

# Scooting to a greener lifestyle

## Tamika Sewnarain

MELISSA Andrews and Christopher List have hopped onto two scooters and are touring through Africa spreading the word on permaculture and reducing carbon footprints.

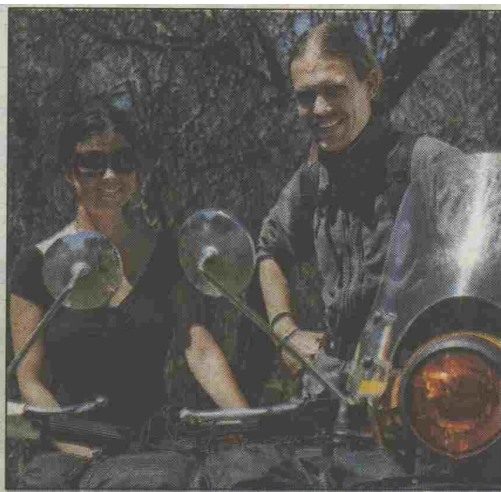
"We stopped in Durban, but our trip passed in a whirlwind of activity," said Melissa, a journalist from East London.

They visited the Priority Zone with their rooftop garden and city beautification scheme, popped into the Sustainable Living Expo, visited the Indigenous Plant Fair and the Botanical Gardens, where they did a tour of the permaculture gardens.

"Then we meandered up to the Midlands where we visited Sifisesihle Primary School in Mpophomeni, one of the Midlands Meander Education Project's school gardens, and checked out the sustainability initiatives at Zuvuya Eco village and Five Streams Eco Village," she said.

Currently, they are at Three Tree Hill Lodge at Spionkop, a green leaf certified, fair trade in tourism establishment. When I asked them where they got this idea from, Melissa said, "While living in Dubai we discovered permaculture, a common-sense method of ecologically sound design (whether urban, rural or social) to create sustainable homes and healthy ecosystems through cooperating with nature and caring for the earth and its people.

"After doing courses in South Africa, Palestine and Jordan respec-



**Melissa Andrews and Christopher List.**

tively, the idea of showcasing some of the amazing environmental projects in Africa took root."

They decided to begin with South Africa as a test phase before tackling the rest of Africa and from there, everything happened 'organically'.

They are riding two LML/Vespa scooter's for 6 months and for 7500km through all corners of SA on a carbon-neutral scooter safari.

They will be exploring, filming, photographing, and documenting South Africa's natural beauty, the inspiring environmental projects that aim to conserve this and replenish what's been lost, and sharing their discoveries with the rest of the world.

"We're doing the trip in support of Food and Trees for Africa, a fantastic social enterprise that's all about putting back more than we (as humans) take out, creating food gardens for school

kids and low-income communities, planting trees and teaching people to become self-sufficient with permaculture methods," said Melissa.

"We're experiencing a global environmental crisis - rising food costs, dwindling resources, increasing water shortages, spiraling energy costs and a changing climate means that we need to change if we want to survive on this planet. We want to inspire people to go green; it's a simple lifestyle change that benefits you and the earth," they passionately emphasised.

They want people to realise that "it's actually really easy to reduce your carbon footprint, whether you're at home or on the road."

Both of them gave us some advice, "Eat local, seasonal produce. Better yet, grow it yourself. And try cut down your consumption of meat. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation the livestock sector generates more greenhouse gas emissions as measured in CO2 equivalent, 18 per cent, than transport."

People can also reduce their water consumption (short showers instead of a bath) reuse kitchen and household grey water for the garden or to flush the toilet, capture rain water, buy earth-friendly products, reuse and recycle products.

They concluded by saying "We're offering our emissions by planting trees and through the volunteer work we do and would like our story to encourage people all over the world to become knowledgeable about their footprints too."