HY FLYER
Hyundai’s new i30 is a sight to behold

GOING OUT...STAYING IN...GETTING AWAY...GOING WILD...GAMING OUT...BOOKS...REVIEWS...GIGS

HARD ZEL
Washington is good but not great in new flick Safehouse

LIFE AFTER SPORTY
Melanie C on her new life as a solo artist, motherhood, playing in Northern Ireland and The X Factor

OSCAR BRAVO
Gadgets to enjoy tonight’s big movie bash from the comfort of your couch

KENYA BEST: OUR MAN ON A LUXURY AFRICAN SAFARI
Easter offers at top spot in wild Wicklow

HOTEL of the Year 2009 and 2010, the BrookLodge, right in the surrounds of the Wicklow countryside, has special Easter offers. There’s a range of outdoor activities including the Macreddin Golf Club, designed by Paul McGinley, the Macreddin Equestrian center and leisurely walks through Macreddin woods. There’s also a field sports centre with clay pigeon shooting and falconry and within close range are Wicklow’s many scenic attractions. The Wells Spa on site has special features like a Seral Mud Chamber, Hammam Massage Room and Caladrium/Finnish Baths. You can get two nights B&B and one evening meal in The Strawberry Tree – Ireland’s only certified wild & organic restaurant – on Friday 6th April & Saturday 7th April for €199pp or Saturday and Sunday for €210. The three night option includes one evening meal in the bistro La Taverna Arrento and another night in the Strawberry Tree, for €300pp. Phone 0402 39444 or visit brooklodge.com

LEARN HOW TO SURF IN LAGOS SUN

Surfholidays.com has a week in March aimed at 25-35 year olds learning to surf in 20 plus degrees sunshine in Lagos, Portugal for €599. You get seven nights accommodation and six days surf course with two sessions per day, plus breakfast in the garden and lunch on the beach every day and midweek BBQ. The week of March 17-24 will have two yoga sessions a day on the balcony with a Swedish instructor at no extra charge. Ryanair and Aer Lingus both flies to Faro. Book online at www.surfholidays.com

It’s Ever so nice for Derry stay

TREAT yourself to an overnight stay for two at the Everglades Hotel in Derry including an evening main course each for just £80 per couple. It’s Ever so nice to stay in Derry including an evening main course each for just £80 per couple. It’s Ever so nice to stay in the Strawberry Tree, for £195 Saturday for €210. 7th April for €190pps or Saturday and Sunday for €210.

By Neil Leslie

VEN as a first-time visitor, there is something strangely familiar about Kenya. From our destinations – Nairobi, Mombasa, Meru National Park – to our hotels and lodgings – the Sarova Stanley, Rhino River Camp and Elephant Bedroom Camp – our trip is peppered with a mysterious sense of déjà vu.

The penny drops on an afternoon safari in Samburu, a couple of hours north of Nairobi as a ripple of excitement spreads through our game drive vehicle. A small group of elephants has emerged from the edge of the bush and begun a loping majestic march across the Ewaso Nyiro river.

The excitement turns to a collective silent wonder as the group continues to grow until we are looking at a herd of more than 100 adult and baby elephants, trunk to tail, swaying lazily through the river in unison.

No one on our vehicle has ever been up close to animal activity like this in the wild before, yet somehow there is a ring of the familiar about it. Then it dawns that the scene we’ve been privileged to witness could have just flowed from the pen of a Disney animator or been framed in the viewfinder of a Hollywood director.

It’s the Lion King, meets the Jungle Book, rare enough but now seen in real life at the ever so nice Elephant Bedroom Camp.

Elephant Bedroom Camp – our trip is to our hotels and lodgings – the Sarova Stanley, Rhino River Camp and Elephant Bedroom Camp – our trip is peppered with a mysterious sense of déjà vu.

It becomes a fact of life on safari that one cannot escape the wildlife that roams the site love to let them into their fences and home is now a museum, paying homage as much to the memory of Streep and Redford as to Blixen herself.

Nairobi is a necessary first stop but it mainly serves as a gateway to the real Kenya which tourists come to see.

Flying low over miles of African savannah you can briefly imagine you are Bogart in Casablanca as a dusty airstrip looms out of the bush and the safari link plane swoops sharply to the ground. As the propellers continue to whirl local tribesmen in native dress greet us on the runway with a cold towel and an even colder drink.

We are then whisked deep into the bush in search of Elephant Bedroom Camp (www.atua-enokp.com). If they ever dish out tourism awards in the “Does exactly what it says on the tin” category, then Elephant Bedroom Camp will be a hall of fame winner.

The site is blended into the landscape with such care and attention that it doesn’t deter herds of the giant animals that give it its name from using it as their preferred sleeping spot.

Sensing the alarm in the air we are all on alert. We are then whisked deep into the bush in search of Elephant Bedroom Camp.

Sensing the alarm in the air we are all on alert. We are then whisked deep into the bush in search of Elephant Bedroom Camp.

By Neil Leslie

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE: Giraffes grazing in the Meru National Park

Luxury safari in Africa came up trunks, with unforgettable holiday wildlife experiences

Her writings brought droves of adventurers in her wake and her former farm and home is now a museum, paying homage as much to the memory of Streep and Redford as to Blixen herself.

Nairobi is a necessary first stop but it mainly serves as a gateway to the real Kenya which tourists come to see. Flying low over miles of African savannah you can briefly imagine you are Bogart in Casablanca as a dusty airstrip looms out of the bush and the safari link plane swoops sharply to the ground. As the propellers continue to whirr in native dress greet us on the runway with a cold towel and an even colder drink.

We are then whisked deep into the bush in search of Elephant Bedroom Camp (www.atua-enokp.com). If they ever dish out tourism awards in the “Does exactly what it says on the
five stars when you can camp under a
canopy of them without forgoing any of
the luxuries.

Many tourists are familiar with
Kenya’s world famous and crowded
Masai Mara but Meru is known to
natives as Kenya’s complete wilderness.
A network of 13 rivers gives this area a
stunning diversity of animal life that
includes elephants, lions, cheetah,
leopards, and its famous rhino.
This is also the place that gave the
world its most famous lioness, Elsa. It
was here that Joy and George Adamson
raised the lioness and released her to
the wild inspiring the movie Born Free
includes elephants, lions, cheetah,
leopards, and its famous rhino.

A network of 13 rivers gives this area a
stunning diversity of animal life that
includes elephants, lions, cheetah,
leopards, and its famous rhino.

It was the perfect happy ending to a
lifetime bucket list of places to
trip that fuses exhilaration and
economic unflappable Italian film
makers Andrea Maggi. Over dinner with
winding road inspired Madagascar.

“Africa is a disease,” he
says before divulging that he once
narrowly failed to entice Bono to stay
when he came on safari here. Like any good Hollywood blockbuster
Kenya has a twist in its tale. After the
exhilaration of safari, visitors can
unwind in the white sands and whiter
surfs of its Indian Ocean coast.

The contrast is perfect and has made
Kenya a serious contender in the dual
holiday destination stakes among
families and couples wanting the
experience of a lifetime that safari
offers, alongside a relaxing beach
holiday. Some of the hotels in the island resorts of
Lamu offer rooms that are only
separated from the ocean by netting.
We stayed at the Garoda Beach in
Watuma (www.garoda.com). It is a chic
resort hotel already popular with well
heeled Europeans. And with prices starting
around €60 a night other
Europeans won’t be far behind.
It was the perfect happy ending to a
trip that fuses exhilaration and
relaxation and places Kenya high up the
time bucket list of places to experience.

African-Italian food at its finest.
We dined at the upmarket
Watuma (www.garoda.com).
It is a chic
resort hotel already popular with well
heeled Europeans. And with prices starting
around €60 a night other
Europeans won’t be far behind.
It was the perfect happy ending to a
trip that fuses exhilaration and
relaxation and places Kenya high up the
time bucket list of places to experience.

By Neil Leslie

**TRUNK CALL:**
Up close and
personal with
elephants at the camp

**FACTBOX**
For more information
on Kenya visit the
Kenyan Tourist Board
website www.
magicakenyaa.com
Kenya Airways
operates daily overnight
and additional weekend
flights from Terminal 4
London Heathrow to
Nairobi See
www.kenya-
airways.com.
For more information
on internal safari flights
visit www.flysafarilink.net
and
www.airkenya.com

**MEMORABLE:** On
safari in Samburu

**LIFE’S A
BEACH:** Gorgeous
Garoda

**ADVENTURE:**
Neil Leslie and
the safari jeep

**EXCLUSIVE:**
Neil Leslie and the
safari jeep

**Thomson SUMMER 2012 BOOKING NOW!**

Exclusive and affordable
Your holiday to a T

Great Value
Half Board
€499
from only
PER PERSON

Luxury
All-Inclusive
€599
from only
PER PERSON

Discover an exclusive
collection of holidays from
Thomson, to suit adults of all
ages.

From contemporary, romantic
child-free hotels for couples,
to a new generation of luxury
resorts to fuel your senses.

BOOK NOW: 1850 45 35 45 • www.thomsonholidays.ie
or visit Falcon Travel Shops or your local Travel Agent

Offer terms and conditions apply. Thomson is fully Licensed and bonded by CAW (TO 021).

LOOK! AMAZING DEALS ON TRAVEL INSURANCE

Buy Annual Travel Insurance Online from €19.99
Single Trips from €3.99*
Kids Go FREE!

*Subject to terms and conditions. Prices quoted is available online only and excludes 3% of handling fee. Kids go free on Family policies. Blue Insurances Limited t/a Multitrip.com is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Best Travel Insurance provider as voted at Irish Travel Media Awards November 2011.