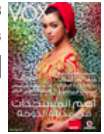


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Table Mountain One of South Africa's most readily recognizable features.

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South Africa: game on!

A year after the World Cup, the “new” South Africa is more alive and kicking than ever—an enduring testament to Nelson Mandela and other courageous souls who made it possible, observes **Elyse Glickman**

PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE AUTHOR, WITH WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL J. COFFIN

A YEAR AGO, people worldwide—including avowed non-sports fans—were glued to their televisions during the World Cup in such a way that transcended the action on the field. People got an extensive look at how Nelson Mandela’s vision of coexistence and openness toward other cultures could exist in the real world and in real time.

Many of us came of age when Nelson Mandela was released from nearly three decades in prison in 1990. From prison through his presidency, people were inspired by the epic journey he and other countrymen experienced that encompassed sacrificed freedom, diligent plotting to dismantle the institutionalized racism of apartheid and the foundation of a new constitution. In the 22 years following his release, this excitement hit several high points: his election as president, the 1995 Rugby World Cup that inspired the acclaimed Clint Eastwood film *Invictus*, and last year’s World Cup which united the tumultuous world of 2010 for one brief but outstanding moment in time.

While Mandela retired and passed the baton to a new generation of leaders in 1999, we still revere the accomplishments he will forever be associated with. Though life has also gone on in the months following the World Cup broadcasts, the allure of the New South Africa’s spirit is stronger than ever.



Robben Island



Iziko Museum

The energy is palpable, from the nation's multicultural urban hubs (Cape Town in particular) to the eternal appeal of safaris—the original, and perhaps the most authentic, form of eco-tourism.

In order to appreciate the new South Africa in earnest, one has to acknowledge wounds inflicted by apartheid are still in the healing stages. Townships and poverty still skirt the perimeters of cities. Some white citizens express views that [register](#) as out of date and out of sync. Many Cape Town cultural institutions, such as Robben Island, the District Six Museum, the Iziko Slave Lodge, the Jewish Museum and even changing exhibits at the Iziko South African [National](#) Gallery, all pack an emotional punch in visually relaying first-hand accounts of individuals who did what was right and not what was popular.

Robben Island's docents are former inmates such as Sedeeq Levy, who during the tour expressed that his choice of vocation is based on the collective goal of former inmates to present the former prison to the world as a living legacy for post-apartheid South Africa, standing for peace and love as well as the hate that put them there. The Jewish Museum dedicates a significant amount of its space to Opposition Party leader Helen Suzman, and other Jews in politics and law, who put their lives and reputations on the line to support the cause. The Iziko South African National Gallery juxtaposed its stunning permanent art collection with a profoundly moving temporary exhibit on Ernest Cole, whose photographic documentation of apartheid gave the rest of the world its first look at the old régime's atrocities in 1968. Even with an internationally acclaimed book *House of Bondage*, Cole paid for his conviction with a life in exile.

With South African culture and lifestyle in its proper perspective, Cape Town and safari lodges resorts like Kapama Private [Game](#) Reserve near Hoedspruit (on the outskirts of Kruger National Park) represent aspects of what's right about this country, especially as they showcase an emergence of a distinctively South African foodie culture, fashion scene and home design. Multiculturalism is celebrated both on a grand scale and everyday life. Firms like Distell (parent company of Amarula liqueur, [Van](#) Ryn brandy and several internationally distributed wines including Durbanville Hills, Nederburg and Fleur du Cap) contribute significantly to neighbouring communities of their distillery and wineries.

Though convening with nature at Kruger National Park's environs is essential, a visit to the Amarula Lapa (visitor centre) near Phalaborwa adds an added dimension of authenticity to experiencing that end of South Africa. The marula fruit (which, freshly picked, comes off as an eccentric hybrid of citrus, passion fruit and plum) has provided nourishment to elephants and humans for centuries. On a small scale, locals have

From that seed emerged the Amarula Trust, and if one travels to the Amarula Lapa during their summer months, one can see first-hand its conservation efforts and community philanthropy in action



Paul J. Coffin

South African winelands, nyalas and rhinoceros



used its components to manufacture local beer, fruit juice and [beauty products](#). However, the economics of this fruit expanded nearly 20 years ago when Distell's experiments to develop a marula spirit with international appeal, in a matter of speaking, bore fruit.

From that seed emerged the Amarula Trust, and if one travels to the Amarula Lapa during their summer months, one can see first-hand its conservation efforts and community philanthropy in action. During the months the villages' husbands are stationed at their jobs, the trust provides wives supplemental household income through seasonal work, as well as a medical facility and day care centre. The trust also has a [scholarship](#) programme, enabling young adults to further their education and train for field guide careers.

continued



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