



A very small scanner does a big job. **N4**



Free app is a flier's good friend. **N4**

A wealth of Newport fun



Rough Point, heiress Doris Duke's mansion in Newport, has been a public museum since 2000. It's one of a dozen mansions open to the public. MICHAEL SCHUMAN



The **International Tennis Hall of Fame** is one of the few halls that enshrine both genders along with citizens of numerous nations.

There are, of course, the mansions — and then do try the tennis hall of fame, and the nation's oldest synagogue, and shopping. And an ocean of sports.

By Michael Schuman
FOR THE INQUIRER

NEWPORT, R.I. — This seaside resort community is like the proverbial onion; peel off one layer and there is another under it, and another under that. Most New Englanders know Newport for its mansions where Vanderbilts, Astors, and other turn-of-the-20th-century commercial royalty made their summer homes. There are a healthy dozen such mansions — or cottages, as they were known — open to the public, and they have always been the leisure city's top draw.

But Newport offers plenty to visitors who don't know their

Vanderbilts from their Astors and don't care. Under that layer is sporting Newport, home of tennis' first U.S. Open and yachting's America's Cup. Peel off another layer and there is colonial Newport — downtown is rife with colonial structures, and is home to the nation's oldest synagogue. Peel off another and there is recreational Newport, with beaches and boating and biking. Peel another and there is commercial Newport, where antiques sell side by side with modern handcrafts.

Following are 10 ways to experience quintessential Newport. But it wouldn't be a real Newport article if we didn't start off with mansions.

1. Homes of the Fabulously Wealthy

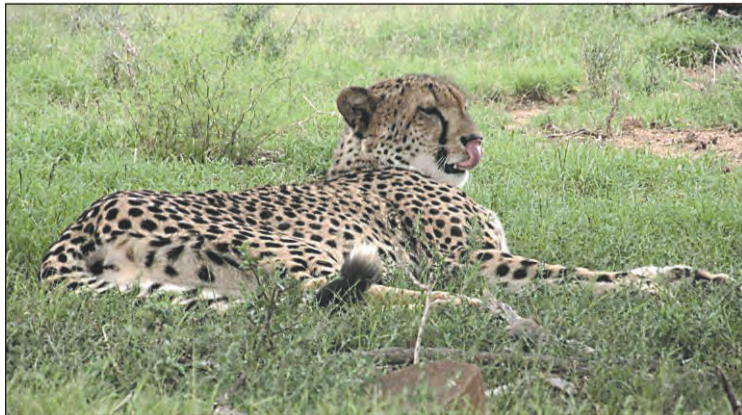
Here is what's new. Over the last few years, four properties of the Preservation Society of Newport County — the Breakers, the Elms, Marble House, and Rosecliff — began offering self-guided audio tours. This year, the Elms updated its audio tour to reflect the points of view of the staff. When done right, they can be more insightful than human-guided tours. At Cornelius Vanderbilt's palatial Breakers, visitors hear straight from the Vanderbilts' mouths the reasons Vanderbilt women often had to See **NEWPORT** on N5

On safari in South Africa's Karoo

Animals and the spectacular scenery vie for attention at a luxurious game reserve.

By Sandra MacGregor
FOR THE INQUIRER

GRAAFF-REINET, South Africa — “All right, this is where we get out and walk,” said Charl Pretorius, our ranger, as he jumped from the safari vehicle and began to scan the horizon. I turned to my friend: “He’s kidding, right?” But Charl was very serious. He’d gone into that tracking-mode trance that had become so familiar over the last few days, and he was onto something. Sure enough, within a few minutes Charl had found her. Not more than 15 feet away, under the shade of a shepherd’s tree, lay a cheetah. A real-life, wild — and very much uncaged



Sibella the cheetah is queen of the Samara reserve, whose owners are intent on bringing back other species long absent from the area.

— cheetah. It occurred to me that I was probably the slowest runner there.

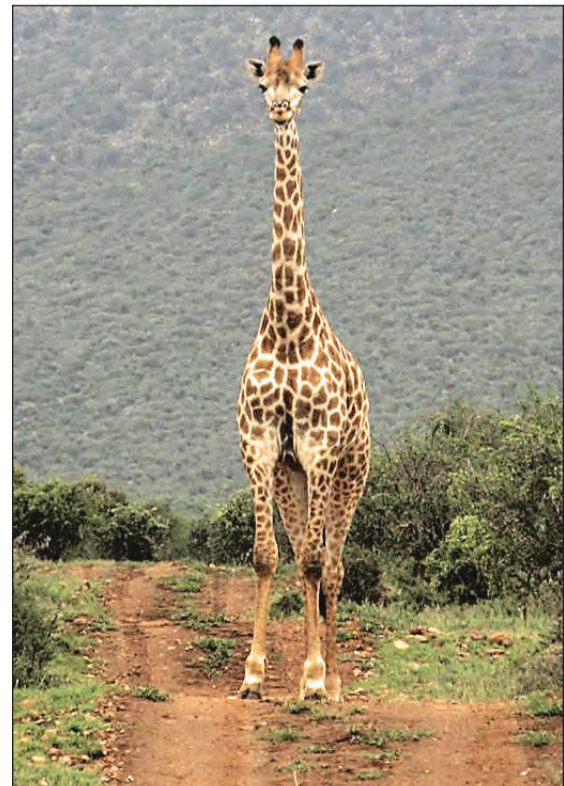
“There’s nothing to fear,” said Charl. Though Sibella, as the cheetah is named, is wild, she tolerates human attention and would go off into the bush when

she grew bored with our company.

For 10 exquisite minutes, Sibella permitted our company as she held court over her dominion. It will forever rank as one of the most magical moments of my life.

I wasn’t sure what to expect when I arrived at Samara, the largest private game reserve in South Africa’s Eastern Cape Province. The region is one of the least known in the country and though I had been told of the lodge’s luxury and remarkable landscape, I was also warned that it did not have the big five — lion, elephant, Cape buffalo, leopard, rhinoceros — which can be a deal-breaker for some safari-goers. But this wasn’t my first time at a game reserve, and I was prepared to forgo the big five for what I had been told would be a singular safari experience.

Certainly the landscape is unparalleled. Samara lies at the heart of the Great Karoo, a non-malarial, semidesert region where boundless grasslands are peppered with spiny, impassable thickets, stunted bushes, aloes, See **SAMARA** on N3



While giraffes are common, lions and other animals were wiped out by settlers. JONATHAN STRUG

ADVERTISEMENT

Know the **dealYo**  **\$69** for 4 Days and 3 Nights in Hilton Head, SC Plus 1 Extra Night Free or Complimentary Golf for 2 GET THE DEAL. Go to dealyo.com. Sign Up for Email Alerts and Never Miss a Deal!

Scenery, animals vie for attention in Great Karoo

SAMARA from N1

and wild olive trees. In this emptiness, rocky, towering mountains own the horizon. And below the escarpment of one such mountain lies the Karoo Lodge, the main camp at Samara.

Despite what one might expect from this "land of thirst" (as the Karoo was called by the native Khoisan people), abundance reigns in this harsh, arid landscape. Samara's plentiful four-legged inhabitants testify to that. With 70,000 acres to play with and no lions, many species of antelope abound. Other favorites such as rhinos, giraffes, and the rare mountain zebras are often seen. We also saw an inquisitive pair of Cape buffalo on almost every game drive. Though I wasn't fortunate enough to spot any, Samara is also one of the best places to see the exceedingly rare armadillo (Charl says that during the winter months, May to September, there is a 90 percent chance of seeing one at the reserve). And of course, there are Sibella and her cohorts.

What makes Samara special is that, unlike most game reserves, spectacular scenery shares first billing with the animals.

Nowhere is the majesty of the landscape more evident than at the top of Kondoa mountain, more than 3,300 feet above sea level. Reaching the secluded plateau was like discovering our own private piece of Africa. We crossed a sprawling savanna where the only traffic we encountered was dueling wildebeests, blesbok, and wary mountain zebras. As we cut a trail through the long grass, hawks came out of nowhere and dive-bombed our vehicle to grab at the crickets we'd awakened. When we stopped the vehicle, it was seemed to stop with us. It was preternaturally peaceful. "To me, Samara is about the landscape," said Charl, in a candid moment. "All the animals are just a plus." It's hard not to agree.

From the peak we over-



From the top of Kondoa mountain, more than 3,300 feet above sea level, the majesty of the landscape is apparent. On the way, a safari party may encounter wildebeests, blesbok, and perhaps rare mountain zebras. JONATHAN STRUG

looked the Plains of Camdeboo, and were struck silent by the beauty. There are ghosts that roam these valleys still; in the plains below us, before 19th-century settlers claimed the land, springbok once migrated by the millions, elephants roamed, and lions were kings. It's a haunting, almost melancholy sensation, bearing witness to what once was and what still is, nature's magnificence.

We stayed on the plateau for a couple of hours. Charl, seeing how we were all mesmerized, didn't hurry us. Being as much about the landscape as the animals, the trappings of many big-five safaris were avoided: no 5 a.m. wake-up calls (unless wanted), no structured programs that must be rigidly adhered to, no getting whiplash driving from one big sighting to the next, no wildlife checklists to be ticked off like a shopping list. Samara is the anti-bootcamp safari. "I like to think of Samara as a graduate-level safari," says Sarah Tomkins, who, along with her husband, Mark, owns Samara. "People can go elsewhere if they want



Guests returning to the Samara lodge from late-afternoon safari drives find a drawn bath, sherry, and a fine meal awaiting. Samara

to tick off boxes on a list."

That night, back at the lodge — a colonial-style, beautifully restored farmhouse — a sumptuous meal awaited. We would be eating inside, away from the charmingly cheeky vervet monkeys who, during outdoor meal service, often wait in the nearby trees to swoop in and grab a piece of fruit or cake. No problem, there's plenty for everyone.

But at Samara, nobody rushes to dinner. First we had to indulge in the little luxuries we'd come to expect there. When we got to our rooms to freshen up, we found the now-familiar drawn bubble bath and glass of sherry. After the bath, I was tempted to go straight to bed, but the candlelit dinners are not to be missed. The wraparound veranda is perfect for a predinner stroll and, with cocktail in hand, to drown yourself in a sky filled to bursting with stars.

That night, Sarah and Mark joined guests for dinner and we learned how Sibella when young was trapped and beaten by farmers. Rescued

by a cheetah rehabilitation organization, she and two males were brought to Samara eight years ago. They all thrived, and Sibella has so far successfully reared 18 cubs. "She's gone from torture to treasure," said Sarah, adding, "she's the first cheetah to step foot on this land in 125 years."

Sibella is not the only species to make an appearance in this part of the Karoo after more than a century of exile. The Cape buffalo, the mountain zebra, and the rhino, among other species, were all once native to the area but were eradicated by settlers and farmers. Thirteen years ago, quite unexpectedly, Sarah and Mark's love for the Karoo led them to become conservationists and they began to buy up the 11 farms that now make up Samara. Their goal is to restore the land, plants, and wildlife to their original abundance. "We want to put everything back that was here historically," explained Sarah. So far their plans — along with the flora and fauna — seem to be flourishing.

There is at least one indigenous animal, however, whose absence is conspicuous: the lion. It is Sarah and Mark's love for Sibella that prevents them from having lions at Samara. Lions did once roam the Karoo, but the couple is worried that, as apex predators, they would make hunting difficult for Sibella, and a fight for territory could even result in her death. "As long as she is alive, Sibella will continue to reign at Samara," said Sarah.

It's fitting that Sibella calls Samara home; the story of this reserve is also one of rebirth and second chances. In some measure, most of the animals that roam Samara now owe their profusion to Sarah and Mark. Perhaps Samara's biggest draw, aside from Sibella, is the privilege it affords guests to see these animals finally reclaim their corner of the Karoo.

To comment, e-mail TravelTalk@phillynews.com.

This is the Year to Be Here Win a Trip to Universal Orlando® Resort!



Enjoy the action and fun of two amazing theme parks! Explore the magic and excitement of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter™, swing high above the city streets with Spider-Man™, and save the day with Shrek. Plus, this summer you can join the ranks of the mischievous minions in the new 3-D ride, Despicable Me Minion Mayhem.

Enter Today to Win a Universal Orlando® Resort Vacation for Four Including:

- Admission to Both Universal Studios® and Universal's Islands of Adventure® Theme Parks
- Tickets to Blue Man Group
- One Day at Wet 'n Wild® Orlando Water Park
- Accommodations in the Heart of it All at Loews Royal Pacific Resort at Universal Orlando®
- Skip the Regular Lines* at Participating Rides and Attractions

Bonus! Go Online to Access Special Content

featuring The Wizarding World of Harry Potter™, The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man® and Despicable Me Minion Mayhem (opens Summer 2012), including behind-the-scenes videos, images, and more!

The Inquirer
philly.com

To enter go to www.philly.com/universal

HARRY POTTER, characters, names and related indicia are trademarks of and © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Harry Potter Publishing Rights © JKR. (s12)

*Not valid at Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey™ and other select attractions. On-site hotel privileges good for hotel stay as indicated on the room key card. Only good for the number of guests staying in the room. Paid theme park admission required. Express ride access available during normal theme park operating hours only. Not valid for separately ticketed special events. No purchase necessary. Must be a legal U.S. resident currently residing in the 50 United States. 21 years or older. Void where prohibited. For full Official Rules, eligibility and complete prize description go to: www.philly.com/universal. Sweepstakes ends 5/12/2012 at 11:59 pm EST. TM & © 2012 Marvel & Subs. © 2012 Viacom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon, SpongeBob SquarePants, and all related titles, logos and characters are trademarks of Viacom International Inc. SpongeBob SquarePants created by Stephen Hillenburg. Shrek 4-D © 2012 DreamWorks Animation L.L.C. © 2012 B.M.P. © 2012 Wet 'n Wild. All rights reserved. Universal elements and all related indicia TM & © 2012 Universal Studios. © 2012 Universal Orlando. All rights reserved. 251323/0212/16