

Business Traveller

SEPTEMBER 2007

AFRICA

INSIDE

Doing business in Zimbabwe

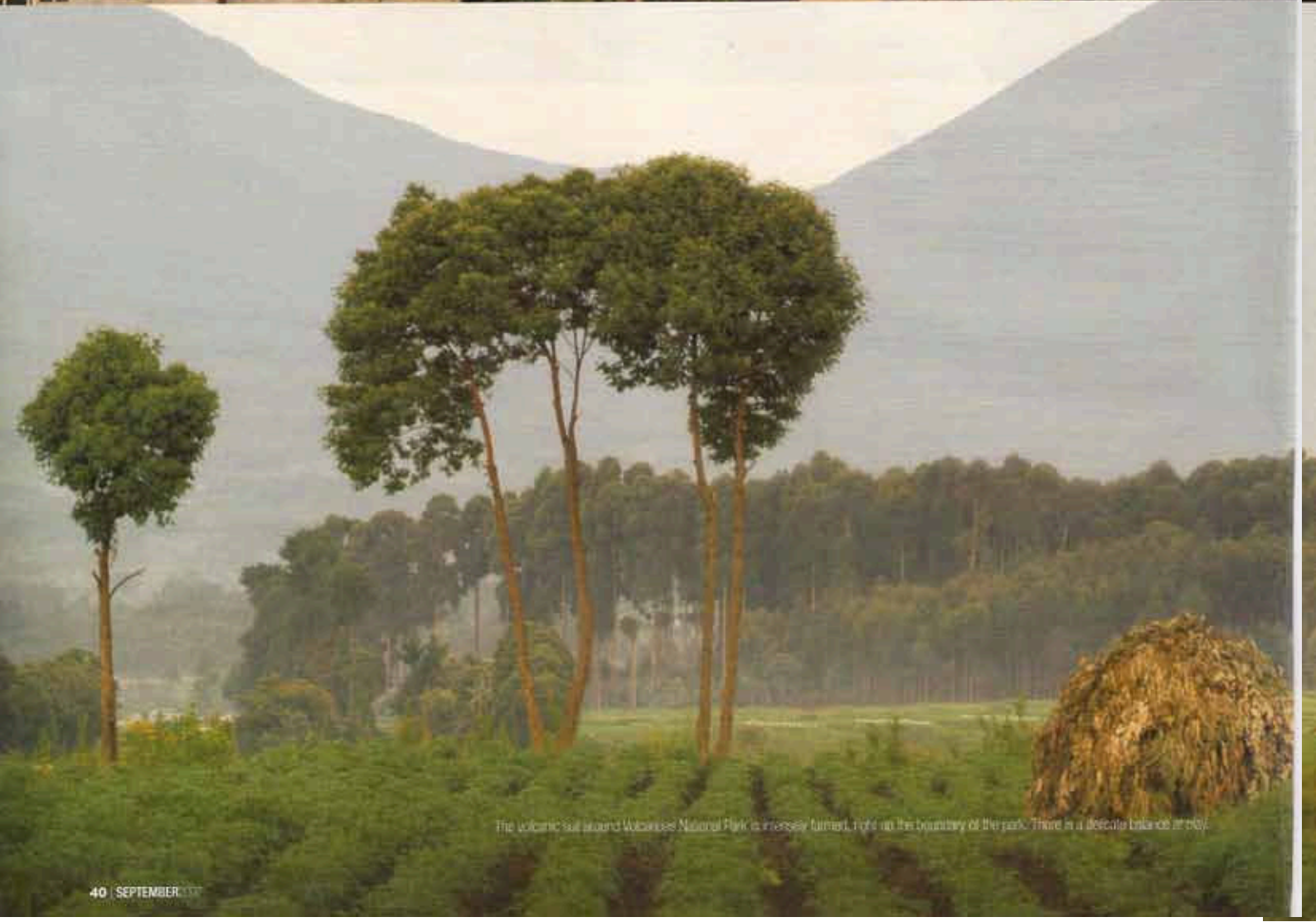
Plus Business in Rwanda • Car hire abroad

- Angola at a glance • Golfing in Dubai
- Travelling and staying healthy



South African Hotels

...a business person's guide



The volcanic soil around Volcanose National Park is intensely fertile, rich in the bounty of the park. There is a delicate balance at play.

RWANDA

business as usual

Rwanda has long been proud of its roads. Since my first arrival in the country during the genocide of 1994, I was struck by their good condition, so different from the often potholed downtown Nairobi and Kampala, their regional neighbours. In fact, a Belgian civil engineer I met at the time said Rwanda's road network had long been the pride of East Africa. Today, 13 years after that time that became known as the '100 Days' of the genocide, the national and provincial routes linking Rwanda's various regions remain largely very good (although those who don't enjoy road trips at the best of times may find the constant hills and bends a bit much) with stretches of the extreme southwest perhaps an exception.

Angus Begg reports

To an outside world constantly scouring the planet for new growth and investment opportunities, especially in resource-rich Africa, if not surprising, this should be welcome news. It is a metaphor for the bigger picture in Rwanda, a country that is hungry for business, willing to do the deals, and in many ways breaking the mould of the way business is so often done in Africa. The fact that government promises to issue a work permit in an hour, from what was previously a month, is an indication at least that the country is replacing the red tape with green.

Driving between various parts of the country on a recent visit I find myself frequently passing through Kigali. On one such occasion I stop off at the Rwandan Investment and Export Promotions Company – RIEPA – established by President Paul Kagame's government soon after the turn

of the millennium as a means of attracting investment to the country. The car-park is largely quiet, but this is Rwanda, a relatively tiny country sandwiched between lakes, volcanoes and the associated fertile soil. It is also Kigali, which experienced some of the worst of the genocide (connotations of words like 'Auschwitz' and 'Nazi' and the ongoing associations, should help in understanding) and remains known for such.

A large sign-board outside the building promises big things: 'Red-Carpet Treatment' and a 'One-Stop Shop'. Nevertheless, 20 minutes after knocking on doors and being ushered into a lounge, all I can think of is tea. In fact after some hard and fast travelling, and in a country famed for coffee and the tea-leaf, that's all they need to offer me – the red carpet now has little attraction. But I remember that this is a country just beyond birth and have to slap my sense of self-importance on the head. The thing is, there's



Tenzin hotels has established Lake Kivu Serena, a four star property with all the amenities – including a hotel, two country clubs, a resort management and the opportunity for an hotel food beverage.

so much going on, especially in Kigali, that it is disarmingly easy to forget where it was that Rwanda recently came from.

"1995", says Peter Nizette, an Australian development consultant I meet in Nyungwe forest (deep in the country's south-west corner), "was Rwanda's Ground Zero", and the country is indeed still absorbed in the infant stages of a learning phase.

Nizette is just one of a number of consultants tasked with developing Nyungwe National Park – from lodges to hiking trails and community activities – as a viable tourist destination. Indeed, paging through 'Investment & Export Performance 2006', given to me after my meeting in Kigali with RIEPA's Deputy D-G of Investor Promotion, the (very young) Clare Akamanzi, I notice under the 'One Stop Centre' section other various 'efficiencies', among these immigration visas processed in 'less than an hour' (previously seven days).

Akamanzi rattles off the government's priorities in positioning Rwanda as the business dynamo Kagame wishes it to be: private sector development, transformation of agriculture, the inevitable good governance, diversification of exports and Information Technology and Communication (ITC) as a pillar of the economy. Good governance apparently refers to the continuing reduction of 'red tape', that which possibly more than any other factor restricts Africa's growth (an 'evil' that arrived with colonial power bureaucracy, it has unfortunately been abused by succeeding independent states) and development.

"Every country knows it", says Akamanzi, "but doesn't do anything about it (good governance)...I think the difference is

President Kagame's personal commitment. He drives it, and doesn't want to hear of any complaints from business".

Rwanda has to its advantage the nation's willing mind and body; so keen are the citizens to put 1994 behind them, especially the returned exiles with their business savvy, that it is sometimes as if they can't move forward fast enough.

'Please, let's move on', says Jacqui Sebageni with a wave of her bangled arm. Running a tour operator called A Thousand Hills and another exile whose family fled Rwanda, like so many others, after Tutsis were first targeted for ethnic massacre in 1959, they had eventually settled in Canada. Her business, she says, established after she returned post '94, is doing well.

Another post '94 returnee is Doudou Katarebe, successful owner of trendy bar and restaurant 'Republika', the social spot for Kigali's well-to-do. Starting with a Chinese eatery in 1995, it was the bar he opened the following year that really brought him his first pots of cash: with over 200 charities and NGOs in town at the time, he said there was "lots of money around".

In his white suit, pink-striped shirt, gold chain and contemporary rimmed glasses, Katarebe says Kigali's economy is booming today, with "money to be made for all".

President Kagame is recognised as one of the continent's most driven leaders, obsessed with getting his country back on its feet and beyond that, making it seriously competitive. Sympathy and funding may be the main concern of NGO's operating in countries of often desperate need, but major businesses from the developed world, despite the public relations waffle, are concerned with little

bar the bottom line. Reading the newspaper in my room at the historic Hotel Mille des Collines (that featured in 'Hotel Rwanda'), I read of Kagame's recent address to Starbucks shareholders in Seattle. I didn't realise at the time that the group buys substantial amounts of Rwandan coffee.

My host at dinner in Kigali one night points out what seems to be a list of Kigali's 'Who's Who'. A 6ft 5 plus handsome character with the typically reversed American baseball-cap, greets one of the women at our table. "That", says Jacqueline, "is the owner of the Bourbon café, and he makes really good coffee...he spent a while in the US".

I try the coffee the next day, after a harrowing morning at the macabre yet outstanding Gisozi Genocide Museum on the edge of the city. The café is as trendy as they come, retro-contemporary in design, serving muffins and flavoured coffees in an equally upmarket, brand new shopping centre that wouldn't be out of place in suburban South Africa. And it's packed.

When the government was in 2001 developing its 'Vision 2020' strategy, aimed at taking the country into the future, coffee, along with tea and tourism, were identified as 'key opportunities' with which to beat poverty in Rwanda. This is according to the young director-general of Rwanda Tourism and National Parks department (RTPN), Rosette Rugamba, who obviously sees the vast potential of tourism.

"We also saw that it (tourism) could work as an image-builder, and a reconciliation tool".

While using tourism to fight poverty is a concept that took commercial root in South and southern Africa some 16 years back, and has since largely proved its 'employability' value in a landscape of diminishing agriculture, it faces an uphill battle steeper than the slopes of the Virunga volcanoes in the country's north.

The Director-General of Rwanda's Environmental Management Authority, Rose Mukankomeje, speaks of Rwanda's massive population growth – 3 million in the 1960s to nine million today, in a country of 27 000sq km, making it the most densely-populated country on the world's most populous continent – as a major issue. She has a wedding to attend, and is dressed for the occasion, but has agreed to meet for a chat in my hotel foyer.

"There is a huge imbalance between natural resource use and the population".

Rwanda is a country of intense patchwork cultivation. On every square inch of land, right up to the borders of the national parks – while trekking for gorillas it is sometimes possible to look down to villagers planting and hoeing fields – something is grown. With 80% of the country depending on agriculture, pressure on the wetlands and remaining indigenous forests (eucalyptus trees are found everywhere) is huge. Mukankomeje's job seems insurmountable, she even says

Hotel Check London



Radisson Edwardian Kenilworth Hotel

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

At first glance it is quintessentially English. However, a longer look once inside reveals the hotel to be a fair blend of architectural styles, the Edwardian façade complementing the contemporary interior.

WHERE IS IT?

On the corner of Great Russell and Bloomsbury Streets, 100m from the British Museum, maybe 500m from the Tottenham Court Road tube station (the Central Line on the London underground) and just a little further to Soho and Covent Garden – depending on what you're after, a perfectly situated central location. From the hotel it's a short walk to Tottenham Court Road's ubiquitous electronic appliance stores, Oxford Street's label shops and bargain buys, and the theatres and restaurants of Covent Garden – Neal's Yard in particular. Beyond that there is the University Quarter, Regent's Park, Holborn, and the Inns of Court, The City, and Museum of London.

The British Museum is such an all-consuming feast for the mind that it's the sort of place you visit every time you're in London. Being so close to it, plus the friendly Turkish restaurant on the opposite corner is possibly reason enough to stay there.

ROOM FACILITIES

Almost 200 rooms, from singles through to suites. All have air-conditioning and have

been 'ergonomically designed to give guests a comfortable space to make their own to work and play in'. While the size was fine, detracting from the features I was meant to notice on the walls was the grubby carpet – the same for the corridors. The bathroom, although my deluxe double was an upgrade, lacked a bath, which doesn't help when London is cold and wet. The 'Sicilian Carrara marble', however, was much appreciated, as was the thumping, scalding hot shower.

Otherwise the room boasts the usual: a mini-bar, iron and trouser press, tea and coffee making facilities, in-room safe and US 110v plug sockets (take an international adaptor—they're good to have anyway). The complimentary wireless Internet access, increasingly common as a standard feature around the globe, was especially appreciated. Access to the bedroom floors is by room key only.

LEISURE AND FITNESS

Having recently written about the fantastic gym at the Kilimanjaro Kempinski in Dar es Salaam, the experience at the Radisson is a catastrophe. Two tiny rooms with treadmills and step machines, no weights, and a TV that for four days had a broken volume switch, making the experience a bit unpleasant.

RESTAURANTS AND BARS

The Creation restaurant and bar downstairs is contemporary, minimalist in the dark-

wood sense. Half of it also serves as a lounge-cum-bar. The restaurant is separated from the bar by a glass divide, enabling diners to watch – as is the fashion today – the chefs preparing their meals. 'Delicious modern British cuisine' is offered, with influences from the Far East. Don't scoff at the British and their food; where do you think Jamie, Gordon, Nigel, Marco and Nigella come from?

There's no other restaurant in the hotel (apart from the private dining-room), but with Fitzrovia and Charlotte Street, Soho clubs, bars and music venues and West End theatre literally a couple of blocks away, you'd be silly to eat in. Breakfast, however, is good. Served by Poles and Jamaicans – everything but English – croissants and pastries supplement boxed cereals (bad touch), cold meats and overly fried hot breakfasts. But the coffee is good. And while on the subject of British food, look out for the organic, British establishments springing up all over town – The Acorn House near Kings Cross is apparently a gem.

MEETING AND BUSINESS FACILITIES

I saw a number of conference rooms behind reception, so there is clearly a focus here – not to mention being next to the smartest toilets in the hotel. The website says Radisson Edwardian – here accessing the international network, including Radisson SAS and Radisson – can accommodate 'your every need', from small meetings to large group events. They probably can.

VERDICT

It's a tough call. I enjoyed the setting and the staff, especially Colm the concierge and the cosmopolitan front-desk staff. But the grubby carpets and persistently malfunctioning lift put me off. For a couple of days, it was fine. ☹

Angus Begg



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OF AGES**

PETRA AND THE MODERN WORLD



Dan Hayes, editor

Our behaviour towards the environment is arguably the biggest issue facing the World today, but for many of us concrete evidence of climate change may be something we rarely, if ever, encounter. In this issue of *CNN Traveller* we report from two places where the phenomenon cannot be avoided. In Greenland we discover retreating glaciers and warming seas, but not much sense of panic - in some cases, quite the opposite, almost a feeling that a few degrees on the temperature would be a good thing. On the other side of the Earth, on the tiny island nation of Tuvalu, we discover the potential for much more concern - though little in the way of action plans should the waves keep rising.

C O N T R I B U T O R S



Angus Begg is an award-winning writer and broadcaster based in Johannesburg, South Africa. In recent years he has reported on a wide range of stories from across the continent. For this issue of *CNN Traveller* he journeys to southern Tanzania to learn about the Hehe tribe and its old friend.



Mark Stratton is a regular contributor to *CNN Traveller*. On a recent trip to Greenland he encountered climate change at the sharp end, with local people talking about their personal experiences of warming seas and retreating glaciers.



Stephanie Rafanelli is a London-based journalist who has written for many of the UK's best-known newspapers and magazines. She reports from Malawi about the legacy of explorer David Livingstone and his relevance today in one of Africa's poorest and most Aids-hit countries.



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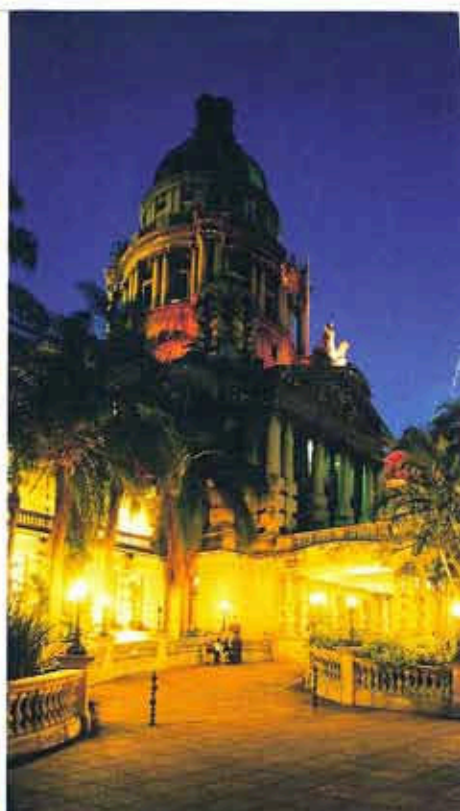
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Angus Begg discovers cultural high points and first-rate cuisine in KwaZulu-Natal

06.00: With the sun rising dead ahead on the horizon, Durban's favourite start to the day is a brisk walk or run along the city's beachfront boardwalk, known as the Golden Mile. Attractions include surfers catching the early swells and the numerous art-deco buildings – most of them hotels – lining the promenade. It is said that downtown Johannesburg has the highest number of art-deco buildings in the southern hemisphere, but Durban must run it close.

08.00: Treat yourself to breakfast along trendy and historic Florida Road. The tree-lined pavements, and cottages and houses of Victorian design, provide a beautiful suburban setting. Take your pick from the numerous cafés, restaurants and boutiques. Breakfast at Spiga d'Oro is a must, and not only for a rare, real cappuccino.

10.00: Victoria Street market provides an exciting interlude. Indians first arrived on these shores as indentured labour for imperial Britain's early railway projects and sugar-cane farms, and they in particular have shaped this province. Keep your possessions close as you wander this buzzing world of cloth, brass, curios and spices; and browse the 170 stalls selling goods from India, Taiwan and China.

11.30: It may be a little bit twee, but a rickshaw ride along marine parade, being pulled by a strapping Zulu in traditional gear, will provide you with an interesting photo and him with a little cash. If that

is too touristy for your tastes, then the botanical gardens are beautiful; the oldest in the country.

12.00: Lunch at Havana Grill, Suncoast Casino. This is one of the top 10 restaurants in South Africa. The large modern complex in which the restaurant is located may also be home to a casino, but you need not hear or see it. The restaurant has a Che Guevara and Fidel Castro theme, a young professional clientele and looks out to sea. The steaks – aged by the restaurant itself – are a highlight, as is almost everything else on the menu. There is also a superb wine cellar.

13.30: Walk across the path to the best beach in Durban for a little breather and some post-prandial relaxation. The establishment has a private and secure beach that allows you to leave your bag on the sand while you take a dip in the waves, confident that it will not vanish. Unfortunately, bathers have to be on their guard at Durban's public beaches; petty theft by day and occasionally violent crime by night are the result of the province's rural unemployed and poor moving to Durban in search of a better life.

14.30: Aquarium Ushaka. Finished only a few years ago, this is one of the top five aquaria in the world, housed in the shell of an early 20th-century steamer. You really need an entire afternoon to do it justice.

16.00: The BAT Centre is an art development and community centre within a small harbour off the Victoria

Embankment, dedicated to nurturing and promoting the music, visual arts, dance and craft of KwaZulu-Natal. It is usually relatively free of tourists and is somewhere you can see artists making the products you buy. It also has a great bar where the tug-boats are moored.

17.30: South Africa is a world leader when it comes to creating shopping malls, so you might prefer to spend the cocktail hour in Durban's ode to consumerism, among the stores and eateries. Gateway Mall, in the suburb of Umhlanga, boasts eight cinemas, the world's highest indoor climbing rock and a 4x4 track.

19.00: Cocktails at Revolving Roma. As the name suggests, this is a revolving restaurant and bar atop a building on the city's beachfront near the Golden Mile.

21.00: Back to the Aquarium Ushaka for the dinner of a lifetime at Cargo Hold, below decks on that old steamer. Enjoy seared sesame-crust tuna while ragged-tooth sharks eyeball you and your plate through the aquarium windows. The wild oysters – as opposed to cultivated – are both tasty and gigantic.

24.00: Bean Bag Bohemia in Florida Road. This is a funky, acid-jazz chill-spot frequented by the in crowd. The food is good – should you be hungry again. ○

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal: www.durban.kzn.org.za
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Time out

for a sip of jerepigo

Deep in the Bushveld, Angus Begg found a place where eccentricity is the norm and it's not only the portions of food that are large.

The name Groot Marico occupies an oddly familiar place on the internal cultural map of many travelling South Africans. Whether or not they've read the famous short stories written by the town's most illustrious son, Herman Charles Bosman, or seen the recently departed Patrick Mynhardt perform them on stage, they will know the name Groot Marico.

Taken at face value, Groot Marico is in itself a lie, as there is nothing large about the settlement. The name instead refers to the large branch of the Marico River, which snakes its way through the thick bush of the considerable hills and gorges of the countryside outside the village.

Groot Marico is little more than a two-street, tiny village, comprising

largely run-down, period-piece gems and the odd shop.

The yellow facebrick hotel at the business end of the street is the worst of it; the gentrified restaurant and art gallery, Marico Memoirs, at the other end are its saving grace. Worthy of note in between are the Wapad Kafee, with its huge, freshly baked Chelsea buns every Sunday morning (appropriate for soaking up sermons and over-indulgence) and, for biltong lovers, the Bosveld Slaghuis, where Petrus Mananyana hangs his strips with a fair smile.

Marico Memoirs was started two years ago by a gay couple. Thank heavens because, as any honest local will surely admit, the street can do with a little flair and pick-me-up. Rather than a clarion call for large-scale gentrification à la Dullstroom

• Beer, boerie and a hike over the hill. Jacques du Plessis (second from right), owner of Riverstill Guest Farm, and friends know how to relax at the weekend.

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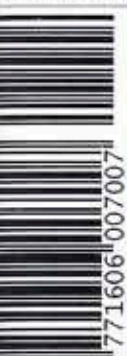
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