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FROM QUELIMANE (VIA CAIA AND MILANGE) TO NACALA (INCL. ILHA DE MOÇAMBIQUE)

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1. NAMPULA (AND MILANJE) TO QUELIMANE (OR VICE VERSA)

Public transport.

Buses leave Nampula for Quelimane at 0500 from the main road near the Nampula station. Sometimes only make it to Mocuba where you will overnight. From Milanje there are irregular 'chapas' which may be pick-ups, trucks, mini-buses or even a trailer behind a tractor – depart when full (way overloaded).

By car

(4x4 not needed if road is dry, but high clearance a must). From Alto Ligonha to Alto Molocùè there are extensive road works, this section should be complete by end 2006 and the entire Nampula to Quelimane road should be all-weather tarmac by end 2007. See 'Quelimane and Milanje to Nampula' below...

Chimuara

(north terminus of the Caia Ferry – a crossing of about 1 - 2km (seasonal) that takes about 15 minutes).

A dusty (or very muddy – season dependent) and dirty little town with the usual line-up of truckers' accommodation in reed and thatch 'casas'. Many truckers' bars and basic restaurants. Going south and miss the ferry? Have a beer or two here (keep vehicle locked and in sight) and then drive back towards Quelimane to one of the small traditional villages, find the school or church, ask permission and camp. Clouds of mosquitoes here all year round. As with Caia, your mobile phone will work around here, but not for more than a couple of kilometres from the crossing if going north. Going south there is reception intermittently all the way to Gorongosa Town and beyond.

2. CHINDE AND THE ZAMBEZI DELTA

Getting to Chinde

Short of Chartering a plane from Beira and landing on Chinde's 800m grass airstrip, the best way to get here is on the small and dilapidated river barge that does the Marromeu – Chinde stretch irregularly (usually once per week). It departs at 0530 sharp and on the upstream leg you may have to overnight at Luabo.

Chinde

The fact that Chinde exists at all recalls a time when the Zambezi river was still an important highway into Africa, and a port was needed at it's mouth from where the Union Castle Line (amongst others) operated small coasters. Building on the shifting islands of a delta is never a good idea as evidence by the fact that the first town of Chinde literally fell into the sea, the banks of the Zambezi eroded to such an extent that the town had to be relocated further inland. Then, on February 24, 1922, a cyclone struck the coast and the second town was virtually destroyed, with 55 people drowned and 10 stern-wheel steamers wrecked. The town is so isolated that it was left completely untouched by the civil war and it is fascinating to walk down the main Avenida and to see the grand old mansions with there roofs and windows still intact. Today, the shore of the town is littered with more than 30 wrecks, a surreal ships' graveyard.

Chinde Accommodation.

Ask about the '*Casa Visitar*' or Governor's guesthouse, but it would be better to ask around for a suitable place to pitch your tent. You will need permission from the *Administração* if you want to avoid hassles from the police when camping.

Zambezi Delta

The Zambezi delta's Wattled Crane population is an indicator species for many of the changes that have come to the Zambezi delta and really to the whole of the lower Zambezi since the river was blocked by the Kariba and Cahora Bassa walls. The Wattled Crane is dependent on the annual floods in two different ways - their breeding productivity - their annual breeding is timed to the floods so that they breed during peak floods and raise their chicks on the pulse of life that grows after the peak floods occur; also their main food source which are the underground tubers of sedges the underground growing rhizomes of sedge species, that food source is completely dependent on the annual flood pulse on both the wet season and the dry season that are pronounced. As those past floods have now been moderated by the construction of the dams at Kariba and Cahora Bassa (and perhaps in the future at Mepanda Uncua upstream of Tete), the food source and the breeding stimulus for the cranes is disappearing. The cranes are large and charismatic and are very well known among local villagers, they stand in stark contrast to the smaller species that no-one knows about in the system - small birds that are out in the floodplain that no-one ever sees.

Zero

Just a few kilometres north of Chimuara (Caia Ferry) there is a little village which has a couple of claims to fame. Firstly it's the turn-off the Shire Ferry at Pinda via Morrumbala as well as the Mutarara-Sena bridge, the alternative route if the Caia ferry has a long queue or is Kaput, and secondly I like arriving there, stopping, stretching, waving to the admiring group that inevitably gathers, then making a cup of tea and saying to my companions: 'Back to Zero, nowhere but up from here'. Sounded great at the time. Oh and if you turn right at Zero you can go to Mopeia (opposite which is Chupanga where Mary Moffat Livingstone lies buried). Mopeia is about 5km from the Zambezi and was the main crossing point during the 78-92 civil war.

Nicoadala

Quite a busy little town at the Mocuba/Quelimane junction with 24-hour fuel (no unleaded – yet), a fresh produce market, good restaurants (wait an hour for basic meals) and mobile phone reception.

3. QUELIMANE (KILLI-MAINE)

Note that between 10 and 14 November of 2006, Frelimo, Mozambique's ruling party will hold it's Ninth Frelimo Congress in Quelimane. I would avoid the town during this period unless you are a journalist as all of the available accommodation will be fully booked.

Quelimane, the capital city of Zambezi province is a river port of about 200 000 people located on the Rio Cua Cua (also called *Rio dos Bons Sinais*) about 20km upstream of the meandering river's mouth. The name *Rio dos Bons Sinais* (River of Good Omens) is attributed to the great Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, who reached the river on January 25, 1498 and found people dressed in Arab-style clothing (the town had long been a Swahili trading outpost) indicating this route would indeed take them to India.

There are two **Internet Cafés** in Quelimane, the best is 'MBC' located on Av. Josina Machel next to Quelimane's very own 'Bollywood cinema'. There is also good local music on offer – an excellent band called *Garimpeiros* (gold-panners) as well as *Capoeira* dancing (Brazilian mock fight dancing) about once a month on a Friday night at *Casa Cultura*. Good cell phone reception.

Getting to Quelimane

(by road anyway) involves an 80km (40km there and 40km back) diversion on good tar from the main road at Nicoadala, and because it is not on the coast and is not very 'picturesque' I hear that many folks think that this little busy town is 'not worth it'.

Do remember however that, if Nicoadala's only fuel station is dry you will have to turn in to Quelimane as your next reliable fuel will be in Nampula (if going north), and in Gondola (if going south). There is also excellent mobile phone reception, international public phones, Internet Café called MBC located on Avenida Josina Machel next to the 'Bollywood' cinema, supermarkets – best is *Casa das Frutas* on Av. da Resistência opposite World Vision (it would be) - for imported stuff and 'lower' prices – AND YOU CAN PAY WITH VISA! Also ATM's and banks (I recommend the Standard Bank), a provincial airport (scheduled flights with LAM and Air Corridor but no air charter available), good restaurants (a Pizzeria included) and, wait for it, less tourists than the central Sahara on a quiet day.

After Inhambane, Quelimane just could be next on my 'Interesting Towns of Mozambique' list basically because it is so isolated and 'off-beat', and always has been. Get up early and wander around the streets to look at the unusual buildings and the river before the heat picks up and drives you into one of the air-conditioned cafés or to Zalala beach. There is also a good band called "*Garimpeiros*" and *Capoeira* (Brazilian mock fight) dancing about once a month on a Friday night at *Casa Cultura*.

My first visit to Quelimane was from Beira in 1992 on a smuggler's boat called 'Xanadu' en-route to Pemba and the Comoro Islands, which we never did manage to get to. The luckless Kiwi and South African crew never actually managed to smuggle anything anywhere in the end, and Xanadu was finally scuppered in Nacala Bay.

Due to the ravages of the civil war, most of the town's, and surrounding countryside's population had fled to Malawi leaving it remarkably clean but incredibly run-down with the only commercial activities being Aid distribution and, yes, smuggling. I stayed then with an ex German WWII Naval Captain who had moved in with a local lady and had self-painted portraits of the various warships that he had served on proudly displayed on the walls.

I joined a 'Save The Children Fund' (SCF) expedition Landrover trip which passed burned out convoys where skeletons spilled from truck cabs, south to Mopeia on the banks of the Zambezi where I walked the 10km to the river in oppressive heat, drank some of the Zambezi and had an almost instant dose of Giardia on the way back. Mopeia was then at the main crossing point for travellers going south or north – the route from Zero to Caia was blocked by broken bridges and landmines until about 1994 when it was reopened.

My next visit was in 1993 courtesy of a United Nations plane during the preparations for Mozambique's first democratic elections, and I was taken to the 1 Junho hotel near the riverfront and met a couple of Australians doing drugs and the local teenage girls and looking for steam boats. I mention this only because Mozambique has long been the refuge for brigands, pirates and other nefarious n'er-do-wells (yours truly not excluded), and also because one of those very Ozzies fell off a boat near Bazaruto a couple of year's ago, and is now just another skeleton in the metaphorical 'Davey Jones' Locker'.

My latest visit to Quelimane was in mid 2005 during our 'Best of Mozambique' trip and we found it to be very busy and certainly improving (roads resurfaced, a bit of paint around. There is now at least one or two very decent and reasonably priced places to overnight (such as Hotel Flamingo), and a few good places to eat – should you decide that the long slog to Nampula or places south can wait for just one more day. Don't miss a movie in the air-conditioned cinema – an experience directly from the 'frivolous fifties' (but with Indian 'Bollywood' movies, no Hepburn or Bogart here).

Quelimane's Own Travel and Tour Agency

Zambézia Travels

Av. Samora Machel, Predio da Boror, BP 89. Tel: + 258 24 21 6174, Mobile: + 258 82 55 75 830, Email: zambeziatravels@teledata.mz Website: www.zambezia.ch Based near to the Hotel Chuabo and offers accommodation and travel bookings as well as tours and treks to the places in the surrounding region such as Pebane beach, the Zambezi delta the tea plantations. These folk have often helped me out with excellent advice and will certainly bend over backwards to assist you too.

Flights to Quelimane

Firstly, let's get the dilemma of getting a taxi from the airport to town (or vice versa) out of the way. The following come highly recommended: (note that the initial '0' for mobile phone numbers has now been dropped throughout the country): Mahomed: 82 521 4050, Camilo: 82 597 5450.

Both Air Corridor <http://www.flyaircorridor.com/> (slow website and often not working), and Linhas Aéreas de Moçambique (LAM), www.lam.co.za (click on 'Horário-Rotas' and then download the routes and timetable in PDF format), offer flights to Quelimane. LAM has daily flights (except for Thursdays) to and from Quelimane via Maputo and most of the other provincial capitals. Air Corridor's booking system (LAM's is not much better) has not yet proved reliable, so reconfirm as often as you can. All flights are met by sedan-taxis and the going rate to the town centre, some 11km away, is Mt400 000, but you could be asked for much more. Flight timetables are available on the Air Corridor website.

Quelimane by Road

Although Quelimane has long been isolated by the lack of decent road links, this has been improved by the completion of the Inchope to Caia highway, the upgrading of the Caia Ferries (an \$80 million bridge is due for completion by 2008), and the resurfacing of Nicoadala to Quelimane, has drastically improved access from the south. From the north (Nampula), and from the west (Malawi via Mulanje/Milange), the roads are still in very poor condition (4WD only during the rains), but upgrades are continuing, and the Alto Ligonha to Namaccura upgrade is due to be completed by the end of 2007.

Note that between Alto Molocúè and Mocuba there are at least half a dozen detours from the main road down to old bridges (someone forgot to complete the new ones), some are not clearly marked so keep a wary eye out up ahead or you could just launch yourself into some river or other, and the nearest help will be days away.

The Quelimane-Nampula Road

From Caia, as far as Namacurra (a little outpost without a fuel station), the road has been re-tarred, as has the 37km (23-mile) link from Nicoadala to and from the main road to Quelimane. In Mocuba, you'll find an enigmatic signpost pointing to various places, none of which is Alto Molocúè, your next objective. Despite sometimes being virtually cut off from the south due to the flooding Zambezi preventing access to the Caia ferry, Mocuba is surprisingly busy, with two service stations (one on the main road in town, and the other as you leave on the Quelimane side at the turn-off to Milange), an Olympic-size public swimming bath and a vast, open-air Mercado.

If going North:

There are already extensive road works between Alto Ligonha and Alto Molocue, and from there south to Namacurra the road is due to be redone during 2007. Obviously some of the information given below will be outdated very soon.

Thanks for this info to Anna and family from Malawi who did this route during April of 2006 and reported back on the mozguide forum.

Nampula – Mocuba – Milange (Malawi border) route description

Note that the distance (km) in brackets is (FROM) Nampula, and the other distance (km – adjacent or underneath) is FROM Milange – both via Mocuba.

If coming from Milange or from Mocuba, read the table from end to beginning.

(0) 554:	TO: (Nampula: 0km) Milange: 554km.
(50) 504:	Potholes
(72) 482:	Murrupula Cathedral and turn-off.
(93) 461:	Lighona River Bridge. Tarmac begins.
(94) 460:	Deviation begins onto graded road. Speed reduced from 100kph to 50/60kph (tarmac laid on new road)
(107) 447:	Deviation ends (tarmac ends on new road). Older tarmac with potholes.
(112) 442:	Deviation (road graded).
(114) 440:	Water on deviation road (passable without 4x4 unless during heavy rain)
(120) 434:	Alto Ligonha turn-off.
(130) 424:	Deviation ends/begins. Good graded road.
(135 – 137)	Deviation ends/begins.
417 – 419:	Deviation ends/begins.
(138 – 139)	Deviation
416 – 417	Deviation
(144) 410	End/beginning of main road works. Old graded road.
(192) 362	About 192km from Nampula road forks. Or 362 from Milanje. Both go to Alto Molocue but take left fork (right if from Milange) has best road.
(196) 358	Alto Molocué - tarmac.
(207) 347	Broken tarmac (quite good)
(223) 331	Broken tarmac (not good)
(236-238)	Deviation then good tarmac
318 - 316	Deviation then good tarmac
(250) 304	Deviation then good tarmac
(251) 303	Bad potholes
(253) 301	Good tarmac
(270) 284	Deviation
(276) 278	Good tarmac and 2 small deviations
(307) 247	Very potholed tarmac
(334) 220	Mugeba
(369) 185	Mocuba
(373) 181	Mocuba Filling Station/ Turn off for Milange. Graded road.
(408) 146	Fork important if coming from Milange.
(483) 71	Fork important if coming from Milange.
(550) 4	Milange Town
(554) 0	Milange Border Post
TO:	(Nampula: 554km), Milange 0km.

So you can see from the above route details that the 268km (162 miles) of the EN104 between Mocuba and Alto Ligonha via Alto Molocué appear benign at first, but watch out! A little after the turn-off to Errego, 100km (62 miles) out of Mocuba, there is a sudden deviation (the first of four or five – some may have been repaired) to the left, the smooth (or potholed) tarmac road continuing on to an abrupt dead end. If you're driving at night, you may discover this anomaly by ending nose-first in mud, or worse! If you zero your trip-meter or odometer at Mocuba, the deviations are at 100km (62 miles), 125km (78 miles), 140km (87 miles), 171km (106 miles) and at 277km (173 miles). To avoid any disasters on this route, keep looking well ahead: bush flattened on the roadside by vehicles constantly having to take evasive action is an indication of imminent surface problems such as major potholes or a completely destroyed length of road. Branches of trees placed in the road are the local version of the red warning triangles indicating a broken down vehicle or accident ahead.

Unleaded Petrol (*Gasolina sem Plumbo*):

Motorists note that, while the government intends to phase out leaded by the end of 2006, presently there is no unleaded petrol (*Gasolina sem Plumbo*) available in Quelimane, while diesel and leaded petrol are usually available 24 hours. Regarding vehicle spares and repairs, Toyota, Isuzu, Nissan and Landrover have agents which stock many parts, but if you need serious mechanical work done, spares will probably have to be flown in and make sure that you supervise it closely or do it yourself. Should you fall ill in or near Quelimane note that there is no private medical care and that the public hospitals are really bad, unless you have uncomplicated malaria which they can treat quite competently. There are well-stocked pharmacies where you can buy scheduled drugs such as antibiotics over the counter, but you must know what to ask for, or they will sell you something strong enough to stun an elephant. Aside from being evacuated by air from Quelimane's provincial airport (can take large jets), the nearest decent hospital is in Blantyre, Malawi which is at least 7 hours away by road.

Vehicle's are available for hire (enquire via Hotel Flamingo) but this is very expensive so if you only need to get around town, or take the odd trip to Zalala beach to enjoy the breezes, it may be a good idea to charter one of the local taxis for a day or two at an extremely negotiable rate – ask Hotel Flamingo for assistance (see below).

Quelimane From the Sea

Coasters and trawlers do visit the port for fuel and supplies on an irregular basis, but there is certainly no passenger boat service to or from Quelimane at present. There are also no sport-fishing boats present in the area.

Quelimane by Public Transport.

There are buses daily from Nampula to Quelimane, the Grupo Mecula bus takes about nine hours to reach Mocuba. From Mocuba it is another six hours to the border at Milange, and 2-3 hours to Quelimane. Presently, due to the bad condition of stretches of the road, buses often overnight in Mocuba where you can find a bed at *Pensão Cruzeiro* which is in the centre of town on the main road, or at *O Sítio* which is on the town's other main road – Avenida da Junta. If coming from the south, the buses from Chimoio may make it across the Zambezi River before dark, and you will probably arrive in Quelimane at around 19h00. The buses from Beira often do not get across the Zambezi on the same day and you may have to overnight at the ferry terminus near Caia which is mosquito – heaven so carry a small tent or mosquito net. Many buses do not do the crossing so you may have to cross by yourself (many small boats beside the ferry) at Caia and then catch another bus or *chapa* from Chimuara to Quelimane.

Buses for all stops along the E.N.1 (the main road) arrive and depart in Quelimane from *Romoza* on Avenida Eduardo Mondlane, next to the BP Service Station. If going south, these buses are the medium-sized non air-conditioned type, as the large luxury-types still do not brave the Zambezi ferry. Buses depart from 0500 onwards so make sure that you have a good alarm clock or sleep with the locals near the terminus. (Why does that not sound quite right?)

Quelimane's crazy street numbering system

If you can't find or perhaps make any sense of the way addresses are numbered in Quelimane, join the club. The city fathers apparently long ago decreed that your address depends on how far away (in metres) your location is from the beginning of the street (wherever that may be).

Accommodation in Quelimane

While I used to rate *Pensão Ideal* quite highly, if it has space, the Private Guesthouse listed below may be the backpacker's best bet. I have also previously stayed at *Hotel Zambeze* (avoid like the plague), at *Hotel Chuabo* (overpriced, but actually very comfortable) and at *Hotel Primeiro de Junho* (bearable but not great), the newly opened *Hotel Flamingo* is probably the best place to stay in town right now.

Hotel Flamingo

Swimming pool, plenty of secure parking. 19 air-conditioned en-suite rooms with DSTV, mini-bar, phone and internet connection. 25-seater conference centre and gymnasium. Well-managed and certainly my choice for anyone needing to stay in town for a few days.

Location: On Avenida I (*Primeiro*) Junho directly across from the municipal buildings - i.e. across from *Praça dos Heróis* (Hero's Square) and next to a Hardware store called Consemp.

Contact: Tel: + 258 24 21 5602. Fax: +258 24 25 5023 (PREFERRED OPTION),

Email: grillo13@virconn.com

Rates: US\$50 pp sharing, \$10 single supplement. English breakfast included.

Private Guesthouse

Really excellent value – backpackers take note! Well located in a very quiet and easy to access zone. Comfortable bedrooms with private showers and air conditioner.

Location: 1510 Avenida 7 de Setembro.

Contact: Mobile: + 82 329 3570 (Mr. Razul) or + 82 282 8680 (Mrs. Razul).

Rates: Mt550 000 per double room (double bed) or Mt500 000 double (two single beds).

Pensão Roma

This has closed as the previous owners have now opened Hotel Flaming (see above).

Residencial Milénio

In a large mansion with nice gardens. En-suite rooms with fans, no bar or restaurant.

Hotel Chuabo

A real throwback to the 'fifties with ornate entrance hall and marble stairs. The rooms and suites are large, but a little threadbare. Still run by the original family, but was state owned until recently but now it has been privatized so extensive renovations are promised which may mean that the Chuabo could close for a while.

Location: Central on Av. Samora Machel - one block from the riverfront.

Tel: + 258 24 213 181

Fax: + 258 24 213 181

Rates: US\$80 pp.

Hotel Primeiro de Julho

Mentioned mainly for nostalgic reasons as I stayed here during 1993 when Mozambique was just beginning its process of rebirth. Met a couple of Aussie blokes looking for steam engines and sniffing things and taking advantage of underage girls. One drowned near Bazaruto a few years ago. Pretty grubby now with no running water, but the staff will try their best to make your stay comfortable. They make good omelettes too.

Location: Corner of Av. Filipe Samuel Magaia and Av. Samora Machel opposite the *piscina* (swimming pool).

Contact: Tel. + 258 (24) 213067

Rates: Mt350 000 pp.

Pensão Ideal

Also under the original management from the Portuguese days. Good evening meals too if you give the manager a few hour's notice.

Location: On Av. Filipe Samuel Magaia, close to the cathedral.

Contact: Tel. + 258 (24) 212731

Rates: Mt450 000 pp

Eating in Quelimane.

Pizzeria Romana

Tel: +258 (0) 24 215602, mobile: + 258 (0) 24 82 1302610

Great pizzas and other Italian dishes accompanied by good variety of wines and beers. Fairly priced. Next to the railway station (*Estação*).

Restaurante/Bar Refeba

On the 'Marginal' overlooking the river so a good bet for sundowners. Slow service but if you order what the waiter advises (*Prato do dia*), you usually get a good meal.

Pastelaria e Salão de Chá Rivieira

On Av. Samora Machel under the Hotel Primeiro de Julho. Air-conditioned, good Indian/Moz food. Halaal so no alcohol on offer.

Casa de Gelados Tip –Top

on Av. 1 de Julho. Ice cream.

Bar da Piscina o Fresquinho

At the swimming pool on Av. Filipe Samuel Magaia opposite the Hotel Primeiro de Julho. Young local crowd hang out here. Good place for a few beers and a snack near the river.

Restaurante Bar Mira Amor

(formerly Kassi-Kassi) at Praia da Zalala 35km up the coast from Quelimane where there are many small reed and thatch restaurants, most of which are open on weekends when the beach becomes quite festive and busy. Buy your own fish and other seafood from the beach, and for a fee, it they will prepare it with chips and salad for you.

4. ZAMBEZI DELTA

Pebane

Quite an isolated little port as if coming from the north along the coast, there is no way to get across the Ligonha river just south of Moma, and also the main road swings 200km inland away from Pebane after Quelimane.

Due to the influence of the main rivers in the area (not the least the grand old Zambezi), the sea is usually a little dirty, but the waves are good for surfing and this town has retained some of that innocence and timelessness that so attracted me to Mozambique in the first place. Drive from Quelimane along the EN7 towards the EN1 you will return to the T-Junction at Nicoadala, bear right here and head for Namacurra on a tar road where you'll find another T-Junction – right for Maganja da Costa (Olinga) and left for Mocuba. Take the left to Mocuba as this route is better and then carry on (on dirt) to Malei where there is a right turn to Maganja da Costa (Olinga) through Cariua and then Maganja (Olinga). Continue on past Mucubela and through some stunning coconut plantations (all on dirt) and you will arrive at Pebane.

Complexo Jamayma

On the LHS of the main Avenida on the way out of town to the north. Basic rooms for Mt400 000 pp - popular with local travellers. If you are hungry, give the chef a good couple of hours warning, or take a walk back to Pensão Pebane, my own recommendation. food here will be

basic but good. The usual option is grilled or fried fish with rice or chips and salad. On weekends there is a busy and popular disco next door.

Pensão Pebane

Central, next to a 5-story block of flats (apartments).

If you are looking for somewhere in Pebane that serves the giant Lobster (Lagosta) that Pebane is famous for, purchase your own from the beach and bring them here to be prepared for you. We didn't have our own lobster to present for cooking and so ordered and then wandered around for 3 hours as it appears meals are only served at usual meal times – worth it in the end. Basic stuffy but clean rooms for Mt350 000 pp, and the staff here do try to please.

Ponta Matirre

(5km from Pebane).

There is a stockade here where the track meets the beach with camping area, covered cooking/eating structure and basic ablutions. We paid Mt150 000 pp.

The Lighthouse

The 13 m (43 ft) square skeletal tower lighthouse with lantern and gallery, painted with red and white horizontal bands was built in 1913. It is still active has a focal plane of 50 m (164 ft) and produces three white flashes, in a 2+1 pattern, every 12 s. Keeper's house, described in NGA as a signal station. The light lists suggest that the original tower survives at this station, but we need confirmation of this. Located on a headland called Ponta Matirre to the east of the entrance to the bay of Pebane, a few minutes walk from the stockade.

Pebane Airfield

A grass airstrip just a few kilometres out of town, the code is PEB, the length is 800metres (2500ft), and the coordinates are: Latitude: 17° 15' 0" S. Longitude: 38° 11' 0" E.

Sport Fishing from Ilha do Fogo.

We met up with a couple of South Africans who were building a few cabins to be used as a base for ski-boat trips to Fogo Island. Did not see their place but when you arrive, ask around for the 'Sul Africanos'.

Reserva de Caça do Gilé (Hunting Reserve).

At 2100km² in size, it's surprising that this reserve is not better known, and has no tourism infrastructure. Reserva de Gilé is a relatively remote and completely unpopulated (by humans) reserve with good herds of elephant, buffalo, antelope and few prides of lion and cheetah. There is a project to redevelop the infrastructure but until this is implemented there is a single access road (between Pebane and Gilé town) and no facilities for visitors. Camping is allowed. An entrance and overnight fee is probably payable. Easiest access is via Pebane but the track from Alto Ligonha to Gilé town has been reopened to 4x4 traffic. It is recommended that this reserve be visited during the dry season (May to November) only and note that game viewing will be very difficult until around August as the bush is usually very dense after the rains.

Parque Nacional das Ilhas Primarias e Secundarias.

The Mozambican Tourism Ministry (MICTUR) is set to establish a new national park covering the districts of Pebane, in the central Zambézia, Moma and Angoche in the northern Nampula province, the new "National Park of the 'Ilhas Primarias e Secundarias' will cover an area estimated at 8,226 square kilometres.

Raimundo Matusse, a wildlife expert with the Tourism Ministry, said that they had already identified the boundaries of what is to be the ninth National Park in Mozambique. Matusse said that a multi-sectorial team, which includes experts from the Tourism, Transport and Communications, Mineral Resources, Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, and State Administration Ministries, Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) and the WWF (World Wildlife Foundation), has already visited the region to conduct preliminary studies on socio-economic and environmental impact of the park.

Matusse explained that the results of the study, which should be completed by September 2006, will guide the government's decision whether or not to declare the area a National Park. (Ah ha! – Ed).

Mocuba

Being at the junction of Mozambique's main arterial road (E.N.1) and the road from Malawi (via Mulanje/Milange), and at the main crossing over the Licungo river, Mocuba is a fairly strategic place with a large sprawling open-air market, two fuel stations (one on the main road in town, the other on the road leading to Quelimane at the turn-off to Milanje - both sometimes run dry), restaurants and accommodation. There is also Banco Austral where you can exchange your US\$ or SA Rands for Meticaís. Note that exchanging more than enough to get you to a bank is not recommended anywhere in Mozambique as it is likely that you will be conned and the rates are anyway best at the banks and bureaux.

Bar O Sítio

On Avenida da Junta which is Mocuba's 'other' main road. Nothing fancy here, but surprisingly the rooms are air-conditioned - usual bucket showers, toilets sometimes flush, but clean, friendly with cold refreshments and good food if you can wait for an hour. My choice when in Mocuba. Mt300 000 pp.

Hotel Restaurante Cruzeiro

Av. Eduardo Mondlane. Tel: + 258-04-810184

A large pink building right in the centre of town. Some rooms have en-suite toilets/showers but usually no running water. Mt450 000 pp.

Pensão São Cristovão

On Avenida Eduardo Mondlane, a little cheaper and more basic than Cruzeiro.

Mutarara and the Dona Anna Bridge

An alternative (if coming from the north) to using the Caia – Chimuará ferry is to go via Zero, Morrumbala, Pinda and the Chipanga ferry to Mutarara and the Dona Anna bridge over the Zambezi, or (if coming from the south) to turn into Caia and carry on up to Vila da Sena which is on the south bank of the Dona Anna bridge. When completed in 1934, the Dona Anna was, at 4,2km (I re-measured it in 2005) the world's longest rail bridge, and it is still the longest in Africa. In 1997 it was converted for road traffic but, as the Beira to Moatize rail route is now being renovated, by the end of 2007 it could be back to rail use exclusively again, and as the Caia-Chimuará bridge is only due for completion in 2008, the ferries could again be the only way to cross the Zambezi downstream of Tete.

Note that the road surface between the Shire ferry and Mutarara is black cotton soil which becomes impossibly slimy when wet, certainly only just passable by skilfully driven 4x4's during and after any rain.

Pensão Mira Zambeze

In Mutarara, just a couple of hundred metres upstream of the bridge there is a somewhat threadbare but otherwise quite nice little pensão called Mira Zambeze which has basic rooms for about Mt350 000 pp. Meals and cold drinks (beer etc) can also be served. The front veranda, with views over the Zambezi and the bridge, is probably one of the best places from which to watch the sun go down in Mozambique.

The Dona Anna Rail Bridge

At present it is being used for motor traffic and because it is wide enough for a single lane only, traffic is regulated by allowing one-way flow which is changed every hour, on the hour. If you arrive at the wrong time, you may have to wait up to an hour here. What we have done in the past is to leave the driver with the vehicle while the rest of the party walk across the bridge on the pedestrian walkway which takes about an hour and by then the driver will be waiting at the other end.

Milange (Malawi border close to Mulanje)

Note that the border hours are 0600 – 1800. A small town in a pretty setting – has a bank, two places to stay, and a couple of basic restaurants. Try Pensão Milange or Pensão Lili. Ask about the Forte de Milange (fort) called 'Fortaleza' Dom Carlosé that was built by the Portuguese to assert their domination over this area in the face of British expansion from Niassaland (now Malawi). Not sure when it was built or where it is.

Raging rapids of the Rio Lugela

For Kayakers, and perhaps rafters, there are some scary rapids and cascades on the Lugela river near to the villages of Munhamade and Tacuane in the Lugela district of Zambézia province.

Gurué

Birders have long been attracted to the nearby forests of Monte Namúli. Gurué is perched in a mountainous zone which includes the second highest (Binga at 2436m is the highest) mountain in Mozambique, Monte Namúli whose granite domes suddenly tower at an altitude of 2420m over the vast Mozambican plain. According to a recent University of Cape Town scientific expedition "in a land of many natural treasures, Namúli is the jewel in the crown" and "a high-priority site for birds in Africa".

Pensão Gurué

I know that an Austrian called Peter Pichler did lease this Inn for quite a few years hoping to make it into a model eco-lodge, but sadly it did not turn into a viable operation and I recently spoke to Peter over the phone where he now works in Johannesburg. Reports from 2006 have called Pensão Gurué a 'dump that overcharges' and also "gritty" with no-one able or willing to assist with trips to the mountains. I suggest that you email Peter: peter.pichler@mail.austria.com and ask him in person what the situation is, he should at least be able to give you general info and advice.

Motel Monte Verde

If you arrive in town and don't like the Pensão, take a look at nearby Motel Monte Verde which might just be nicer. You should pay about Mt300 000 per person at either option in Gurué.

Birding at Monte Namúli

Apologies in advance to the author of this 2003 report, but I cannot locate your details to credit you.

Sunday 26 October 2003

"From there I continued north off the main road to Errego and then on to Gurué. Amazingly, this was also recently tarred, so it was an easy drive, and I arrived in Gurué at around mid-day. The afternoon was spent trying to negotiate for a guide so I could go up Mt Namúli searching for the endemic Namúli Apalis, which only occurs here. Sadly Peter - the owner of the Pensão Gurué - was in Austria, so it was quite hard to find a suitable guide, but I ended up employing Mike and Fernzalo - the latter who proved to actually know what he was doing. Spent the afternoon recuperating after the long drive - by now I had covered about 2 500 km. Up to this point I had not been seriously bird watching, so only identified a few species.

Monday 27 October 2003

Mike woke me at 04h50 - which was about 10 minutes before sunrise, and by 05h00 we were off. The road to the mountain was not easy to find without a guide, and was not in perfect condition, but a Landrover or Landcruiser could handle it quite easily. It took about 1½ hours to reach the "campsite" below the Ukalini forest, so we were there by about 06h30. It only took 5 minutes to find the local "President" (*chefe*) who gave us permission to climb the mountain, for which he wanted M 300 000 for the day trip. This was about \$15, and seemed very reasonable and sensible, since it ensured that the local people did gain some benefit from the survival of the forest.

While waiting to see the President, Cholo Alethes were calling incessantly, which was good to hear, as their other strong-hold on Thyolo Mountain in Malawi has now been totally deforested, so presumably eliminating this species from that area. We spent about 1½ hours walking up to the forest, having made the mistake of driving a bit further up the road to the next hill. This delayed us in reaching the forest, and also made the walk harder. Anyway, by 8h30 we were in the forest, and it didn't take long to track down one of the local special birds - the Dapple-Throat. Several other local species were found, and then after a surprisingly long time, I found the Namúli Apalis - a bird well worth the trek. Since I had seen all I had hoped to, we returned back to the Landrover, and reached Gurué by 14h00.

Casa dos Noivos (House of Newly-weds)

On various occasions I have been told of a special secluded spot once (and perhaps even now) favoured by local honeymooners and researchers in need of seclusion and privacy. Ask around when you get to Gurué, and if you find something special don't tell anyone.

Alto Molocúè

You might get cell phone reception (tower is under construction) and (usually) fuel here. Situated a strategic 350km from Quelimane and 200km from Nampula amongst mountains ranging in altitude from 1000m to 1300m, during colonial times this little trading centre must have been an idyllic refuge from the sweltering summer heat of the coastal lowlands. I think that Alto Molocúè could be rated as one of Mozambique's most unpleasant towns, and certainly if you arrive around midnight (as I have done on three occasions), and you need a clean, quiet and comfortable place to lay your weary head, you will probably resolve never to stop there again. On the other hand, it was only during my 1999 trip with Getaway Magazine www.getawaytoafrica.com when I was charged with looking after more than just myself (I usually travel with self-sufficient people), that I really didn't enjoy the experience.

My other two visits to (or transits through) Alto Molocúè were during 1995 and 2003. In 1995 very few tourists were doing this route, and certainly no one else in a '72 VW Kombi Bus. I was with a friend, my brother, his girlfriend and 200 litre drum full of Naartjies (Tangerines or *Tangerinas*) that we had bought near Maxixe and which had already sustained us for ten days. We had left Zalala beach (25km north of Quelimane) at 0500 that morning but because the road was then still sliced apart by stretches of kilometres of half-filled in trenches (a relic of the civil war), our average speed was reduced to 20km/h. I changed gear so often in the old bus that by the time we eventually got to Pemba, the damper joint on the gearbox linkage shaft was completely worn out and I had to manufacture a replacement which in fact lasted all 3500km back to Joburg and beyond.

So it was an exhausted and bedraggled bunch that rumbled to a halt in front of Pensão Tambe Uone at something to midnight, and occupied one of the threadbare rooms. The guard had been fast asleep, but he, probably galvanized by the spectacle of the establishment's first foreign visitors in fifteen years, decided we needed special attention and he quickly produced bucketfuls of hot water for our showers, and bread, papaya and bananas for our stomachs. The night was as dark and smelly as a gorilla's armpit, but not peaceful – it appeared that most of the town's population slept outside of the pensão, and that truck drivers needed to keep their engine's running, giving it a good revving every few minutes. Breakfast was actually pretty good, but we, sadly could not tarry as another 16-hour day in a bent-shouldered bus lay ahead.

My latest experience of Alto (apart from what my contacts in Quelimane and Nampula told me yesterday), was a few years back when a group of us under the banner of the Exploration Society of Southern Africa (ESSA www.explorationsociety.org) arrived very late, this time in a nice new Landover which actually covered the Quelimane – Alto Molocúè leg in about the same time as my bus, but with far more bump and grind. This time we were prepared and, after helping the *guarda* to haul up the warm shower water, we went around the back to the open air kitchen and drank a few beers with the locals while preparing a truly memorable meal which we ate overlooking the cascading Molocúè River. This time we pitched our tents on the flat roof, as had been done on the Getaway trip.

So when in Alto M. what to do? Well now the road construction company may have left the Pousada São António, which is also just off the town square near where the road leaves if heading south, so you could look in there, but I would camp ten or twenty k's before or after the town, at my usual choice of a church or school at one of the many little traditional (straw and mud) villages.

Accommodation in Alto Molocúè.

Pensão Tambe Uone

Don't even think about it unless someone has spent a lot of money doing it up. I have stayed here twice, on the first occasion for a few hours during which I sat with the '*embragado*' (servant) and drank coffee listening to the tumbling Molocue river until morning and on the second I pitched tent on the roof. Unforgettable.

Pousada Santo (São) António

Probably your best-bet if not occupied by contractors. Clean, fans, running water and a nice restaurant. Mt250 000 – 350 000 per person.

Esplanada Bela Vista – ask around for this place if the Santo António does not appeal.

Alto Ligonha

Not much to recommend this village apart from the fact it is about here that the tarmac either begins if heading to Nampula, or ends if heading in the opposite direction. Pretty views of the hills from hereabouts.

Murrupula

When I first experienced Murrupula with its huge Gothic/Victorian Cathedral (you can't miss it, it there on the RHS as you arrive and the Bishopric is over the road, it was a mysterious misty evening. The Cathedral loomed out of the gloom and I pulled the old VW bus over for a better look as well as to ask whether we could sleep there. The watchman mistook me for a priest and so offered us the guesthouse for the night – he realized his mistake in the morning but was really nice about the whole thing. The cathedral has now been renovated to a certain degree and it's really worth a look inside – it has one of the most impressive vaulted ceilings I have ever seen. It's just 70km south from Nampula.

5. NAMPULA

Getting to Nampula

By Air: Both LAM and Air Corridor have regular flights to Nampula. See www.lam.co.mz and www.flyaircorridor.com I hope that they have got their websites to work properly by now.

By Bus:

From Pemba it's about 6 hours (departing as early as 0400!) with Grupo Mecula, from Nacala and Ilha de Moçambique, 2hrs on a 'Chapa'.

From Malawi (Mandimba/Chiponde or Entre Lagos/Nayuchi) and Lichinga, there are regular buses and chapas from Lichinga to Mandimba, but less regular from there to Cuamba from where during the rains (unless in a 4x4) your only option may be the thrice-weekly (should be – departing 0430) **Cuamba – Nampula (and vice versa) trains**. 3rd class is only for the (fool) hardy – I would opt for the 1st class carriage which has air-con and half-decent toilets.

From the south (Caia, Quelimane, Mocuba and Milange): Buses, trucks and chapas do the Caia to Quelimane (and Mocuba) run while the buses from Quelimane depart

By Train: Appears to be much confusion and perhaps disinformation regarding the Cuamba-Nampula (and other direction) trains. Firstly there is no passenger train service between the Nayuchi/Entre Lagos border and Cuamba or between Lichinga and Cuamba. Also no passenger coaches on the Nacala – Nampula (or vice versa) trains.

The Cuamba To Nampula (Or Vice Versa) Train.

Note that there are no passenger trains between Cuamba and Entre Lagos/Nayuchi (Malawi) or between Cuamba and Lichinga. In Malawi there is a passenger service from Balaka near Liwonde to Nayuchi. 'Chapas' do the Entre Lagos – Cuamba link.

Thanks once again to Anna of Malawi for this info collected during May '06.

Ticket office open 16:00 – 17:30. Buy tickets at least two days before if possible. First class sells out very quickly.

Train leaves Nampula for Cuamba

TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS, SATURDAYS at 05:00 (need to be there 04:00) arriving 15:15

Train leaves Cuamba for Nampula

WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS, SUNDAYS at 05:00 arriving 15:15

No train either direction on Mondays.

Tickets are (Meticais only):

1st Class: Mt500 000, (US\$20). Usable toilets and A/C.

2nd Class: Mt250 000, (US\$10).

3rd Class: Mt100 000, (US\$4).

Keen on a real modern-day experience in human suffering? Then opt for 3rd Class, but beware, pick-pocketing and theft is rife, especially as you get on or off the train! Not a good idea to let anyone assist you with anything. Train stops often and there are always throngs of people selling fresh produce – good opportunity to stock up on veggies as they do not grow very well in the heat of the coast and are very expensive there. If you feel the need to speak to someone in authority about this train, try phoning **CFM Norte, (Nampula)**; (26) 21 2044 or mobile: + 82 45 41 42.

The Nampula to Cuamba road (or vice versa) is impassable?

Put your car on the train!

Taking your car on this train is a possible option if you want a different leg to/from Malawi and avoid a long drive on the reportedly rough/ sometimes impassable(?) road between Cuamba and Nampula. The road from Mandimba to Cuamba is reportedly quite passable (2 hours travel time and do-able with 2 wheel drive even at the end of the wet season) but apparently hard going from Cuamba to Nampula. Apparently it is quite a picturesque train journey.

We spoke to several people at Nampula Train Station including the Station Master, a Zimbabwean who speaks English. To freight a car one way would cost Mt3 200 000 (price depends on weight – this was for 1900kgs).

By Car. (See too “Quelimane by Road” above). Presently, from whatever angle you approach Nampula, it is highly advisable that you be in a 4x4 vehicle that runs on diesel and sweat (for the rainy season when you have to dig and push). From Malawi I usually opt for the short cut that goes Liwonde – Nayuchi/Entre Lagos – Cuamba, but even in the dry, Liwonde to Nayuchi can be 4x4 only. Chiponde/Mandimba to Cuamba is the busiest route, but can be horrendous during the rains (even 4x4's struggle to get through), and horribly corrugated during the dry. Cuamba to Nampula can be quite slippery in rain, but is usually quite passable (80km/h) in the dry season which is May to November in these parts. From Tanzania note that the Rovuma ferry driver usually hangs around Kilambo or Mtwara in Tanzania and it may take a day to get him to his boat, and also that the ferry can only do the crossing at high tide only (not at all on neap tides) unless the river is very full. Note too that this just may be the only border where visas are not issued on arrival so be sure to get yours in Dar Es Salaam which is a 14 rough journey away. Word is that a house for immigration officials is now being built at the border post on the Moz side near Quionga, so perhaps soon they will be issuing visas at last. For Mtwara tides look up: www.mobilegeographics.com:81/locations/3949

Memories of Nampula.

My first experience of Nampula, which now has a population of well over 400 000, was at the end of 1993 when I arrived on a UN-chartered Russian Antonov plane. I had conned the UN in Maputo into providing me with papers authorizing me to use their aircraft and had flown up from Maputo – a juddering, claustrophobic flight that (with stops in Beira and Quelimane) took 8 hours. Not too bad except for the fact that something I had eaten for breakfast had turned into a dangerously volatile fluid and this had been trying to erupt from my back-end for most of the journey. I did ask one of the Russian speaking cabin crew (who I think had been at the Vodka) whether there was a toilet, or even a bucket on the aircraft, but he just smiled and kept on saying ‘Nampula, Nampula’. We got there in the dark and I did not make it to the terminal buildings but squatted in the dark behind one of the wheels...

In Mozambican terms Nampula is a fairly ‘modern’ city, as most of it was built in the 1960's when the colonial Portuguese regime decided that they needed the town to be their forward base against the Frelimo insurgents. Today it has a population of perhaps 500 000, ATM's, good mobile phone reception, internet connections at Telecomunicações, a provincial airport and hospital, a couple of new fancy supermarkets and shopping centres, hotels, quite a few reasonable restaurants, banks, and an intriguing Museum of Ethnology.

The traffic lights (OK ‘robots’ if you are S. African - all two of them) are good places to start when looking for places in Nampula. Confusing perhaps but if approaching a traffic light when going parallel to the Nacala road and you suddenly need to buy a water filter or see the museum - go straight on after the traffic light. This is the intersection that goes past the cathedral, and the Commercial Centre and Hotel Girassol (Nampula's most recent building of any stature), and of course the hottest item in town: the new ‘Shoprite’ (South African) supermarket, where you pay twice the SA price, and more, but can get practically anything particularly fruit and veg, cheese and other dairy products.

All the Essentials in Nampula.

Fuel

There are two or three 24-hour Service Stations in Nampula, and also one or two on the roads as you approach the outskirts of Nampula. Unleaded petrol has been sporadically available, but should be in plentiful supply soon as Mozambique has undertaken to phase out leaded by the end of 2006.

Banks

BIM (*Banco Internacional de Moçambique*). 6 Avenida Francisco Manyanga, tel: (26) 216 252/5, fax. 216 256/218 200. BIM Expresso 779 Av. Eduardo Mondlane, tel: 216 252/5, fax: 216 256. BIM Expresso Limoeiros 16 Rua da Tete, tel: (26) 214 292/214 283, fax: 214 286. There is also a Standard Bank on Eduardo Mondlane which supports VISA cards and I recommend that you try here first.

Getting Cash in Nampula

There are ATM's at all of the banks and at many supermarkets that dish out Mt3 000 000 (or NEW Mt3 000 when the currency changes kick in!) which is the limit per withdrawal (you can withdraw more by logging in again) - that's about \$125 at current exchange rates. If you need money desperately and it happens to be month end, prepare to stand in queues for hours and then the damned thing sometimes runs dry just before your turn! This info applies to all ATM's in Moz, but the limit per withdrawal *may* be higher in Maputo.

Medical Assistance

The management of Hotel Tropical have an arrangement with a nearby clinic that does malaria tests and has a doctor on call from 0800 to 2200 (ask at the hotel reception). In dire need, the best advice may be to go to the offices (or house, after hours) of one of the many international aid groups (*cooperantes*), as they will know where to find the 'best' doctor. Try perhaps Halo Trust, who are landmine clearing experts: tel (26) 21 7701. Or how about MSF (*Medicócs Sem Fronteiras*) or CARE?

Nampula does have a Provincial hospital where malaria medication is available, but for complicated malaria or for any major medical procedure or in any emergency you should immediately activate your evacuation insurance. If in South Africa, I can recommend TIC: www.tic.co.za which offers evacuation insurance from just R12 (US\$2) per day. Malaria and basic complaints such as simple infections can be adequately treated at the hospital and the pharmacies in town will sell antibiotics without prescription should you know exactly what you need.

Shopping for Groceries

The *Mercado Municipal* is best for fresh produce and local crafts, but for anything processed and imported (especially dairy and packaged products), go to Shoprite or *Casa das Frutas* and *Africa Comercial*.

Travel Agency

Navitur Lda on Rua Cuamba is a long-established reputable agency which can handle most of your travel needs to and from Nampula. Tel: (26) 21 7656.

Vehicle Hire (rent a car):

Imperial is based at the airport in the entrance hall, tel (26) 21 6312, fax: (26) 21 6312, mobile: +82 300517 (24 hours), e-mail: imperial.npl@teledata
Website: <http://broker.imperialcarrental.co.za/affiliates/rel/booking.aspx?partnerid=123>

Moti Rent-a-Car at the airport in front of the main entrance has 4x4's and sedans: tel: +258 26 21 8687 or 52 6070, fax: 52 6071, e-mail: motimoz@teledata.mz Both car rental companies have a variety of vehicles available, the prices vary from \$80 to \$250 per day, depending on the type of the car and the contract. You will either need a credit card or be able to pay a hefty deposit fee.

Private vehicles (with driver)

Try calling Putua (+82 456595), Dinho (+82 601578) or Mukesh (+82 455405).

Hash House Harriers

Looking for a group to jog or drink a lot of beer with or simply to socialize? Nampula's 'Africa Hash' members meet on the first and third Saturday each month at Restaurante Copacabana. Friendly and festive crowd. Website: www.africahash.co.za/HashDetail.asp?Identity=142

Mercado Artesenato: Nampula's Saturday Morning Craft Market

Close to the Hotel Tropical and Hotel Lúrio, this is a big weekly gathering by most of the Province's craftsmen and women. You'll find furniture, baskets, mats, cages, curios and much more. For my money, this is one of northern Mozambique's cultural highlights so plan ahead to fit a Sunday morning in Nampula into your hectic schedule.

Sites to See in Nampula

Nampula Cathedral. With its twin towers and massive dome, the cathedral is an unmistakable landmark in the middle of town.

National Ethnology Museum of Mozambique. Situated on the lower end of Av- Eduardo Mondlane. Tel. (26) 21 2129. Varied exhibits provide fascinating insights into the diverse cultures that have contributed to the Mozambican society. See the famous Makonde sculptors at work in their co-operative behind the museum. Their carvings are on sale.

Public Telephones and Internet (*telecomunicações*). Located on Rua Monomotapa, one block down from the cathedral.

Post Office (*correios*). On the corner of Rua Cidade de Moçambique and Av. Paulo Samuel Kankhomba.

Immigration (*Imigração*). Attractive old building on the corner of Rua Monomotapa and Av. Francisco Manyanga. Visas can be extended here; price negotiable.

BP Service Station. On Av. Independência, diagonally opposite the Hotel Lúrio. Open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some spares available.

L.A.M office (domestic airline). At the railway end of Av. Francisco Manyanga. Tel. (06) 21 3311.

J. Fernandes vehicle spares (*acessórios do carro*). On Rua 3 de Fevereiro, next to Pensão Nampula.

Nampula Railway Station (*Estação do Caminhos de Ferro de Moçambique or C.F.M.*). Tel. (06) 21 2032. The tracks run parallel to Av. do Trabalho, which leads to the airport (if you turn right) and to Cuamba and Quelimane (left). A passenger service has been implemented. The old steam engines on the railway sidings are worth a look.

Bus and Taxi terminus. Minibuses, trucks and buses to far-off places. Located on Av. de Trabalho near the railway station.

Paraíso da Moda. Indian clothing shop on Rua Daniel Napatima next to Restaurante Lord. Advice on changing foreign currency into meticals is available here.

Civic Centre (*Conselho Executivo*). A very attractive example of Portuguese colonial architecture is found across the *Praça Feminina* (Women's Park) from the cathedral.

Cinéma Moçambique. Av. Eduardo Mondlane next to the museum. See why the children in Nampula think that Americans are people who have the biggest guns and solve their differences by kicking each other to pieces! May have been converted into a church.

Accommodation in Nampula.

There is quite a choice considering the size of the town and I have put these (vaguely) in order of price, starting with the most expensive:

Girassol Nampula Hotel

Part of the new 'Centro Comercio' Business Centre that is by far the biggest investment in Nampula since 1977 (when the Portuguese left). Only 3,5km from the provincial airport (but then so is most anywhere else in Nampula). This 28-roomed Hotel is part of a well-respected Portuguese chain so if you need to be pampered or are in town on business, Girassol with its large conference centre, 4-star amenities, and reasonable prices, is a good choice.

Contact: tel: +258 26 216000 258, fax: +258 26217638mobile: +258 82 121 9880 or + 258 82 319 0540 (Director) email: girassolnampulahotel@visabeira.co.mz Website:

http://www.girassolhoteis.co.mz/en/hoteis/girassol_nampula_hotel

Location: Central Nampula, 326 Avenida Eduardo Mondlane.

Rates: Single - \$110, Double - \$125, Junior suite (2 person) - \$150. Includes breakfast.

Hotel Tropical

A quaint (charming?) three-storey hotel with small, air-conditioned en-suite rooms. Close to the main shops, banks and services. Restaurant with a wide menu and sometimes live music. Restaurant Copocabana (one of Nampula's best) is across the road. The Hotel has an arrangement with a private clinic and has a doctor on call 0800 – 2200.

Contact: tel: (26) 21 2232, fax: (26) 21 6359.

Location: Behind the Cinema (which has its entrance on Av. Eduardo Mondlane) at the beginning of Rua Macombre which is a quiet, tree-lined street close to Hotel Lúrio.

Rates: singles for 55 USD and doubles for 80 USD. Includes full buffet breakfast.

Residencial Expresso

One of the newer and more comfortable (not cheapest) places in town. Air-conditioned, Internet access, own restaurant, games room and gym.

Contact: tel: 06-218808, fax: 06-218807

Location: 574 Av. de Independência (next to Lúrio).

Rates: Singles \$60, doubles \$80 including breakfast.

Complexo Residencial Bamboo

Certainly my recommendation for families and overlanders (it has plenty of secure parking, a playground and kiddies pool, but **no camping**). Along with the Girassol (perhaps), this is the only place in Nampula accessible for people with disabilities, and the facilities and standards are very good. Individual air-conditioned chalets, swimming pool and spacious restaurant with good Portuguese food all alongside a lake.

Contact: tel: (26) 21 7838, fax: (26) 21 7803, mobile + 82 60 1156. E-mail:

bamboo@teledata.mz Website: www.teledata.mz/bamboo

Location: On the LHS 1km towards Ribaué (Cuamba) from the junction with Avenida do Trabalho which is the main road you reach if coming in from Nacala or from Quelimane.

Rates: Single room 50 USD, double 75 USD, both with breakfast. Bamboo also has an air-conditioned conference room with flipchart and overhead for \$100/ day.

Complexo Montes Nairucu

Nice views over the lake water. Chalets, restaurant and (reputedly) camping is allowed on the surrounding farmland.

Contact: Tel: (26) 21 5297, fax: (26) 21 5296. Mobile: +82 669 3680.

E-mail: dalecio@teledata.mz

Location: At the end of the road out to the dam (barragem), about 10km's from town.

Rates: Not known.

Hotel Lúrio

Reasonably safe, clean and priced. Overlooks the Sunday Market so if you have had a heavy Saturday night, then choose somewhere else to lay your heavy head, all with private bathrooms and a basic breakfast. Not accessible for disabled.

Contact: tel: (26) 21 2520.

Location: 12b Av. da Independência.

Rates: Singles for \$23, doubles for \$36.

Pensão Residencial Estrela

More expensive rooms with private bathroom, fridge, and TV. Also slightly cheaper rooms with shared bathrooms in the corridor, other facilities the same. The rooms are quite small, and the ones overlooking the *mercado* can be noisy, but for the rest, Estrela is pretty calm and clean. Breakfast an optional extra.

Contact: Tel: (26) 214902.

Location: Av. Paulo Samuel Kankhomba (close to the 'Mercado Municipal).

Rates: Singles Mt500 000, doubles (depending on size) Mt695 000-800 000.

Pensão Márques

Renovated a couple of years back so perhaps my recommendation for budget travellers. Clean, safe and conveniently located for all things including the station if coming from or heading towards Cuamba. Rooms are en-suite and have a fridge and TV and some with small verandas. Restaurant and bar downstairs.

Contact: tel: (26) 212527.

Location: 12Av. Paulo Samuel Kankhomba.

Rates: Singles, Mt500 000, doubles for Mt650 000.

Residencial Brasília

Not bad considering what you pay - all with plenty of stairs and narrow corridors, so I hope this place never catches fire. The clean and modern Pastelaria Brasília next door serves pizza, good coffee, snacks and meals.

Contact: tel: (26) 21 2126, fax: 21 2127, e-mail: Mtmz64@yahoo.com

Location: 26 Rua dos Continuadores.

Rates: Basic singles Mt450 000 - Mt650 000, doubles Mt750 000.

Pensão Parque

Want to know what Nampula was like during the war? Well at the Parque it seems that no renovations have taken place since independence in 1977. Also the beer garden downstairs may either be a solace or quite disturbing to a tired traveller. Only for those on a very tight budget or wanting to spend money doing something else.

Contact: None.

Location: Av. Paulo Samuel Kankhomba (close to the big roundabout at the bottom end).

Rates: Single Mt180 000, double Mt250 000 (that's about \$6-10).

Eating in Nampula

Most of the establishments listed above have a bar/restaurant or offer meals. Note that if you are in a hurry to eat, avoid Bamboo on Sundays when it is often packed with local and foreign families enjoying the playground and the pools.

Pastelaria Brasilia next door to Residencial Brasilia on Av. Eduardo Mondlane serves pizza, variety of good coffees, snacks and full meals. Vegetarian section on the menu. Halaal – no alcohol or pork.

Restaurante Copacabana, tel: (26) 21 8121. Opposite Hotel Tropical has a big menu and will cater to vegetarians. Nice gardens with water features and shade.

Pastelaria Aurora, on Rua dos Continuadores has fresh light meals, and pastries, cakes and snacks prepared on the premises.

Café Primavera, on Av. Eduardo Mondlane is popular (deservedly so) with the locals and a good option if you are into people watching. Variety of local beers and light snacks.

Café Pastelaria Atlantico, also on Av. Eduardo Mondlane – best coffee in town (expensive) and an upmarket restaurant upstairs.

Clube de Tennis on Av. Paulo Samuel Kankhomba, in the shade of trees behind an office of the Electricity Department. Sandwiches a speciality.

Cafe Carlos down a small side street off Rua dos Continuadores is a uniquely Mozambican establishment that has been my favourite for over ten years now. Senhor Carlos loves to chat with patrons while the meal is prepared over charcoal, a process that usually takes over an hour so order a bottle of wine to drink while you wait. Vast and eclectic menu from 'bife à Portuguesa to 'Ingera bread Etiope'. Also excellent 'galinha (chicken) à Zambéziana and 'camarões (prawns) tigre grelhados com arroz de côco'.

Sporting Clube next to the Museum has a pleasant garden terrace and Portuguese cuisine.

Almeida de Garrett in the town centre has nice food, a terrace bar with pool tables upstairs, with a rowdy bar downstairs.

Pastelaria Aurora. On Av. Eduardo Mondlane. Best option for vegetarians and it offers a selection of Indian, Chinese and Portuguese food, good coffee and pastries.

Namialo

This is a busy junction town (turn north here to Pemba, Mocimboa da Praia and Tanzania) which has a Service Station, a great clothing market and an adequate Pousada (Inn) and Restaurant. Note that as the Pousada is adjacent to the main road and market, it is very noisy. Cellphone reception too.

6. NACALA

The road from Nampula to Nacala is presently in very good condition. Just as well as this is presently the only way to get to Nacala – there are no passenger trains doing this stretch or flights directly to Nacala, but you can get one of the many chapas and buses that come from as far away as Pemba, Nampula and Ilha de Moçambique.

My first impression of Nacala, population (2005) 212 650, was of a decaying, forgotten but substantial port – a sense which I gained during 1994 when I was taken by the Bangladeshi (called Bangla-crashis by many as they wrote off fleets of UN vehicles) contingent to view the first group of trainees under the banner of Mozambique's new army. We were taken to a supposedly high-security air-base where I noticed that the reluctance to allow access to journalists was probably due to the embarrassment of seeing a dozen MIG 21 fighter jets that were crumbling under a collapsed hangar. The 'united forces' were being drilled by swarthy, foul-mouthed sergeants from Portugal's elite Commando unit, some of whom had fought during the pre-1977 independence struggle against the very soldiers that they were now charged with training. Ah but Africa's ironies run deep, little sparrow.

The former Renamo and Frelimo recruits were in pitiful condition, many so thin and emaciated that they lacked the strength needed to carry a rifle, and I was told that most of them had never engaged in a 'regular' battle, but had spent their time terrorising the local population. By 1994, one third of Mozambique's people had become refugees in neighbouring South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Tanzania.

A couple of years later I revisited Nacala, and as the (then) bad roads would have it, I arrived by bus at night. As we descended past the Hotel Maiaia (then Hotel Nacala), a strange glow appeared on the horizon (there was no general electricity supply then) and it was a quite surreal experience as the modern new brilliantly floodlit docks with their massive cranes came into view. I stood at the deserted corner where I was dropped and tried to digest a day during which I had gone from almost iron-age Africa to high-tech 'first world' in the matter of only a few kilometres.

There are now plans to export coal from Moatize in Tete Province via Nacala and so the area may be due for quite radical developments to berth the massive ships and to house the engineers and dock workers that could soon descend on the port.

Nacala itself is still strictly a working-type town and so for beaches you will have to go to Nacala *Velha* (Old) a short distance to the north, or to Fernão Veloso (en-route to which you will find Bay Diving), a few kilometres to the south.

Fuel (unleaded petrol - soon) is plentiful in these parts – there is a 24-hour BP service station as you arrive in town. Good cellphone reception and also public telephones and Internet at the TDM container on the RHS as you go down to the docks.

Note that there are three Nacalas: Nacala *Porto* (the port or lower *baixa* area), Nacala *Alta* (on the hillside), and Nacala *Velha* (old) which is the original Nacala town around the bay to the north of Nacala – well worth a visit if only to see good old Portuguese Town Planning in practice. To get to **Nacala Velha** and **Memba** watch for the turn to the left a few k's before entering Nacala. From *Nacala Velha*, go through the town and take the second turn left. For **Bay Diving**, *Praia Fernão Veloso*, and the old air force base (airport), take the right turning just before where the road slopes down to the port and then right again at the Service stations about 10km further on.

Banks in Nacala

BIM ATM: Loja Expresso Nacala, Predio João F. Santos, Tel. (26) 52 6862/5, fax. (26) 52 6866.

Accommodation in Nacala

Bay Diving and Fim Do Mundo Safaris

Not in Nacala town, but a few kilometres down the Fernão Veloso road. Owned and managed by Arthur Norval, a long time resident of the area who certainly knows how to choose his spots. Perched on bay-side cliffs with steps down to the beach, has a top-class dive operation, very good restaurant (one of the best this side of the Zambezi and vegetarian heaven), a swimming pool, recently upgraded chalets and a good camping site. Best place to gather information if you are on the road heading north or south.

Contact: tel/fax: +258 (26) 520 017, e-mail: fimdomundo@teledata.mz

Website: www.fimdomundosafaris.com

Location: For Bay Diving, *Praia Fernão Veloso*, and the old air force base (airport), take the right turning just before where the road slopes down to the port and then right again at the Service stations about 10km further on.

Rates: Camping Mt150 000pp, dorm bed Mt200 000, chalets around Mt 1000 000 for two persons.

Hotel Maiaia

Reached by carrying on down towards the port where it is perched on the left with a great view over the bay. Before it's revamp a few years ago, this was Hotel Nacala, and it now offers fairly standard rooms and facilities with a restaurant and conference centre.

Contact: (26) 52 6351 or 52 6827.

Location: About halfway between the upper and lower sections of Nacala.

Rates: \$70 to \$80 including breakfast.

Complexo Bela Vista

Which also has a restaurant is a somewhat run-down place situated in Nacala *Alta* (where the docks are, is called Nacala *baixa*) on the hillside and offers singles with shared bathrooms, and a few doubles with private bathrooms.

Contact: tel: (26) 52 0133, mobile: + 82 601 537.

Location: Central close to the port.

Rates: Single Mt450 000, double Mt600 000 (shared bathrooms), doubles with private bath for about Mt800 000.

Bonito Lodge

The area's newest addition offering luxury self-catering accommodation, dive and water-sports centre and a wonderful location.

Contact: Tel: (26) 52 0820 or 52 6828, mobile: + 82 310740.

Location: I sent an SMS – no response.

Rates: “ “

Complexo Turístico Napala

A friendly family business (the *Ribeiros*). En-suite double rooms or 2 beds family units with air con, DSTV and fridge.

Contact: Tel: +258 (26) 520608, (26) 520078, mobile: + 82 601 7830.

Location: On a beautiful beach on the northern side of the bay.

Rates: Enquire when booking

Pensão Universo

Close to the BP Service Station reached as you arrive in town. Not sure whether it is still open or not, but if you are on a seriously low budget, ask about it when you get to Nacala.

Where to Eat in Nacala

All of the places listed above do offer meals, but for me you will find it hard to beat Baia Azul for lunch and supper (dinner). Bay Diving has less of that local 'atmosphere' but is more in line with acceptable and reliable standards of service and food. The Bay Diving restaurant is the only place offering decent steak on the menu in this sector of Mozambique.

Restaurante Bar Baia Azul

Here's a tip – don't always judge places in Mozambique (particularly restaurants and lodgings) by what they look like from the outside (could apply to people I know as well...). This may be because official permission is required before one can paint one's premises (a throwback to the Marxist days) or because if you look prosperous this attracts the attention of Internal Revenue. Whatever the case, many establishments continue to look derelict from the outside, but are well-maintained internally. Baia Azul is certainly a prime example of this as inside there is a cosy and clean restaurant complete with disco dance floor surrounded by full-size mirrors and overlooked by a large TV showing satellite channels. Excellent fresh seafood and Portuguese food is on offer and the owner, a Portuguese resident of Nacala for the past 10 years will gladly answer questions about the area.

Restaurante Boite Sandokan, tel (26) 52 6740, *Cidade Baixa* (downtown) opposite the Banco Standard Totta. Good food, slow service. May have closed.

Reserva do Matibane

This is a new development in the Nacala area. Matibane was declared during the Portuguese times and comprises 60 000 hectares adjacent to the coastal road between Ilha de Moçambique and Nacala. There is presently just a community run campsite with basic facilities for fully equipped campers.

7. ILHA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

Now here's one of the finest pieces of advice for those of you who travel to (or even talk about) this special island: Don't ever refer to it as 'Mozambique Island', it's Ilha de Moçambique to you, amigo - or just Ilha. If you do commit the unforgivable in the presence of a proud Mozambican, it's something like referring to that disputed stretch of water which separates Britain and France as 'The English Channel' within earshot of a fiery Frenchman (or woman).

This is no pristine palms swaying in the breeze kind of Tropical Island experience. With an estimated (2005) population of 46 402 (excluding you and you) crammed into an area barely 2km by 700m in size, and highly inadequate ablution facilities, the beaches and rocks remain the island's main toilet, but if you can see beyond this, the culture and colour of the people become Ilha's greatest attraction.

If you are towing a caravan or boat, these will not fit between the posts that limit access to the 1,7km road bridge (yes you can drive onto the island), so either camp at Casuarina Camping or leave these here on the LHS as you arrive at the bridge.

My Own Private Ilha.

Perhaps it's something along the lines of the conundrum so central to Umberto Eco's 'Island of the Day Before', but this enigmatic island has muddled a piece of my mind since that Spring day in 1992 when I arrived at its shores on that smuggler's boat. This place is my 'Island of the World before', and simplistically put, my life is strangely divided into pre and post Ilha periods. I'm sure Shrek would now say "What a load of (sound of toilet flushing)"

Five years previous to my arrival at Ilha I had a girlfriend who had been born on the Island, and her mother had shown me a coffee-table book with black & white photographs that had been taken during the 1960's, and I was mesmerized. On those glossy pages I saw a place that many of the world's greatest adventurer's from Sindbad and Ibn Majeed (Arab) to Da Gama and Zheng He (Chinese – the world's first navigator) would have known, and I knew then that I would go there one day, too.

We left '**Xanadu**' anchored in the calm bay between the Isle and the mainland, and took the tender boat to the shore where a representative of the '*Capitão do Porto*' or harbour captain invited us to fill in his huge leather-bound register of arrivals. I noticed that Xanadu was the fifth foreign vessel logged since 1977, and also that we probably the only 'white' people on the island during our stay.

The old *Pousada de Moçambique* (now revamped and reincarnated as Hotel Omuhi'piti which is the Macua name for the island), was still staffed by locals left behind when the settlers fled, and who showed us to an upstairs room where the beds were too broken to sleep on, no water flowed in the bathroom, but the view was an experience in time travel and the sounds of past revelry seemed to echo enticingly from the halls and passages.

The nearby *fortaleza* was still littered with the bones of what our guide seemed to indicate were former prisoners of the old regime, and the cisterns at its centre were the only place on the entire island where fresh water could be found (now water is pumped from the mainland). In the Governor's Palace (now the museum), I stood in front of a huge tapestry depicting a scene of shipwrecked European sailors clinging on to one another in terror as they are surrounded by evil looking 'savages'. A view of Africa still so prevalent amongst dwellers in the present-day (so-called) 'Developed World'.

Ilha is sometimes packed:

Bear in mind that sometimes *Ilha* hosts events such as dance and music festivals that attract a large number of visitors, and accommodation may be booked out. For this reason it is highly advisable that you book your choice of accommodation well in advance or be prepared to camp should there be no room at the Inn.

There is a Service Station on Ilha which you will see as you leave the causeway toll point (Mt20 000 per vehicle), as well as public phones and Internet at the TDM container near to the Hotel Omuhipiti.

Changing money on Ilha

BIM Expresso ATM and bank. 2 Rua dos Combatentes. Tel. (26) 61 0062/26610135, fax. (26) 61 0093.

Note that the 1,7km long Lumbo – Ilha causeway is closed to vehicles from 22h00 to 05h00, and is only just wide enough to accommodate ordinary vehicles – the weight limit is 2t. Vehicles are charged a Mt10 000 toll in either direction. The causeway is single lane, but there are regular passing bays and you must pull into the first one that you reach, thus allowing the oncoming vehicle to pass.

Accommodation on Ilha de Moçambique.

Hotel Omuhi'piti

This is the old, but now fully rebuilt 'Pousada de Moçambique' that was built in the '50's. The rooms could be characterised as 'standard 4-star', but lack the atmosphere and character (and quirks) of other choices of accommodation on Ilha. The restaurant does serve excellent Portuguese food. There is a cosy beach bar across the road called Clube Náutico.

Contact: Tel (26) 61-0101/3, fax (26) 61-0105 or e-mail inturhoteis@teledata.mz

Location: In the 'Museu' north-eastern section of the island, on the seaward side across a football field from the fortress. Just a few minutes walk to the swimming beach.

Rates: Single \$65, double \$75, suite \$75- \$100.

Patio dos Quintalinhos or "Casa do Gabriele"

Run by architect Gabriele Melazzi (Italian) in a restored house, where the rooms are charmingly arranged around an internal courtyard and garden. The swimming pool is the converted water cistern and meals are prepared on demand by your hosts. Bicycle, canoe, boat and jeep with driver for rent. Private parking \$5 per day.

Contact: Tel: (26) 61 0090 mobile: + 082 419761, e-mail: gabrielemelazzi@hotmail.com

Website: www.mozambiqueguesthouse.com

Location: 17 Rua do Celeiro but ask someone to show you.

Rates: Rooms from \$25 with shared bathroom, or from \$40 with bathroom en-suite, including breakfast.

Casa Branca

The first of Ilha's many private villas to be renovated and turned into a guesthouse. The basement and ground floor date back to the 1600's, and it overlooks the statue of Portuguese poet Luis Cameos who chronicled in rhyme the exploits and passions of sailors, many of whom may well have stayed in this very house. Dona Flora will treat you like at a long-lost relative in her spotlessly clean and charming home. Dona Flora has renovated other old colonial houses on the island, one of these is called Mooxeleliya so if Branca is occupied, ask about her other options.

Contact: +258 (26) 61 0066/76, fax: 61 0175, mobile: + 82 4543290, or try Ia if

she is still there - she speaks English: 82 097 5830, e-mail: Flora204@hotmail.com

Location: Fairly close to Omuhi'piti on the seaward side of Ilha.

Rates: Mt500 000 or US\$20 per person.

Escondidinho

In one of the classic old mansions of Ilha - high ceilings, large windows and an excellent restaurant overlooking the swimming pool in the 10-roomed hotel. Dhow trips to the neighbouring islands and beaches and sunset cruises can be organized.

Contact: Tel: +258 (26) 610078, mobile: + 82 674842, e-mail: ilhatour@itservices.co.mz

Location: On a quiet street in the middle of the island. Lives up to it's name (hiding place) and is difficult to find so ask one of the kids to show you and tip him Mt10 000.

Rates: En-suite rooms from \$35, breakfast extra.

Casa Dugong

I first met Cacú (his nickname – short for Macacu, or monkey) some years ago when he was still convinced that he would stop the local population from cr*pping on the beaches and rocks that surround this overcrowded island. The people may have won (for now) but Cacú is still there running his diving operation and guesthouse. He is probably the most informative person on the island – he lived in Johannesburg for many years and so speaks English perfectly (for a South African, that is), but note you may have to put up with his tirade against the toilet habits of his fellow islanders.

Contact: +258 (0) 82 454781) or Johannesburg: +27 (0) 11 463 3086

E-mail: enquiries@dugongadventures.com

Location: Close to the Museum (Palácio).

Rates: \$30 per person.

Private Garden or Casa Luis.

On the southern (the busy) half of the island. At the back of Luis's garden behind his house. Aimed at backpackers – small double rooms with fan. Can be noisy (roosters, kids etc). No running water.

Contact: None known.

Location: Ask one of the kids to show you.

Rates: Mt100 000 per person.

Camping Casuarinas

The only place to stay if camping or your vehicle will not fit onto the bridge, or you are towing a trailer or caravan. Note that there is very little space for parking close to most of the guesthouses on Ilha. A nice cool breezy spot away from the 'madding crowds' on the Island - but watch your belongings. Easy to catch lifts from here to the island, and then back again – or walk, the views from the bridge are great.

Contact: No contact details.

Rates: Mt200 000 pp camping.

8. THE COAST FROM MOMA TO ILHA DE MOÇAMBIQUE.

Moma

Really isolated – poor roads from Nampula – best route presently is via Liupo and Angoche, but the 130km Nametil – Moma road is due for rehabilitation in 2006. No road access from the south (Quelimane or Pebane) due to lack of bridge or pont over the Ligonha river. This is all changing as we speak due to the huge Kenmare Moma heavy sands project that is under construction near the town.

Here is an extract from the Kenmare Chairman's statement to Shareholders:

“Kenmare Resources plc
Kenmare Preliminary Results
For the year ended 31 December 2005
25 April 2006
Chairman's Statement

Dear Shareholder,

I am very pleased to report that during 2005 Kenmare has achieved excellent progress in the development of the Moma Titanium Minerals Project in Mozambique. Construction activity is over 80% complete and the Project Contractor, a joint venture between Multiplex Limited and Bateman BV, indicates that by the end of 2006 the plant will be ready for handover to Kenmare.

We achieved several significant milestones during the year, including the successful shipping of the wet concentrator and minerals separation plants from Western Australia to Mozambique using a number of specialised, ocean-going barges. The landing and off-loading of these plants at Moma was also completed without incident and they are currently being reassembled with good progress to date. The permanent accommodation village is complete and currently houses a large number of construction workers. Later this year, as the number of construction workers decreases, the housing will become available to Kenmare's own operations staff. The air strip is busy with an air charter twice weekly transporting workers in and out of Moma.”

For travellers the implication of the above could be that as there will be money in the area, perhaps a resort or two may open up to exploit this opportunity. Perhaps you may also manage to hitch a lift on the air charter to avoid the long hard drive too.

Bang goes yet another quiet corner of Mozambique (perhaps).

Angoche

Once the seat of an important and powerful Arab/Swahili Sultanate, Angoche has been largely left behind by progress and there are no formal tourist facilities in this area. The name 'Angoche' actually refers to the archipelago consisting of a cluster of islands off the town, which appears on many maps as one piece of land despite the fact that each island can be reached only by water¹. Historically, other islands, such as Puga-Puga, Kiziwa Sultani Hassan (renamed by the Portuguese Mafamede), and Moma were also considered a part of the political unit called the Sultanate of Angoche. Although the people that were under Angoche political or economic influence were ethnically diverse, the ethnic name of the inhabitants of Angoche Islands proper is Koti.

Accommodation in Angoche

There is the **Pensão Parapato**, lots of bars and a handful of places to eat in Angoche, but it's best to give the kitchen a couple of hours warning of when and what you would like to eat (this applies particularly to vegetarians. If you get up to the **Farol do Sangage**, where there is a decent beach, the Keeper's wife will be happy to gather together basic meals, or to prepare what you bring along.

Bank and ATM in Angoche

BIM Expresso Angoche, 52 Av. Liberdade, tel: (26) 72842, fax: 72841

Mogincual

Mogincual town, located about 7km from the beach, has an airstrip a market and a few small shops. From about 1998 there used to be a nice little camp called "Fim do Mundo" (The End of the World) at the beautiful estuary near here - owned by Arthur of 'Bay Diving' fame. Due to what Arthur calls 'overdevelopment' of the area, he has closed down FDM, and is now developing a camp over the bay from Bay Diving near Nacala. If you are camping note that the beach is a few hundred metres across the estuary from the mainland, but it is really special and has some good body-surfing breakers.

Quinga

I recall an evening when we were grinding our way in low-range toward Quinga and at 23h00 finally decided that we must be on the wrong track and so decided to pull off and make camp. I took a closer look at a white lump of concrete half hidden in the grass on the roadside and saw that it had 'Quinga 1km' inscribed upon it. The little village was quite pleasant and the stunning beach (great surfing waves) was just 3km further on. 4x4 access only.

Mossuril/Chocas Mar

Complexo Turístico Namarollo (Chocas Mar).

A fairly tatty and poorly run complex of 6 bungalows equipped with beds, chairs and a table. Good beaches and clean waters around here, but unless you can arrange with one of the owners of the private houses, no worthwhile accommodation is on offer. Not much in the way of food (other than from the sea) either, so bring in fruit and veg.

Ask for directions to visit **Pequena Cabaceira**, apparently the first buildings built on the mainland by the Portuguese, and **Grande Cabaceira** a 16th century cathedral reputedly the first church built by the Portuguese in Mozambique. Look too for the parish of Nossa Senhora de Fátima, and the main Mesquita or Mosque.

Bank and ATM in Monapo.

BIM Expresso Monapo, Av. Monapo, tel. (26) 620136 / 620167, fax: (26) 620167.

Nampula to Malawi and to Lichinga by Road.

Generally this route is in fair condition (average speeds 60-80kph), but during the December to April rains sections can become very slippery and have wash-aways, difficult to negotiate even with a good 4x4.

Ribáuè.

Monte Ribáuè has some impressive rock faces and is worth a closer look if you have the time. This is a small village with no fuel pumps and no formal overnight spots.

Malema.

A pleasant little village surrounded by granite domes. The base for climbing the Mlema peaks (see 'Rockclimbing in Nampula Province' below). Has a fuel station (unreliable supplies), bakery, basic supermarkets and a busy railway station where it's quite an education watching the activities that accompany the arrival of a train.

Complexo Turístico Malaya: Considering the size of the Malema, this is a very large resort with airconditioned bungalows and a festive and quite good restaurant.

Mutuáli.

Here you will find the turn-off to Gurue, a sprawling local fresh-produce market and good views of the mountains.

9. CUAMBA

The dusty, wide Avenues of Cuamba lined with run-down villas reminded me of the set of a Spaghetti Western movie starring Terence Hill and Bud Spencer, where the protagonists are squaring up on an empty street where a tumble weed is lazily rolling along in the wind (apologies to the Star Wars generation if you fail to picture the scene).

It has a good tarmac airstrip, 24 hour electricity (barring the odd power cut) as there is an incongruous hydro-power scheme on nearby Monte Mitucue capable of lighting up a small city but Cuamba manages to consume only a small proportion of the output. This does allow the town to have a fairly active nightlife which can be a drawback should you be a weary and lonesome traveller who has to get up at 03h00 to catch the Nampula train. Oh and of course as it's an important rail-head, steam-engines sometimes shunt around carriages well into the night just to add to the fun.

Getting to Cuamba.

The Nampula to Cuamba train.

Note that there are no passenger trains between Cuamba and Entre Lagos/Nayuchi (Malawi) or between Cuamba and Lichinga. Both of these lines are under repair and so this situation may change in the foreseeable future. In Malawi there is a passenger service from Balaka near Liwonde to Nayuchi. 'Chapas' do the Entre Lagos – Cuamba link.

Thanks once again to Anna of Malawi for this info collected during May '06

Ticket office open 16:00 – 17:30. Buy tickets at least two days before if possible. First class sells out very quickly.

Train leaves Cuamba for Nampula WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS, SUNDAYS at 05:00 (need to be there 04:00) arriving 15:15

Train leaves Nampula for Cuamba TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS, SATURDAYS at 05:00 (need to be there 04:00) arriving 15:15

No train either direction on Mondays.

Tickets are (Meticais only):

1st Class: Usable toilets and A/C. Mt500 000, (US\$20).

2nd Class: OK but packed. Mt250 000, (US\$10).

3rd Class: Only for the brave. Mt100 000, (US\$4).

Keen on a real modern-day experience in human suffering? Then opt for 3rd Class. Train stops often and there are always throngs of people selling fresh produce – good opportunity to stock up on veggies as they do not grow very well in the heat of the coast and are very expensive there. If you feel the need to speak to someone in authority about this train, try phoning CFM Norte, (Nampula); (26) 21 2044 or mobile: + 82 45 41 42.

Public Transport:

From Mandimba (near Chiponde in Malawi):

There are regular 'Chapas' which are usually trucks with benches on the back and some sort of covering – often ineffective against rain and certainly no protection against the red dust.

Pensão Massinga in Mandimba is just behind the service station on the main road through town and is a good option if you have to overnight. Order meals an hour or two in advance.

From Nayuchi (Malawi) / Entre Lagos:

No passenger trains but if one of the goods trains just happens to be going to Cuamba, you can 'pay' your way onto it and it will get you to Cuamba in about 7 hours. Trucks also do the route on a daily basis. There is a run-down 'Pousada' in Entre Lagos where you may have to brave the bugs and prostitutes if nothing is going your way.

By Car (4x4) from Malawi

On the Mozambique side you will pay US\$2.50 per person 'border tax' (legit) to immigration. The vehicle Temporary Importation Permit (TIP) fee is payable in Meticaís only and it is Mt30 000 which is a little more than US\$1.00. Third Party Insurance (seguros) isn't at Entre Lagos so buy it at Emose in Cuamba for Mt500 000.

Note that if driving or going by 'chapa' from Cuamba to Malawi via the Entre-Lagos and Nayuchi border, the road from Cuamba crosses the rails, passes under the rail bridge (where there is usually a transit police checkpoint) and then carries on straight for Mandimba and Lichinga but there is a left turn for Mecanhelas and Entre Lagos.

All the Essentials in Cuamba

Internet In Cuamba: Go to the Telecomunicações cabin in the town centre, or try at the post Office (Correios).

Diesel and petrol are usually available in Cuamba. If the pumps at the service stations are dry – ask the attendants, they will know where you will be able to buy fuel at perhaps 50% more than the official price.

Medical Assistance in Cuamba: The hospital is pretty abysmal but you may find missionary doctors working there. There used to be a South African couple, both doctors, living over the road from the hospital. Nearest decent hospital is in Blantyre, Malawi.

Money in Cuamba. Change US\$ at one of the filling stations or at the BIM Expresso bank. There is an ATM over the road (Av. Eduardo Mondlane) from the Hotel Visão 2000 where you can withdraw Mt3000 000 at a time against a Visa card with PIN.

Safety in Cuamba. A friend had his bag with money, camera, passport etc stolen from the back of our (unlocked) Landrover so be aware that petty theft is as likely here as it is anywhere else in Mozambique – apart from in the rural villages where the people are so honest that they will return your litter to you unless you indicate that they may have it.

Accommodation in Cuamba

Hotel Vision 2000

198 Av. 3 de Fevereiro

Could be the biggest building in town – on the main Avenida Eduardo Mondlane - a ten minute walk from the train station. Shabby but still the best place in town, and with aircon and sort of running water, not too bad (by Moz standards that is) at \$30 per person. Tel: + (271) 62 632, or fax: 62 713 e-mail: h-vision2000@teledata.mz

Pensão São Miguel

Livable rooms with fans and lumpy beds. Lots of night goings on and some of the rooms double as storerooms so you may end up sleeping next to sackloads of dried fish – real 'Fear Factor' stuff! Mt250 000 per person.

Pensão Residencial Cariacó. Tel: (271) 62595 on Rua 5 Novembro is possibly quieter than São Miguel.

Eating in Cuamba

The main 'bazar' area where fresh-produce is on offer and you can buy a meal for a dollar at one of the 'barracas' is over the rails on the road to Mandimba and Nayuchi. Otherwise I can recommend the Restaurante São Miguel – the Pensão is behind.

Malema

A quaint town with a long, wide main street lined with beautiful, old Portuguese style houses. We were amazed to find a real bakery, restaurant, pub, a bank, working telephone and shops in the middle of nowhere.

Ribáue

A quiet town with a decent market selling fruit and veggies and the last good remnant of Portuguese culture, bread rolls, the African version sometimes containing sand: "Crunch!".

Liúpo

Situated 40km from the most beautiful beaches at Quinga has everything a traveller might need. A lively and well-stocked market, telephone, 'bush-mechanic' and hospital. For good camping contact Sergio: He offers free camping (although a donation is reluctantly accepted), pit-toilet, bucket-shower and a guard. He is very keen to meet travellers, mainly to learn about the world and to improve his English. The market offers nightly entertainment in the form of old, poor quality, action videos for a mere 50c. The local people love this nightly ritual, packed into the small outdoor cinema, they giggle uncomprehendingly at the ridiculous action shots. The level of enjoyment depends on one's frame of reference.

10. ROCKCLIMBING IN NAMPULA PROVINCE

Mozambique Big-wall Climbing

HIGH IN MOZAMBIQUE, A NEW ADVENTURE IN AFRICA

BY MARK SEURING in Johannesburg.

www.alardsbigwallclimbing.com

www.samountainmag.com

Alard's high-pitched whooping sent a tingling down my spine, my hands clammy with excitement as I stared. "There it is! This is what we came for!" Our faithful old Ford aptly named 'Mozy' came to a skidding halt, spilling the contents of our precious beers onto our sweaty laps. Momentarily we were engulfed by dust, our eyes straining to see... The three Mlema (Malema) peaks suddenly reappeared, the perfect spire shape of the first one holding our gaze, as it rose from the green Mozambican landscape, reaching high into the liquid blue sky.

Our mission: to spend 4 weeks exploring northern Mozambique's potential for rock climbing and to pioneer the ascents of some of the granite domes for which this area, in particular Nampula province, is known. Mozambique's massive size is sadly paralleled by its level of poverty. A recent history of war has left the country bare of any noteworthy economic infrastructure, despite its rich natural resources. The people of the northern provinces in particular are solely dependant on subsistence farming and small local markets selling necessities.

We had to be well prepared for this trip into Africa, and so sucked up all the info, even the most trivial morsel, on Nampula and Mozambique from maps, books and the few people who had been there. We spent long nights planning, motivating, joking ... doing anything to sway the probability of a safe return in our favour.

Unlike most climbing trips, where the actual climbing forms the most challenging part, on our Mozambique adventure the danger from climbing ranked in at a cosy 5th place. Sure, an accident on any climb no matter where you are, can be life threatening, but in Mozambique we would be faced with additional dangers such as: Landmines, a bitter remnant from the war and a frighteningly real threat when bushwhacking to the base of a climb, wild roaming bandits, malaria, cholera and other weird tropical diseases that can force a trip to be aborted. The greatest concern was, however, the lack of decent medical facilities should something happen.

So, packed to the rear-view mirror (no looking back from now on!) with extensive medical kit, weighty car spares, food (including some luxuries like 'hot-chocolate') and the bare minimum of climbing gear, a sponsored Ryobi petrol drill our most prized possession, we headed north into the unknown.

Our first taste of Mozambique was the 200km stretch through the Tete corridor, previously known as the 'gun-run'. Cars were only allowed through in convoy and with armed escorts because of the fighting. Now, however, it seems quite safe, but the destroyed buildings and bullet-riddled walls and the general lack of activity along the road make for a fateful atmosphere. Here we had our first encounter with the African brutality, not often understood by our western culture. Goats, tied up, lying at the side of the road in the hot sun, bleating, only to be sold and carried away on a bumpy bicycle. We hurried on through this bleak and desolate place.

We decided to take the southern route from Malawi into Mozambique, From Liwonde eastward on a track which runs parallel to the railway-line for 50km's. Three times the track was blocked by old bridges with half their beams missing. Three times, by driving extremely accurately, one mistake possibly leading to a fall into the river below, we managed to navigate past these obstacles. By evening, we still hadn't reached the Mozambique border and were forced to ask at a Malawi Police Station for permission to camp. No problem.

We had just settled into our tent when the night duty officers disturbed us and demanded that we park the car in their garage, hand over all the car papers, the car keys and our personal documents, all for the sake of safety. There was no alternative, as our queries were met with aggression and a threat to throw us out. Seeing that the prospect of spending the night next to the road was even more dangerous we resigned ourselves to a sleepless night, always wondering what would happen. Luckily nothing did and we collected our valuables the following morning and headed off into Mozambique.

Once in Mozambique, the next larger town is Cuamba. It is here that the mountains first appear and seem to spread out in little clusters and solitary domes all the way east to the coast. We had travelled 1600 km to get here and like true 'Pavlovian climbers', our hands were sweaty with anticipation.

The smooth gravel road took us eastward past some impressive mountain ranges which stoked our excitement as we sprawled over some maps, trying to determine their size and looking for a possible approach. Somewhat disappointed we continued on our way, their dark, steep faces looming in the distance, too far away from any road so as to make a closer inspection possible.

Malema town suddenly appears out of nowhere, a welcome oasis after days of hard travelling. Armed with icy South African beers we set off to find the perfect mountain. As it turned out, we found it not 20 km's further down the road.

Finally we stood below the steep face of Mlema 1, a peak I had dreamed about for the last two years since my girlfriend showed me pictures from her Mozambique trip. But from up close the face did not quite resemble my dreams, its blank faces were vegetated with grass tufts and its chimneys occasionally blocked with trees and shrub. The obvious line heads up a series of chimneys and cracks to the west shoulder and then up a final cone to the summit.

Earlier that day we had arranged to camp amongst a small enclosure of huts belonging to a local farmer named Tome. He was very patient with my attempts, with the use of a Portuguese phrasebook, to explain our desire to climb this mountain. He later conveyed our plans to the local secretario, a majestic old man with large feet, crooked teeth and a friendly smile, and soon we were off to scope out the mountain with Tome's son as our guide.

The following day we climbed Malema 1, a first ascent, requiring 12 roped pitches with grades including 21 and some sketchy leading, using grass tufts as holds and for protection, the ultimate in feel-good adventure climbing: The view from the summit was in itself worth the entire effort. Our guides and friends were waiting for us at the bottom, their joy at seeing the 'Msungu's' (whites) descending slowly towards them from the sky paralleling their sense that we must be crazy. Hence the route name: 'The whites must be crazy'.

The next morning Alard and I felt pathetic, totally exhausted from a long drive and the previous day's climbing. Also, our malaria prophylaxis, taken the night before, contributed to our general state of fatigue. So, having decided to drive toward the coast and see what mountains are out there and then being able to choose the most appealing, we bid farewell to our hosts. Around the very next bend the east face of Mlema 3 appeared, its 700m near vertical face reaching into the sky. We were boggled by its size and its compactness, with no simple line bisecting its massive bulk. At the end we left this wall unclimbed, vowing to return with more time and resources.

After spending some rest days on the Island of Mozambique, we headed south for 3 hours on good roads to the town of Liupo with its distinctive 200m high sphinx-shaped dome, capped on its highest side by an 8m roof.

Having completed all the tiring formalities of securing permission to climb the mountain and organising a place to camp, we focused on finding a way through the roof. We packed all our gear under the watchful gazes from the local people. One thing you have to get used to in

Africa, is being watched, constantly. When you're eating, packing, walking around and doing whatever, you will be stared at, mostly by children who think you are the most interesting thing in the world. Learn to relax, with time they will get bored, even with the crazy 'Msungus'.

Our route leading up to the roof is characterised by clean, moderate climbing on good rock, with good gear. Alard learned to trust his micro nuts when a friend popped on a short aid section. He is still seen, tilting his fuzzy head to the heavens and thanking them for saving his life. The roof looked daunting and did not yield to our attempts. The crack was too large for any protection we had, so we opted to haul up our drill and protect it with bolts. We had hoped to do the roof free, but in the end it was worth every bolt: swinging out high above the coastal plains and gulping at the intense exposure, our whooping echoed by a group of local people watching from below. The climb, "Gone Batty 21/A2", is a classic 6-pitch route in a spectacular setting. Alard and I managed to add another 3 natural lines to Sphinx rock, all characterised by rewarding climbing on good rock. We were especially excited to find two clean Yosemite style cracks, "Cherry in a minefield" being a fulfilling 18 and "The Spirit of Tontonto" a harder 22. We seem to have climbed the most obvious natural lines but there is still a huge scope for some excellent bolted routes.

Quithele is a quiet village on the slopes of the majestic 650m face of Ribau mountain; in its midst is our tent, peaceful under a large tree: I was having a bad dream; it was dark outside, the stars bright, enhanced by no moon. The dream: We only climbed 150m in a whole day, eating nothing but dirt and a single roll, shared between the two of us. Grovelling up scary pitches of chimney, aiding, placing bolts off hooks lodged over loose flakes and holding onto tufts of grass. A dream where I was pulling lumps of dirt into my face, placing gear in cracks lined with a crust of soil and finally, exhausted beyond belief, abbing down an old 10mm static line in the hazy light of an approaching dusk. A dream where everything could have gone wrong, but didn't. We escaped only with some scratches and a battered psyche. A dream, no, I only look upon it as a dream, a dream caked in a gritty reality.

We thought the worst was over when we started up the climb the following day with our haulbag, planning to free-climb the route in 2 days. At 250m the obvious line we were following was blocked by a smooth 20 m face, only climbable with bolts or aiding at A5. The latter option was too risky and the former impossible, seeing the drill was sitting in our car, useless. It was a difficult decision, but we aborted our attempt, giving the lack of motivation to re-climb the first 150m as our reason. We'll be back!

On our way home we passed through Malawi where we relaxed on the islands of Lake Malawi for a few days before embarking on our last mission: to climb the famous 1700m high Chambe West face on Mt. Mulanje. The massive size of the face and its fantastic location in a mountain range which offers some good hiking make it an appealing challenge. We managed a one day ascent of the face and relaxed on the beautiful Mulanje plateau for a few days. A great place and well worth a visit.

For the climber and explorer, Mozambique offers a feast of adventure. Whether you want to be the first to climb some of the many domes in Nampula Province, explore the mountain ranges with their wild and exotic ecosystems, seek out forgotten villages sometimes found along the endless white beaches or just want to soak up the atmosphere of a country with remnants of a colonial past, this is the place to visit. Mozambique is rebirthing into a time of opportunity and growth. The past is always near, haunting the present in various forms: the damage of a recent war, general poverty and often-derelict roads. All in all, the ingredients for an unforgettable adventure. Enjoy.

FACT FILE:

Our research had revealed that Mozambique is not only divided into provinces but these are further divided into many smaller districts, each with their own administrator, the secretário. So, when you want to climb a mountain you have to ask the secretario of the district, in which the mountain lies, for permission.

If there is no village nearby with a secretario, this could be quite a mission.

If you want to walk around and scope out a mountain, hope that it does not lie in different districts. Neighbouring secretarios hold each other in high esteem and it is required to

formally ask the other secretario whether you can enter his district. Our guides would turn back because we had no formal invite. More time would allow you to make the necessary arrangements if you want to enjoy longer hikes and trips of exploration.

Portuguese is the dominant language in northern Mozambique, next to the local language of Makua. Not many people in the north speak English. You might find a German speaking local, if you're lucky. Take a Portuguese phrasebook.

Always organise the exact amount to be paid to a guard or a guide or for camping beforehand. It will avoid a misunderstanding later on. Remember: Money is 'Sange' (blood)!

Always have small notes available. Often people won't have change and you will end up paying more.

Best time of year: In winter, May through to September

Currency: 1 Rand = appr. 4000 Mozambican Meticals

Best car to take: 4 wheel drive

Train is possible, but you would be very limited

Access from:

-South Africa through Zimbabwe, Mozambique's Tete Corridor, Malawi, then either through Nayuchi or via Mandimba into Mozambique.

-South Africa to Maputo and up the coast to Nampula. A long trip and not recommended due to the bad roads above Quelimane

-Harare, Zimbabwe,

-Blantyre or Lilongwe, Malawi (faster and easier)

-Lusaka, Zambia