



FISHING Inhaca island ruins your fishing. Once you have wet your line there, nothing else can ever compare. The mere mention of the name Hell's Gates, however, evokes feelings of hesitation, fear and excitement. Mental images of a watery graveyard are quickly conjured up. One is quick to dismiss any notions of being able to venture out in such a place on nothing more than a fibreglass fishingski.

Hell's Gates is a 300m wide channel of water that separates Inhaca Island from the mainland Mozambican peninsula. The name is derived from the huge volumes of water that push and pull through the Gates with the ebb and flow of each tide. Consider all the water in Maputo Bay squeezing through such a minimal gap: the result is extreme currents which, at times, can cause standing waves. It is this very same current that always brings us back to this destination.

Through numerous trips and extensive experimentation, we can confidently argue Hell's Gates to be one of the premier fishingski destinations available to the South African ski fisherman. With the right approach, the sheer number of fish that can be caught is absolutely mind-boggling.

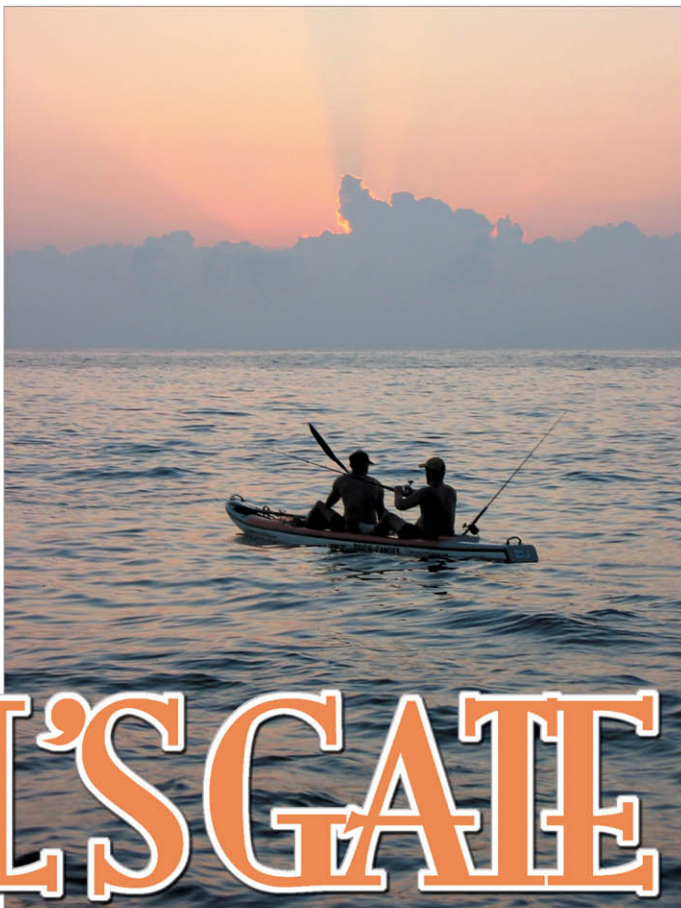
An average day off Hell's Gates consists of sight-fishing around shoals of 'cуда, and landing and releasing anything up to ten fish per ski. On exceptional days, when the silver bullets are a little hungrier, we have had days of 15-plus fish per ski. Although the large majority of the fish caught are 'cуда (king mackerel), there are plenty of other species to keep things exciting,

like outsized queenfish, GTs, golden kingies and good-sized kaakap.

There is one simple reason for the massive amounts of gamefish congregating around the gates. Maputo Bay has a huge volume of water. On every incoming tide, this water is primed with nutrients, prawns and baitfish. As the tide approaches full, as if by some sub-aquatic grapevine, every 'cуда and his dog arrives at Hell's Gates. The outgoing tide literally flushes a mother-load of food into the Indian Ocean. The result is, in sportfishing terms, chaos!

As the name would suggest, Hell's Gates is not for the faint-hearted. Appropriate respect is due for the extreme currents there. First timers, even the most experienced ski fishermen, visiting Hell's Gates must take special heed of the location's name. The treacherous currents need reverence and, above all, proper planning.

The planning process starts well before departure for the destination. Tides are studied and a basic trip plan is born. On tour, by observing the sea state and weather conditions, the basic



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HELL'S GATE