

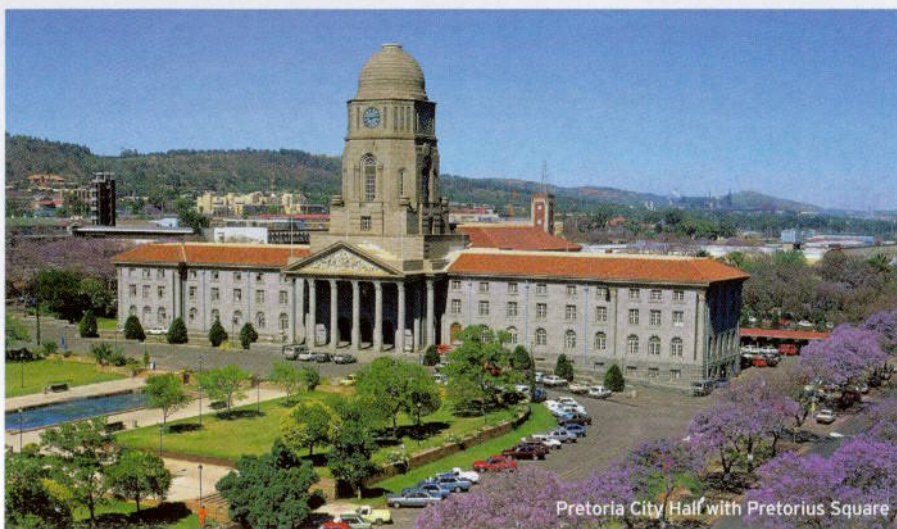
All About UBUNTU

Table Mountain

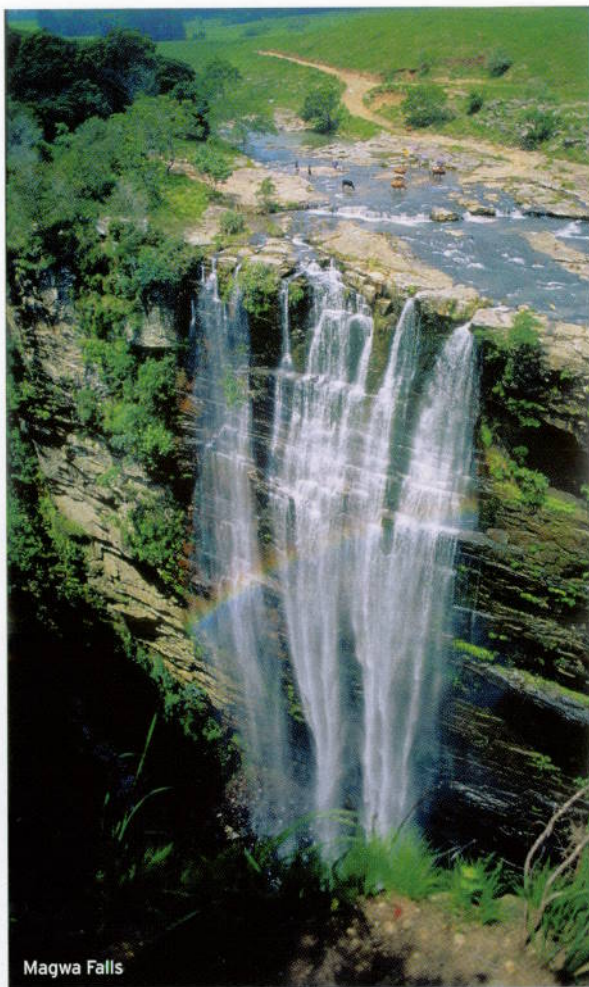
The South African notion of humanity has strong ties to the workplace, and **Liz Kraft** explains how this translates for the savvy business traveler

Only a decade and a half has passed since the fall of South Africa's apartheid regime, but to visit the country today is to visit a modern democracy full of promise and endless business opportunities ripe for the picking. One of the country's most important principles is the notion of *ubuntu*, or humanity toward others. "The true strength of South Africa lies in its people," according to Euvyn Naidoo, CEO and president of the South African Chamber of Commerce in America. He goes on to say that the country's reputation as the "rainbow nation" can be attributed both to its focus on *ubuntu* and the ability of its society to "foster an ethic of hard work; a 'can-do' attitude coupled with determination."

It's fitting, then, that South Africa, with its business-friendly democratic core and innovative tax initiatives, should evolve into one of the continent's strongest economies, having been recently rated in the top 30 for "ease of doing business" by the World Bank. "The country is supported by the pillars of the rule of law, independence of the media and strength of a modern constitution," says Naidoo. "To any serious international investor



Pretoria City Hall with Pretorius Square



Magwa Falls

wanting to take part in the economic growth across Africa and emerging markets, South Africa is a serious platform.”

The country's booming economy, paired with an unparalleled landscape, has catapulted tourism into one of the nation's fastest-growing industries, with a 100-percent increase over the course of a decade. A seductive mixture of award-winning game reserves, affordable luxury, and breathtaking scenery are hard to deny, and must-see highlights for future visitors will include major architectural projects such as Cape Town's Green Point Stadium and Pretoria's monumental Freedom Park. Naturally, the upward trend in tourism is forecast to continue with the coming of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, promoting government agencies and the private sector alike to eagerly invest in infrastructure or any improvements that will put them on the map for business investors and visitors.

And, although a simple interest in their country will appeal to the average South African's sense of pride, knowing the “do's” and “don'ts” of their culture will help to level the playing field and make you their indispensable MVP. “South Africans are hard-working and in turn respect investors with a long-term focus who realize the tremendous benefits of investing in one of the world's most vibrant democracies,” concludes Naidoo.



Wilderness National Park

Getting to Know You *The Importance of Trust and Respect in the Workplace*

The notion of *ubuntu* in a professional setting translates into knowing and respecting your business partners and meeting on common ground amid differences.

And to respect your neighbor, you first must know them, which is why conversation is so important in the South African business world. Expect to engage in open conversations with your foreign counterparts, ranging in topic from current events to politics, religion,

family life and something very near and dear to their hearts—sports. It pays to brush up on rugby, cricket and “football” scores, and, Americans take note, by football they mean soccer in this ex-British colony.

In discussions, everything goes—don't expect exaggerated political correctness or a sugar-coated approach. South Africans are generally very direct and honest, and expect the same from their business counterparts. What is taboo is use of the word “God” in a casual, non-religious way—an offense serious enough to be censored out of international programs on South African television.

“I'll Be There Just Now” *South African Standards of Time and What to Expect in Meetings*

Roughly translated, the commonly used South African phrase “just now” means later, or at some point in the near, or distant, future. South Africans are generally very relaxed about time, but this can also be misleading, as at formal events, tardy visitors may very well be denied entry.

In the workplace, it's not uncommon for attendees to show up a half-hour late, but be punctual and bring some reading material to avoid making a bad impression on prospective business partners. Agendas are expected prior to meetings, but be sure to save the important topics for later, to ensure that all parties are

present for that portion of the meeting.

During discussions, it's generally acceptable to address people with first names, unless, of course, they request otherwise. Business cards are usually exchanged at first meetings, and, as in most business cultures,

glancing at the card before tucking it away is considered proper business etiquette.

Women in the Workplace *Moving Toward Equity*

In South Africa's corporate world, earning differences aside, women are generally treated as equals, and, to tackle any existing discrimination, the country's lawmakers have implemented various rules and regulations in the form of the Employment Equity Act. In a country where dual-income households are the norm (for the working middle class), business etiquette is generally the same for both sexes. Dressing provocatively is no exception, and is frowned upon regardless of gender.

Also noteworthy is South Africa's exceptionally high rate of women Parliament members, at just under 33 percent. A principle that President Nelson Mandela pushed strongly for, this is something that South Africans are very proud of, made possible through *ubuntu*-inspired initiatives.

It's Official—Now What? *How to proceed once the contract is signed*

After signing the contract, expect to celebrate. Although restaurants are the usual venue, don't be taken off guard if a South African invites you to his or her house for a *braai*, or barbeque, in which case you might bring a small arrangement of flowers or bottle of wine.

Later on, as the project commences, rest assured that South Africa has an advanced legal system based on English law. Should any unforeseen disputes ever arise, disagreements can be spoken about openly with the responsible parties. Although these matters don't usually require complicated legal proceedings, South Africa has an experienced legal community, and international travelers can always expect to receive Western-style contracts, briefings and signatures.

Finally, project completion is often commemorated at a closing event, where gifts are well-appreciated. Items exchanged are usually personalized and thoughtful, and should be presented with a short speech. Now full circle, it all comes back to *ubuntu* once again, as you celebrate your joint accomplishments as one team, one people, one humanity. ■

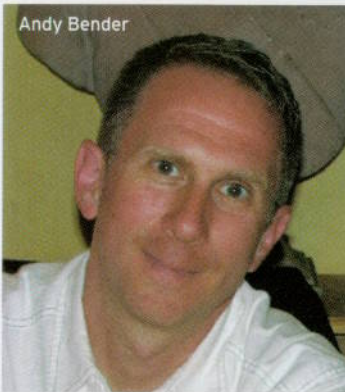
Contributors



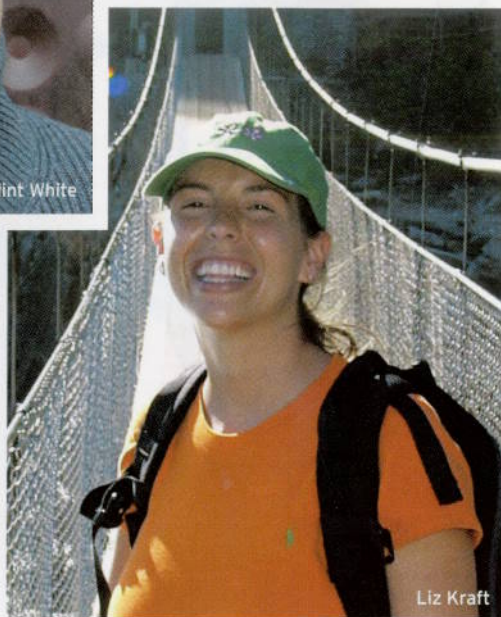
Clint White



Mark Chesnut



Andy Bender



Liz Kraft

"Business traveler" pretty much sums up **Andrew Bender**. This native New Englander and current Southern Californian earned his MBA from UPenn's Wharton School and consults with Japanese companies on cross-cultural issues in the workplace. With his other hat, he travels the world and writes about travel, food and culture for outlets including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Forbes*, United Airlines' *Hemispheres* magazine and *SilverKris* (Singapore Airlines' in-flight magazine). Among his several Lonely Planet guides to Japan, he has covered Nagoya and Sapporo, as he does in this issue of *Business Traveler*.

With more than 15 years of experience covering the travel industry, **Mark Chesnut** serves as a contributing editor at both *Travel Weekly* and *Passport* magazine, and his work has also appeared in *Latin Trade*, *Meetings & Conventions* and *Travel Management Daily*. He has also moderated and participated in panels at conferences including *The New York Times Travel Show* and the *TravelAge Magazine Tradeshow*. A specialist in travel to Mexico, Central and South America, Chesnut is based in New York City.

Bob Curley, a regular contributor to *Business Traveler*, is a freelance travel journalist based in Rhode Island. He frequently writes for *Meeting News*, *Intelliguides*, and other travel publications. Curley is also the Caribbean guide for *About.com*.

Dave Demerjian is a writer and journalist based in Boston. He has written about the airlines for *Wired News* and *Airways* magazine, and his work has also appeared in *The Boston Globe*, *Business 2.0*, and *Nerve.com*. He once flew four round-trips between New York and Boston in a single day to ensure he reached Chairman's Preferred status on US Airways, and has been obsessed with commercial aviation since his first flight at the age of eight.

A veteran business traveler with 20 years' experience in the legal, media and IT fields, Brooklyn, NY-based **Jeff Heilman** is now a full-time freelance journalist, covering business, financial and general-interest topics for several publications. Senior contributor to business monthly *Chief Executive* and trade monthly *Meetings East*, Heilman also writes programming copy for

A&E Television and feature articles for Ford Motor Company's "Bold Moves" Web site.

Farhad Heydari is a journalist who has reported on travel, aviation, golf, gastronomy, architecture, design, fashion and trends from every continent except Antarctica. His articles, features, essays, commentary and reviews have been published in magazines and newspapers in the U.S., the U.K., Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and the UAE. Usually New York City-based, he currently splits his time between London and Hamburg, from where he contributes to *TIME*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Town and Country*, *Wallpaper**, *New York*, *Architectural Record*, *ForbesTraveler.com* and the travel pages of the *New York Times* and *South China Morning Post*, to name just a few.

Liz Kraft's year in South Africa, although short-lived, was an eye-opening experience which exposed her to everything from the country's intense beauty and striking diversity to its extreme poverty. Her all-time favorite South African destination is Tsitsikamma National Park, a place she describes as "heaven on earth." A seasoned expat, Liz has also lived in Germany, Australia and the Netherlands, falling hopelessly in love with each country before moving on to the next. You can follow her travels at www.lizandtobi.blogspot.com.

Alison Stein Wellner is a contributing editor at *Inc.* magazine, and a former editor at large at *American Demographics*. Her work has appeared in *American Archaeology*, *Boston Magazine*, *BusinessWeek*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Continental*, *Fast Company*, *Glamour*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Men's Journal*, *Mother Jones*, *Psychology Today*, *Reason*, *Sierra*, *The Washington Post*, *Working Mother* and *Yankee*, among other magazines and newspapers both domestically and internationally. She's been a National Press Foundation fellow and a *New York Times* Professional fellow, and received awards of excellence from the American Society of Business Press Editors and the American Society of Journalists and Authors. She lives in New York City.

Clint White, based in New York and San Francisco, wears several hats professionally. He is a freelance writer for *Business Traveler* and other publications. At the same time, he serves as vice president of the Eliran Murphy Group, a boutique arts advertising agency in Manhattan, where his clients include museums, libraries, symphonies and presenters of performing arts worldwide. He is also founder and president of Art Career Network, a resource for careers in the arts, online at www.artcareer.net.

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Editor's Letter



Eva Leonard
Editor in Chief

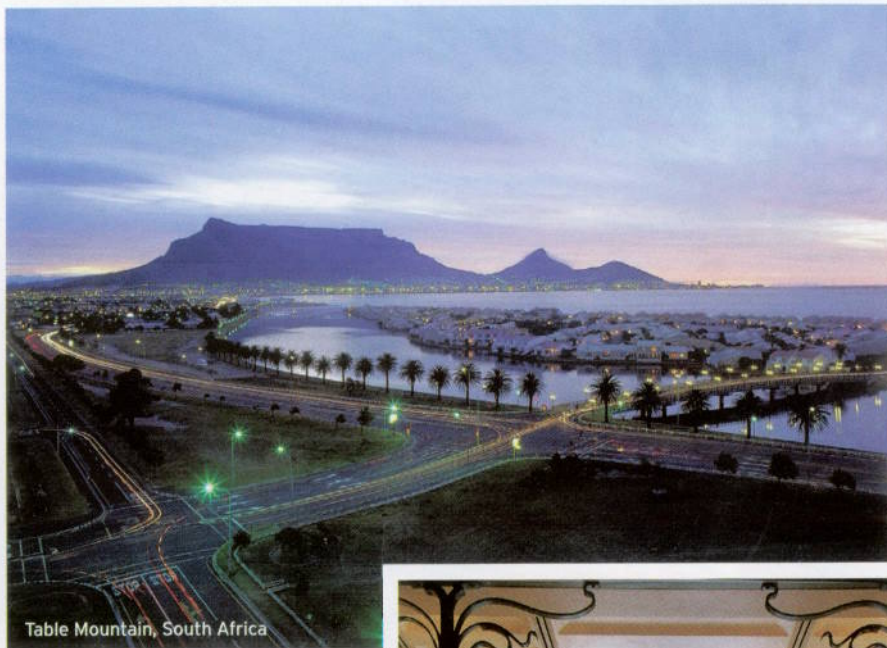


Table Mountain, South Africa

At their best, hotels can transform an ordinarily stressful business trip into a pleasure, enhancing your experience in an unfamiliar city and smoothing the way for you to be in top form for meetings. At their worst, they can leave you frustrated and furious, with unpleasant memories fomenting a vow to never return.

In this special Hotels issue, Bob Curley and Dave Demerjian examine what hotels are doing right, what they're getting wrong, and what is becoming standard as business travelers continue to raise the expectations bar. To round things out, we've also included a selection of hotel reviews from key business cities across the globe, including Amsterdam, London, Cape Town, Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles.

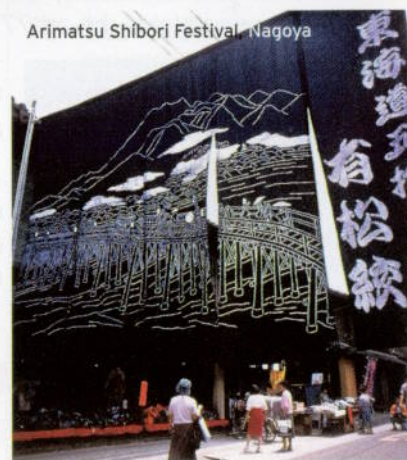
Also in this issue, *Business Traveler's* Japan expert, Andy Bender, discovers what drives the very different economies of Sapporo and Nagoya. Latin America guru Mark Chesnut assesses the growth of São Paulo and Santiago and finds out what's hot in both cities. Farhad Heydari checks out the modernization of Vienna's hotels, restaurants and clubs, and its wealth

of meeting and convention venues.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Kraft guides us through the particulars of business etiquette in South Africa. Alison Stein Wellner takes an art and culinary romp during a quick trip to San Francisco, and Jeff Heilman explores the historic and contemporary glories of Brussels. Jonathan Spira offers a tutorial on winter driving, with handy domestic and international info for both car owners and renters. And, leaving icy roads behind, new diver Faith Zuckerman tries out her fins in the Indian Ocean, in the sparkling blue waters surrounding the Seychelle Islands.



Comme Chez Soi restaurant, Brussels



Arimatsu Shibori Festival, Nagoya

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eva Leonard".

Eva Leonard
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