

# SLING HW -

## *ROAD TRIPS IN THE SKY*

**The refreshing ocean breeze. The crackle of a bushveld fire. The taste of a home-cooked meal. The breathtaking sight of the country's vast rugged mountain range.**

**E**VERY SOUTH AFRICAN has a different take on what that joyous thing called 'The December Holidays' means to them. And, no matter how far the journey is to get there, be damn sure we'll be willing to make it.

But what if you could fit all of that into one trip? That's exactly what team Sling did when their test pilot, Riaan Denner, and his family filled the team's latest High Wing to its 1,120 kg takeoff capacity to embark on their Sling HW Holiday Hop across South Africa.

Covering five provinces in three weeks, Riaan, his wife and two children packed 50 hours of flying into their December break across a multitude of terrains. From a gravel airfield in the Free-State, to landing on a sweltering 44°C tar strip in the Northern Cape, the team stopped off at 17 spots to bring the High Wing to the public.

"Many people felt as though the Sling High Wing was a myth. They'd seen it on YouTube, social media, at Oshkosh... but the only way to really make this magnificent aircraft real for the people of South Africa was to take it to their doorsteps," said Riaan about the inspiration behind the trip.

Starting at their home in Parys in the Free-State, Riaan and his family took to the following route:

Bethlehem – Harrismith – Bingelela - El Mirador - St Francis Bay - Jeffrey's Bay - Paradise Beach - Plettenberg Bay - Oudtshoorn - Worcester - Diemerskraal - Stellenbosch - Mossel Bay - Cape Town - Saldanha - Van Wyksvlei – Bloemfontein.

While inclement weather meant stops in Ballito and Knysna were postponed for a later visit, the public showed up in droves at all other

locations to see the aircraft in action and in many cases to enjoy a demonstration flight.

"A bunch of people came along with misconceptions about the plane. So, it was an incredible feeling to blow their minds with the final product and. You don't have to do any talking - you let the plane do that," said Riaan.

## It was an amazing experience

Whether it was the plane's ease of entry, spacious interior or the sheer unmatched power of the 160 hp turbocharged fuel injected Rotax 916 iS engine, its popularity was undeniable. Particularly in St Francis Bay, Jeffrey's Bay and Paradise Beach, where team Sling spent 4-5 hours each day doing demonstration flights.

A grueling schedule for any aircraft to keep to, but how exactly did the High Wing hold up? They had a seamless three weeks. No flat tyres, not even a single spat issue, despite the rocky terrains they needed to tackle. Riaan says the 160 hp 916iS engine has made the world of difference to the aircraft. Not even landing in 25 knot crosswinds on the pristine coastline of Jeffrey's Bay or taking off in 45 knot headwinds in the Drakensberg could stand in its way.

"I have a newfound respect for the Sling High Wing after this trip. We pushed the plane to its limits. Full fuel and luggage, difficult terrains, but no hassles. There's a common thought


among pilots, including myself initially, that rough landing strips require a taildragger. After this trip I will happily land our trike anywhere I land a taildragger!"

Riaan adds that no gorgeous scenery, or even the High Wing's perfectly consistent performance, could match what the kindness and hospitality of the people within aviation.

"The sense of community was incredible. We were welcomed with open arms at every stop. No matter who we called, whether it was for landing strip information, a hangar for the plane, a roof over our heads or even a car to use, everyone was happy to help. I feel that if I had to try do this trip in my car, no one would even remotely care or want to help. It was an amazing experience."

For anyone wanting to enjoy their own version of the Holiday Hop, Riaan had a few recommendations: "The Wild Coast is a must! The most beautiful part of the trip. And the coastline between St Francis and Jeffrey's Bay was amazing."

But, be sure the weather's cooperating. "In South Africa, at some point on your journey, you're going to come across bad weather. If it's not playing along, don't push it. Go with the flow. And if it means spending an extra day or so in one place, so be it. The only thing I would do differently for this trip is having fewer stops and spending a bit more time at each spot." Riaan concluded.

So, when December rolls around again and a sense of adventure calls, consider a road trip of a different kind - to see ALL that the country has to offer in one go. 





*Sling*HW

Beach, bush, berg. Why pick one when you can have them all?  
With the Sling HW, it's just a hop away!  
Go Everywhere. Take Everything.