

A close-up photograph of an elephant's head and trunk, viewed from a slightly elevated angle. The elephant's skin is dark and heavily wrinkled, especially around the trunk. The trunk is thick and textured, with visible rings. Bare, light-colored branches are in the foreground, partially obscuring the elephant's face and trunk. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting a natural outdoor setting.

SOUTH AFRICA TOUR

AUGUST 2005

JAX and JUDY KNEPPERS
TOUR GUIDES



SOUTH AFRICA

THE ADVENTURE

JAX and JUDY KNEPPERS TOUR GUIDES

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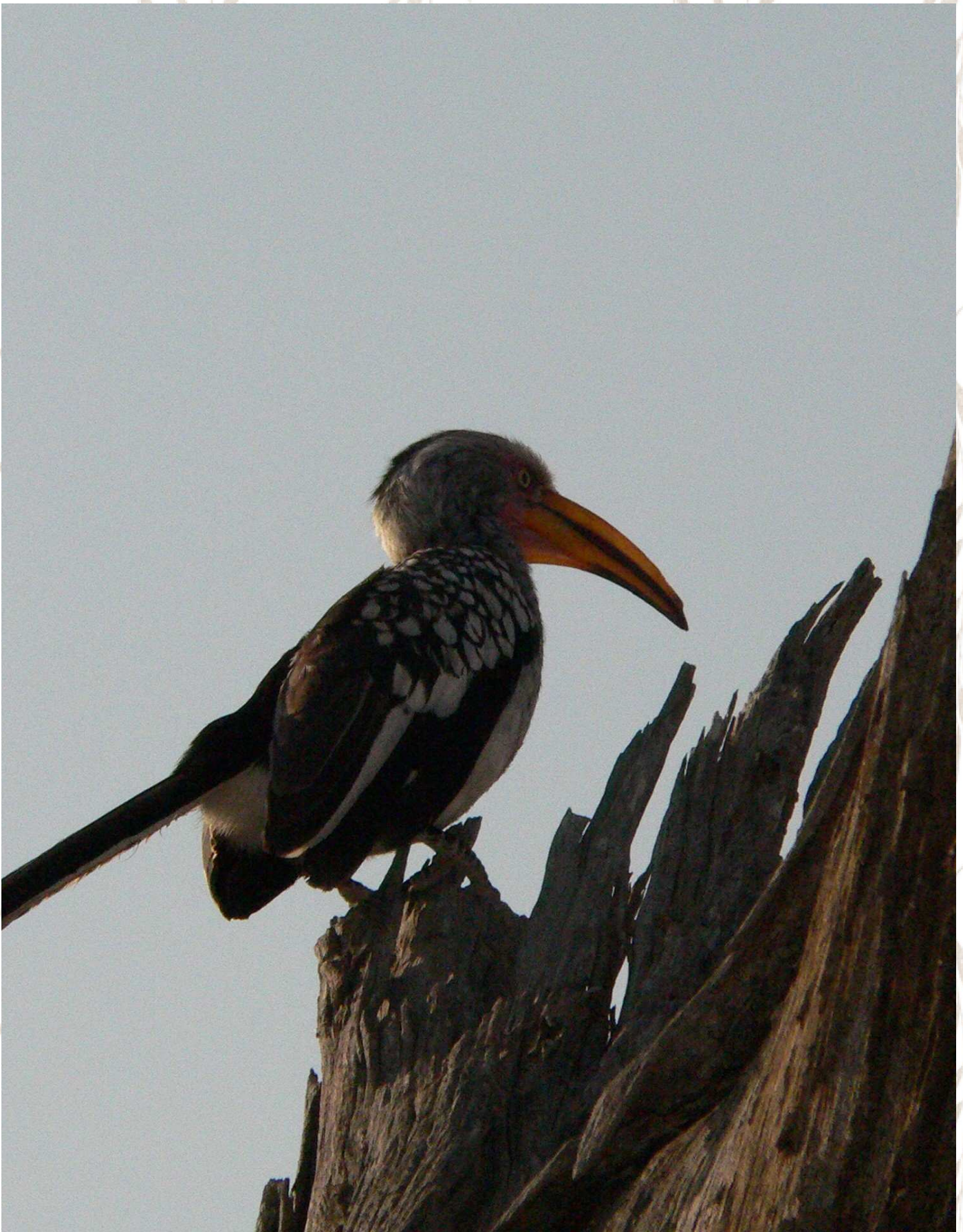






After timing their generous shopping spree with our arrival we hooked up with Jax and Judy at Mpumalanga International Airport and made the wild dash up to the Orpen entrance into Kruger National Park. We arrived at the gate with minutes to spare. We had been in South Africa for about 30 minutes in Johannesburg (never leaving the airport) and about 1 hour at Mpumalanga.

Here we are just lounging on the patio of our 'bush camp' accommodations at Talamati. First night in Kruger National Park on August 22, 2005. This photo shows how truly 'rough' we would have it for the next several days. The perception of a 'bush camp' leads one's imagination to the expectation of some level of difficulty. This was about as difficult a condition as we would have. Sitting on this patio we had no idea that this would prove to be the vacation and adventure of our lives.

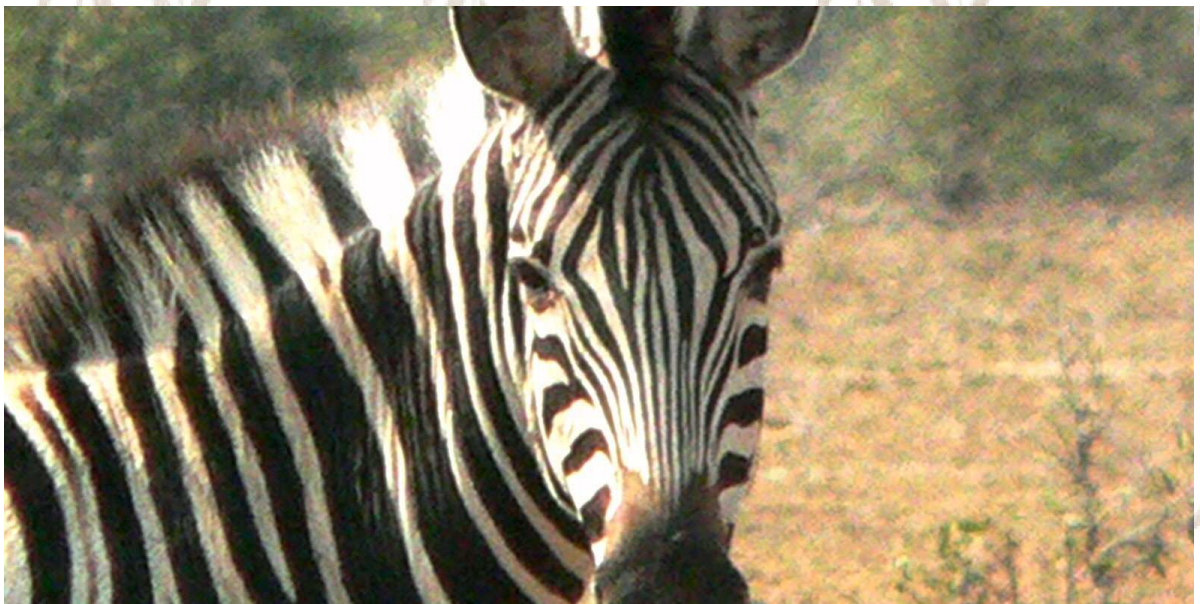




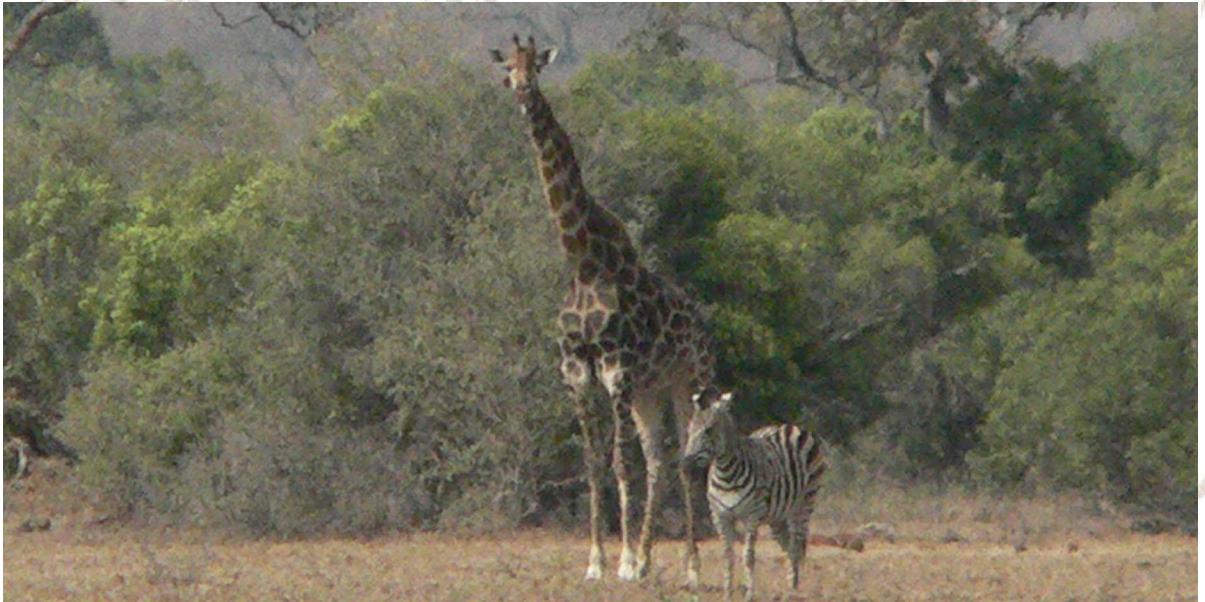
This is what roughing it looks like within the Kruger National Park, at the Talamati bush camp. The accommodations throughout the trip were clean, comfortable and safe.



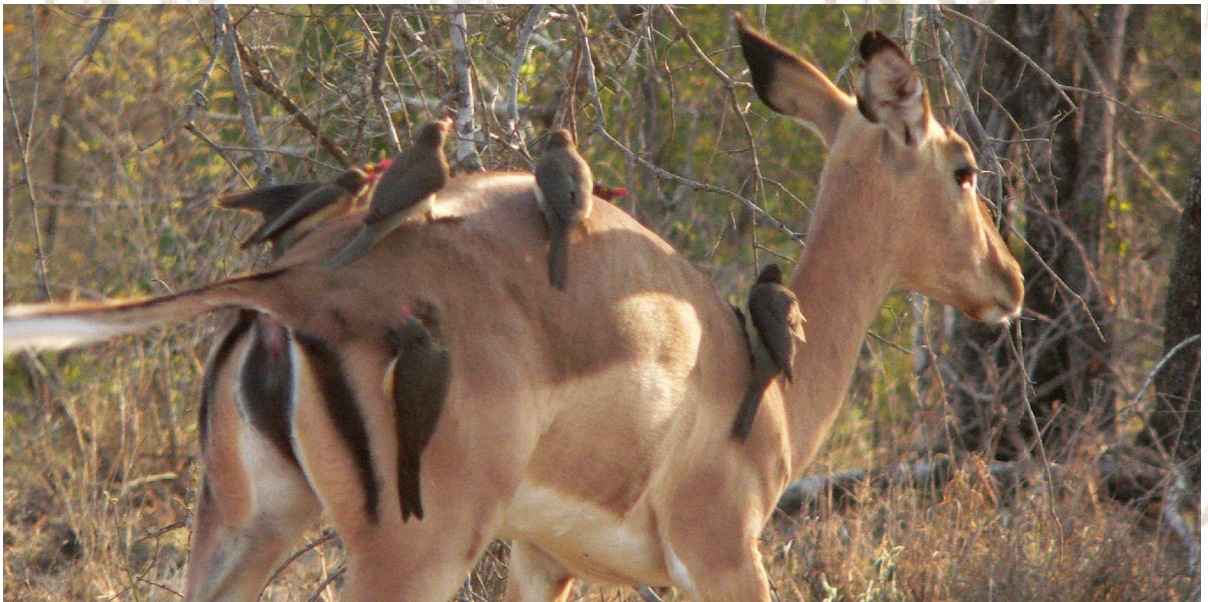
From the blind at the Talamati water hole these zebras were kind enough to synchronize their drinking.



Even the slightest noise attracts this penetrating stare. Zebras really are reactionaries



While sharing the local environment Giraffes, Zebras and Impalas all coordinate their differing senses to keep from becoming a meal .



These chickens are enjoying a cruise on this 'meal' called an Impala.



This Nyala was just trying to stay out of sight and enjoy some grazing activities.



The horns are the distinguishing characteristic that differentiate the Nyala and the Kudu.

Beautiful male Kudu



Sometimes the amazing animals were so cooperative for the photo opportunities like this beautiful Kudu who seemed as curious about us as we were about him.



This Kudu was not sure about us. We were less than 25 meters away from him. When the Kudu feels threatened they will freeze motionless as this fine gentleman did to pose for this photo. The distinctive spiraling horns are specific to the Kudu.



The Waterbuck are distinctive due to the ring around their butt. Looks like they sat on a 5 gallon paint bucket.



These guys are small Steenboks. The small black spots just below their eyes are glands that are used to mark their territory.



This Blue Wildebeest did not seem to be very happy to see us. He could not, however, know how happy we were to see and photograph him. As we found this dude, they commonly hang-out in the shade of a tree.



This is one of the most deadly snakes in the world - The Black Mamba. This little lovely slithered under our car and did not come out the other side. We became somewhat anxious that he might be trying to find a way into the car to join us. So we pulled away and found that he had been curled up in the shade of our car.



When a White Rhino wanders out of the bush and cruises by the car and then across the road, one realizes that this is an extraordinary adventure. This guy is a prehistoric gigantic hunk of animal.



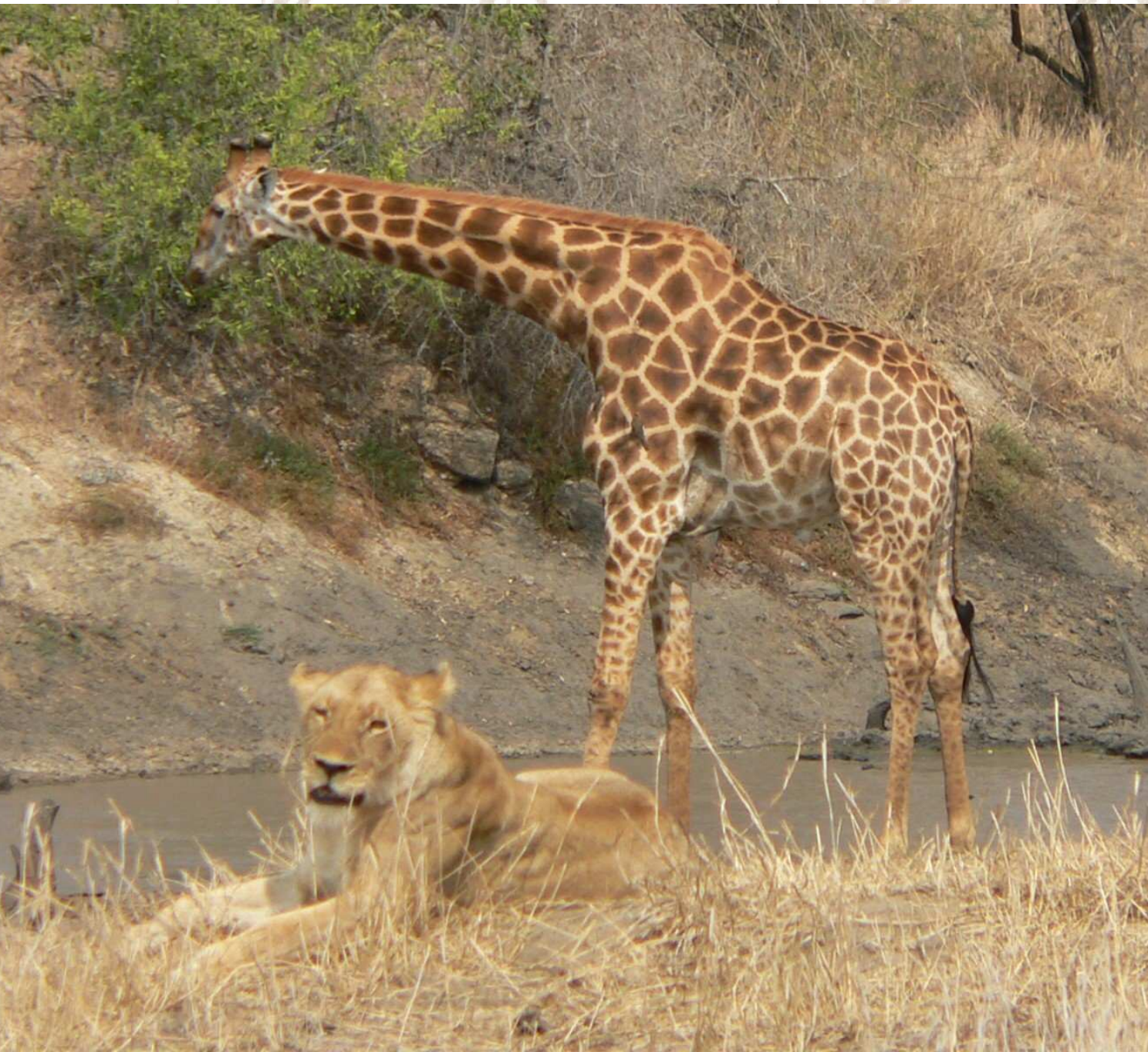
The big dude nearly took up the entire two lane road. He stands nearly 6 ft. tall. The record for length of a horn is more than 5 ft.



There was a pride of lions lounging near a watering hole. This giraffe wandered cautiously up to have a sip of water perhaps knowing that the lions had already had lunch and he was safe. We were able to have an amazing and tense few minutes of watching this interaction.



While they each kept a cautious eye on the other, the water was too great a draw not to partake, even with the danger lurking nearby.



The lioness seems to be thinking "Seriously, man, how can you taunt me this way? Don't make me call my friends!"



Just relaxing in the sunshine. This beautiful lioness seemed so relaxed even when the giraffe approached.



As Jax patrols the snack stand, it is interesting to note the only separation between wild human and wild animal is the 'fence' that is visible in the background. Also worth noting is how clean the facilities are even though they are miles from "civilization". One last observation - No graffiti.



*Seems so strange to have a picnic as if we are just sitting in any park;
yet every conceivable wild animal is nearby and some would love to
make us their lunch.*



The Tamboti 'Tent' camp was fantastic. We each had one of these multi-room cabins whose only resemblance to a tent was their canvas covering. We enjoyed a fantastic barbeque and even had a wild dog cruise by during cocktail hour.



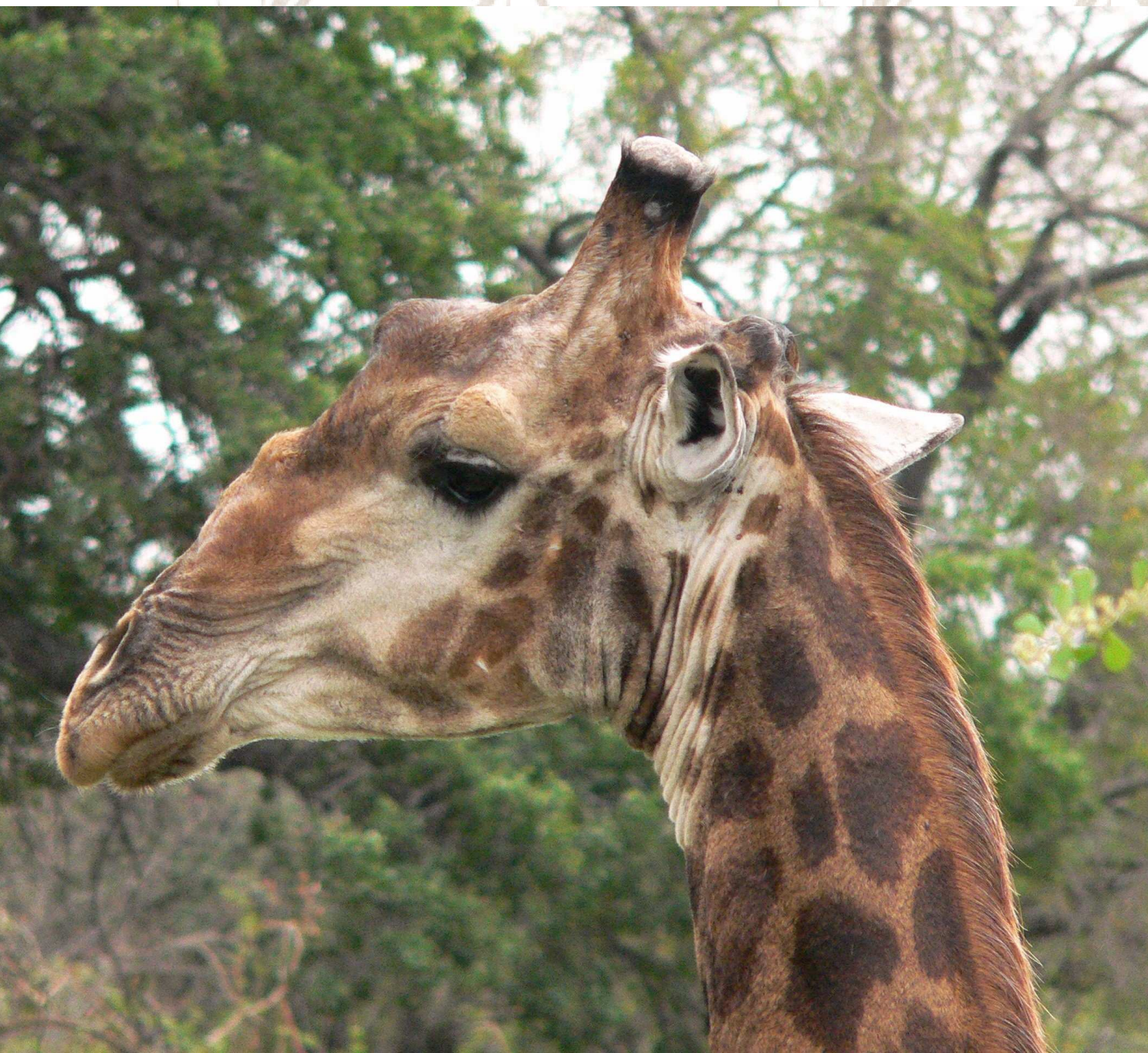
The walking trail leading from the parking space to the cabin. Note the wide dry river bed just beyond the fence of the camp.



Warthogs were cruising along the road and were not very interested in posing for pics.



This baby elephant was always close to mom.



The very kindly looking giraffe may be insincere but here he is just munching on some leaves and checking us out as we pass by.



These young giraffes just seem to blend into the brush even with their shaving brush horns.



It takes great effort to get all the way down to the watering hole when your mouth is 10 to 15 feet from the ground. This also makes the giraffe very vulnerable while he is drinking. Special valves in the neck prevent excessive blood pressure to the head while bent to drink.



As the giraffe raises its head the water tends to flow out of the long neck. The goal is to raise the head quickly enough so as not to lose the water that has been sucked upstream. I am sure it takes some serious practice.



The Buffalo just doesn't look too friendly, although his passenger does not appear to be too much of a bother.



The famous Baobab tree. Said to be more than 2000 years old, mythology says that one of the children of the Gods pulled up the tree and then put it back into the ground with the roots sticking up. It is hard to argue based on the appearance of the tree. They are very distinctive and very big.



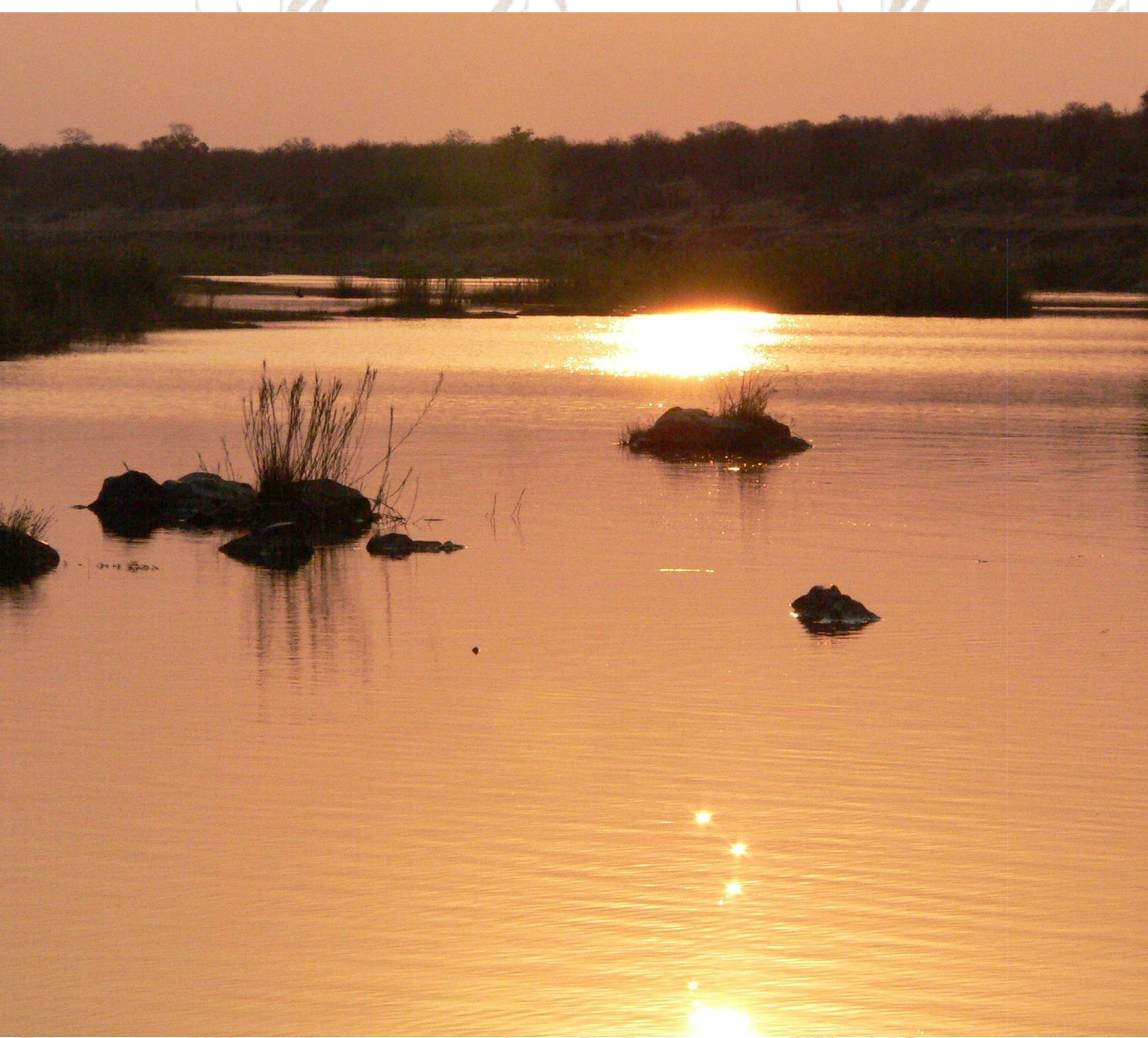
There was a group of elephants that were not very happy to have us stop so near to their baby elephants. They proceeded to surround our mini-van and then in their very loudest elephant wale convinced us to move along.



This was the last piece of their defense. With this big dude behind us we were surrounded on three sides. Once he announced his presence, we slowly pulled away as they each out-weighed our mini-van by about double.



Our final destination within Kruger National Park was Shimuwini. From here we took a night excursion as well as observing the hippos that were lounging in the lake that is visible just beyond our accommodations.



Sunset in the Kruger Park is a magnificent experience. The noises, the stars, the wine, and best of all the friends.



Judy making a friend on our patio with this little darling that found humans to be OK. Probably a safe place to live inside the gates of the camp.



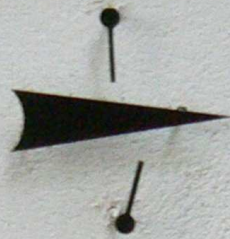
It is difficult not to love the hippos. Cute little ears and they seem so mellow; Kruger fact - hippos kill more visitors to Kruger than any other animal. When they open their mouths it seems like they could swallow a car.



A very recent birth. Baby and mom having a snooze on the beach.



This nice looking family was found in the water just in front of our camp. I did not have any luck getting a picture of these guys with their mouths open, but that is an amazing thing to see.



CYBELE

**FOREST LODGE
AND SPA**



Cybele Forest Lodge and Spa was such an amazing place. We look forward to being able to spend more time there on our next trip.



Cybele Lodge was luxury and comfort defined. From the beautiful rooms, linens, art and furnishings to the exterior shower in the garden to the amazing hiking trails and restaurant. Cybele was supposed to be our respite from the rigors of Kruger tents and the like. Except that the Kruger experience did not leave us wanting the Cybele experience was sublime.



Carol Jean enjoying the garden shower at Cybele Forest Lodge and Spa.



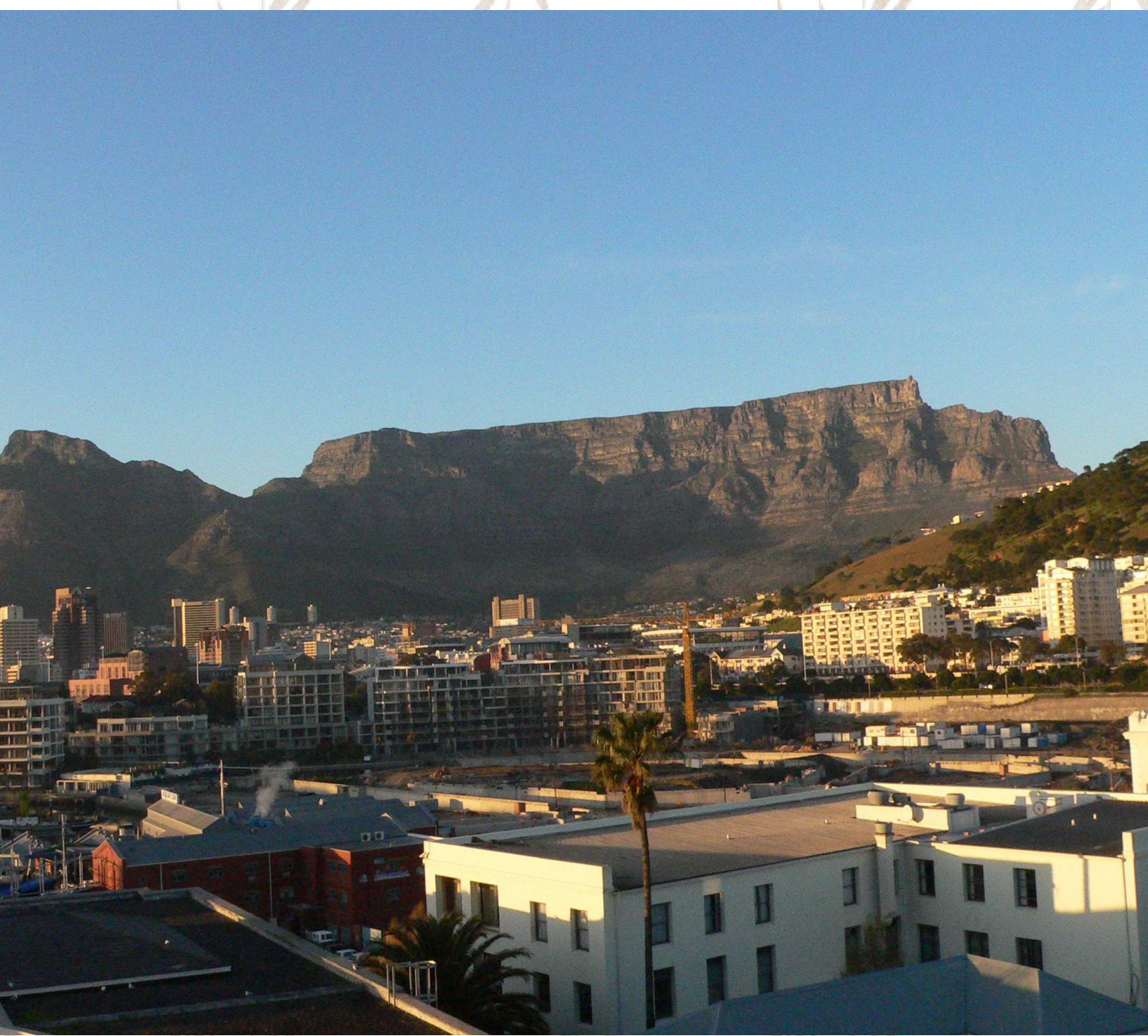
A view of the surroundings at Cybele Forest Lodge and Spa. The lush green forest just did not feel like this could be South Africa.



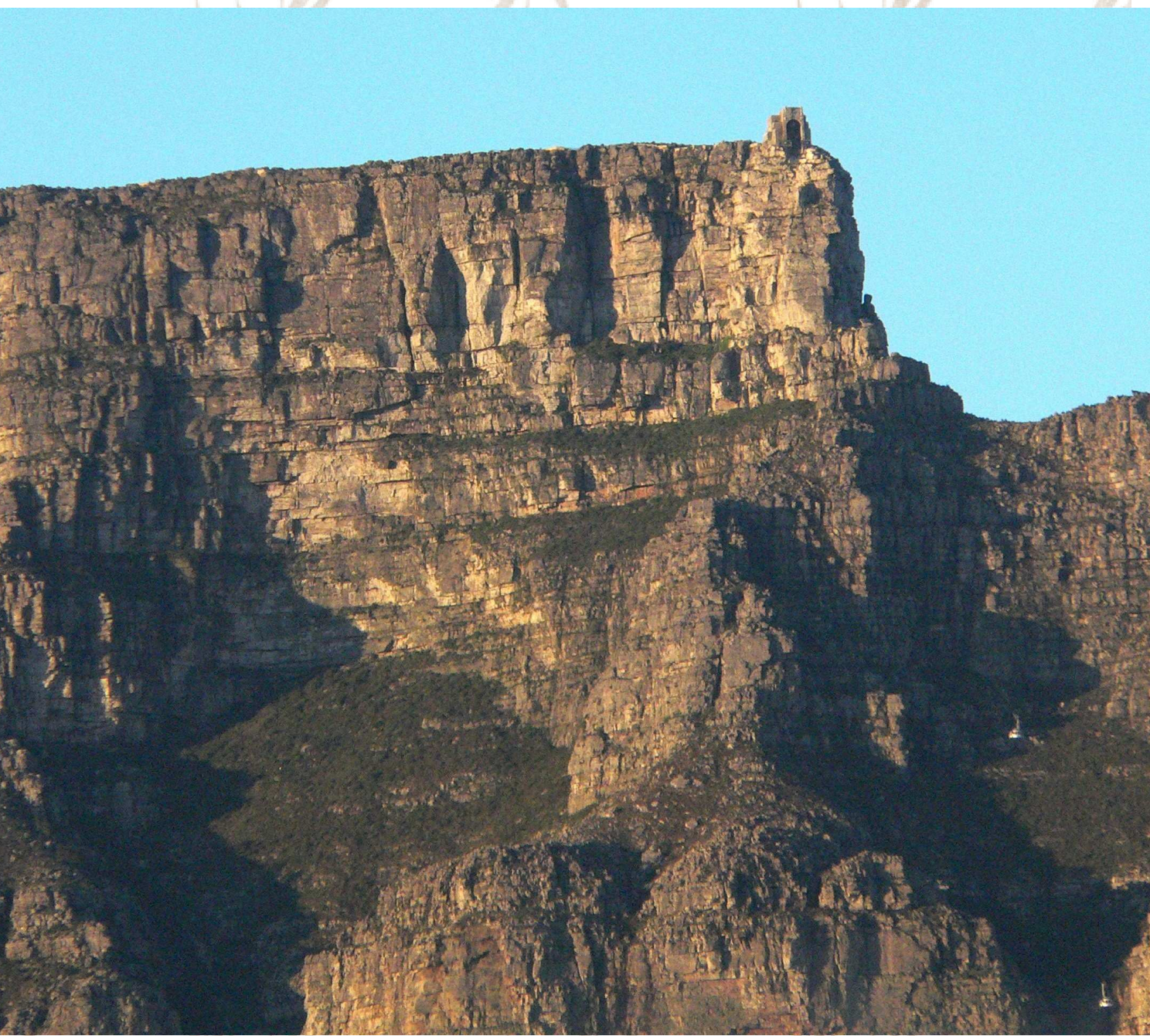
*We returned to Mpumalanga International Airport for our flight to
Capetown.*



Looks like a perfect fit for a 6'7" South African!



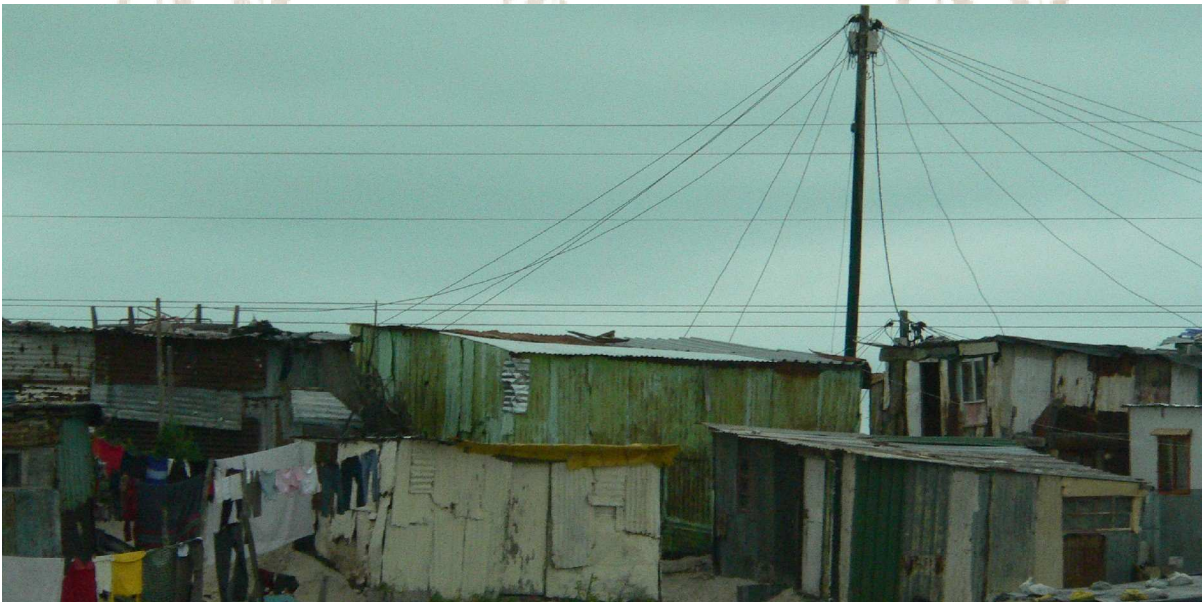
With Table Mountain as the back-drop, this is the view from our hotel room looking over the beautiful city of Capetown.



View of Table Mountain with the cable car visible to the right in mid flight on it's way up to the top.



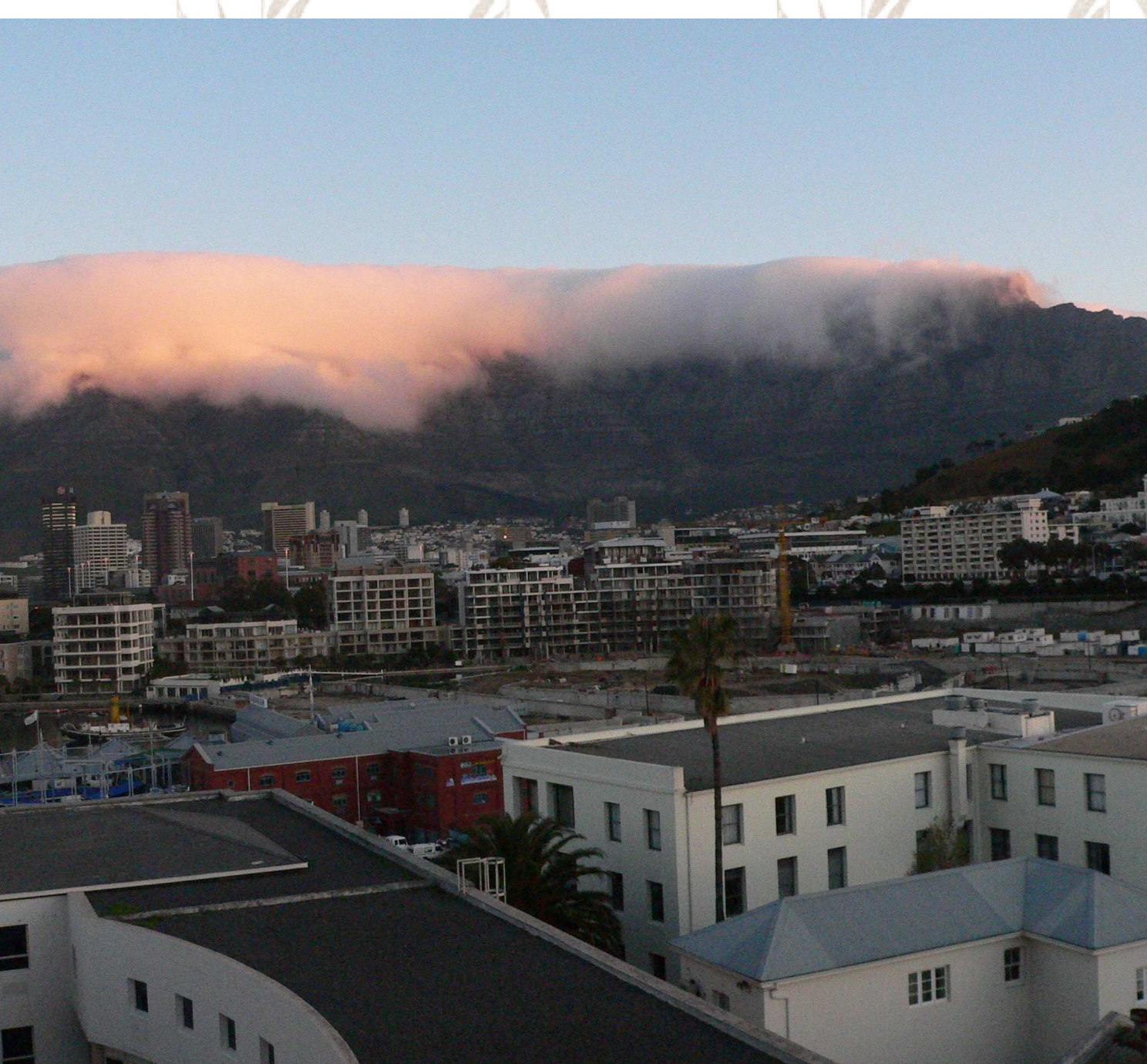
Even with all of the beauty of this country, one is never far from being reminded of the 'Townships' with poverty and living conditions that are unimaginable.



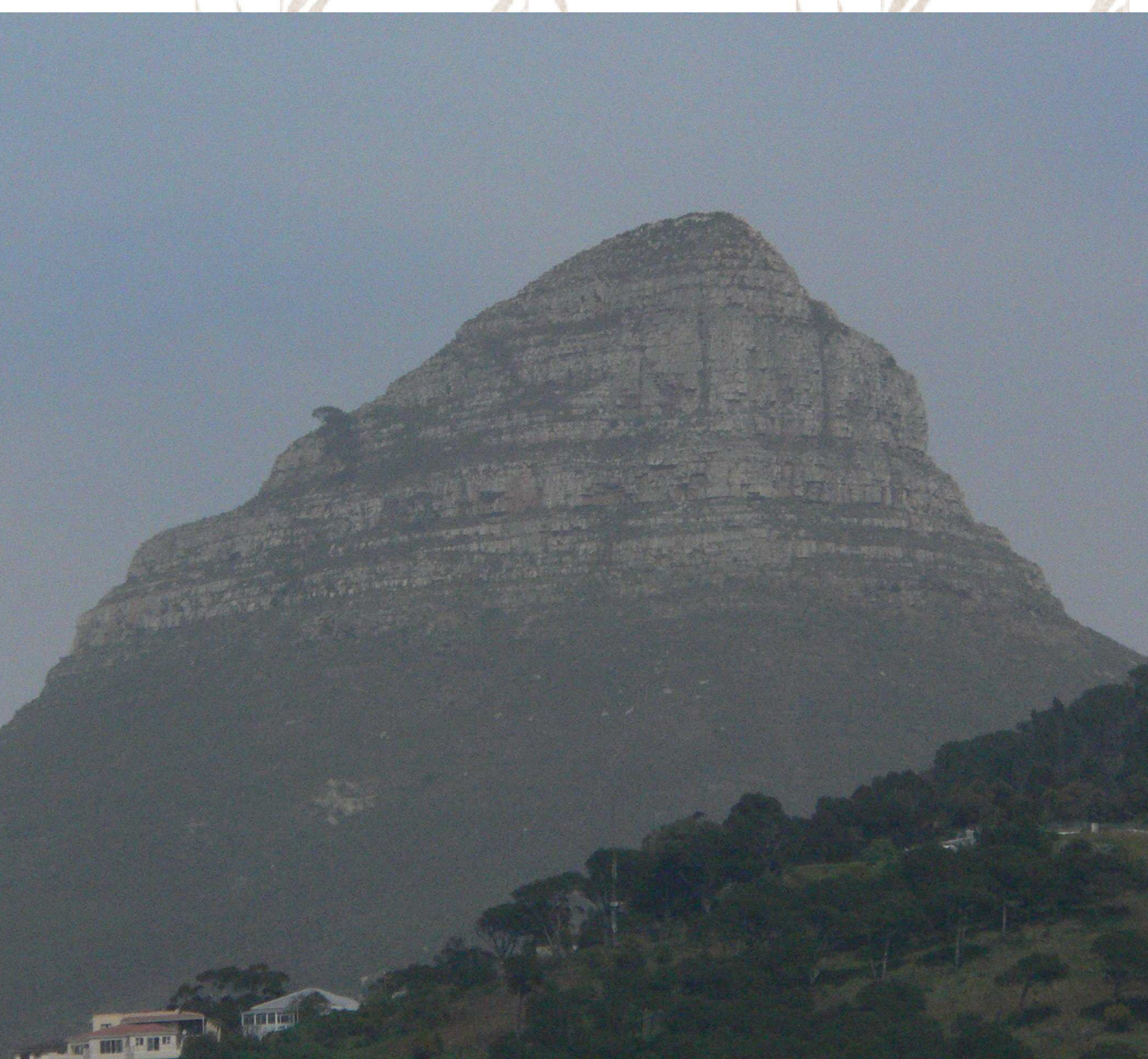
These leaning tilt-up structures are some of the lucky ones with roofs and power of sorts.



Not too far from the Townships are these very nice homes in Capetown with a view of the harbor.



With the sun setting and the clouds rolling in over Table Mountain we got to enjoy this spectacular view.



Next door to Table Mountain is Lions Head. With Stuart Watson joining Jax and Judy we made the hike to the top for a spectacular view of Capetown, as well as completing another adventure to remember.



This is a view of the Cape coastline from the top of Lions Head.



Judy, Carol, Stu and Jax working their way through the vegetation and over the stone path up Lions Head.



Here are the intrepid hikers at the top. What a good looking group. The good looking gentlemen in the yellow cap is the highly regarded South African naturalist Stuart Watson who led the way to the top.



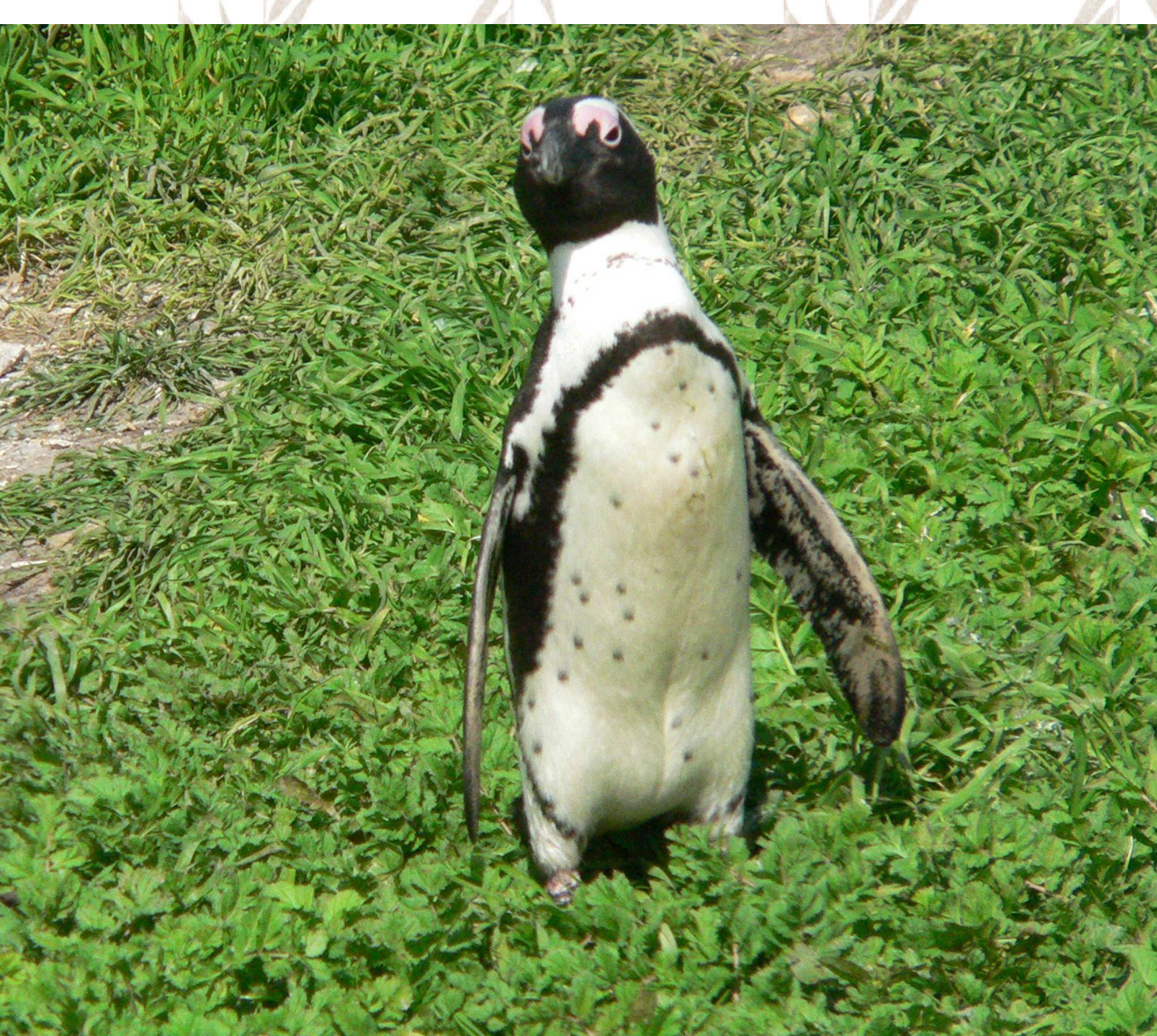
*Here are the babes on the beach near Cape Town. (Judy, Kins & Carol)
Beautiful white sand for the beautiful girls to get their feet into. As
Stuart would say "That's a mighty fine looking little group of
women you got there".*



Lounging on the beach the Watson's, the Knepper's, and the Winchell's hanging out barefoot and happy.



Just a reminder of what a vacation should always include; some time to just take your shoes off and wiggle your toes in the sand.



This little dude was one of the greeters at Robbin Island.



This is the jail on Robbin Island that housed Nelson Mandela for 25 years. The island is located about 30 minutes ferry boat ride from the Capetown harbor and is now a museum and tourist attraction.



One fantastic component of our journey was to be able to ponder the southern most tip of a continent. Sailing south from here, one will only encounter Antarctica.



The baboons were very prevalent near the Cape. Obviously the barbed wire fences were not too effective in controlling them.



One more addition to the chicken count was this ostrich



This is the post office at the tip of the Cape



We took a ride up the Funicular to the lighthouse at the Cape Point



This is the view of the Klein-Constantia Vineyard. They make the best dessert wine in the world (according to famous Somalier Jax Kneppers) - Vin de Constance. No argument here. It is said that Napoleon sent ships from France to get this fine wine.



Another of the fine winery's in South Africa. This beautiful winery is Vergelegen (pronounced vair kha lake hun) and is located in the Stellenbosch region. Vergelegen was granted to the Governor of the Cape in 1700.



Another view of Vergelegen with it's beautiful Dutch architecture.



This home sits on the cliff at Hermanus with an unobstructed view of the ocean and the migrating whales just off shore. Hermanus is a beautiful town on Walker Bay where the Southern Right Whales migrate from Antarctica to breed and play.



Along the coast at Hermanus the Southern Right Whale frolics near the shore



The Southern Right Whale is found very near shore and can be seen from July to December each year.



These big whales can be 60 ft in length and weigh more than 60 tons.



The Southern Right Whale can not breath through it's mouth but rather only through the blow hole.



This was our rental home in Hermanus.

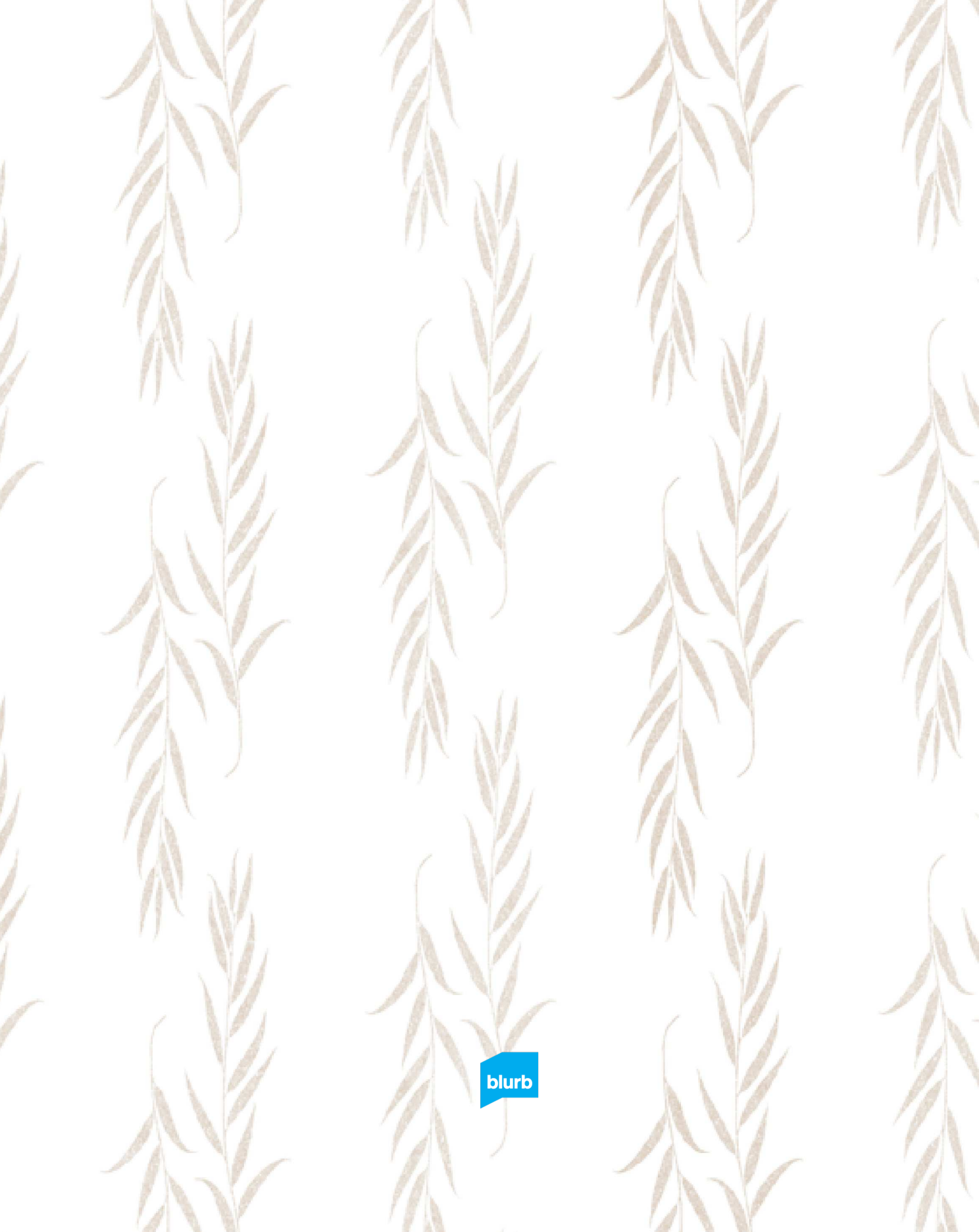


Fine wine, good food, and great friends as we celebrate the end of our fantastic trip.





*This natural stone erosion was photographed at Cybele.
With all our hearts,
Thank you.*



blurb

A photograph of four people sitting on a porch. In the back row, a man with a beard and glasses in a blue long-sleeved shirt sits on a wooden chair. In the front row, from left to right: a woman with sunglasses in a white long-sleeved shirt, a woman with blonde hair in a light grey t-shirt, and a man with a grey beard in a green and white striped polo shirt. They are all smiling. The porch has a tiled floor and is surrounded by trees and a building with a thatched roof in the background.

This book and all of it's precious memories could never have happened without Jax and Judy Kneppers including us in their incredible adventure.

We recognize that this book, long overdue as it is, is an insufficient expression of our appreciation of how fantastic you guys are and how much fun we had with you in South Africa. We hope you enjoy this photo remembrance of our great trip together.