



SLICE OF LIFE
Composer and jazz guitarist Mac McKenzie; the Bo-Kaap is the historical centre of Cape Town's Cape Malay culture; a guest on the Storytelling Route soaks up the sun outside the home of a Gugulethu raconteur



Local Heroes

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FLY TO FOREIGN SHORES TO BE A TRAVELLER: BACKYARD EXCURSIONS RIGHT ON YOUR DOORSTEP PROVIDE NEW INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING, AND REVEAL THE DEPTH AND DIVERSITY OF URBAN AFRICA

WORDS KELDA LUND

Familiarity breeds contempt – or so we are told. Perhaps this is why so many of us feel the need to venture to far-flung destinations to experience 'travel', all the while neglecting the gems in our own backyard. I thought I had seen and done it all in my home city of Cape Town, but this illusion was shattered when I embarked on a Coffeebeans Routes tour sampler, passionately guided by Jacques Jacobsz and Michael Letlala.

The brainchild of Iain Harris, Coffeebeans opens city doors, with the emphasis on meeting a cross-section of true Capetonians. Says Jacques, 'When you travel, you seem to touch on the peripheral, rarely making it into the actual homes of real people living in a city and sharing their day-to-day existence.' With Coffeebeans' versatile offering, you can embark on your route of choice: music tours

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CITY LIFE

URBAN CRAWL

include the Rootz Reggae, Hip Hop or Carnival routes and the Cape Town Jazz Safari. Also on offer is a Secret Garden Route, where you can visit extraordinary gardens from town to the townships, or treat yourself to the Art, Soccer and Spirituality routes.

I am about to meet three of Coffeebeans' wonderful hosts, each from a separate tour. First up is a trip up Kloofnek Road, winding to a standstill in front of a small Victorian house, the first stop on the Reggae Tour route. Inside, among African art and dimmed lights, we meet the charming Alan Grant, who lived in Jamaica at the time that reggae was becoming a worldwide phenomenon and knew all its pioneering figures, and resident chef, Jason Yankes. Both are passionate about music and people, and a visit here can include dinner and the chance to get lost in a five-terraced garden filled with enticing nooks and crannies.

From here it's a taste of the Cape Town Jazz Safari. We head to the Gugulethu home of Blackie Tempi, a stalwart of South African jazz – which we learn is a mixture of the various influences that sailed into our docks over many years. The streets are buzzing with people, walking in groups, chatting, on their way back home. Blackie is running late and we are entertained by the warm guitar sounds of Alfred, his musical *compadre*. When Blackie arrives, not

much later, we are immediately treated to his gentele yet moving trumpeting in his lounge. Dinner is his wife Sheila's homemade ginger beer and 'special secret' chicken – a delicious feast of a home-cooked meal. Outside, we chat with Sheila, who works all day as a nursing sister; she explains that the chicken *hokkies* (coops) next door are ready to be loaded with chickens that will be sold the next day. 'I don't complain about noise: my husband plays trumpet day and night; when my neighbours load chickens first thing in the morning, that's fine by me.' After dinner there is more music; the mood takes us and we end up dancing around the lounge with Sheila, her sister and the two musicians.

Our last stop is the home of delightful Hazel Allies, writer for a local community newspaper, in Bonteheuwel. We meet her family, enjoy snacks and chat the night away, looking at photo albums. Hazel is part of the Storytelling Route – hosts include poets, musos, entrepreneurs, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Rastas ... all with a story to tell and each willing to hear your own. Her family anecdotes open a fascinating window on her life, and Jacques and Michael have to tear me away to head back along the N2 to town.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO WWW.COFFEEBEANSROUTES.COM

OWN YOUR CITY

Coming soon are Coffeebeans' Weekend Specials in Cape Town and Johannesburg, Luanda in Angola, Maputo in Mozambique and Zanzibar in Tanzania. Local city specialists know what makes their city tick, and they'll take you inside. Enjoy live music, local delicacies, insight into history and people. Accommodation is in four- or five-star hotels and boutique guest houses. For current itineraries visit www.coffeebeansroutes.com.

NIGHT TRAIN

Legendary jazz musician Mac McKenzie is known as the King of Goema, Cape Town's own musical genre

BEHIND THE SCENES

- If you think you've 'been there, done that' on the Garden Route, try acclaimed music producer Howard Butcher's Walk on the Wildside 'Township Tango' tour of pristine nature sites in the Knysna area and then on through its townships. You'll gain a fascinating insight into township life, the aspirations of its people and their musicality; www.peaceofeden.co.za.
- Durban's dynamic cultural heritage – a fusion of Zulu, Indian and colonial cultures – is honoured and its contemporary urban mix explored in City of Choice's Authentic Heritage tours; the Heart & Soul tour examines the city's religious and spiritual cultures; www.cityofchoicetours.co.za.

