz names “BlueEFFICIENCY” and VW “BlueMotion”. These high-tech motors are almost always turbo-charged, eliminating the lack of response commonly found in diesel-powered cars.

Many modern turbo diesels have almost eliminated the annoying turbo-lag. Unfortunately, diesel-powered vehicles cost about R25 000 to R30 000 more than the average-priced car, service intervals are shorter and special care must be taken to ensure longevity. A blown turbo, often not covered by your normal warranty, will reduce you to tears if you have to replace it due to neglect.

While a tank full of diesel will take you much further than the same tank full of petrol, the price advantage of a litre of diesel is no more. Also, many new high-tech diesel cars use only high-quality 50 ppm diesel fuel – so if you are driving a 4x4 SUV and find yourself in the middle of Tweebuffelsmeteenkoeëlmorsdoodgeskietfontein, you could



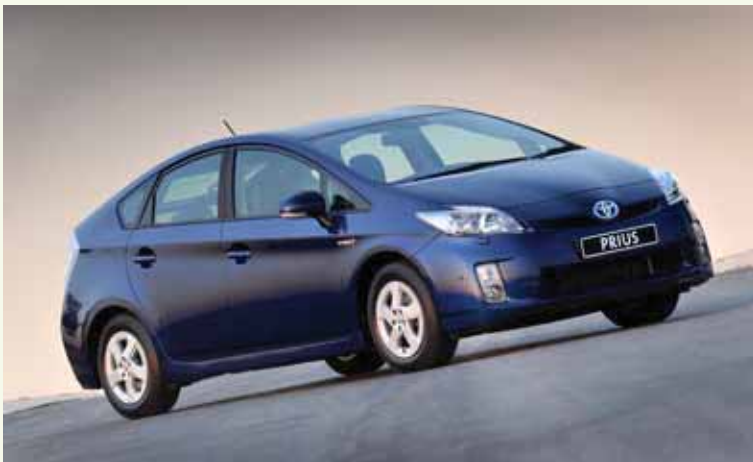
*Honda’s CRZ shows that green can be sexy too*



*The Jaguar C-X75 was awarded the Louis Vuitton Classic Concept Award 2010 by a panel of luminaries from the worlds of design, fashion and luxury.*

do serious damage to the engine if you use low-quality diesel in a car meant to run only on the best.

So if you've decided to do your bit for the planet and are now seriously considering purchasing a green car, yet you do not want to see red, cost-wise, what choices do you have and where do you start?



*The car that started the green revolution, Toyota's Prius.*

Always remember, cars with small-capacity engines that emit the lowest emissions are a great start. The bigger the car, the bigger the carbon footprint.

Not everyone can walk to work or would want to take a taxi. If buying a green car is too expensive, consider saving fuel by ensuring your vehicle is well maintained and eliminate unnecessary trips. Optimum fuel efficiency and reduced air pollution is the way to go.

When you're in the market for a new car, downsize but still tick all the options boxes so you do not feel you're making a huge sacrifice. Compare fuel consumption as well as emission figures. Also, choose manufacturers that have a high number of

recyclable components and demonstrate responsible environmental value systems.

If you have a generous car allowance, you can still go green with one of the premium motor manufacturers that boast a model that has all the green credentials; some, like Lexus, Range Rover and even Porsche are offering hybrid versions of their standard models.

If the green concept cars displayed at motor shows are anything to go by, we need not mourn the passing of the size-matters, cubic-centimetre, puts-hair-on-a-man's-chest gas guzzler. No longer do we have to fear that green cars will look like egg-shaped, aerodynamic amoeba. Tomorrow's cars will be clean, green and mean! Roll on the future ...! 🚗

***\*Ashref Ismail is a member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists and presenter of "Bumper2Bumper". Catch Ashref on DSTv Audio Channel 165 every Friday from 19:00 to 21:00 for your high octane, low calorie, turbo-charged motoring fix!***



*Nissan's electric Leaf*



# It's still my **mojo!**

Writer: Matona Fatman

**R**ule number one for a professional woman working in the heart of the city's business district: always bring on your A-game. Looking (and feeling) great is as big a deal as knowing how to tame a team of wolf pack-reared board members. And I, Kathy Bridges, am the proud author of the manual of fabulousity. Look up the word "fierce" in the dictionary and you'll find a picture of me right next to it.

Besides my appreciation of all things cosmo and metro, I have a little secret too dirty to hide in my crocodile-skin clutch bag. When the mojo levels dip, I revert to my addiction. Some women gamble, some eat chocolate, while others, sadly, wear clothes that are two sizes too small. I, on the other hand, am addicted to construction sites. If you're willing to think beyond the shrill noise of jackhammer drills, you'll realise I have sound reason to risk my imported stilettos on the battered sidewalks. After the dust clouds settle, you'll see the bodies manning those power tools as clearly as I do: 100% pure testosterone waiting to wolf-whistle at the click of your heels.

One hot summer's day after I had survived yet another gut-wrenching internal audit, the old ego was desperate for some stroking and I knew just the place with an endless supply of people who would be very glad to see me. I headed to the local shopping complex under construction, under the guise of looking for orange juice and a loaf of low-GI bread. I could see the blue overalls half a mile away. This was going to be easy: park, hike up my free-flowing, ankle-length dress as I "struggled" my way out of the car and wait for the barrage of whistles as I strolled into the shop.

Lip gloss. Check. Quick wink at myself in the rear-view mirror. Check. All I had to do was wait for the incessant whistling, and slightly unsavoury remarks from a bunch of not-so-gentle men. I was almost halfway to the shop when I noticed the cold echo of

silence on my trail. I had wasted a good minute of striding and almost twisting my left hip out of socket on dead silence. This was an unusual first for me. Either these men were blind, or I was really losing my mojo. As I reduced my walking speed to 0.01 km/h, a miracle happened and the blind men regained their sight. Phew! There was that all too familiar sound of appreciation. They absolutely loved me!

It was only when I took a moment to turn and throw a perfunctory glance at my dusty admirers that I saw it. There it was. The truth, in all its mini-skirt-clad glory:



another girl. Not wanting to further exacerbate the deep sense of humiliation I no doubt felt all by myself, I slid my Chanel sunglasses from the crown of my head to their rightful place and continued my accelerated walk of shame, incognito, straight into the shop to go about the dreary business of choosing a loaf of bread.

Was I relieved to be back in the safety of my office: the one place where being desirable was considered bad for business! As soon as I got out of the lift, there was old Mr Bennett, standing there with a stack of files as thick and uninteresting as he was.

"Ah, Ms Bridges. There you are. Was just about to send out a search party for you."

I'm sure he didn't mean to sound condescending.

"Here I am, sir." I shrugged.

"And there you are indeed."

Yes! He was staring at my chest with his beady, almost lifeless, smarmy eyes. The man was at least 120 years old with a hideous toupee, but on a day where my charm had failed to get the attention of a bunch of supposedly warm-blooded young ones, stuffy old Bennett would have to do.

"Very well, Bridges. The Sapphire Group files you requested," he said, dumping the stack into my arms. "One more thing. There's an intern joining your unit. Amanda something or the other. Please see to it that she gets all the experiential training she requires."

When I returned a blank stare, Mr Bennett cleared his throat in his customarily annoyed manner. "Surely I don't have to explain to you what you need to do with an intern, Bridges. You're an old hand. Now get on with it." He gave my chest another "once-over".

And with that he was gone. It's only when I looked down to smile at the "girls" that I realised old Bennett wasn't looking at them at all. Why would he be, when my armpits had formed two untidy dams on my shirt?!

I threw the files on my desk. "You're an old hand" was still ringing clear as church bells in my head when Pedro (my Gay Best Friend (GBF) – come to think of it, the entire office's GBF - snuck up on me.

"Don't you ever knock?" I huffed. It was an old running joke in our

open plan office. "I've just had a day from hell! I've lost my mojo and I will die an old, wrinkly chambermaid no one even takes a second look at."

"Oh bokie! You're in the wrong profession. So melodramatic. Don't you know the more mature the wine, the better the taste?"

"You're sweet Pedro, but honestly let's face it: I'm not a spring chicken anymore! I've just taken a major dive in the desirability stakes and that's putting it mildly." I dropped my voice four octaves. "Not even old Bennett thinks I'm hot."

"No darling – you are hot," he teased, staring at the wet circles on my shirt.

I instinctively drew my arms closer to my body. "Thanks a lot," I retorted, swatting him with a file. "To further rub salt into my wounds, there's a new tart – Amanda something – I have to babysit! She's probably pretty with an agile hot body and legs that go all the way up to heaven. And she has the intellect of a three-day-old pea."

By the time I realised Pedro was not shaking his head because of the onset of a mild stroke – it was too late. Amanda something was standing right next to me.

"Miss Bridges," she reached out her hand. "Amanda Johansen. I'm the new intern. Mr Bennett has told me so many good things about you, says you're the best accountant this side of the equator. I look forward to learning so much from you."

After having been struck right at the knees by the Gautrain going at the speed of light, I gathered my hand to shake Amanda's. To ask the earth to open up and swallow me was noble, but

not happening. The next best thing was a double shot of vodka.

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"You know, Kath, for such an enlightened woman who's never missed an episode of Oprah – you can be pretty thick," said Pedro, handing me my

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third shot of vodka on the rocks. We were lucky to have scored tables at La Dolce Vita on a Thursday night – a table I was now coming dangerously close to falling off from.

"I know," my lips curled into a smirk. "I am an intelligent woman of substance, whose worth is not dictated by how others see me. I'm strong and beautiful and have a lot to offer."

"Do you believe yourself?" Pedro asked, as he winked and pouted at a complete stranger.

"Yes. Yes I do."

"Then here's to being more beautiful and more intelligent as you get older and wiser."

"I'll drink to that!" At that moment, I would've drank to anything.

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"Miss Bridges, today's my last day."

I could hardly believe Amanda Johansen had spent six months under my guidance and it was now time for her to go.

"Already? Wow! Who would've thought?"

She nodded, hands demurely clasped at her hips. "I know we didn't get off to the best start – but I've learnt so much from you. I know it's only going to be better things from now on."

"Look at you Amanda. I'm so proud of you."

She clumsily reached out for an unexpected hug and whispered "thanks". I, Kathy Bridges, had groomed yet another young person into a promising accountant. That was a very good reason to have someone look up to me.

Ok. So no wolf whistles, just smiles from an adoring young girl whose future, I am proud to say, I helped to shape – and that felt pretty damn good. This feeling trumped a construction site hands down!

As I braved a chilly winter's afternoon in search of low-GI bread and orange juice at the local shop, I found myself almost crashing nose to nose with a young man who got to the door at the same time as me – except he was on his way out, and I was on my way in. He held the door open for me.

"Good day," he said, and under his breath was a clearly audible "gorgeous".

Amanda Johansen was right. Things can only get better as time passes. Kathy Bridges has found her mojo. ☺