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DRIVE



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

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

**SUNDAY
WORLD**



**AT THE
MOVIES**

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*



TECH



OSCAR BRAVO

Gadgets to enjoy tonight's
big movie bash from the
comfort of your couch

HOLS



KENYA BEST: OUR MAN ON A LUXURY AFRICAN SAFARI

Your social network

ESCAPE

with JP Thompson
jp.thompson@sundayworld.com



AND all that jazz...the French Quarter Festival in New Orleans is one of the largest free music festivals in the States. The four-day festival kicks off on April 12 with 20 stages in the neighbourhood. Tour America has an offer with return flights, five nights at the Holiday Inn Downtown from €899 based on 4 sharing. touramerica.ie

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 Serail 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 €190pps or Saturday and Sunday for €210.

The three night option includes one evening meal in the bistro La Taverna Armento and another night in the Strawberry Tree, for €300pps. Phone 0402 36444 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 €349.

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 fly 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.

The hotel overlooks the River Foyle and the hills of County Donegal, is just five minutes from Derry City Centre and is a great place to relax. Offer is available until March 31.

Go to www.hastingshotels.com/everglades-hotel or call 048 7132 1066.

KENYA FEEL IT

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

By Neil Leslie

EVEN 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 meets Born Free meets Out of Africa. It turns out of course that this is no coincidence. All of these film classics and many more were inspired here in Kenya, the birthplace of a thousand unforgettable movie scenes.

In April, Hollywood will release the latest instalment in its love affair with the east African nation when Disney's African Cats documentary hits cinema screens. But our own magical movie tour begins on arrival in Nairobi as we check into the colonial splendour of the Sarova Stanley hotel where we are following in the tracks of glamorous guests such as Ernest Hemingway and Ava Gardener.

The Sarova Stanley (www.sarovahotels.com) is the perfect refuge from the hot, dusty reality of the bustling African capital outside. And a short distance away you can begin your Kenyan silver screen adventure at the farm of Karen Blixen. The writer whose book became the iconic Meryl Streep/Robert Redford movie 'Out of Africa' was one of the most famous Europeans to fall in love with Kenya.



PHANTASTIC SIGHT: Elephants in the wild

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 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-enkop.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.



EXPERT: Neil with local guide Julius

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 safari rookies among us the rangers reassure that the tents can stand up to the frequent nocturnal rubbing which is a consequence of our hosts cleaning their ample rears after answering a call of nature in the night. The welcome briefing also includes the advice to padlock the zip of your luxurious tented accommodation and hang the key on a raised hook before coming down for a pre-dinner drink.

The somewhat less than obvious reason is because the mischievous

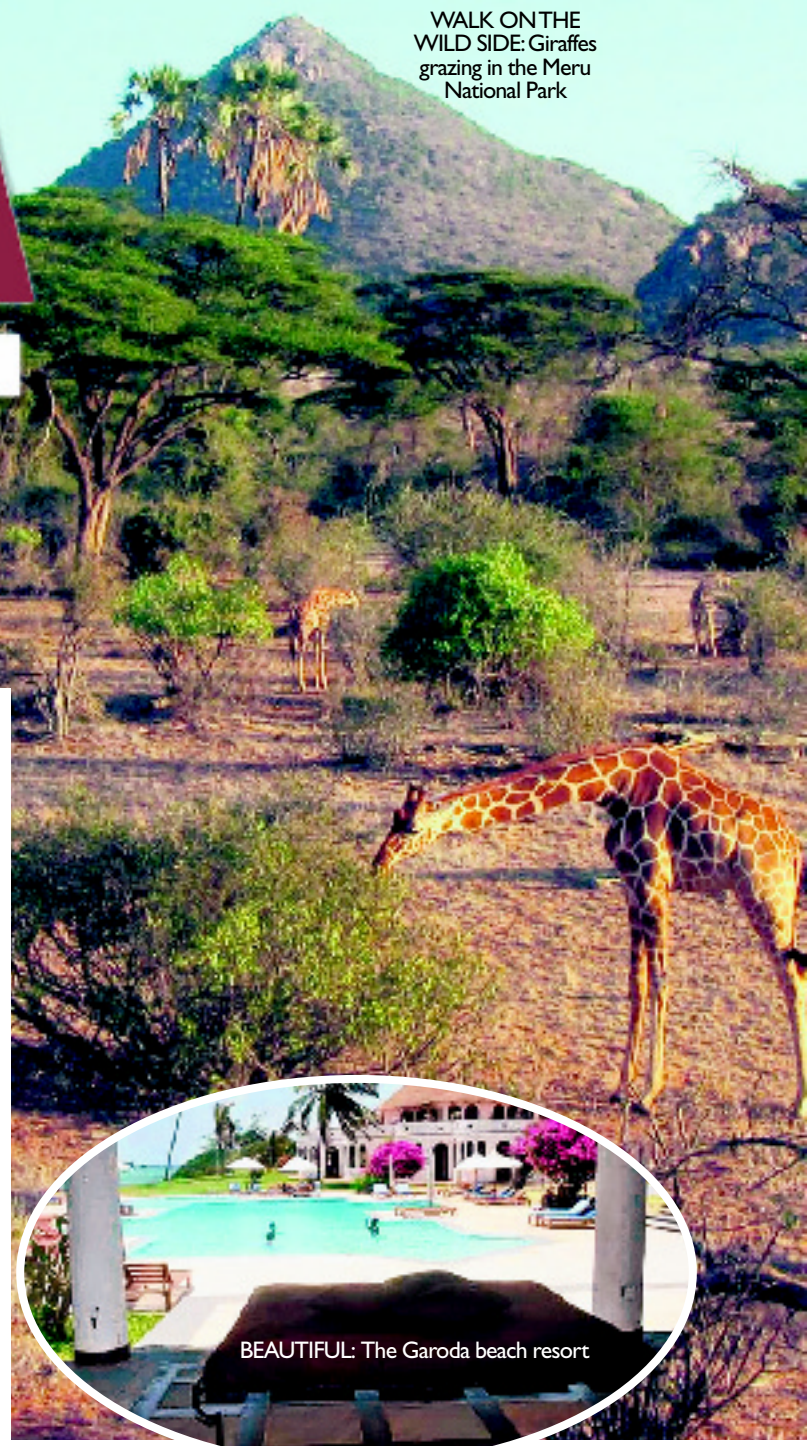
monkeys that roam the site love to let themselves in and have a rummage in the guests' belongings. They've even figured out how to turn a key left in a lock but thankfully not how to unhook it and stick it in yet.

The game viewing in Samburu is spectacular. An afternoon drive leaves plenty of war stories to be swapped with fellow guests at the traditional sundowners, where you can sip a cold beer in the bush.

After reluctantly waving farewell to Elephant Bedroom Camp we embark on a bumpy and dusty road trip in search of Rhino River Camp in Meru National Park (www.rhinorivercamp.com) where Kenya's extraordinary movie heritage kicks up another gear.

There are back to nature experiences, and there's Rhino River camp where you become a part of the living breathing forest.

The handful of canvas cottages are set among pristine forests and leave most hotel rooms in the shade. Who needs



BEAUTIFUL: The Garoda beach resort



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FOR €429 you can fly to Faro with Aer Lingus from Dublin or Cork, and have seven nights B&B basis in the stunning 5* Grande Real Santa Eulalia Resort and Spa in Albufeira. This deal is available from now to the end of May with ClickandGo.com. Aer Lingus has two flights each day from Dublin to Faro and six from Cork.



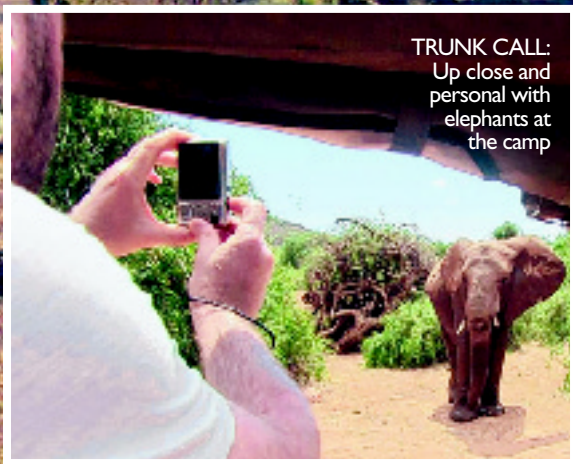
FALCON
March 01, Sharm el Sheikh, Tropicana Tivoli Hotel, seven nights B&B, from €425pp.
THOMAS COOK IRELAND
7 nights in Gran Canaria from

€409 staying in the 3* Vistaflor Bungalows Apartments in Maspalomas based on 4 sharing, on March 10.
DIRECT HOLIDAYS
Have seven nights in Lanzarote

from €289 staying at the 2* Los Hibiscos Apartments in Puerto Del Carmen based on 3 sharing, departing March 18, from Cork. Log on to www.directholidays.ie (price includes on-line discount)



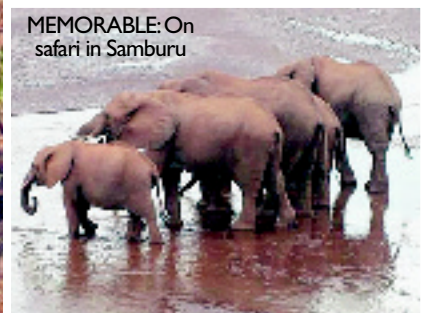
ADVENTURE: Neil Leslie and the safari jeep



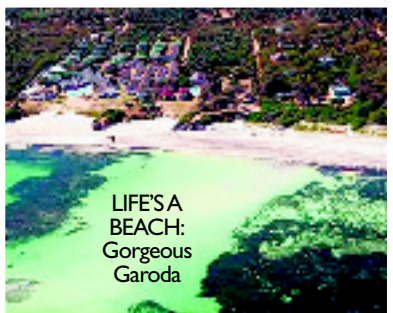
TRUNK CALL: Up close and personal with elephants at the camp

FACTBOX

For more information on Kenya visit the Kenyan Tourist Board website www.magicalkenya.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.com and www.airkenya.com



MEMORABLE: On safari in Samburu



LIFE'S A BEACH: Gorgeous Garoda

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 and a generation of conservationists and wildlife filmmakers.
Among them is the owner of this luxurious gamelodge, the somewhat eccentric and unflappable Italian film maker Andrea Maggi. Over dinner with his guests he tries to explain why he came for a visit but never left.
"I suffer from the African 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 Italians. And with prices starting from 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 lifetime bucket list of places to experience.

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