

THE 2010 WORLD CUP IN AFRICA

Written by MICHAEL RICHARDS

In the early 70s, when I was attending the University of Missouri-Columbia, I helped out a professor of mine in the English department by briefly helping acclimate a foreign student from Africa. This particular student had been given an athletic scholarship by the University, and was brought over here to be part of their track team. This tall, sleek, intelligent African had come all of the way from a tiny village somewhere in the region of Kwazulu-Natal (I really can't remember where), and his exposure to American culture was essentially nonexistent. Even indoor plumbing was somewhat of a novelty to him. He told me that there was electricity in one section of his village (provided by a gas-powered generator), and although they had no radio or TV, they did have a 16mm projector that some Christian missionaries had left behind along with a number of old westerns. When he was offered the athletic scholarship in America, many of his friends and family in his village became very concerned for his safety and felt he should buy a gun. You see, since their only exposure to America was of the old west, many in the villagers thought we still rode around on horses and carried six guns in holsters on our side.

I mention this story because I think we have somewhat of the same mindset

when it comes to Africa. First, it is a continent, not a country, and even though there are still tribes in many areas, there are also modern cities and pristine beaches and beautiful places you'd never recognize as Africa. To many of us, Africa still conjures up images of Maasai warriors and the Congo. In today's world, though, nothing could be further from the truth. Personally, I predict that Africa will become the new China going into the next century. Not only is it rich in culture and natural resources, but Africa is only just now beginning to break out of the repressive bubble that has kept it from maturing and effectively competing in the global marketplace.

If anyone had any doubts about the affability of the South African people, or about their ability to overcome the architectural challenges posed by hosting a World Cup, then the absolute success of the event there should forever put those issues to rest. South Africa not only successfully met the challenges, but they literally amazed the world by hosting one of the most fun, most exciting and most watched World Cup Championships in the history of the event. In stark contrast to what had been predicted, South Africa effectively proved itself to the world, and set the bar extremely high for Brazil in 2014.

Located in Muldersdrift, Gauteng, Fireworks for Africa is South Africa's most widely awarded display operator, and the nationwide leader in the fireworks display industry. Known worldwide for its spectacular aerial displays and proximate low-level shows, it is also renowned for the high quality fireworks it exports and the concerts, major events and productions it choreographs.

The World Cup is the kind of event that every professional fireworks company lives for, but getting to create the displays for both the opening and closing ceremonies of this world event is truly a pyrotechnic dream come true. Where else (beside the Super Bowl or the Academy Awards) can over a billion people watch your work unfold?

This event was not only Fireworks For Africa's biggest event to date, but it also proved to be the biggest rooftop show ever planned there. Complicating matters, the roof was made predominantly of plastic and they had to convince a lot of important people there that they wouldn't hurt the roof during the display. As it was, final permission for the rooftop fireworks show was given just one week before the event itself.

“We cannot wait to bask in global attention, to project an image of Africa so vibrant and so positive that we create wealth, jobs and opportunity.”

—Irvin Khoza,

Chair of the World Cup Local Organizing Committee.

World Cup Fireworks

Fireworks For Africa by the numbers:

21

The amount of pyro crew who worked on the World Cup show

7

The amount of days it took to rig the show

4500

The amount of 1-shots that were fired for the rooftop closing

1:48

The duration of the closing display

60

The number of programmed sequences in the show

260

The number of gerbs that were fired on the roof for the closing show

88

The number of firing positions that were used on the roof

53

The number of receivers used on the roof

44

The number of matrix boards used on the roof

1.5

The number of seconds it took most sequences to chase around the 600 meter roof



Soccer City

(pictured below and on the next 2 pages)

On the outskirts of Soweto sits the flagship stadium of the most recent World Cup. A huge structure outfitted with colorful glassfiber concrete panels, the stadium is called “Soccer City Stadium” or “Soccer City.” The structure is modeled after the shape of the calabash, an African cooking pot. Originally built in 1987, it was refitted for the World Cup and its cladding was completed in 80 days. The 40,000 panels used for cladding were transported 8,500 miles. The refit of the stadium increased its seating capacity from 80,000 to 94,700. Nine such stadiums were used in South Africa during the FIFA World Cup 2010. Total cost of the upgrade: \$440 million.



“The task was daunting but I know my guys and I knew that we could handle it. The FIFA World Cup gave us a brilliant opportunity to showcase what we can actually do. It’s tricky to tell people how phenomenal pyrotechnics can be; they really have to see them for themselves. We’re just grateful that we were given such a momentous platform on which to work.”

*—Nick Mitri,
Owner / Fireworks for Africa*





The True Face of South Africa

Written by TIM DRIMAN

From its humble beginnings in 1930 the Soccer World Cup (SWC) has grown to be one of the most spectacular sporting events in the world. The 2010 World Cup promised to be the planet's biggest sporting event ever. Well over a billion people were expected to follow the month long tournament between the world's top 32 soccer playing nations. The World Cup is the most important competition in international soccer and is organized by FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association), the sport's govern-



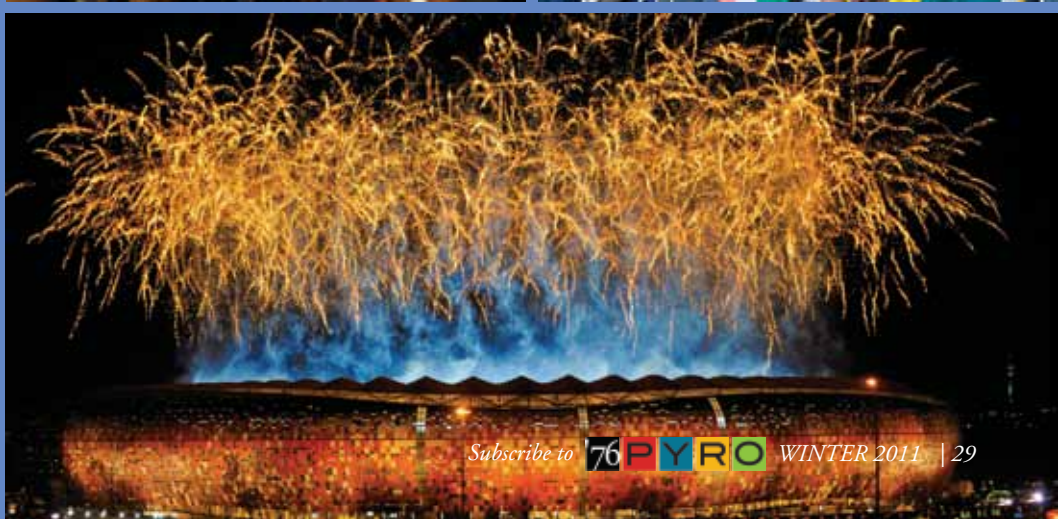
ing body. The tournament takes place every four years. The previous tournament was held in 2006 in Germany and Italy won the World Cup. 2010 will be the first time that the final tournament will be hosted by an African nation. More than 160 national teams take part in the regional (Continental Zone) qualifying rounds to qualify as one of the 32 teams that will take part in finals.

For the 2010 SWC South Africa had to commit vast sums of money to upgrading the general infrastructure of the country. This expenditure covered existing stadia and then building five new stadia making a total of nine world class soccer venues.

<http://www.wcsbig5.com/imageGallery.cfm>
The monetary commitment for the 2010 SWC made possible the construction of a modern transport system called the Gautrain. An express commuter system running from the capital city, Pretoria

Most of the photographs on pages 28-29 were taken by Chris Kirchhoff of MediaClubSouthAfrica.com, with additional photos provided by MediaClubSouthAfrica.com, Brand South Africa Media Service. All of these photos are © MediaClubSouthAfrica.com.





through to OA Tambo International Airport. This cut the transit times on the 90 kilometer route from over an hour to a mere 12 minutes! In time, the routes will be extended to include the inner city of Johannesburg.

<http://newsroom.gautrain.co.za/2010/07/gautrain-showcased-as-a-top-100-global-project/>

The 2010 SWC being staged in South Africa was Africa's first opportunity this country has had to host a sporting event of such magnitude. Many argued that it was simply an extravagant waste of precious resources, and that the money could have been better spent helping the poor. As it turned out, however, this was much more than a simple soccer extravaganza. As the event unfolded over the four-week program, it was quickly apparent to the world that this was a complete rebranding of an entire country. No longer were they the country of apartheid, numerous mineral resources and very little else—now they were the friendly, proud, exemplary hosts of one of the most beautiful countries on earth.

As the television cameras beamed the new image of South Africa to the entire world, the diversity of the people that comprise the modern South African society as a whole showed the entire world what positive attitude and unity can accomplish. Finally, the world got to see the real Africa. 🇷🇺

Nick Mitri (owner of Fireworks for Africa) and his team worked tirelessly to ensure that all three shows: The FIFA World Cup 2010 kick-off concert; the FIFA World Cup 2010 opening ceremony and the FIFA World Cup 2010 closing ceremony went off without a hitch. Many thanks to Nick and Fireworks for Africa for providing '76 Pyro Magazine with the information and many of the photos for this article. many thanks to Michelle and Tim Driman for their help and support as well.

