



Hello dear flying friends!

Customer Flying Safari Adventure Report

We're delighted to present our latest newsletter to you, which features a fantastic Self-Flying Safari Adventure Report written by one of our dearest clients, Wolfgang Spada, who has ventured out on quite a few flying exploits with us over the years. His safari saw him flying to remote and beautiful destinations in South Africa, often overlooked by most tour operators. Thank you Wolfgang for taking the time to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) and letting us be part of your holiday.

Below the report we have once more listed our special safari offers for 2011, which could see you undertaking a similar fun and adventure filled safari as Wolfgang. Be sure to give them a read!

Bush Pilot Courses

On the right you will find a reminder of upcoming Bush Pilot Courses. Join us and hone your flying skills whilst experiencing the African bush, enjoying the camaraderie and having a whale of a good time!

Until next time, kind regards and happy landings,

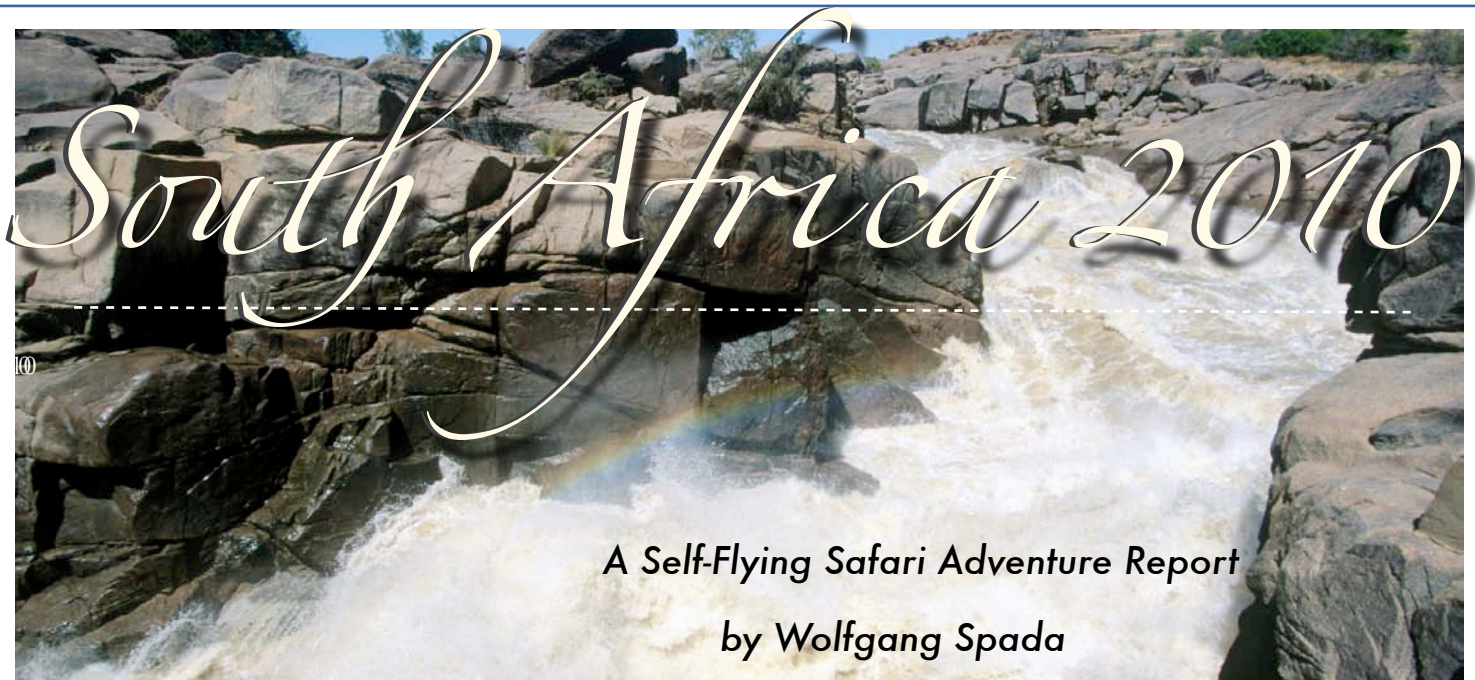
Erika and the SkyAfrica Team



Bush Pilot Course Dates

- 23. - 30. July 2011
- 19. - 27. August 2011
- 01. - 08. September 2011
- 22. - 30. October 2011
- 15. - 22. November 2011

Individual Bush Pilot Courses can be organised anytime upon request!



„One time is always the first time!“ says the attractive South African Airways check-in staff lady as both she and I realise that I have arrived at O.R. Tambo Johannesburg International Airport one day too late, and have thus wasted my rather expensive Business Class ticket to Zurich via Munich. Thankfully a very dedicated Lufthansa station manager managed to get me a seat on a direct flight to Zurich, even if that did mean flying “cattle class”. An hour later I was neatly wedged into my Swiss Air seat and allowed myself to think back on all the great adventures that had taken place these past two weeks.

I spent the first few days with SkyAfrica boss, Karl, in order to get back into the groove of things before completing the bi-annual flight test and medical tests required by the CAA to once again have a “current” South African pilot licence. Most of Karl’s clients simply do a South African Validation, which is easier and valid for up to 5 years.

Karl Finatzer (a 2 ½ ton specimen originating from Carinthia/Austria) emigrated to South Africa about 36 years ago, has owned his own mine and is now the proud owner of a fleet of Cessnas and Pipers and a few more exotic aircraft based at Benoni Brakpan Airfield (FABB). SkyAfrica is a One-Stop-Shop for pilots, as it incorporates a safari charter business, flight school, tour operation and its own fully licensed AMO-Shop.

SkyAfrica primarily organises pilot-safaris in their very own “travel agency”. The necessary formalities are dealt with at the South African Civil Aviation Authority and by request a safety pilot and flight planning can be added to the shopping basket. Next to their aviation expertise, the Africa pilots have a lot of interesting and helpful things to tell. The first time I came here was in 2005 and back then I already enjoyed one of those legendary bush pilot courses you keep hearing about.

A lovely 2-day trip close to the Krüger National Park helps gets me acclimatised again and I am ready for something bigger. My companion this time around is my cousin Willi. Even though he is only a “pedestrian” he is very enthusiastic about flying. Three years ago we already did a trip to Namibia in a C-182; however, back then we had a professional pilot and guide by our side. This time we are looking for something a bit more down to earth, but yet nothing too rustic – we are not the youngest after all, but also don’t necessarily want those 4 or 5 star lodges at € 400,- per head. As we have already been to all those classic South African tourist destinations like the Krüger Park, Cape Town, the wine region, Garden Route and Drakensberg, we asked Karl for some insider tips on where to go this time. Karl and his team have a priceless wealth of experience and are therefore just the right people to ask for advice.

So Karl asks me in his Carinthian dialect: “Do you want to land on a salt pan?” After finally understanding his Austrian gibberish I nod. Of course I want to land in a salt pan! I heard they are flat, gigantic, relatively smooth, and well, salty I presume. That’s where they always break those speed records in the US. Karl’s suggestion sounds “cool and safe” – seeing that Karl would never suggest any dangerous undertakings that could damage his beloved planes. Port Nolloth is the name of the destination and is located about 7 hours’ drive north of Cape Town, surrounded by diamond mines and desert and is a wonderful quiet and sleepy town. How will we get there? Stupid question, with a plane, of course! The strongest horse in the stable is the Piper Cherokee PA 28-235 B with about 250 horse power under its hood. A few years ago she already lifted us, packed full to the brim with 4 people and luggage, out of the shortest of bush strips. Karl helps us with the flight planning, or should I say, his oh-so-beloved EasyPlan software does the work for us. The accommodation is organised by Janna, the office star!



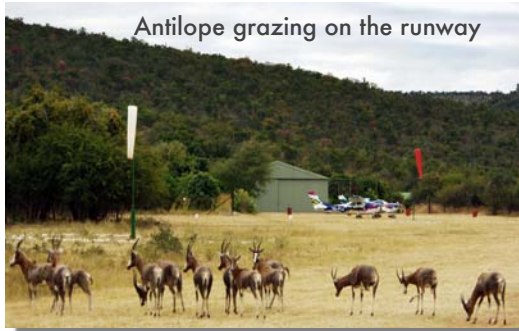
“Do you know that feeling where you look forward to going home after a two-week holiday? To be honest, I don’t anymore. The farewell from Africa gets harder and harder every time!”

Kunkuru Runway



Main issue as always is, "Where do we get Avgas?"

We fill up the long-range tanks of ZS-FAI to the top and get ready on our first flight to Kunkuru Lodge. The sound of the big six-cylinder motor gives us a reassuring feeling and the 1.8km long runway at Brakpan makes it an easy takeoff for the powerful Cherokee 235, even though the airfield lies at 5300ft. After only an hours' flight we can already see the great Waterberg and the Mabalingwe Game Reserve appear in front of us.



Antelope grazing on the runway

Kunkuru is a small and privately owned bush lodge, and can be found at the foot of the Waterberg about 2-3 hours' drive from Johannesburg. The runway is used uphill, is 750m long and in a much better condition since the last time we were here. However, due to the rising terra firma at the end of the threshold, the "go around" decision has to be made early, as after a certain point one is committed to landing! Airplane wreckages can be found left and right of the hill and are evidence of some unsuccessful attempts to out-fly them. It is also very helpful to contact the lodge before arrival, as this gives the game rangers some time to clear the runway of any antelopes or giraffe. Pilots who land at Kunkuru for the first time acquire a fitting "Kunkuru Eagle" name to suit their personality, heritage and flying skills! Thanks to my origin from Baden and the influence of a certain Austrian big mouth, I received the title

of "Gelbfuß (Yellow-foot) Eagle" in 2005.

Not such a bad name, considering some of the other titles pilots have earned. A propeller on the wall in the Kunkuru bar boasts all of the recent names, where one can find some as nasty as Nosewheel- or Scratch-the-Bush-Eagle. I won't go into too much detail here, as it may shine a negative light on a few of my respectable flying friends. Kunkuru isn't overly spectacular; there are no Big Five to be found, however, one can definitely feel the incredible quiet of the African bush. The number of beds is also limited, allowing you to enjoy your surroundings peacefully. The staff are unbelievably friendly and helpful, and it is a joy to visit.

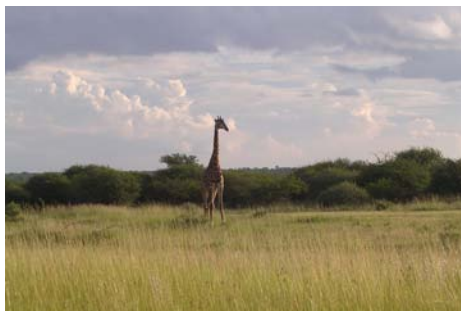


Notorious 'Eagle' Names

The obligatory game drive with sun downers at the top of the hill is always a highlight. As soon as the sun sinks over the wide landscape and the light changes colour every few seconds I am reminded of scenes from "Out of Africa" (even without Mozart). The rooms of the lodge are decorated in an English style and are very comfortable. The tranquillity is overwhelming. After a restful night and an English-style breakfast we reload and pre-flight the Piper. The next leg brings us to Upington; they have Avgas! All of a sudden I realise that it is Saturday and the petrol attendant might not be there anymore. A quick look into the Airport Directory and a telephone call to Karl clears up the situation: "No Problem" (this, by the way, also being Karl's favourite statement!). The attendant comes on request, however, costing us a 600 Rand (~€70) call-out fee! That's our own fault though; had we gotten up an hour earlier he would have still been there. The Avgas costs about € 1/litre and evens out the call-out fee again. We will land on runway 35, which is 4.9 km long and could be used as an alternative runway for space shuttles (or a good place to practise a few touch & goes).



Bush pilots enjoying a game drive



Kunkuru



Upington

The 3.8 hour long flight of about 800km gives you wonderful insight into the greatness of Africa. For hours all we see are uninhabited areas. Now and then you can spot tiny villages, mines or lodges. Naturally, we fly low-level, which means the frequency is set to a constant 124.8 and from time to time you can even hear a few radio calls. However, it is generally very quiet. Before we reach the Upington controlled air space I try to contact the tower. Somebody from airport safety informs me that the air traffic controllers have already called it a day.

Of course, Saturday afternoon, 1PM! So the procedure is like at any other uncontrolled airport. Check the wind, pick your runway and at least call in your position in the air space twice. In front of us are a Boeing 737 and a big Turboprop. Both land on Runway 35.

I let the Cherokee glide for a bit over the 4.9km runway; otherwise you just have to taxi for too long. Our “big” colleagues help us find the right taxiway, just like anywhere else on the road when you need directions. An airport marshal leads us to our parking spot on the apron. We settle all formalities without any problems, except that you have to complete these formalities all the time. The airport staff are relaxed and almost everyone is up for a nice little chat. The outside temperature is a simmering 40°C, and it is clearly unthinkable for the locals to believe that back home in the Black Forest of Germany it is currently snowing. Willi and I however feel very content in this heat. The low humidity must be the reason why such old and yet still completely well-maintained Boeing 727s are parked here. In the meantime the petrol attendant has arrived. The chromed petrol barrel and pump sparkle in the sun, and the manual hand crank starts the pump motor that fills our tanks with 250 litres of Avgas.



The departure is just as problem-free as the landing, this time from runway 19. We follow the Oranje River to the Augrabis waterfalls, which drop about 60m. The Dundi Lodge also has their own landing strip on which we land uphill. The pretty receptionist directs us to an open and empty hangar. What more could you ask for; only 300m from the lodge. And what a charming lodge it is!

The main building is U-shaped and surrounds a pool. The style reminds me of those lovely white Dutch colonial style houses in Stellenbosch and the Cape. As a frequent traveller (about 150 nights a year in European hotels) I give this hotel room 4 or 5 stars. At a price of €80, - / night I can use this double room as a single.

Getting single rooms was a must on this trip, seeing as my cousin snores like a walrus. Apparently I do the same, but what do I know, I don't listen to myself sleeping now do !! Also the cuisine of this lodge is spectacular. Willi orders a large and tasty T-Bone steak whilst I indulge in a divine ox tail. We enjoy the rest of the evening with a bottle of South African red wine, or as in my case, with a non-alcoholic Grapetizer. The lodge is surrounded by a mix of stone and sand desert with all sorts of colourful plants. The tranquillity is heavenly!

A moment of shock awaits us the next morning: my flying buddy has a huge, red spot on his back. Those many spectacular nature documentaries shown on German TV immediately get me thinking it is a spider that has laid its eggs under the skin, or a bug bite, or even a scorpion attack? After all, we did spend yesterday in the bush. Even the hotel staff recommends seeing a doctor, so we borrow the Hyundai of the hotel and rush to the next “biggest” town, Kakamas, about 38km away.



Comfortable Parking



Salt Pan - Port Nolloth

It's a Sunday morning, yet the doctor has kindly agreed to meet with us.

Just before we reach the town, we get a puncture – well done boys! I let Willi change the tyre so he stays active (and MY hands stay clean!). The doctor is clearly not amused by our delay. A black-bearded South African, about 2m tall and 2m wide! The red spot on Willi's back turns out to be merely a skin irritation caused by a tiny insect sting – thankfully nothing worse! We drive back to the lodge and check out the waterfalls on the way there. They're not the Victoria Falls, but at 40°C still very impressive. The location is rugged and rocky. Wooden footbridges lead the way through the area. This pit-stop was definitely worth it!



Augrabies Waterfalls

Around midday we start up the Piper again. We use the first-class gravel strip downhill to take off before we fly on we passed the waterfalls once more. Before we departed I had a quick phone chat with Captain Myburgh. He is the chief of police at Port Nolloth and always checks the condition of the salt pan. He said the weather is good; the wind however was gusting at about 44 knots. Instinctively I have to think of my Savage back home, which in such conditions could easily end up with a groundspeed of zero – and I won't even venture thinking about landing in such conditions with the tail-dragger! But we are flying this heavy American aluminium lump – we should be fine!



Orange River

At first we go low-low-level over the Oranje River – on the right side lies Namibia, left South Africa. This costs us a bit more time, but it is incredibly great fun! I calm Willi down by reassuring him that there are only two power lines over the river, and that I do actually know their location. This river carries water, but the sandbanks are big and often very green and bushy. Could be difficult bringing down the Cherokee here somewhere in case of an emergency, but with our excess speed and the extreme tail-trimming due to the very low-level flying a manoeuvre to one of the roads on the side lines should be no problem. That's the theory.

After that bit of fun we continue on over the rocky desert straight towards the coast. Over Springbok (where we could also get Avgas), I call Captain Myburgh once again and inform him that we are 30 minutes away. From a distance the salt pan is a great, white spot on the horizon in front of the deep blue Atlantic coast. But beware, there are two salt pans! As we approach we can already see the black and white buggy of the chief of police. During a fly-by Captain Myburgh indicates the landing direction. Thank god, because I couldn't even see a definite landing strip from the aircraft. The wind is brutal! As we descend on short final it gets better as the edge of the salt pan holds some of the wind off. Still, I get a shock as I open the door and it literally gets ripped out of my hand. Again I have to think of my Savage, I probably would have been blown to Namibia by now. A malicious friend of mine from Krefeld always calls my plane a paper kite with a lawnmower motor!

We receive a very warm welcome by Capt. Myburgh, almost like meeting old friends again. The chief of police (and bar owner!) drives us to his pub and generously offers us more of those lifts over the next few days. We promise to drop by in Anita's Tavern for Monday dinner – the restaurant of his wife Anita lies directly on the beach! We make ourselves at home in our simple but clean and almost German-looking hotel. Just a while later, Johan de Waal picks us up in his Land Cruiser. Johan organises tours into the Richtersfeld National Park, mainly for botanic-junkies. As we are only here for a day, we plan to do a day-trip to the southern part of the park just by Port Nolloth.





Right on schedule Johan arrives again the next morning. He brought along his friend Davy, who has just returned from Cadiff/Wales after being involved in the Christmas tree business there, to start his own diamond business back home. We take the massive Toyota through the desert and up a hill to see what grows there. Actually it is very incredible that anything grows there at all. Hot, dry and rocky would best describe this area – oh yes, and absolutely beautiful! Botanists spend days and weeks in this region, yet after a few hours we must sadly depart, but enjoy marvelling at the great dunes before arriving at Davy’s “company”.



The building looks more like a huge garage. Little gravel stones that were sucked up from the ocean floor with huge tubes by Davy’s divers are being washed and sieved in oil barrels. Thereafter, the round sieves are tipped onto a well-lit table and an expert surveys the “concentrate”. They even find 2 diamonds in our presence, both about 1mm of size. Sometimes they only find enough to pay the Diesel for the boat and to pay the divers. Then again they have days where they find stones a few thousand Euros worth. Apparently, there are people who make a few million within only a couple of weeks, and could be considered to be modern treasure hunters! Somehow I thought this doesn’t exist anymore. Johan then takes us to the beach to look for some bushman tracks. Miraculously he even finds jewellery from about 2000 years ago. In Anita’s tavern we enjoy the rest of the evening with a delightful seafood dish and drinks, and charming company.

The next morning Johan picks us up once more and brings us to our airplane on the salt pan. Thanks to the lack of crime here Captain Myburgh even has time to bid us farewell; also Davy drops by to say goodbye. A send-off just like with old friends!

Preflight the plane, let her run warm, and start into wind! After a short rollway the Piper takes off. A last circuit over the salt pan waving farewell to new friends, and then we head east towards Upington to refuel. This time the tower is open and everything runs smoothly. The ATC is friendly and easily understandable. We land, fill out some forms, pay the fees and refuel. After 45 minutes we continue our journey back home: five hours non-stop over the Karoo and the savannah of the Highveld towards Brakpan. Every time I am here the vastness and diversity of this country amazes me. In Brakpan, Glen and Tony from SkyAfrica welcome us back. We sit with the guys, enjoy a few drinks together and tell them about our journey.

It was a wonderful trip, and even though it only lasted for five days we got to see pretty much everything – bush, desert, beach, and all this in South Africa. We met a whole load of friendly people and encountered amazing hospitality. This was my seventh flying holiday in southern Africa, but there is still so much more I want to do. Do you know that feeling where you look forward to going home after a two-week holiday? To be honest, I don’t anymore. The farewell from Africa gets harder and harder every time!

Guess where I will be spending the next dull and grey European November ;-)

Greetings from the Black Forest!

Wolfgang Spada



SkyAfrica Offer 2011

See you in a little while!

Enjoy a Week Long Flying Safari in South Africa

- Had enough of fog?
- rain?
- an overcrowded airspace?
- overregulation?
- annoying security checks?



At SkyAfrica you will be greeted with sunshine, blue skies and great flying without limits!

Come to Africa where aviation is still unrestricted, fun and affordable. Anything your heart desires, SkyAfrica will be happy organise!

Our Offer: African Flying Safari Week for Two!

± 1500 Euro per person sharing in double room

± 2700 Euro single traveller

(Please enquire for quote)

- 15h worth of scenic flights: Highveld, Bushveld, Drakensberg etc.
- 5 day stay at SkyAfrica Guesthouse
- 1 night stay at bush lodge incl. game drive

SkyAfrica Getaway Safaris



- Affordable Flying Safaris for Pilots
- Memories to Last a Lifetime!

Bush & Beach Safari (12 Day - ± €250/day per person)

Gain great insights into the coastal and bushveld regions of South Africa! This safari will see you flying over the South African high plateau and enjoying an evening game drive in the bush - soar over the great Soutpansberge to Tshipise, which will enchant you with its warm thermal springs, many elephants and grand baobab trees - enjoy breathtaking flights over the Drakensberg and Blyde River Canyon into the Kruger National Park, which boasts the Big 5 - delight in flying over the Kingdom of Swaziland and Lake Pongola - a short hop over north Zululand will take you to the untouched beaches of the Indian Ocean, and a delightful flight over the 1000 Hills of Zululand and the Highveld will return you to Johannesburg.

SA's Undiscovered South (14 Day - ± €250/day per person)

Fly to Parys, where the Vaal River winds gently through the impressive meteorite dome - onwards over the vast plains into the Kalahari desert - enjoy a 4x4 game drive through the dry dune landscape - scenic flight over the Augrabies Waterfall and low level through the gorges of the Orange River into the beautiful Namaqualand to Springbok! Take pleasure in landing on a salt pan on the Atlantic coast before exploring the fishing town of Port Nolloth encompassed by the stony desert of the Richtersveld and the diamond-clad Namib sand dunes - fly passed ancient shipwrecks to the stunning & fertile mountains of the Cederberg - into the wheat fields of the Cape before flying over historic Robben Island, Cape Town, past Table Mountain to the Cape of Good Hope before landing in the heart of the charming Cape wine-lands in Stellenbosch! Explore Chapmans Peak, Hout Bay, Cape Point and many other must-see places before flying to Cape Agulhas, Africa's southern most point and the meeting place of the mighty Atlantic & Indian Oceans. Fly onwards over the Outeniqua Mountains into the Klein Karoo to the gliding paradise of Gariep - take in the beauty of the savanna of the Freestate and the Highveld before returning to Johannesburg - the City of Gold!

What are you waiting for?

[**team@skyafrica.com**](mailto:team@skyafrica.com)



SkyAfrica is now also on Facebook!