

Land Rover's legend has not deserted it



By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Years ago, the late Anton Hammerl - then a photographer on *The Sunday Independent* - brought me a photo from a "rave" he'd been to at Verneukpan in the back of beyond in the Northern Cape...

It was outrageous - and just the sort of iconoclastic thing Anton became known for - and most newspapers would have rejected it. Chief sub-editor Don Bayley, his deputy Alf Hayter and I (then news editor on the paper) shook our heads in disbelief.

It was a vast canvas of nothing, save two-thirds blue sky and one-third orange desert. When one looked closer, in the bottom left-hand corner, there was a small figure of a man with his arm in the air. In the top right-hand corner, about to fly out of the picture frame, was an equally small orange frisbee.

The only way to use a pic like this was big - so we did, across half a broadsheet page, one of the biggest pictures the paper had used.



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And, it worked. You could almost hear the echoes of desert wind in the vast empty spaces of that picture. Thereafter, anytime a photographer brought us an arty shot, we would ask: "Where's the frisbee?" and that has been my chirp about many a deep, artistic photographer.

It takes guts to use an image like that and even more so in an advertising context - because newspapers have a bit more leeway than a brand trying to make a pitch for its product.

Land Rover is a brand, though, which is comfortable with risk-taking and it seems instinctively to know that its seven-decade reputation will back it up.

Its latest print ad reminds me of Anton's "Where's the frisbee?" pic - a vast area of desert. Top right-hand corner, a Land Rover Discovery has run up against the only baobab for kilometres around. At the bottom left is the simple message: Please don't text and drive.

The point is elegantly made. Landie drivers go to much more remote places than ordinary people. This is no "Sandton tractor" SUV, as my colleague Kevin Ritchie labels the fashion statement so-called off-roader. No, this is the heir to the Land Rover legend, the 4x4 which conquered the world. Whether that is true or not, Land Rover owns that space.

The ad is a neat piece of work and it gets an Orchid for Land Rover and its agency, Y&R.

I've said this before but I'll say it again - if you're going to communicate in English, and if you are not proficient in it, please get someone who is to write and/or vet your marketing communication.

That's something the brand manager for Husqvarna Motorcycles in South Africa, would do well to take on board.

Earlier this month, they put out a release announcing a new "tittle sponsorship deal".

Tittle? Really? Normally, two of anything is better than one, but in this case the two Ts bring a whole new line of thought to your sponsorship. Quite how someone who is a brand manager would not know how to spell "title" is beyond me - as is the fact that "tittle" seemed to have slipped past everybody. Perhaps not a wardrobe malfunction, but certainly a language one.

You boobed, so, Onion for you, Husqvarna Motorcycles.

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ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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