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Into Africa

Mike is on the phone, old friend from the river, leader of our tatshenshini adventure in Alaska. We plot another tat trip: "Weve got to schedule it early in the summer, Im going on a trip to Africa in September" "OH? Im suddenly all ears "Ya, maybe youd be interested, were spending a month, rafting The big Z, Zambezi river, safaris to see big animals, all that." "Where do I sign up?" Next thing I know im plunking down 2300\$ for the land cost of an African adventure.

A dream trip, Africa interior, Victoria falls, Zambezi big water river trip, safaris, people, and finish up in capetown wine country. I visualized it and it happened. A chance connection with old river friends mike and donna clued me in December, and I got my 2300 fee in feb. to give me a discount. We met the group in march, all youngish river savvy outdoorsy types, crowded into delton Johnson s living room, going over schedules, planning, assignment of jobs, general logistics, medical requirements, insurance etc etc. good group of people, some take charge types, and delton definatly low key, but well organized. He's done this trip several times before and knows the locals and the ropes. Airplane tix cost 2700\$ including 3 flights in south Africa, but we fly from sfo to heathrow, then to Johannesburg, then to livingstone (as in Dr...I Presume?), Zambia and are united with the group at the airport there. G Mike chimes in at the last minute, working hard to catch up on all the plans, I print out a lotta stuff for him and hes on to itl. I fear he will flip out under the stress of the trip, but he seems earnest to play the game.

Delton's company, Daring Journeys, is set up as a private small trip, with a variety of accommodations, 8 days on the river, transportation to safari camps, etc. we even will do a service project, cleaning up an old folks retirement home. We will have plenty of contact with locals, river guides, street people, local guides. And looming behind all is the political situation in Zimbabwe, with Mugabe, president for life, losing it and milking the country dry of money and resources

Major prep and packing job, after 6 days at burning man, on 6 sept, im set with my roller duffel, a big bills river bag with life jackets and helmets for Shearwater, our river co., part of our fee is covered in trade of equipment. Even my tripod chair stuffed in the bills bag, gotta have a chair on the river trip. A new roller carryon bag (1/2 price at rei, dumb clerk discount), name

tags and surveyors tape on everything, boarding passes from the internet, all checked in, a carry on satchel with food for the flight, reading again the regs for heathrow airport, only one carry on allowed, no food. Security is tight there and we are expecting long lines and waits.

L picks me up and with C. we head down to the bus, meeting G Mike who has 3 tiny bags, packing light. He was supposed to bring a bigger bag so we could share weight, but he has strange ideas about packing. Onto the bus and a n uneventful ride to sfo international terminal, deal with brit air, they wont check our bags on to Livingstone, but they will send Mikes on, very strange. Finally onto the 747 with a herd of other people, get a window seat with an empty seat next to me, great deal, and on into the night. Bone up for the flight with a gin and tonic, gotta keep my Africa medicine up, the quinine and alc are age old preventatives for Africa diseases, malaria, etc.

Heathrow is crowded, but early and we breeze through security, and settle in for a 6 hour layover in the busy terminal 1, a huge mall of shops, C racks out on my thermarest, and I wander around, and take my turn sleeping. Fish and chips at a rest and coffee set me up for the rest of the time. We board a 747 for the 11 hour trip to Johannesburg, S Africa, adding stamps to the passport. Another g+t and good dinner, I have ordered lo sodium meal, so I get fish and get served first, feet squashed on a bulkhead seat, watch a harry potter movie, then find the jump seat in the back and use that to stretch out and raise my feet and talk to people going to the bathroom. Long trip, but orange sun dawn over Africa, first views of brown dusty landscape, a few small villages, few roads, all unpaved, sparse vegetation, no infrastructure visible, then a railroad, a nuke plant, more roads, buildings and we are landing at joberg. Migmatite tile, very modern airport. Mirabi from Italy is waiting too, she is with our group and we catch up. She is an accountant with 1 client in California, but lives most of the year in a small town in Italy. We find our bags and pass through customs into Africa.

We board a small jet outside for Livingstone, Mike is jabbering, repeating himself, im getting annoyed but back off, weve got to get along. More brown dusty land, very little sign of life, cuestas dipping south with high ridge lines, some kind of anticlinal structure. Down in Livingstone, Zambia to be greeted by Delton and his crew, and some dudes from Bushwhackers, the transportation company, helping with our bags, tip with dollar bills, they are appreciative, and talk in a sonorous low slow voice, very relaxing to listen to.

Africa blog 1; 9/6/07 into Africa-zambia-zimbwawe

Hi dudes, im in africa! major different scene, the squirrels here are

baboons, little black faced thigs i dont know the name of etc. the flight was long but not bad, we had a 10 hour to heathrow, and 6 hr layover there, then another 10 to johannesburg, then 2 to livingstone, zambia, where we were met by delton and crew and spirited to the Maramba lodge, a dusty place with cabins, pool and great bar, g+t is the national drink here. at dusk we saw 3 elephants watering in a slough and a croc swimming around, decided not to swim in the river.

I took an early morning taxi ride to the falls, (\$20 us) walked the knife edge trail along the trace of a huge chasm where the water falls in cascades for 2 miles over a major cleft, eroded out from an ancient (150 my) set of flood basalt lavas which have major fractures which filled with limestone, and have now been eroded out. the river meets in the middle and cuts through another cleft to form the main stream ,looks like about 50,000 plus. I spy a kayak sitting on a rock at the boiling pot, the main putin for the upper run, rapids 1-11. also up stream are 3 other rapids -1,-2,-3 running along the foot of the falls, leading up to the spray at the bottom of the falls resplendent with a rainbow in the dawn. All frothing white water, and 3 major riverwide holes. No. 1 boiling pot has a wall at the bottom and a hole up stream which flips boats constantly featured on the Sobek poster on the Zambezi back in the early 80s with a big raft plastered against the wall and people falling out.

I go. back by taxi (the safest way around here, man at the gate says "two dangers, elephant and human, human is the worst") some members years ago tried to walk and were mugged half way there, no thanks, din't bring the pepper spray. The gorge is cut into a high plateau, uplifted over the African hot spot. Smoky skies belie fires all over. The elephants run rampant and have devastated the trees, so the forest is a mess. After a good breakfast, we get a ride with Delton to the falls again, and a group heads down the steep trail to the put in,. We are passed by barefoot porters carrying boats, kayaks, frames, oars, paddles, even a generator to blow up boats. The boats are 18'self bailers . with stout ropes on the thwarts to hold on to, major big water holes downsteam. Flip lines on all rafts, looks like they are expecting to flip. The kayakers are having a field day, in modern play boats, surfing huge waves and doing pirouettes in the holes. We wait for the rest of the group before we head on down the river in 2 days.

The people are very friendly, smiling, speaking good English, and intent on getting our money. . I make it clear I'm from northern California, Not from Hollywood, or Bush USA. We trade stories about governments ineptitude and corruption, and atrocities.

I buy 2 statuettes and bargain down from 12 to 5 \$us along with a nice long conversation. we kick back in the afternoon and bbq and have a meeting about the route ahead that night. Bunking with Mike, is ok. Snug under my mosquito net with whirring fan, deet at my head and feet, for malaria. Got

malerone just before i left, so i should be ok for malaria. Bought a giardia filter water bottle before I left and that gives me more protection. Plus a bottle of lomotil for symptomatic relief of gi infection.

Next day we came by bus over the bridge, 30\$ cash us, long lines of refugees fleeing Zimbabwe. People crowding around the bungee jumping platform to risk their lives and a zip line crosses the canyon as well, another death defying ride. 300 meters to the water.

Bunk down at the Vic falls rest camp, pool, cabins, restaurant, outside showers.. A woman on the other side of spiked electrified fence crying for food. Shanty towns in the forest with people trying to get over the border. for 40\$ us i get 2 million z dollars and am rich at last. We cruise the town, shelves almost empty in the super market, smaller markets the same, long line for bread at bakery. Curio hawkers very insistent, following you all over. i buy some gin for 10\$ us per liter, tonic small cans, and some fruit. Back to rest camp,. kick back, have a shouting match with g Mike, but he calms down when the psyche patrol from the group comes in and does a smoothing job. . Time for a swim, g+t and long conversation with a young native named "wise man" who didn't want anything from me and gave me some insights into local life. We have an evening meeting with river guides, Shearwater Expeditions, and make a date for 9:45 in morn, in the internet café, its getting near that time now so i gotta scam. thanks for your greetings and wishes,

blog 2, first day on the river. Somehow lost the original, if anyone has it, send it please.

The lower stretch is a 1/2 day trip, after dusty bus ride on the plateau, we hike into the canyon on a steep trail with log steps, thru some travertine grottos dripping springs to a pure white shiny sand beach with the usual river accouterments, boats, paddles frames oars people sitting around. Black basalt everywhere, one place with a vug of quartz crystals in it. Barbeque lunch then on the river, rock n roll ride on 11-21, big water, Kazi Is the boatman, very sure of himself and a good judge of ferry angles., I row some small stuff, then we hike out a steep trail 800 feet to the rim, and a long dusty ride to vic falls past round thatched roof huts, some small and very large gardens, people walking, always walking, pushing carts full of junk and food. I crocktail then write blog at the internet café and head off to the falls and dinner at Olali resort, expansive green lawns, white columns, very british. A glass of Pinotage the signiture south African wine, croc shishkabob (tastes like chicken) and ostritch carpaccio, and the roar of the falls in the background. Very posh, elephant guns on the walls, great friendly waiter, 25\$ us including tip. Life is good out here.

Africa blog 3 in vic falls and on the river at last.

another shitty day in paradise, beautiful people, very friendly, they want my money, they are starving, and have no work and town is dry and dusty, teeming with people hawking local crafts, a blind beggar woman plays a tambourine, laughter and loud music from the Hunters club the main beer bar. . Big contrast to vic falls rest camp, green lawns, spiked fences, guard at gate (named william, good buddy) and a great group of friends to hang out with, and internet a stroll away. gin is only 10 a bottle and wine is cheap too, good food, but not much of it. the supermarket shelves are almost bare, except for booze, people wandering around with dazed looks, refugee camps all off in the woods, waiting waiting by the side of the road for something to happen. oh well some major things i observed, drove into the vic falls hotel, a palatial english setting, green lawns, we hope to have high tea there when we return from our 6 day river excursion.

We did the upper stretch today, rapids 1-10, major big shit, but still only grand canyon style problems, holes avoidable, downstream ferrys the rule. i took over the oars which weigh about 25 lbs apiece and rowed some small stuff. Kazi again is the boatman, and we have developed a great rapport, i am Teedub. , We blasted our way through holes and big waves all day. Couple of swimmers from the paddle boat Jen was running. the putin is directly at the foot of Victoria falls, a spectacular eddy rimmed with soaring cliffs and crashing waterfalls, we climbed down 800' iron staircase and then traversed up river to some slabs where the boats awaited us, all equipment carried down by porters and assembled ready to go. We rowed up to the falls and had spectacular views of the wall of cascades coming down at us, immense black basalt cliffs all around, and spray from the falls pummeling us as we circulated in a monster eddy. now down to the boiling pot, the classic z rapid you saw in the early 80'ss sobek poster with a boat plastered against the wall, a hole and big cushion piling up 15' . We watched as commercials from the Zambia side tried to ferry through the Hermit like waves above, and watched one flip and dump all in the water. we came with reverse ferry from river left and punched through the right sidecurlers with great aplomb, Kazi is a grand canyon style boatman who knows how to do his stuff.

Off we go on some complimentary (3 and 4th class) rapids, then some big ones (5s) with many squirrily waves, and holes hiding in the towering waves. very Grand Canyon , the flow supposed to be around 100,000, but I'm doubtful it's more than 50. Moving right along, we scout a 5th class rapid and run an obvious slot in the center, with breakthrough holes with no problem. now my turn, no. 7 is big, major waves and a hole on the right to skirt, no prob. now 7.5, kazi tells me to push, but i cannot get any momentum with heavy oars and end up taking a side curler at a very low angle, we go vertical, and I'm suddenly out of the boat at the top of the rapid, fighting for air, remembering what Marty taught me, breath when you

can, and finally the tumult subsides and Kazi pulls me in spitting and fuming, shoulda quartered around to the wave, pulling, not pushing, how many times will i learn that lesson.

Next is commercial suicide, rated class 6, we walk and watch as one boatman brings the paddleboat down a slot on the right between 2 major holes, and a 16 foot drop, then the kick off the oar boat, it flips in the first hole, and rides up side down, to the bottom, the safety kayaker brings it to shore. now kazi is gonna row it. he sneaks the 1st hole on the right over some rocks, drops the 16 feet and sets up well for the lower hole, jumping into the bow of the boat and blasting through on the right v wave, and he is thru. Wow, major water, bigger than anything I've ever seen.

Float down to lunch on the same sandy beach we started from yesterday, bbq, potatoe salad, lemonade, good cheer, long conversation with mike sonora about chf, and then the trek out. We climb through the travertine grottos, beautifully festooned with dripstone, dripping springs and caves, part of the limestone that fills the major fractures that the river has carved out. a steep climb to the top up the log ladders and steps, i climb with Kazi and the boys carrying the rafts, rolled and teathered in long cylinders, two boys per raft, bare feet and zorries all they wear on their feet. Now the kayak bearers, one with 2 kayaks, one with one kayak, a frame and 2 monster oars. these guys are very tough. Cold beer and fanta and reunion at the top, long dusty ride back with a stop to view 4 elephants gathered in the forest, waving their ears to stay cool. I crash at the rest camp with a cool wet sarong over me, and mike comes back, i commandeer a g and t from mike across the way, c. comes by and cant find the itinerary and i look and cant find, mike has it so all is not lost,

Now in the icafe, typing away, and hoping you enjoy this little snippit of life in africa. it is a totally different place, but the people are friendly, just gave 300000 z dollars to a guy who wanted to buy bread and will head off to a new rest. for dinner. everyone else is wiped, crashed, and tomorrow is a rest day . I plan to hike this side of the falls, 1 mile of cliff edge above the main part of the falls, then shop and get ready for 6 days on the river. The first day we do the 2 stretches just described, go into a camp all set up for us by porters, then on down for 5 days to the takeout, 130 km downstream. . Then 3 nights at Sable safari camp in Hwange national park for animal safari, then back to vic falls for our service projects and interaction with local schools, etc.

Blog 4 On the river and on safari

Sorry about the lacuna in communication, I tried to squeeze in a visit to the icafe, but the electricity was off in town, couldn't even buy gin, the store

was closed, crowds gathered around, heard about ladies fighting for their place in line for meat. The restaurants all have food at the resorts, but about 1/2 of the menu is unavailable.

We have been on safari last 10 days, no internet connections in the zambezi river canyon or on hwange sable lodge. I just returned to vic falls yesterday after a 2 hour bus ride, I hate those, and a visit to a craft native display where wheeling and dealing was fast and furious. We watched a wood carver under a tree forming a large set of figures from a piece of ironwood, very careful, he used a wooden handled hatchet, and I tried to buy it from him, but it was his livelihood.

The 6-day river trip started below the falls, hiking down into the canyon just below vic falls and gearing up for rapids 1-11, mostly big 4 and 5th class, huge waves coming from all directions. Mike insisted on running no. 4 and it got his number, over in a split second. We jumped on top of the inverted boat and righted it in a second but I was kicked away and had to swim and wait for Rodger the kayaker to pull me to another boat (pronounced "booot" by the natives). The Canon camera didn't retract in time, so I couldn't get it into the pelican case and it got soaked and stopped working. Thank God I've brought the Nikon as well, so I have backup.

Oliver is the boatman now, and I set up to row some smaller rapids. Suddenly he changes his mind and wants me up front to punch through some big waves, I am 1/2 way to the front tube when we hit, and get punched by the fist of the bow. I come up bleeding from the nose, another victim of the river's revenge.

We pull into camp set up for us by porters, with tents, a table, tablecloth, chairs, glass wine glasses and bottles, gin and vodka, and other cold drinks and ice. We have a congenial dinner of stew and soup and veges for the vegetarians, and two vegans. With kero lanterns, and great conversation of the day and a birthday cake for G. Mike (the first of many).

The next day we run big and little rapids, the canyon starts widening out, with African root trees exposed on the surface, and many beobabs. Lunch at a wide beach under the shade of a few trees. I explore up a draw and find a stash of gear left by fishermen, a shelter for smoking fish and other signs of habitation. We see several fishermen on the banks on the way down.

Down rio again to a major portage where we camp, expecting camp setup as before, but snafu reigned, and no one was there, It was getting dark when

finally lights came down the trail with bodies toting coolers, frames, oars, pads, tents etc. not as elaborate a camp, but a good time. . People are starting to get sick, Maribai is nauseous, shitting, as are Jen and Rodger. I stay away from unfiltered water and note the lack of bleach and no chickie pail line. I start a course of lomotil just for good measure. we portage first thing the next morning with the help of the porters, then run more 4,5 th class and portage a couple of 14 foot water falls. The last is called Deep Throat, and the first ghost boat snags its bowline in a rock, and stays suspended in mid rapid, Delton jumps onto the boat from a rock jutting out from shore, cuts the line and rows to shore. Another boat, ghosted is snagged by Kofe, the kayaker, the other by Rodger, and Kazi the king of boatmen here runs the deep throat, a frothy rock studded chute and comes out unscathed.

Africa blog 5??

(Intermission-forward 4 days)

On the computer now another 4\$ for 30 minutes at the Vic Falls Safari hotel, very african fancy, polite people, headress doorman, water running everywhere, people with drinks in hand, raucous shouts in the bar. Last night dinner was a african bbq, the delicacy was a worm, and we got a diploma if we ate one. We ate Sable, Kuzu, Impala, and other things that run around the fields here. Then a drumming session, where everyone got drums and danced and had a great party. This morn we were up early for a 2 hour elephant ride that hurt my legs, and now im facing a deadline of 4 pm for a river dinner cruise on the zambezi above the falls. too much to do.

Back to the river trip, . we spent another 3 days on the river, a layover day with a great hike up a side canyon over dry waterfalls and seeing fish eagles with fish in claws. Got down and partied with the boatmen, getting mellow and drinking wine at a swimming hole they had cleared of crocs. Smaller rapids, wider canyon, and a last camp near a lodge with an armed guard who hitched a ride downstream with us.

We were met at the takeout by a crowd of locals, and a bus and trailer to take our stuff to the hwanje national park game preserve where we settled into grass huts and an evening game drive in Toyota land cruisers with high seats, seeing everything from sables, to warthog, to zebra, giraffe, jackal etc. and millions of elephants, if I see one more elephant ill scream. candlelight dinner, with more people sick, mike is out, i have an argument with leonard about chickie pails, they'd never heard of them. shit. mike g is sick as well.

Up at five for another game drive, more elephants, watering holes, water buffalo, hippos, rinos etc. back to breakfast, rest and noon lunch at another tree house lodge with pool, cool and relaxing, getting into the high 90s here. another drive that night to the national park, with beautiful african sunsets behind trees. Many giraffes, zebra i dont feel well, my turn. i have been

chugging the lomotil and manage to get by with only a few dry heaves, but rest out the next morning drive, and miss lions chewing on a kill.

Now lunch at the tree house-pool place again, then onto the bushwhackers bus for a long ride back to vic falls. The driver, Louis, is very interested in geology, and I give him a lesson, and promise to send him a cd of the ppt im planning on putting together on the geology of this area. We drive and drive through desolate, elephant ridden country, small towns, all walking or standing by the road trying to sell something. Many churches and church schools in big settlements. A nuke plant in Hwange for electricity infrastructure, a one way railroad snaking through the countryside, very few junked cars, very few cars period. Everyone looking unhappy desparate. We pull into a curio market and they are on us like flies on shit. Some fabrics, but mostly wood carvings, and a real wood carver out back. A bathroom which has a fancy building, but is just a hole in concrete. We end up back in vic falls atg the Lokuthula rest camp, big thatched buildings with 2-3 bedrooms, on e bath and a sitting area and kitchen, and curtains that open onto the lawn and forest outside. Security guards prowl the perimeter in case there are any baddies out there. Dinner at African bbq bouma-an eating place, smoking Chinese and more food imaginable, see earlier description of eating worms.

Blog 6.5 This aint no north hill--service project-retirement-death home

Part of our tour if you would call it that is a service project, which entailed cleaning out 5 buildings in a retirement community -read place where poor folks go to die, in the main residential area of vic falls far from the swanky hotels. we piled on the bus with our faithful driver richard from shearwater at 730 am after a buffet bkfst at the vic falls safari hotel, overlooking the plateau and watching the animals cavort around the watering hole view from the deck the warthogs are the lawnmoers here, getting down on thier knees to munch grass, mike peed on one in the dark inadvertantly

We arrived in a dusty jumble of buildings, trash all around, old folks lying on concrete floors, filth everywhere. donning gloves and mask I joined the demolition crew and cleaned out broken glass and put new glass in for several hours, worked with 2 Shearwater guides who became instant friends, joking about our Bush and their Mugabe. the government took all the money away from the churches which run this place, some 72 residents, all in various stages of immobility. Not north hill by a long shot (where my parents retired in boston), i snoozed till lunch then ate a light meal from a huge pot d.o. with three legs of buffalo stew (pete and tom i took a picture

of it for you) salad, veges (we have 4 and 2 vegans, which complicates things). after noon we started mucking out the stalls with disinfectant, and by 4 had all places clean sort of except for one room where an old woman lay motionless on the floor, we later found that she was dead. 1 bathroom for the lot, but neat vege gardens and flower gardens planted here and there, tended by the people. We sat with them and had conversations over lunch. I was wiped, so sat and watched the G Mike and Beneai show washing out blankets and clothes and drying on lines. Another crew put up curtains, and we all moved the furniture, decrepit iron bunks, wood piles of various belongings back in and folks thanked us as we left.

I take a shower and long siesta before dinner in the main lodge, hot, fans only, great kudu venison meal and a cabernet not bad from Zimbabwe. then a long conversation on how to tip the guides, I'm running out of cash money, hope to restock in capetown. Cash a check with Lawrence, who is a neighbor in Forestville.

I get up late 6 am, and ready for a trip in town, took the lodge bus after coffee on the terrace overlooking the watering hole. I am immediately surrounded by a gaggle of boys, all trying to sell me stuff. I am picked up by Robert who seemed to be smarter and more willing to do what I wanted, who I hired as my guide for the market, scored an axe, fabric, earrings, wooden masks, more fabric, jewelery, and had endless conversations with the keepers of shops at the community curio place. wheeling and dealing. They cleaned me out of us\$\$ and i gave robert 10\$ (4 million zim\$) and told him to buy a science book and learn. He is serious about school, and needs money for books and workbooks. He shows me his workbook he has just bought with my money and I show him a graph of $y=x^2$ (squared).

I go up to the internet café after changing a 50 bill in a shady office with Robert gave his ten and and his friend got 2 for his help. Part of their job was to keep the hawkers away from me. Kazi comes out of an office and we greet warmly, he shows me on his feet my new river shoes, I had traded him his tshirt for these after the river tirip. I think ill get the bus back home and sit bythe pool for a while. We have a big party for the shearwater crew this eve, we will see Kofes videos of our trip. some fun, saw Kofe at the old folks home, he lives out that way. We trade, ben is gonna give me a bunch of shearwater clothing for my chair. All the guys on the street want my shoes,..beaten up old hikers, but ill need them in Stellenbosch.

We are off to botswana tomorrow for Chobe national park supposedly the best animial safari place around.

Blog 7-Vic falls shopping, to Chobe, Botswana

Zd out for a bit, put in some pool time, then back to town to meet my young friend Robert again, he takes me on a tour of the inner villages and to a huge open air market where i am the only white person, racks of clothes, fabric i bot yet another beautiful thing for a fraction the price \$750,000, about 2 bucks us and made many new friends, we wandered into a beer hall, loud music, dark, people sipping local cream colored brew, tasting very yeasty. then back past vacant lots where the govt destroyed a shanty town a few months ago, they called it "driving out the trash". Back to the wimpys burgerstand and wait for the bus and talk, i give him another 10 us and tell him to buy soap for his mom. we exchange addresses, he shows me with pride his multplication tables and we talk about the future, school, he will be gong to hwange to live with his mom for school, wants books, shoes, anything i have left over, i promise to send him a package if he will write and tell me his grades, implying money will be forthcoming. we part sadly, but he is always looking around, for deals, a streetwise kid, he says he wants to be a student, i give him some geology lessons and we laugh at friends jokes.

The bus comes and I'm off wedged into a mass of fleshy tourists, South african, german, french, make friends with a couple from s africa. start reading the constant gardner about the situation in Africa, a mind wrecker. back at the lokuthula cabanas, big thatched roof structures, there is no party yet but all is in prep. big coolers of wine and beer local type but no guests.. I go to the room and rack out for a while until activity sounds from down the row. Uniformed security guards watching carefully, i mingle with the crowd, one of the favorites of the crew, they all come up to me and we have great conversations, i hand each a carabiner, and trade Ben my tripod chair for some Shearwater zambezi shorts and another crew shirt. Got together with the glass glazing crew and had a great time reliving how we worked together to make things better at the old folks home. more music, singing i lead the crowd in a rendition of this land is my land guthrie song, a huge feast materializes, bbq beef and chicken and salads etc, more good converstations. one guy says he saw me pick up a matchbox with something he had hidden in it, i say moop, i always do that, but look in my stuff, not finding it.

big crowd now, all the porters, guides, warehouse, mgrs etc, we exchange addys and all and music plays. Kofe shows the movie dvd he made and we all order them, great shots of rapids, interviews with people on the trip. Then the opening of the envelopes, each porter guide etc gets a tip, over 2 grand in all, they are very happy. we drift off, i say earnest goodbyes to my new friends in Africa.

Blog 8 What a difference a country makes

Today we are off to Botswana to see Chobe national park, this is abbreviated cause of time, We go to a supermarket, bustling with people, food laden shelves, tourists all over, such a contrast to Zimbabwe, I get some cash from an atm, miraculous machine, money from a my bank 1/2 a world away. I buy yogurt, crackers. Great bran biscuits with no sugar or salt, that would be great in the US. Gin and tonic water and I have a great lunch buffet at the resort where we stay, a great pool looking out over the river.. Delton has to change currency and cash traveller's checks long line at the bank. I wait and watch gongs on in the parking lot, safari equipped vehicles ply back and forth, some monster tour 4wd trucks, headed for lion land. Bustling businesses, major contrast to Vic Falls.

We finally check into our suite, tv, deck overlooking the river, all posh, then a great monster buffet lunch and nap. 4 pm we board a boat/raft 30 feet long and cruise the river watching hippos, crocks, elephants, water buffalo, and birds occupying an old termite mound. End up in Hippo bay, with dozens of the huge beasts frolicking around, showing their smile. The sun sets red, fires in Namibia to the south for ag. give us a colorful touch at the end of the day. We are at the corner of Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana.. monster dinner buffet on deck, a little rain and thunder, warthog steak for dinner and a glass of cab, good friends, and warm soft air.

Up at 5:30 on a game drive at Chobe park piling into several safari vehicles, on the outside to get a better view. We start with giraffes, warthogs, then water buffalo, springbucks (with the M of mcdonalds on their butt) more elephants, kudus. We cruise along a lake and a mass of brown turns into a pride of lions, 13 of them lion around after a hard night hunting lesser beasts.. Immediately there is a lion jam about 7 safari vehicles all with lenses pointed at the majestic beasts. One has a collar on him, tracking him by gps, the others finally get up and saunter off followed by 50 telephoto lenses burning megapixels at a very high rate.

now back in zambia, crossed the Zambezi river in a boat from Botswana. We spend 3 nights at the Zambizi sun resort. will leave for capetown tmw, hadda grerat hike along the rim of the falls with 2 young guides this morn, checking out the back gate of the resort with a uniformed dude. Bought some great air photos of the falls, then watched the rafters at boiling pot, then back to kick back and write this. G Mike and I take a cab into town to eat at a seafood restaurant, nice quiet time, He is so mellow now, compared to last fall, this has really done him a lot of good to get into Africa, I just hope it lasts.

kk goes for google interview on site tmw, give him some good vibes.

Blog 9.1 Capetown Racers sing this song...

Another monster buffet breakfast at the Zambezi sun, I fill a bag with goodies and bag up all my leftover clothing and take them to my guides' camp. They are already out at the falls, so I leave the stuff in care of another dude there, specifying to share the food and that Felix and _____ get the clothes. We gather at the bus to the thumping of drums and the dancing of warriors, a crowd mills around, arriving, leaving on safari etc. Major crush and confusion at the airport, people on several different flights, passports to be stamped, forms to fill out, finally crammed on a small jet to Johannesburg. We run through the J. airport to make our flight to Capetown, up 3 monster ramps, pushing our cart. We have to pick up our luggage from international and recheck for domestic flight. We think we only have 10 minutes for a long line for security, but we make it through. The guy frisking me has me take my belt off, and my pants fall down as I run for the gate. C is there signaling its ok, the boarding is delayed. Oh well I got my exercise.

We have a short hop to Capetown, I find my rental car listed under "teddy" Wright (the way they pronounce Terry here. And after major delays for others missed flights, we caravan into Capetown. I'm losing it at the hostel, but we finally get settled after another major blowup at G Mike, but he takes it well, maybe he is ok. We have to unlock 2 iron gates, a door and an inside door for the room, and find C is also booked in there, she is not pleased, but I don't give a shit anymore, so tired, I crash out, then take a shower and crash out again. C wakes me in the middle of the night cause im snoring, I put a nose expander on and go back to sleep.

Great bkfst at the hostel, we have to have the code to get in the gate, all places have high walls, electric fences, razor wire and signs "armed response", taking security very seriously here. I walk to a mall, guards at every door, get more rand (1000r = 143\$us) and find some books and maps, one on geologic finds here, say good by to the troops, and head off on the loose again.

At Cape Point (really Queens Beach) I finally found Darwin's outcrop, a fantastic exposure at tide level with Cape granite with 5-8 mm phenos of ksp, and black blobs of argillite swimming around in it, lit par lit injection in the argillite also. The argillite has porphyroblasts (big crystals) of ksp as well. It seems Darwin was looking for proof granite was igneous and this was it, he immediately wrote Playfair (the writer who made Hutton's lousy writings intelligible and really was the originator of the concept of uniformitarianism) to describe this as proof of the demise of the

sedimentary origin of granite. Driving on the left again and navigating at the same time back thru the city on the freeway to Stellenbosch.

blog 9.2 Stellenbosch wine country

Stellenbosch is a college town set in beautiful mountains of horizontal sediments of the table mountain group,. I 'm driving left hand drive on the left side, with the shift lever on the left, very unnerving. I almost get killed several times making turns the wrong way. It was quite confusing finding the Stumble inn, no sign on the main road, but I got tired of driving in circles and went to a great small winery, chatted up the guy there, bought some pinotage and finally found the hostel after driving on the wrong side of the street only 2ice, got yelled at by a big black lady, and honked at by many, who is this idiot? oh well.

The guy at the Stumble inn is great, my room is poolside, and after a bout with the security system an iron gate that wouldn't operate for me, I opened the pinot and took a dip and forayed out to dinner. The restaurant review will be written at a later date, I'm tired and headed out to pinot land tomorrow, but in brief a very comfortable place with a wild salad, carpaccio of ostritch, warthog and sable wrapped around goat cheese with baby greens, and a local trio of dishes, lamb, chicken pot pie and mashed beef, veges etc washed down with a bottle of garagiste Topaz pinot (listed under "garageist wines" on the wine list) from the area I'm going to tomorrow.

This morning I spent a delightful 3 hours with Dawid Saaymans, the main soils guy with Distel and we did a tour of local soils, geology and talked soils and wine quality nonstop for that time. Then to lunch at Barrique, another winery restaurant. A very nice lady looking like Kate MacMurray seated me late for lunch asking me "will you eat what I have or are you going to be fussy?" and I talked with an older couple with two dauschunds on the patio, I cant get a way from people with dogs. A great oxtail and glass of local shiraz hit the spot. Then a foray into the mountains to look at rocks and more wineries, but they are closed on Sunday, so I drove some back roads and explored a bit before returning to the pool .Great shouts greet me in the main room, US vs South Africa rugby match, we drink beers and yell at the tv for a while. I call and talk to Volkmar and he gives me convoluted directions to their flower shop and home southeast of Capetown

blog 10 Stellenbosch to Capetown

Im in a beautiful farm setting, Table mt in the distance, close to the ocean, The Engkelds are wonderful people friends of Greg Mcmillans and have welcomed me with open arms. A shantytown of several hundred thousand

people is 3 miles away, I am warned not to drive certain roads at night because people will drop rocks on your car from bridges, or sideswipe you to rob you, or jump out in front of you to get injured and sue. The armored cars travel in caravans of 3 or 4. One group was rammed by a stolen bmw, pushed off the road, there is no armor on the roof, so the bandits shot everyone dead through the roof and made off with the dough. No suspects apprehended. This is a very wild place on one level.

I left Stellenbosch. yesterday morning after a 3 hour session with John Wooldridge, a major brit character who is the head of plant nutrition and soils at the wine research institute. He talks a bloody blue streak with 2 big screen computers with power points on each illustrating different points. He is very much into the chemistry of soils and wine quality and agrees with me, but concentrates on K uptake as the key. we shall see.

After I squeezed in some wine tasting at Rosenberg estate, way up in the foothills of towering mountains north .of Stellenbosch. I had to sign in with a security guard, then drove 2 km of country roads back to a whitewashed estate, rolling green lawns, guernsey cows in the fields (it is also a dairy) to an immaculate tasting room with spiral steel staircase descending to a great room, 100' wooden bar and very few people. a cultured black served me-first I've seen in a tasting room, and engaged me in a wonderful tasting using a new glass, a hollow stem beer glass it looks like, but crafted by Riedel, you fill the stem with about a standard pour, then roll the glass on its side, just enough lip to keep the wine in the glass, and it totally covers the whole glass area in 1 roll. brilliant. A crisp, flavorful sauvegnon. blanc, low oak chard, bordeaux blend, and high end cab, all very deep flavors in the reds, lingering palated and all that stuff. I bought a bottle of blend to bring back for our enjoyment.

Now for a mountain adventure, drive to Frenchoek (French corner) a cute little resort town back in the mts, people lunching it and shopping and farms all around, at the foot of the immense escarpment to the north, cape granite rising to the Karoo plateau, this is several hundred miles long and takes a bend here formed from the cape fold belt. more in another blog. Hugenots populated this valley in the early 1800s and it is a spectacular place, ate lunch leftover from the volks restaurant. in the cemetary, many big granite monuments, smaller marble, and then unmarked mounds with big chunks of quartz at either end, class differences? blacks? oh well. Drove off over the frenchhoek pass, 1000 m up great views of folded table mt group and a hike at the summit, sign full of bullet holes, some things never change.

Now down to the coast on a long winding road past apple orchards, big fruit area, out to n2, the main route and to the premiere pinot noir area, elgin/grabau, in a high mountain valley with rolling hills mostly in apples, pears, etc. but vinyards streatching up the fans to the mts on the

bakkersfield shale, a clayely by pebbley soil to paul cluven winery and found them open till 5. After checking in with the inevitable security guard (a major employer in s Africa) who then dutifully opened a big gate, another 1 km of farm rds to the winery and very pleasent lady who presented sauvagon blanc, chard, a somewhat off rose, too sweet for me, called slowine, and a very tasty pinot, deep berry a little acidic, could use some aging, but altogether worth \$18 us so i bot one for our s african tasting when i return. the lady is very helpful and brings out books on geology etc, and i spot a tall gent entering and ask if he is the winemaker, she says, thats my father paul cluven, so i introduce myself, we have a pleasent conversation, and I leave my website and name and get his card.

The Southeast wind has really picked up and im buffeted on the n2 back toward Capetown, this wind blows incessently at this time of year, and blew the door off the pool changing room last night with a resounding bang. I drive south down on to the plain and following directions out toward the ocean, with major surf happening. a long 5 km drive through shanty towns, shacks made of corrugated metal, wood, palletes, whatever works, streaching for miles on either side of the highway , all black neighborhoods, if you would call them that. man, worse than the worst slums projects in the us. Distracted by crazy motorists, i miss my turn back north and end up at the foot of table mt, enquire at a bp station and a handsome Afrikaan gent patiently explains to me how to get back on track. I find it easily with the help of the mapquest map I ran off the internet last night at the hostile, and gave the girl there a bottle of wine as a tip. I roll into Engelke gardens at 6 pm to be greeted by the family, father, mother, bro guntar, volkmar and autumn (greg mcmillans friends) and immediately drawn into the family patter. After some negotiation, with the older men speaking in afrikaans and me speaking with mom in english, volkmar drives my car through the back yard, squeezing between a big tree and a shed, across a field, past a dead land rover and more sheds and up to his house. autumn is there, lodi native, and we greet and meet and i lavish praise on the house, full of African stuff, springbok rugs, kudu horns (shot by volkmar) and freshen up for dinner with a g and t at the bar, bottles lined up upside down so you just press up and you get a shot. wine collection of reds only on the top shelf, chosen for the colors of thier foils and arranged just so. and stories start flying; my wine work, their wine collection, the zambezi, the grand canyon. , unter the brother really wants to go to the grand, hiked in and out in one day years ago, he is very interested in usa and my work .

A briie (bbq) is scheduled, and Volkmar goes out to light the fire, the wind is raging now, and I wonder how he is going to do it. It becomes clear when I go out to find him, ensconced in a 2 car garage with big fireplace, fire roaring, folding chairs, kudu steak marinating "we eat meat" he says. and a family gathering for dinner with a bottle of the blend bought at Paul Cluven, very drinkable merlot shiraz etc. blend. We have long conversations about

history of Africa, politics (crazy down here) farming, my doings, plans, another Lodi transplant lives next door and comes in and volunteers to drive me around to the winery he used to work for tomorrow, I offer lunch and he is on it. Now I have a guide. And a day to explore before i have to get serious about leaving for California.

blog 11 Capetown-Engkelde gardens

hi campers, just a short note, ill be winging my way back to sf today and tmw on britair (in case anything happens). I spent a great day in the winelands with new friends (Kevin-grandson of JP Morgan- drove thank god), visited and tasted in the Malmsbury area saw some great schists folded in the Malmsbury group unconformably under neath the Table Mt ss. Lunch at a great spot in Casteel (Kasteel) and thought of Mitch. Visited a small winery, and the winemaker poured. I bought a shiraz, and he opened and gave me the opened bottle of a great cab shiraz blend. Booty. An area of beautiful farmland, Through Pearl, an old Dutch colonial town with a beautiful white church and a red tree in bloom. Then we returned back to the teeming city to the biggest mall in the s hemisphere cape walk to get a few last minute things, a ZA sticker for the truck (south africa). then to Kirstenboch gardens for a great dinner with free corkage and a free bottle of wine from the sommelier (it pays to be from overseas with a wine background), This morning now to visit the flower farm of my hosts, back to the Kirstenboch gardens for a long walk, and on to the airport. Best to all and thank you for listening. Ill post this whole blog as a link to my website soon, and post the pix as soon as i straighten out my cameras. Love and kisses terry

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