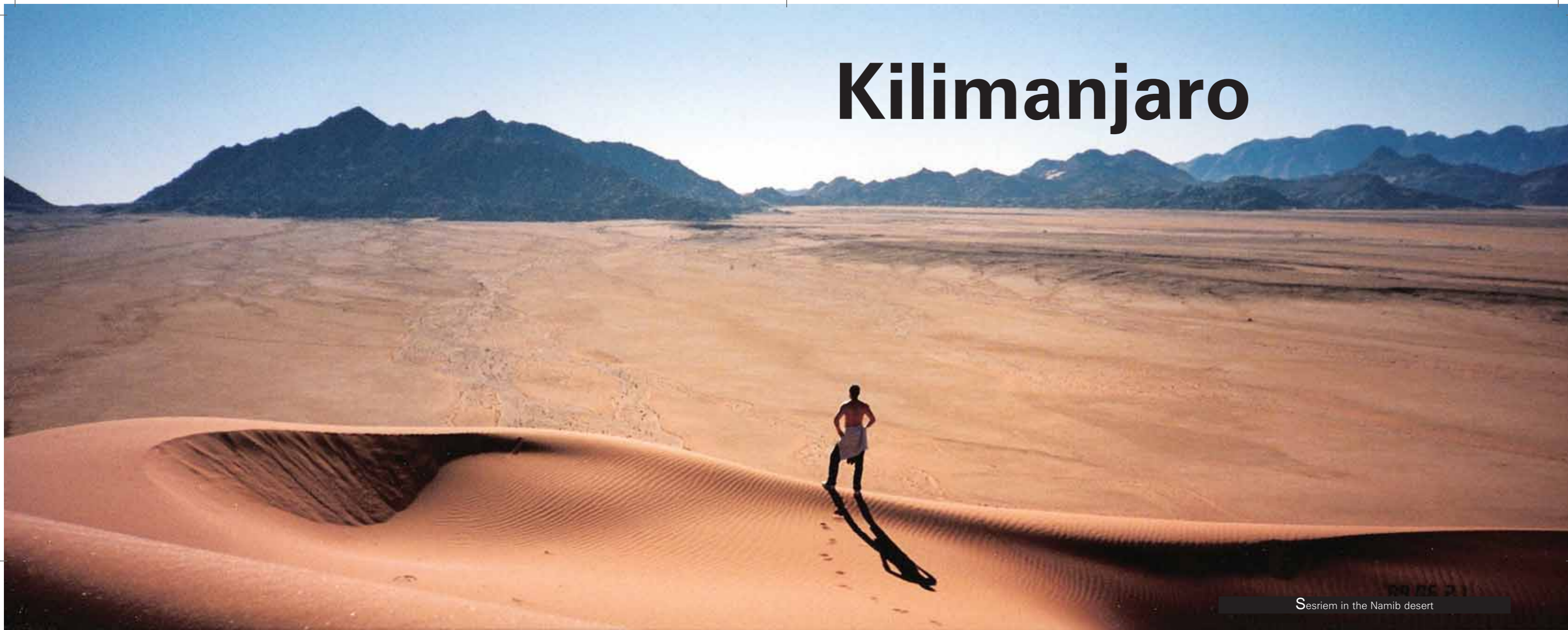


Kilimanjaro



Sesriem in the Namib desert

10 July 2006

We were ready for the taxi and left for the airport at 0630 sharp. The airport of course was nothing like Heathrow, no computers or electronic equipment but it functioned well. I have known my friend Johan for 34 years and never knew he was afraid of heights. The flight to Zanzibar took 20 mins and the airport procedures were quick and efficient. Our contact Ali Paramana arranged a taxi to take us into town to meet him. Except for the steering wheel on the taxi that has a 180 deg play, the trip into town was uneventful. We met Ali in Stone Town where he took us to the Vuga Hotel which is small but clean, very reasonably priced and situated in the heart of Stone Town. Ali Paramana, what a wonderful guy, he is the Food and Beverage Manager at the Emerson & Greene Hotel in Stone Town, one of the top hotels on the Island.

The history and buildings of the island impressed us the most. Ali showed us round a bit and then went back to work to meet us later at the Africa House Hotel for sundowners. Sundowners were excellent. Johan had the guitar from the local

musicians to play a tribute. We make a lot of friends and go to bed late.

11 July 2006

The people on the island are friendly and we quickly learn a few Swahili words to get by and to get them smiling. Today we do the tourist thing, spice market, fish market, vegetable market and walk in the village around Stone Town. The old slave market history makes the hair stand on end when you walk in the church that was built by Livingstone in his quest to stop slavery. Outside there is a pit where the slaves were kept when they were brought out of the dungeons before they were auctioned – a bad time in history.

At the music academy we listened to traditional Zanzibar music which is a combination of Arabic, Indian and African sounds. The Academy band is called 'The Taraab Band' and consists of all the best students on the various instruments and has been going for over 105 years. The oldest member of the band at the moment is 82 and plays an instrument with 81 strings. We attended a performance of the band that night at one of their regular

venues – fantastic! We talk to the people and enjoy ourselves.

12 – 15 July 2006

While we were waiting for the taxi to fetch us for the airport, the leader of the Taraab Band arrived on his bicycle to say goodbye and brought us copies of their music cd's. The flight to Pemba is 35 min. The resort sent transport to collect and deliver us to a harbour where a boat takes us to Vundu Lagoon. On the boat is the skipper, one crew and the two of us.

There is a welcoming party and we can see that we are going to enjoy ourselves here. The accommodation is luxury tents amongst the trees with showers and a wooden deck looking out over the sea – fantastic!

We joked with the staff using what we considered our 'reasonable' Swahili. We socialised, went diving and took a lot of photos. When we took the boat back all the staff came to say goodbye, even those who were not on duty. We fly back to Dar es Salaam. Saturday evening in Dar es Salaam – people, smoke, cars, hectic. It

took a while to get back to the Silversands Hotel. We get all our stuff ready, tomorrow morning we leave for Kilimanjaro.

16 July 2006

The Road is in perfect condition. We arrive in Moshi, fill up with fuel and check in at the Ameg Kilimanjaro Lodge. Best value for money so far, neat, clean and all facilities on site, highly recommended. Up to this point we have ridden 6809km's. We relax.

17 July 2006

Today we are going to Kilimanjaro Mountain. After breakfast we rode through Himo to Marango where everybody that wants to climb the mountain starts. On the way we see the peak of Kilimanjaro sticking out through the clouds. We stop and take photo's. In 1998 when we were here it was covered in mist and we asked one of the locals what time does the mist lift? 'Maybe 3 weeks' he said.

The entrance to the park is flooded with people begging or trying to sell anything you can imagine. We ride back to Moshi.



Johan left Charel right with staff of Fundu Lagoon

Our original plan was to go to Nairobi or Mombasa in Kenya but we have seen enough poverty up to here and there is nothing we can do to remedy it so we decide to leave the following morning for Swakopmund, Namibia and visit our friend Mike de Kock. We will rest a few days there before returning to Cape Town.

18 July 2006

We leave early and make good time. No serious traffic and we maintain a reasonable average speed. We ride through Korogwe, Chalinze, Morogoro, Iringa and reach Uyole just before Mbye at 1730hs. Long hours in the saddle, today

we covered 1169km's then filled up with fuel and checked into a small hotel at the roadside. Tomorrow Zambia.

19 July 2006

What a nightmare at this border post. Here you pay to get in and it seems the more money they see on you the more you pay. Insurance, road tax, government tax, emission tax (crazy, if you look at the vehicles being driven there) and then council tax. As I said to Johan there are probably no thieves inland because they know that you get robbed at the border. This was the most negative experience on the whole trip, not on my priority list for the future.

We left in a hurry. The road surface is good but the grass is long and grows right to the edge of the road. It is a weird sensation, like riding in a canal. We ride carefully. I was riding in front and as we rounded a sharp bend in the road two trucks abreast bore down on us, the one trying to pass the other. I saw myself flattened against the grill already and realised that I would have to slow a lot before attempting to leave the tar for the long grass where I expected rocks, donga's or sand. As I was about to swerve off the road the trucks passed me, I don't know how they missed me. All happened so quick that I was not even breathing quicker and silently thanked my guardian angel. Luckily Johan was a way behind me. I shudder to think. I have been riding motorcycles since 1984 and fallen down mountains twice, but this was definitely the closest to disaster that I have ever been.

We stopped for fuel in Chinsali but there was no petrol at any of the garages as they were waiting for a delivery and we were forced to buy fuel on the black market – what an experience. We wanted to overnight in Lusaka, but with petrol problems we made Kabwe, 140km's before Lusaka and booked into a B&B –

what a day. Tomorrow we enter Namibia at Katima Mulilo.

20 July 2006

Early on the road, Swakopmund is getting closer. In Lusaka we change money, fill up, have breakfast and hit the road. Sections of road are in a bad state but otherwise ok. In Livingstone we fill up with petrol and take the road past Kazungula, Sesheke, Katima Mulilo. Everywhere are signs

All happened so quick that I was not even breathing quicker

'Beware Elephants' but we did not see any. Both of us have travelled extensively in Namibia and it was like a homecoming when we passed through the border and found everyone spoke our language. We travelled in the direction of Rundu but it was getting dark quickly and we decided to overnight wherever the card fell. We stayed at the Rainbow Lodge in Divundu and for the first time on the trip had a home cooked meal, small things are wonderful. We are tired and tucked in early, tomorrow we are in Swakopmund, all being well.

21 July 2006

It is intensely cold, that dry cold that cuts to the marrow. Stopped at Rundu, filled up, defrosted and had something to eat.



Reaching the Atlantic Ocean in Swakopmund, Namibia

The roads are excellent with very little traffic and we make good time. At Usakos we had a beer and phoned our friends in Swakopmund. We have now travelled 11382km's since we left Somerset West. We take photos with the Atlantic Ocean in the background. Everybody is happy and celebrates our good luck so far.

21 - 25 July 2006

We relax, cook, sleep, read and look at the sea, chat and do all the holiday things.

26 July 2006

We started early, today we are riding through the Namib Desert. The bikes were serviced and checked the previous day. Between Swakopmund and Walvisbay we get heavy fog and travel slowly, vision is bad and the road slippery.

Passing Dune 7 and Rooikop Airport it is still misty and dark. It's difficult to see the road where we went from tar onto dirt. One moment you are in the mist and next you are out. We decide it is best to wait a



Sunrise, Dar es Salaam

while until the sun comes up and we can see better. It was not long and we were in the clear with blue skies and beautiful scenery. They had good rains in the desert this year. We stop to take photos. A few scary moments in patches of thick sand but we reach Solitaire in one piece. Between Solitaire and Maltehohe I see that the instrument panel has come lose and after inspection realise the fairing bracket which holds the instruments is cracked. I try to fix it with a piece of wire but it is not working. I have to travel slowly

until we reach Maltehohe but there are no facilities for repair. We decide to travel on tar to minimise vibration and prevent the whole lot from braking down. That night we slept over at Grunau. Tomorrow all is over. It is hard to believe.

27 July 2006

We departed early, we want to get to Somerset West by 1730hs. We crossed the border into South Africa and travelled through Springbok and Vanrhynsdorp. We

let everybody know where we are and that all is well and that we will be at Kawasaki Helderberg, Somerset West on schedule. We had lunch and pondered a bit over the fact that the time went by so quickly. We arrive in Somerset West, 29 days after we left there having covered 13862 km. There is a welcoming committee with radio interview and all. Everybody is happy that we are back safely and in one piece. It was not an easy 29 days but the next day was going to be more difficult to start work again.



Victoria Falls

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