

Brenda and the Boy's go to Victoria Falls.



Where better to go on a bike trip with friends than Victoria Falls? Days of riding with nothing but nature, adventure and great company.

We started our journey from the very busy Johannesburg, hoping to escape our hectic lives for a couple of days of fun and the great African outdoors. Shortly after leaving the busy streets, our group of fourteen arrived at the very calm and quiet Beestekraal Station. Here it was time to relax and leave all the stress of our day-to-day lives behind while sipping a cup of coffee. From here it was time to forget reality and enjoy the holiday ahead.

The first leg of the journey was on tar, which should have been easy and a comfortable ride, but as JJ and Natasha proved, even on tar it can be tricky to stay on your bike when the tube of your back tyre comes out through the tread and ends up in melted bits all over the tar road. Testing his rider skills to the extreme, only light damage on the bike was sustained. We were able to fit a secondhand tyre as a temporary fix, but a new tyre was needed, so the calls began hunting one down



In no time we were back on the road, heading to places unknown, hungry for the adventure awaiting us. As we hit the first dirt road everyone knew it was time to play, although some riders were more experienced than others, we were hoping for an easy day. Not long after the



dirt started, the first rider came off. Bike and rider made it through the ordeal, but Gordon wasn't comfortable to ride the sand and took up a seat in the back-up vehicle for the rest of the day.



Not long after the first fall, we had to fix a front wheel puncture on Stuart's KTM. After a few minutes we continued, only for Stuart to end up braking his fall with his head. Luckily only resulting in a black eye. By nightfall we were all settled in at Limpopo Tented Camp, where we were spoilt with cozy beds in the fixed tents, a fully equipped kitchen and hot showers. It was great to sit around the fire in the boma listening to the sounds of nature while sipping drinks.

We took on the straight tar road to Palapye where we were to spend the night. We arrived early at Camp Itumela. The camp pub was a welcome sight for the riders, giving everyone the chance to take in the experience. Due to bad restaurant food on the way, our fearless leader; Ken Thrash, was a bit under the weather and was happy to be able to rest.

Early morning coffee and rusks set the mood for the day ahead, riding tar up to the VET fence on the Lethlakane road, here the group split into the guys that took the tar alternative and the rest on the sandy cutline. The first 'victim of the sand' was Roberto who gently put his BMW on its side on the first corner, proving that the terrain was not for the faint hearted. From there we had many



spills along the way, which included Stephen falling three times in a short distance. Michael decided to take the XR through the sand, to allow Stephen to relax a bit. I managed to lose three of the spare tyres that were on the trailer and had to turn around to look for them. Roberto came looking for the back-up vehicle, thinking that something

might have happened. The reward for being a 'knight in shining armor' was a snakebite on the front wheel that had to be fixed more than once before we could carry on. Meanwhile down the road there was a darker force in the form of a 90° corner that is now known as 'Tyley Corner', which almost took out a couple of the riders. Mr Tyley was the unlucky one who ended up lying a couple of meters from his bike, winded



and badly bruised. Stevie's injuries forced us to camp out in the bush to give him time to slightly recover. In camp we had a dozen punctures to fix, which kept everyone busy for a while.



The next morning we were on our way to Makgadikgadi Pans, which was supposed to be our destination for the previous day. The road to the pans proved difficult, with sharp turns, sand and dongas. When we arrived at the pans, everything looked calm, except for the wind, but under the thin salty crust lay something we did not expect in the least. The bikes went playing on the pan, while the cruiser hugged the side in case of wet spots. Everything was going well, until the cruiser went

from 60 to 0 in 0.2 seconds with the death grip of the mud lurking out of sight. After about 20 minutes all the bikes arrived to help the damsel in distress get the cruiser out of the mess. It

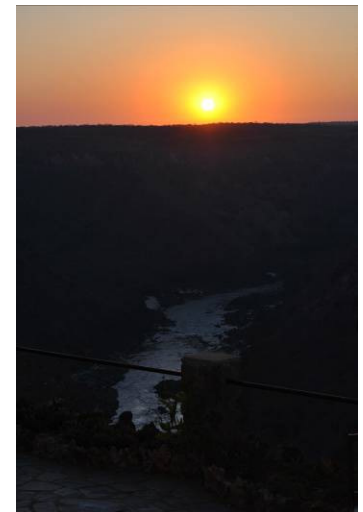
took a couple of hours to get the cruiser out, which delayed us a bit, but the holiday mood kept us going. A couple of kilometers down the way disaster struck, the cruiser got stuck again. Bush camp number two. The day was ended with the sound of 11 men singing 'Happy Birthday', which made the day worth it, bad weather and all.



In the morning the clouds gave way to let the brilliant sunlight show us the way out of the pans onto the tar road to Pandamatenga. As with everything in Botswana it is better to take your time, proven when we got a speed fine in

Pandamatenga. We stayed over at Panda Rest Camp, where we also enjoyed a delicious dinner in the lodge. At the campsite the showers were a bit of a problem, in that there were only two showers for the gents and two for me. This resulted in the first time some of the guys used the ladies' showers instead. Around the campfire we discussed the adventures we had thus far, also noting that we have not seen wildlife on the roads up to now. This could have been as a result of the road

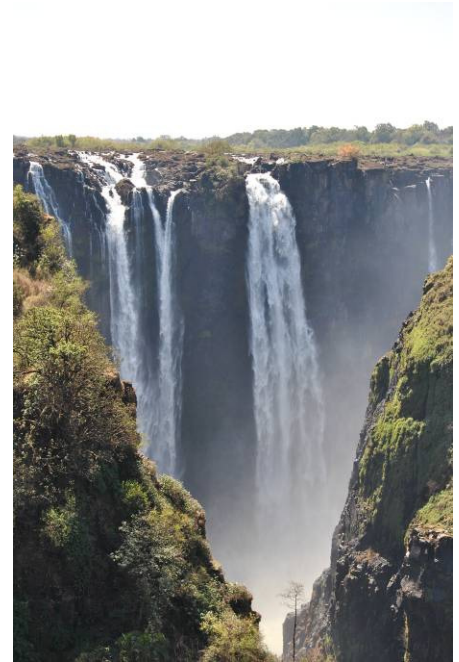
works in usually heavily game populated areas. We all went to bed early, dreaming of the game we might see on the next leg of the journey as we pass through Matetsi Safari Reserve and hunting area on the way to Victoria Falls.



We were woken up by the smell of Gordon's French toast in the morning, getting us all on the road early towards the border to Zimbabwe 6km from the Rest Camp. On the Zimbabwean side the officials searched the vehicles and made sure that all the paperwork was in order to cross. We spent nearly an hour waiting for everyone to be cleared, Stevie of course had everyone baffled by sitting on his bike while it was loaded on the back-up vehicle, wearing his goggles. Soon we were off, travelling through what seemed to be a deserted game reserve and hunting area. At least the terrible condition of the road kept everyone occupied enough to almost forget that we were not seeing any animals. We were racing the clock for the first time this trip, as we were booked for a sunset cruise on the mighty Zambezi River. After quick showers and settling in we were off to the cruise by bus. It took the bus driver all of about 15 minutes to travel the road that took us almost an hour, adding to the adventure of the day. We were met by friendly staff on



the boat, who kept everyone happy by keeping their glasses filled with whatever they desired. The bus trip back to Gorges Lodge was of course jolly and no one seemed to notice the driver's skills. From the deck at the lapa of Gorges Lodge you have an amazing view over the Gorge, it takes your breath away every time you see it. The showers have different view over the gorge, with nothing between you and the view. It gives you the feeling of being a part of nature, while having a hot shower.



We took a rest day, visiting the Victoria Falls. It doesn't matter if it is your first time to the falls, or your twentieth, it is amazing every time you see it. We spent hours wandering around, gazing at the water as it rushes over the cliff, thundering down into the river below. Creating rainbows everywhere and drowning out any sounds from the two neighboring cities, mesmerizing your every thought and taking you to a state of utmost relaxation. After our walk we had lunch at 'In-da-belly' restaurant, where we were able to sample food like crocodile steaks, warthog sandwiches and bream. The perfect ending to the day was having sundowners at the lodge bar, with a view from the deck second to none.

We were starting to head back the next day, with a choice of either going back to Pandamatenga border, or going to Plum tree border further south. We all decided that

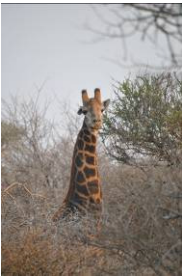


although going to Plum tree was all tar, it would be better than the road we came on. We encountered many road blocks on the way, each trying to fine you for something ridiculous. First we got fined for having firewood on the vehicle without a permit. After paying the fine and removing the firewood, we drove off again, only to realize 5km down the road that the vehicle registration papers were still on the trailer along with Michael's passport and driver's license. We had to turn around and go for a walk along the road to find it again. Luckily



it was easy to find and we were on our way in no time. The next road block fined us for not having the correct colour reflectors on the vehicle (white for the front and red for the back of the cruiser). Again we had to pay and were on the way again.

At the next road block they wanted to fine us for the tyres on the roof, but luckily they were secure and we got out of there without a problem. We caught up with some of the guys when Roberto had a blow out on his BMW's front tyre, nearly sending him straight into oncoming traffic, he was however



able to keep the bike upright and pull off the road. By now the sun started to set and we

had to find lodgings for the evening. In Plum tree we found Kombani Lodge

where we were able to stay for a really good rate. The rooms were nice, the food was good and the service was impeccable.

We were able to get a good night's rest

and a proper meal without breaking the bank. It made up for the day we had.



We went through the border back into Botswana, heading straight for Francistown. The group split into the guys riding dirt and the guys going the easy way while we made our way to Stevensford Game Reserve in the Tuli Block. We were able to see some antelope as we entered the reserve. The campsite overlooks the Limpopo River, reminding you that you are very close to home seeing South African soil on the other side.



Bally Shannon was our next stop, with its beautiful rustic bush camp. We enjoyed the first night so much that we stayed an extra day, giving us time to relax and also opportunity for a game drive. We were lucky enough to spot a lot of animals, including Giraffe, Waterbuck, Blue Wildebeest and many other antelope species. We had sundowners at the high hide overlooking the uninterrupted portrait of nature. This was definitely not for anyone with a fear of heights. After she took us on the game drive, Bernadette spoilt us with a lamb potjie, which was to die for. She entertained us around the campfire until the morning hours, making sure we were all satisfied with the last day.

This marked the end of the trip. We were all sad to go home, ending it where it started, Beestekraal Station. The trip was most definitely filled with a lot of fun and adventure. We were fortunate that nobody was seriously injured and perfected the art of puncture repair.

The only thing left to do is sit back, enjoy the photographs and memories until the next road invites us for more.

