



# LOCATIONS

South Africa Has What You Need in 2014

By Kevin Kreidemann



Safe House

## More Water-Based Shoots

Cape Town, South Africa has been attracting a regular flow of water-based shoots over the last few years, like pirate series 'Black Sails,' rescue series 'SAF3,' family film 'Free Willy: Escape From Pirate's Cove'; and BAFTA-nominated series like 'Sinking of the Laconia' and 'To The Ends of the Earth.'

Cape Town now offers two dedicated water tanks for filming.

Thanks to 'Black Sails,' Cape Town Film Studios now has a 75x50m water tank, which is 1.2m deep, with an inner pool that is 20x10m and 4.8m deep.

'SAF3' has also left a legacy: a permanent, heated, 30x15m, 3m-deep tank at The Ottery Youth Centre.

With both shows expected to return in 2014, expect more water-based shoots than ever.

"It's been fantastic. We finally have film-friendly, specially-adapted, controlled locations to film all sorts of underwater sequences," says Michèle Spooner of

Marine Scene, a comprehensive marine support services company.

## More Studio Space

Cape Town Film Studios is expected to announce an ambitious studio expansion plan in the near future to keep up with demand, while Anant Singh also has plans for a similar studio to be built in Durban.

Okuhle Media has also invested in Cape Town's first full HD live studio facility, with a 270m2 stage area in a 700m2 studio complex in Observatory. They're shooting their popular youth show 'Hectic Nine-9' there, but are also renting the space to the broader industry.

## South Africa Starring As Itself

'Safe House' changed its location to Cape Town and topped the international box office in 2012. Similarly, last year, 'SAF3' not only doubled Cape Town as Malibu but gave the

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Mad Max

city its own multi-episode arc.

In 2013, Cape Town was voted The Telegraph Travel Awards Favourite City for the second year running, while Lonely Planet named Cape Town the third best city to visit in 2014, saying, "In recent years, the city has received a deluge of accolades paying homage to its undeniable natural beauty. This year the city is destined to get even prettier as it takes on the title of World

Design Capital for 12 inspirational months."

So expect Cape Town to increasingly cameo as itself in international projects shooting here.

### Weak Exchange Rate

The exchange rate is currently at around R10.3 to the dollar, having depreciated by 17% against the US dollar during 2013, according to the South African Government News Agency.

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In October, Bloomberg wrote that they expected the rand to be "tumbling during most of 2014."

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### Shooting Beyond South Africa

In addition to being the ideal location to shoot Africa in Africa, South Africa is increasingly acting as a gateway to the continent, serving as a base for crew and gear for shoots elsewhere ▶



Guinness 'Cloud'

in Africa. For example, 'Mad Max: Fury Road' shot in both South Africa and Namibia, while 'A Good Lie' shot in both South Africa and Kenya. South African companies are even servicing internationally: for example, Juice Film helped 2013 Oscar and Golden Globe nominee 'Kon Tiki' shoot in the Maldives.

### A Film Industry Without SA Locations

Historically, South Africa's film industry has revolved around its locations. This is changing. The Department of Trade and Industry's Post-Production incentive is available to foreign-owned qualifying productions with Qualifying South African Post-Production Expenditure (QSAPPE) of R1.5 million and above, whether or not they shoot in South Africa. In 2012/103, they only approved one post-production, but the number of post-production-only projects should rise in 2014. Similarly, the animation sector seems set for further growth after Triggerfish cracked the international box office with 'Adventures in Zambezia,' which made over \$30m at the global box office, the most money for an African-owned film internationally since Jamie Uys' 'The Gods Must be Crazy' in 1980.

### The Place To Bring Complicated Shoots

Three of Shots' 12 Ad of the Year nominees were filmed in South Africa: Guinness 'Cloud,' Samsung 'King of TV' and Virgin 'Flying in the Face of Ordinary.' In 'King of TV,' Stink's Adam Berg brought a herd of wildebeest, tyrannosuaras rex and an alien invasion to Cape Town city centre to showcase the new Samsung TV, which can be controlled with voice recognition and motion sensors. It's the sort of complex job that top international directors have been bringing to South Africa for peace-of-mind for years.

### Guerrilla Filmmaking

In 2013, South African Johnny Barbuzano directed 'Shotgun Garfunkel,' now in the Guinness Book of Records World as the fastest film ever made, in just 10 days and 12 hours. With the 48 Hour Film Project growing from strength to strength, guerrilla filmmaking is catching on in an industry with more ambition than it has film financing.

### A Centralised Industry

In the Department of Trade and Industry's 2012/2013 report on their rebate spend,

they noted that the Western Cape had 296 shooting weeks, compared to 133 in Gauteng, 20 in Limpopo, 13 in the Northern Cape and less than 10 shooting weeks in the rest of the country. This was a growth of 186 weeks for the Western Cape, compared to decrease of 59 weeks in Mpumalanga, 16 in Gauteng and 13 in KwaZulu-Natal. So the South African film industry is increasingly centralised in Cape Town and Johannesburg. That said, there was a distinct trend towards shooting at South African 'dorps' in 2014, especially for period and science fiction films like 'The Salvation' (Cullinan and Rayton in Gauteng), 'The Giver' (Wellington in The Western Cape) and 'Young Ones' (Springbok in the Northern Cape).

### More Local TV Work

Despite being in 'the golden age of TV' internationally, the South African industry has yet to completely recover from the protracted crises at both the South African Broadcasting Corporation, the country's public broadcaster, and The Department of Communications, which has only just set a new digital migration switch on date of 1 April 2014-six years behind schedule.

But this is all changing, with digital terrestrial television (DTT) expected to lead to more channels, and therefore less reliance on the SABC for work. Last year saw the launch of OpenView, a new, pay-once, HD satellite platform; Mzansi Bioskop, Telemundo, True Movies1 and SABC's 24-hour news channel on DSTV; and four new e.tv channels: eKasi+, eAfrica+, eMovies+, and eToonz. Africa News Network 7 also launched, although the less said about that, the better.

Okuhle's Louise van Hoff hopes that DTT – when it finally arrives – will be a game-changer "as long as the broadcasters actually commission and spend money, unlike TopTV." ◉