

Sanral ad pothole-free

By  [Brendan Seery](#)

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Peugeot's clichéd and silly *La Belle France*-type ads are only Onion-worthy.



Screen grab from the ad.

As Upton disappeared behind me and miles and miles of nothing ahead welcomed me to a new life in Namibia, I thought of English poet Thom Gunn's line: "One is always nearer by not keeping still".

That open road, into the literal and figurative unknown, had to be driven... the fear had to be conquered and life had to be tackled. Anything better than playing it safe, sitting where I was. That 2,000km drive from Joburg, across the vast empty heart of southern Africa, frightened and enticed me at the same time.

In the 30 years since then, road trips have become one of my favourite parts of living on this southern foot of Africa. An open road stretching out ahead of you signals adventure, or that there will be an oasis at the end where you can take your well-earned rest.



Pilot Crushtec, Sanral sign MoU to promote transformation in SA

12 Apr 2019



And, ironically, you will be nearer peace by not keeping still. As long as the road is good, of course. When it is potholed or disappears altogether – as happens in parts of provinces like the Free State (thanks Ace...) your wonder vanishes, to be replaced by tension and anger.

So, I must say I quite like the latest TV ad for the SA National Roads Agency (Sanral). Before you jump up to accuse me of double standards, I am still vehemently opposed to e-tolls and the unnecessary waste of money on the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project's roads, as well as the systems used to fund them.

But I do recognise the need for first-class roads – and Sanral is correct that we do have some world-class ones here in South Africa.



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Brendan Seery 5 Jun 2018



That is what the ad is all about – how the agency brings us the infrastructure which helps our daily lives and helps us live the dream of being nearer by not keeping still. So we see some of the best current and planned civil engineering roads projects across the country.

“ But – and this is what attracted me – we also see some of the beauty of our country and how it is accessible because of an excellent road. ”

In the past few years, Sanral has tried – and largely succeeded – in moving the debate about e-tolls away from it to where it really belongs – with the government itself.

Sanral, after all, is only a government agency. This was not always apparent during the reign at Sanral of the arrogant Nazir Alli, who treated the organisation as if it were his fiefdom and taxpayers not as people to be served but as people to be treated like serfs.



Sanral fails to find successor to CEO Alli

Andiswa Mqutu 5 Jul 2016



The current TV ad reminds us that we need first-class roads if we are ever to become a first-class country. And Sanral provides that.

The debate about waste through programmes like the e-tolls does not diminish that fact. So, for putting across your case well and for reminding us about the beauty of the journey, you get an Orchid, Sanral.

My Onion goes to a series of radio ads for Peugeot cars – for a group of dealers, not the main brand, it seems – which have taken the clichéd *La Belle France* idea to silly extremes.

They sound like they recruited Inspector Clouseau to do the voice-over. And complete with French music playing in the background... Does your minkey drive? It's not my minkey... but if it were it would not be impressed with your ad, Peugeot.



Why you need to keep your eye on the Peugeot 208 GT-Line

Ilse van den Berg 25 Apr 2019



Can't you speak to the merits of the cars (and there are many) rather than relying on hackneyed images of France and an over-the-top accent? Peugeot, collect your *Oignon*, *S'il vous plait*...

Ross Meldrum writes:

“ *The series of Outsurance flights of two complete strangers, carefully PC, driving aimlessly about and discussing insurance premiums! They have become really annoying to me both for content and frequency of flighting. Long past their sell-by date, I think. Even worse, though, is the guy lounging on his bed staring at this laptop all day and talking to a dog about credit scoring. It's on every few minutes and been on for months now! As soon as those grunts from the dog are heard off goes the sound! Doesn't he have anything else to do?* ”

Let me know who gets your personal Orchid or Onion.

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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