

# Tourism can also play a vital role

THE Traditional Horse Racing (THR) report recommends the sport be properly managed, protected and developed as a cultural activity that also has tourism potential.

- They called for:
- Better co-operation between associations involved in *mdyarho* (racing events) to develop the sport further.
  - A thorough investigation into the origins and functioning of clubs and associations that manage THR events to ascertain the development of the sport from its early cultural forms until now. This would help to protect THR using indigenous knowledge systems law.
  - Investigate assistance for jockeys.
  - Conduct training workshops on horse-care management using traditional knowledge systems.
  - Training and education on government legislation possibly using animal welfare organisations.
  - Establishing a pilot project to help standardise the development of venues currently being used.
  - Assess the potential of supplying the associations with water tanks and marquees to use at races.
  - Better communication with government departments and municipalities to ensure the inclusion of THR in their economic and social development plans.
  - More detailed investigations into how traditional horse-racing can be developed into an appropriate and equitable tourism product.
- David Macgregor



**HAPPY DAYS:** an elderly horse-racing fan dressed in his Sunday best struts his stuff at a Tsolo junction meeting  
Picture: CRAIG PATERSON

# Rural racing is thriving

By DAVID MACGREGOR  
Senior Reporter

## Competing is mainly for prestige

**H**ORSE-RACING may be called the sport of kings but that does not mean you need to be rich and famous to own and race horses. A cornerstone of rural Xhosa life, horses have been used for generations for work and transport – as well as racing. Far from the manicured big city race tracks and computerised betting boards, rural racing is thriving, according to a recent Rhodes University report. Commissioned by the Eastern Cape Gambling and Betting Board (ECGGBB), The Status of Traditional Horse Racing in the Eastern Cape

report provides a fascinating glimpse into the long-lasting – and often little known – connection many Xhosa people have with horses. Project manager Jaine Roberts, who is Rhodes University director of research, said even though traditional racing has been thriving in rural areas for many generations little formal research had been done. “It was important to do as there was a vague knowledge in urban areas of racing happening ‘out there.’” Roberts said it had been unfairly labelled “bush racing” by city slickers unfamiliar with the role the popular pastime plays in rural communities. “I thought it particularly concerning this racing in many areas of the Eastern Cape was referred to as ‘bush racing’, concomitant with seeming fears among white horse owners their horses could be stolen for it!” Roberts, who has been riding for years herself, said the passion for horses in rural areas went back generations and had resulted in most of the grooms and work riders at professional racing yards in KZN coming from the Eastern Cape.

According to Roberts, it emerged during the two-month research that racing was more a traditional sport of socio-cultural significance than organised gambling. “It is full of camaraderie and good spirit around who has the best horse.” She said there were sometimes “wagers” between owners from far and wide who were competing more for prestige and trophies than cash. “Astonishing for me was learning the amaXhosa had a cavalry of some 7 000 horses back in 1842. I cannot recall ever learning that in any

of the history books I was prescribed.” Roberts said the talents of riders from the Eastern Cape had long been ignored by the organised racing fraternity. “It took till now for a black jockey to win the [Durban] July A bit of active recruitment, ranging over Pondoland and further south, could well have seen the Jockey Academy at Summerveld filled with talented trainees from the Eastern Cape – much earlier than 2013.” She urged passing motorists travelling on the N2 near Mthatha to “stop in at Tsolo Junction – you’ll find some of our heritage there.” — davidm@dispatch.co.za

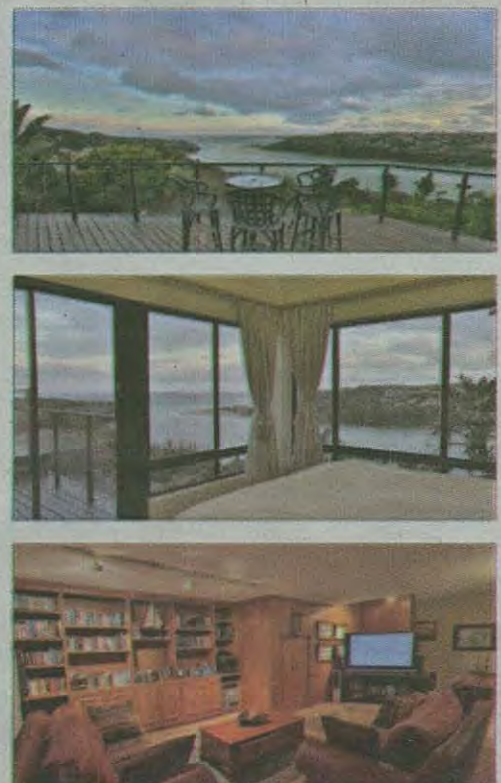
YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE, WE’LL SHOW YOU WHERE



**BLUE BEND** - This magnificent home situated in prime East London area is an entertainers dream no matter the weather. The R8,6 million property offers panoramic views of the Nahoon River and Indian Ocean. There's plenty of space for the kids to play safely and the house boasts two swimming pools, one of which overlooks the river and a second, more sheltered pool. The pool in the front is more exposed to the elements, the second is essentially encased by the house.

Various sliding doors open on to the pool area and off to one side there's even a sauna. The double story house measures 470m<sup>2</sup> and the entire property 1433m<sup>2</sup>. It has four bedrooms, three bathrooms, a guest toilet, study, kitchen, lounge, dining room and bar area. There's a second lounge and bar downstairs, a flat with sea views could be used as a guest suite. Skylights throughout the house ensure all the rooms have an open, airy feel to them.

The Hillcrest Drive house is situated a stone throw from the Blue Lagoon Hotel. This area is also regarded as 'millionaire's row', surrounded by prestigious upmarket homes with spectacular views. There's always something to see and the pink sunsets over the river is amazing. This property will also feature i Uelah Snyman 082 557 7185



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