

# YOU'RE DRIVING ME CRAZY

You think the roads in SA are bad? Think again, says **Nick Dall**

drivers to wear seatbelts, a niche clothing market opened up almost immediately. Within days, T-shirts with diagonal black swathes across the front were available on the streets of Naples. Similarly, South American motorbikers reacted to the introduction of the helmet law by hanging their headgear from their handlebars. The decision was motivated by the amount of Brylcreem they put in their hair, but whatever the reasoning, this half-hearted acknowledgement of the

perfectly, but a policeman still stood in a fancy little canopy at the fulcrum of the intersection, valiantly translating their message... At least I didn't have to drive myself in India.

In Vietnam – my home for two years – I was forced to hop onto a scooter and face the music. I tried to ease myself into it. Only when I was comfortable riding around the backstreets of my dozy neighbourhood would I brave the open road. So much for the plan...

within minutes of setting off, I'd taken a wrong turn and was swept up by the convulsive torrent which is Hanoi's traffic, becoming a tiny speck in the sea of scooters laden with everything from pot plants to live pigs and enormous blocks of ice.

Much like Zoolander, I could only turn left and before I knew it, I was in the industrial outskirts of the city without a map or a cellphone. By the time I finally made it back to my (more than a little concerned) wife



**W**hen it comes to the level of driving in our country, we all agree it's

mayhem out there, don't we? Capetonians are so firmly under Table Mountain's spell that they're incapable of sticking to one lane and anyone with a GP number plate is pushy, bombastic and almost certainly speeding.

Taxis dance to their own tune and all cyclists seem to have a death-wish. And don't even get me started on *loskop* pedestrians. It could be worse, though: we could be in Italy. When the government there made it compulsory for

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regulations kept everyone happy, as it meant policemen could also carry on riding bareheaded.

If you think that's overboard, you obviously haven't been to India, a country with over a billion people who all seem to be going somewhere all the time. It's usual for traffic policemen to step into the breach when robots are out of order, but it struck me as odd that cops in Mumbai routinely served as traffic light "interpreters". The robots were functioning

I was, for what it's worth, a Hanoi driver. The traffic rules in 'Nam are simple. Rule one: the bigger vehicle has right of way. Rule two: you're responsible for whatever the person in front of you chooses to do.

It sounds petrifying – and it is. But the reality is that riding in Hanoi is a lot like playing a video game with only one life. I can't say it's the wisest thing I've ever done, but it sure as hell is a lot more exhilarating than driving in Cape Town.

Do I miss it? Of course I do... 🌈