

Adventure Riding

Having read your article in August issue "Ready made Adventures", for the past 3 years myself friends and anyone who can make it have been going to South Africa adventure of road riding, we have just returned from a 12 day trip from Johannesburg through Botswana , Zimbabwe to Victoria Falls.

We arrived in Johannesburg on the 12th of August met at the airport by Michael Steyn who operates Dual Purpose Adventure .co.za he took the 5 of us to his house" in his pickup or as they say "bakkie" and you can ride in the back without fear of the law" where the bikes we hired from D. P. A .were waiting for us 2 transalps , ktm 900, xr 650 and a 250 honda once acquainted with the bikes we camped in his yard , good to get tents up make sure camping equipment was up to the trip.

We set off early on the 13th for Beestekraal Stasie 7 bikes the bakkie and trailer it was a very cold morning S African winter i was so wishing for heated grips as we had brought summer riding gloves , early morning temperature 2 degrees thought i was back in Scotland, a couple of hours on the road we arrived at meeting place where we met the rest of the group all in all there would be 12 of us on bikes and Mike and Brenda(the chef) in the bakkie, we set off for Tabazimbi near the Botswana border, JJ had a blow out on the way how he managed to keep his bike up right was all down to experience we had a spare tire though it had done 3000 k hopefully he could get a new one at the border, we camped that night by the Limpopo river there was a fence around the campsite to keep croc's out thought it didn't make for easy sleeping !!

The next day we crossed into Botswana rode up to Palapye where we camped this site had a bar nothing like a cold beer to wash the dust of the day away, in the morning we headed for the Makgadikgadi pans there was a tar route or deep sand , most of the group took to the sand at first it was scary and hard work once up and running it got easier as long as you stayed in the ruts made by 4x4's, we had a few mishaps on that stretch, there was a 90% right angle which most of us missed i managed to damage my ribs 3 other riders had punctures as dusk fell we were 45 k short of our destination so we had a bush camp at Tyley corner as they were now calling it, the next day we arrived at the pans a sea of white is the best way to describe it the boys on bikes set off across the pans like kids in a toy shop doing doughnuts, figures of eights while we followed in the bakkie only for it to sink right up to the springs in the mud and unlike some TV presenters we had no back up we had to dig it out ourselves it took a couple of hours to get going again only for it to sink again a few k's along the way, after digging it out for the second time we were well behind schedule that we made our second bush camp of the trip right on the edge of the pans watching the sunset was something I wont forget , next morning the bikes headed out again while we in the bakkie hugged the shore line till we came to the exit of the pans, we then headed for Pandamatenga where we camped it was good to get a shower after three days in the bush/pans, the next day we crossed into Zimbabwe the border crossing wasn't as bad as I thought as we know how much Robert loves the British although there was so much paper work we used up a rain forest just to get a 3 day visa, I was feeling better and road pillion with Stuart though soon regretted it as the road turned from tar to the most potholed stretch ever then it was a gravel/sandy road to the campsite by the time we arrived my body ached, after dismounting and looking at the view from the

camp site I forgot about the pain we were camping at the top of the gorge with the Zambezi River below us.

Later that day we went on a cruise down the Zambezi where we saw elephants, hippos, crocodiles, sea eagles, it was well worth the journey, the best was yet to come as the next day was rest day we visited the Victoria Falls spent most of the day there, ventured across the bridge into Zambia stopped to watch the bungee jumpers think I'm glad my ribs were sore as may have been tempted.

We left for Plumtree border crossing the next morning 500k on tar and the real Zimbabwe we must have went through 10 road blocks and toll gates it was ok for the bikes as was to much trouble to get all the gear of, the bakkie however had to pay bribes and fines to get through it was a case of smile and thank the officer even though he was ripping us off, at Plumbtre we stayed in a lodge never been so glad to lay in a bath, sleep in a bed i think we all needed a good night's sleep the next day we crossed back into Botswana different atmosphere all together we made for Stevensford camp site on the north side of the Limpopo river the following day we crossed back into S Africa to Bally Shannon hunting camp the best campsite of the trip great showers and toilets and Bernadette who owns it made us dinner which was well appreciated, the next day she took us on a safari where we saw giraffes, wildebeests, impalas, and other animals that i couldn't put a name to.

Alas no sooner had we arrived in S Africa than it was time to go we spent the last night back at Michael's place turffing out what we didn't need and storing what we will need for next year as everyone said they would go back, we sat down with a beer or two and talked into the early hours of what we had done and seen we all agreed the trip of a life time, if anyone would like to know more about biking in S Africa, Botswana Namibia, Zimbabwe, look at Dual Purpose Adventure [.co.za](http://www.dualpurposeadventure.co.za) or contact me at stevietyley@hotmail.com