

# Cheetah ad a new chapter in VW advertising book

Ogilvy Cape Town's cheetah commercial for the Volkswagen Golf 6 has not only generated media interest but has also tugged at the public's heartstrings. "Not since the VW Corporate Memories commercial have we had such a phenomenal public reaction. Without a doubt the team at Ogilvy Cape have written a new chapter in the history book on VW advertising," says Bill Stephens, Volkswagen South Africa communications GM.



Since its launch only two weeks ago, the VW ad has been making an impact, with numerous blog posts, interviews and features on Radio 702, 5fm and Cape Talk, and articles in *The Times*, *Sunday Independent* and the *Weekend Argus*. There are forthcoming radio and TV features, too.

## Live up to past executions

The challenge has been to live up to the excellence of the past executions for Golf "The Rally" campaign, the GTI "Drum" ad and, most recently, the "Dreams" execution. Golf is, and always has been, a driver's car. Golf briefs have, at their heart, the task to communicate the thrilling experience of driving the ultimate driver's car - and the ad has to do it in a fresh and exciting way.

"Two things happened - first we wrote an incredible local human story, then, through a Cape Town-based production company Gatehouse, found a director who specialises in documentary, reality-style commercials," explains Ogilvy Cape Town executive creative director Chris Gotz.

"A Golf commercial has to capture the exhilarating feeling of driving. We wrote a story about an injured cheetah that relives and experiences the thrill of speed by driving in a Golf."

## In search of a story

Continues Gotz, "When we were looking at directors, Henry Rubin came into the mix at the last minute because another director pulled out. Before he even spoke to us and pitched, he flew up to Namibia, which has the world's largest wild cheetah population. He wanted to find a real story. And he found it.

At heart, Henry-Alex Rubin is a film and (an Oscar-nominated) documentary maker. He works for international film, TV, commercial and music video production company Smuggler directing commercials.

"He hooked up with a woman called Marlice van Vuuren, who rehabilitates wild animals, including cheetahs, at her game farm near Windhoek. She drove a three-legged cheetah that she was rehabilitating around in her bakkie. Henry suggested we do it for real. And that's how it all came about. Instead of truth meeting fiction, this was fiction meeting truth," said Gotz.



## Wildlife sanctuary

Van Vuuren runs a wildlife sanctuary called Na'ankuse, largely committed to relocating problem animals as an alternative to farmers shooting them. In cases of injured animals, she rehabilitates them and gives them a life on her farm. The female cheetah in question had lost her hind leg in a farmer's gin trap. Since she would never return to the wild, Van Vuuren committed herself to rehabilitating her as best she could.

"Her tenderness and care for the animals was inspiring to watch and she opened her arms to this project. Marlice uses many unconventional ideas to strengthen the cheetah's remaining hind leg: throwing food, running with her dogs, playing

with tennis balls and feather dusters, even using her son's remote control car. Marlice named the cheetah Lucky because she was lucky to be alive. In a sense, we were lucky too, as I never expected to land upon such a beautiful true story that lined up with an agency's dreamed-up idea," says Rubin.

"Ogilvy Cape Town wrote a rare and inspired script. Its message of kindness and resilience resonates. It's one of those few-in-a-lifetime ideas that will grow wings and fly around the world. I truly wanted to help give it wings," adds Rubin.

## Host of awards

Golf launch ads are always big news for both VW SA and its agency of 30 years, Ogilvy Cape Town.

Last year, and over the past five years, VW was the most awarded car manufacturer at the Loeries and Volkswagen SA sales and marketing director Mike Glendinning won the Loeries Marketing Excellence and Innovation Award of the Year.

This year, Volkswagen is both 2009 Cannes Lion Advertiser of the Year award and 2009 Clio Advertiser of the Year - after winning their first Cannes Lion back in 1961, Volkswagen ads have gone on to win nearly 150 Lions across all disciplines.

The Golf 6 cheetah ad will be entered into this year's Loeries and London International Awards and next year's Clios and Cannes Lions.

### For more:

- Ornico ad showcase: [VW Golf 6](#)
- Forum: [Lucky Volkswagen??](#)

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