

# KENSINGTON & CHELSEA MAGAZINE

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## TINKER *Tailor*

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS WITH  
LOCAL ARTISANS EDWARD SEXTON  
AND KATHERINE HOOKER

## BORROWED *Time*

CHANEL'S NEW BOYFRIEND  
TIMEPIECE STRIKES THE  
GENDER FASHION BALANCE

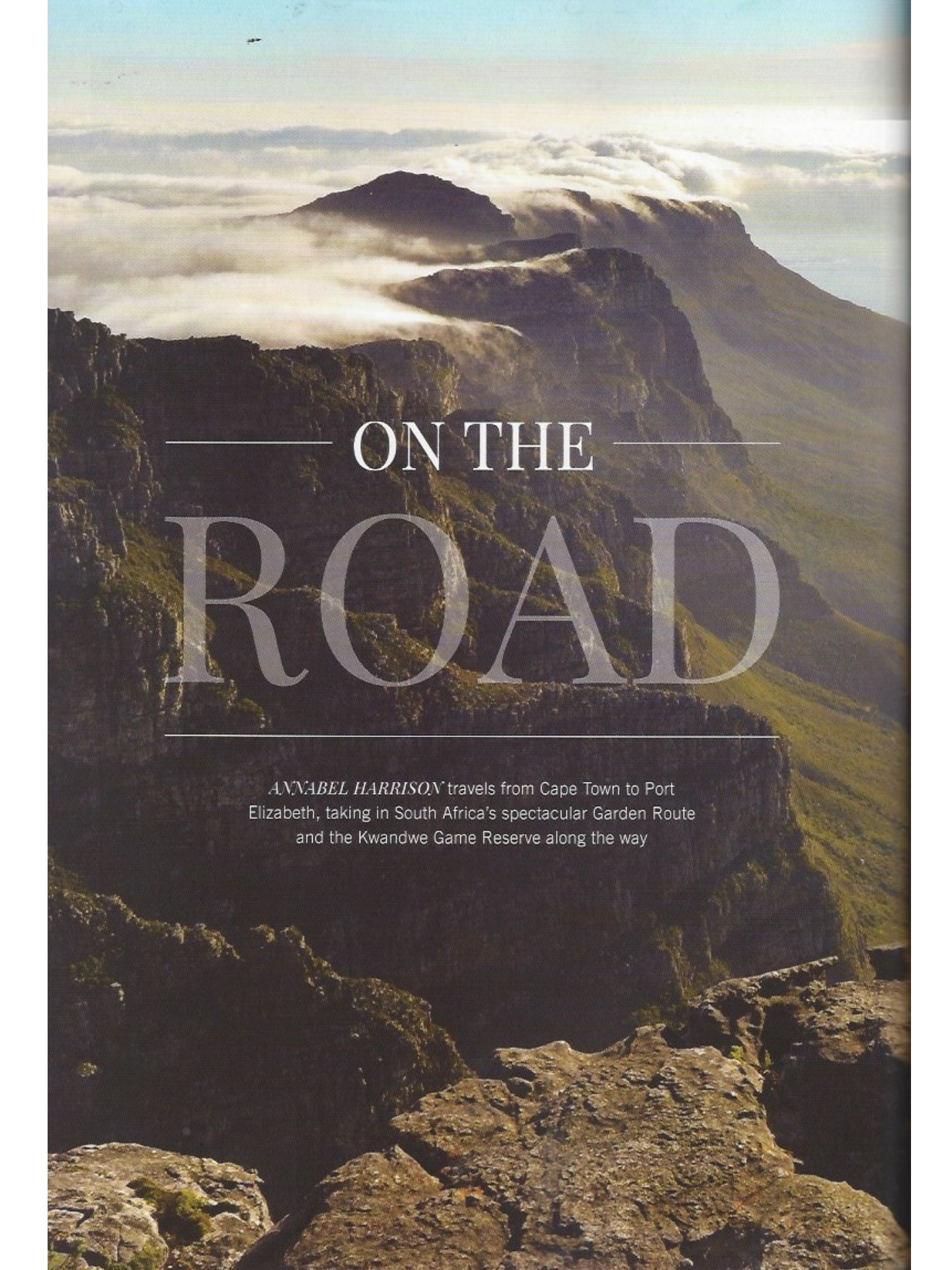
## BEHIND THE SCREENS

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL  
FASHION BLOGGERS ON  
THE SCENE TODAY

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: RUPERT SANDERSON • A/W15 TRENDS • LAURA MERCIER • STEPHEN WEBSTER

RWAG  
REALLY WELL KNOWN





— ON THE —  
ROAD

*ANNABEL HARRISON* travels from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth, taking in South Africa's spectacular Garden Route and the KwanDwe Game Reserve along the way



of South Africa's legislative capital and it deserves to do so. Within half an hour of leaving the airport, the aptly-named granite giant looms ahead of us, its craggy, crinkled slopes stretching down to meet the populated city areas. Needless to say, the view from the top is 360-degree staggering and my husband and I feel like Greek gods as a veil of churning clouds – nicknamed the Table Cloth – rolls over the surrounding peaks, like dry ice spilling over the edge of a theatre stage. Hike up there if you're keen (and fit) enough, or hop in the revolving cable car and save your energy for gasping at the panoramas awaiting you.

Welcome to Cape Town, a jewel of a city fringed by golden beaches, soaring mountains and the sparkling Atlantic Ocean which stretches as far as the eye can see. The weather is at its bright and breezy best from March until May but it's a brilliant year-round destination, and, even better, jet-lag is minimal; although the direct flight takes 11.5 hours, South Africa is only two hours ahead of GMT. We've decided to hire a car in Cape Town (do make sure you book in advance) and drive to Port Elizabeth via the famed Garden Route, experiencing SA's safari offering in the Eastern Cape too. Making it even easier, they drive on the right (well, left) side of the road, as we Brits do.

We wind around the foothills of Table Mountain and pull up at boutique guesthouse Cape View Clifton, where we're welcomed like family. It aims to be "a home away from home" and the open-plan ground floor does feel like a wonderfully relaxed private house, with a bright-white kitchen (where breakfast is prepared), a TV/snug area, ▶



▶ complete with books, magazines and an iPod dock, a coffee/tea station and honesty bar, and a big dining area. This opens out onto two terraces, the larger of which plays host to a small pool, seating, sunbeds and dining tables; the perfect sundowner spot, we later discover. As *The*



*Sunday Telegraph* said in an accurate review I read before leaving the UK, this city offers any number of splendid views but "none surpass those from the small, stylishly furnished Cape View Clifton".

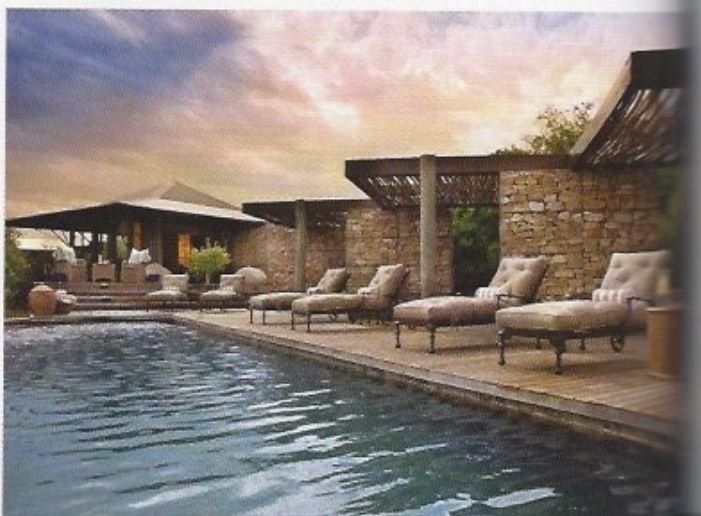
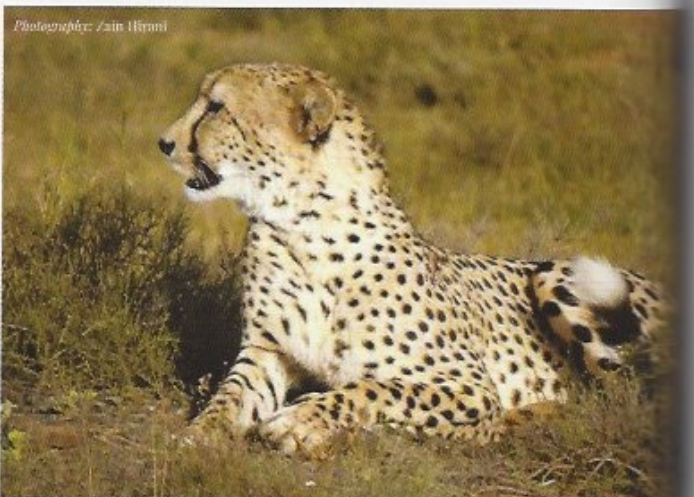
I spend a disproportionate amount of time, as a result, on the private terrace of our suite, watching my husband race off happily on an early morning run and swim (an activity dozens of locals seem to be partaking in too). There are only seven suites, built in staggered layers into the hill, as all the properties in Clifton are. Our rooms are designed in a fresh, modern style, with a distinct Malibu/New England touch, and white is king, with chic, warming grey sofas and furnishings. The communal areas boast refurbished vintage pieces and antiques,

## We're all delighted by our good luck; we've seen four out of the Big Five

natural fabrics, and black and white photography; it's the gold standard of relaxed, elegant African design done so perfectly in the continent's safari lodges too. The staff are very friendly, but discreet; when you need them, they'll be there but will otherwise leave you to enjoy yourselves.

Although we have our own kitchen and can cook for ourselves, we're invited to request "dinner and lunches by prior arrangement" or eat out – people seem to do a mixture of the three. At breakfast, I bypass the tempting spread of fresh pastries, mounds of fresh fruit, yoghurt and cereal in favour of the hot option; low GI bread, poached eggs, rocket, spinach and baby tomatoes – the kind of perfect breakfast you vow to make more often at home. Fuelled, we hop in the car to explore, stopping in Hout Bay, Chapman's Peak, Simon's Town (perfect for boutique-browsing and enjoying an ice-cream), Fish Hoek and Boulders Beach, a popular spot to watch the imperious penguins waddling about.

By late afternoon when we return, Camps Bay, a lovely half-hour walk from Cape View Clifton, is thronged with people as families and groups of friends flock from the wide, white-sand beach into the bars and restaurants fringing the coastline. Cape View Clifton recommends a number of places to eat out and we concur that Codfather and Hussar Grill (a 20-minute walk uphill from Camps Bay, or a very short Uber ride) are both brilliant, buzzing places that locals clearly love. Codfather is, as you can guess,





all about the fish; order drinks, go up to the fish counter with a waiter and choose whatever you like, which is then charged by weight. We try so-fresh-it's-almost-leaping, mouth-wateringly good tuna steak, angel fish, and dorada, served with a pile of vegetables and a selection of sauces. Hussar Grill has been going since 1964 and is famed for its meat, and justly in our opinion; it does incredible food.

Although we're reluctant to leave Cape Town the next morning, the Garden Route beckons and off we go, windows down and local station KFM blaring. It stretches from Mossel Bay in the Western Cape to the Storms River in the Eastern Cape and although we cover a lot of ground quite quickly, there are clear highlights. We visit the wine-producing regions of Stellenbosch and Franschoek as we leave the city; I'd suggest allowing time to stay over if you plan to partake in the fruits of their labour. Hermanus, our first destination, is relatively sleepy when we visit but by whale-watching season, from June to December, the town comes to life as eager visitors crowd the coastline to spot the enormous mammals. We eat mostly by the sea, sundowners in hand, at the Burgundy, Gecko and Bietang's Cave.

Back on the road, we stop off for breakfast at one of the many charming farm shops for tea and banana bread – the Blue Crane Farm Shop near Heidelberg – and next in Kaai 4 Braai in Mossel Bay, a rustic lunch spot with a deservedly great reputation where fish and meat are cooked, South African style, over a huge fire pit. Although George is the area's administrative centre and the Garden Route's largest city, we take one look and drive straight through it to Knysna, an hour away, where we stay on a houseboat and soak up the relaxed vibe of the town, while indulging in fresh fish and sea air.

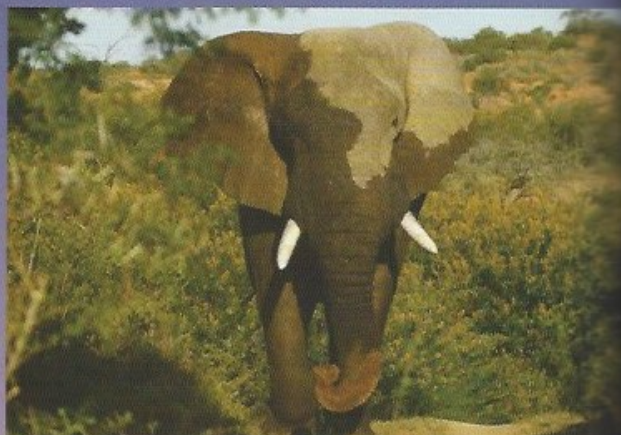
Our final stop before Port Elizabeth provides an immediate contrast; the blue ocean, sea birds and fish dishes are replaced by bushland, leaping impala and local meats, as our car rolls into the 22,000-hectare Kwandwe Private Game Reserve, leaving a cloud of dust in our wake. We're here for a safari stay and Kwandwe's story, explained to me by our guide Grant, is a fascinating one. A pair of American entrepreneurs started buying goat, sheep and ostrich farms in this area in 1998 – before that, and before settlement by the English and Dutch, it was home to elephants, rhinos and big cats – and by 2001, they had acquired 18 of the farms. In order to rehabilitate the wilderness after years of farming,

2,000 kilometres of internal fencing was removed, as well as windmills, troughs and pipes, and 7,000 animals were brought in to repopulate the reserve; they are enclosed but protected from poachers.

After a spell under the And Beyond umbrella, the reserve was bought by another American family three years ago and has since gained independence. The new owners promised that no one would lose their jobs and as a result, more than 80 per cent of the staff – 200 of whom live on-site in two villages with their families – are local. Up to 44 guests can be hosted across four guest sites at any one time and we're staying in Ecce Lodge, hoping for an experience to rival our recent trip to the Serengeti. We're not disappointed; as I snooze mid-afternoon before our first game drive, Zain wakes me, excitedly pointing out two rhinos lumbering through the undergrowth 100 metres from our suite. There's no time to waste; we pack our safari essentials – camera, hats, sunscreen, extra layers – and meet Grant outside, as well as tracker Monde, who sits perched on a seat that hangs over the bonnet. The open-topped vehicles seat six, so this does mean a certain element of compromise in terms of what a guide prioritises finding, unless you'd prefer to pay extra for a private vehicle, which is possible.

On this first drive, we're all delighted by our good luck; we see two white rhinos almost immediately, followed by a pride of six lions, and by the end of our stay, we've seen four out of the Big Five. Only leopards remain elusive but Monde does spot a leopard tortoise, which is rather magnificent too, on a smaller scale. ▶





➤ The ubiquitous and skittish greater kudu is an icon of the Eastern Cape and the most abundant of the large antelope on reserve, so we see many of these, as well as African buffalo, bat-eared foxes, red hartebeest and black-backed jackals. The elephants are majestic, swaggering lawn-mowers, essentially trampling through tangled undergrowth that not even our Jeep can navigate.

One of the highlights is observing a pair of beautiful cheetahs – seven-year-old brothers, Grant tells us. They are wiry and skinny, and we watch them on three separate occasions as they stalk a kudu in the twilight, snooze in the sun together and attempt an impala kill, only to fail: a disheartening but captivating moment. The cheetahs

## What can beat the combination of beaches, bars, seaside sun and safari?

may be hungry but that's one thing we never are, as an endless carousel of meals and snacks roll around. We're offered fruit, cereal, yoghurt and pastries before we leave for the morning drive (at 5.45am), and then mid-excursion a make-shift breakfast bar pops up – more tea and coffee, as well as hot chocolate and ginger muffins. At lunch, a platter of sharing dishes arrives at our table; tell the manager when you check in if you're veggie or have specific food requirements. We devour beef and apricot kebabs, incredible chicken bunny chow (a local dish that becomes my new favourite), salads and vegetable quiche, followed by a fruity crumble. If the food isn't guaranteed to send you to sleep during an afternoon siesta, the house wine (Flagstone, produced near Cape Town) is also on offer.

We retire to our rooms to cat-nap before tea and the afternoon game drive, grateful for the air-conditioning

and enormous, blissful bed. For those bringing children, they can easily be accommodated in the living room, attached to the bedroom, and they'll love the small pool on the private terrace, as well as the huge bathroom with a rain-shower wet room. There's a couple of lovely additional efforts made, as we're on honeymoon: a basket of sweets and treats is left out for us, including some inspiring marriage-related messages, and one night a bubble bath is run, complete with chilled sparkling wine and tea lights.

The decor is surprisingly and inventively urban given that we're in the bush, and in fact, the reliable WiFi would put many less remote hotels to shame. Polished grey cement floors and walls are given life and warmth by rugs (coloured and cow hide), patterned wallpaper and wall sections made from huge wire gabions filled with what looks like Cotswold stone. As we raise a glass to the end of our stay, I settle into the huge mustard-coloured armchair that makes me feel like a Borrower, and Zain into the squishy 'Fat Sak' (which we love so much that we check if they ship to the UK – not yet).

Leaving South Africa, I feel like I've found somewhere with the potential to become a rather enduring favourite on the holiday destination list; what can beat the combination of beaches, barbecues and bars, seaside sun and safari, with an impeccable wine list to boot? ■

*Scott Dunn offers four nights at Cape View Clifton on a B&B basis and four nights at Kwandwe Eccca Lodge on a fully inclusive basis from £3,250 per person based on two sharing, including flights and private transfers (020 8682 5070; scottdunn.com)*

