

# #Manvsmachine

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Decio Lourenco, the fearless 24-year-old downhill skateboarder and YouTube star who set off a Cape Town speed camera earlier this year, is caught speeding down steep passes again, this time in a tango with the new Mercedes-Benz A 45 AMG on the treacherous Franschhoek Pass, in a thrilling [video](#) produced for Mblife.co.za, the Mercedes-Benz South Africa online lifestyle portal.

Whether you're a car lover, skateboard freak or armchair adrenaline junkie, you can catch this action-packed video on [mblife.co.za](#) and other Mercedes-Benz media channels from the 25th of September.

"Mercedes-Benz is a leader of innovation and by using a speed skateboarder (not something one would traditionally associate with the motor car manufacturer) we are yet again pushing the envelope and finding new ways to connect to the Mercedes-Benz audience, across all age divides," says Claudia Walters, marketing manager for Mercedes-Benz South Africa.

The concept and location for the video was a collaboration between Mercedes-Benz South Africa and New Media, choosing the Franschhoek Pass in order to showcase the powerful and aggressive compact A 45 AMG to a local audience. "It has a distinctly South African look and was chosen for its spectacular scenery, severe hairpin bends and smooth surface," editor of New Media, Dylan Culhane, says. 'Silver Slipstream' was produced in conjunction with edgy production company Bring Back Choirboy.

It took three months to plan and three days to shoot the three-minute black and white "Silver Slipstream" video, which features Lourenco on his skateboard in a high-speed duel against the A 45 AMG, driven by seasoned precision driver Robbie Smith. The video shows Lourenco zigging, zagging and slipstreaming with former race car driver Smith before meeting at the bottom of the pass in a stand-off.

To get the video's dramatic look, Darkwing Aerials was contracted to capture aerial views of the Franschhoek Valley with a high tech drone camera suspended from a helicopter. On the ground, the crew used a high-speed 2000-frames-per-second Phantom camera to create a slowmo effect. The shoot's complex demands, which included road closures on the Franschhoek Pass by the Western Cape Traffic Department as well as medics on hand, were further complicated by weather.

"It was kind of a four seasons in one day scenario," said Culhane. "It started out freezing and misty, which segued into rain and wind with spots of sun. It was tricky because the drone can't fly in high wind conditions, and rain can be hazardous for skateboarding. While it made visual consistency a challenge, ultimately the perpetually changing weather contributed to the video's surreal look."

The rapid-cut video with "major cool factor" was shot and produced by a young and passionate crew, mostly under the age of 30, according to Culhane, who "really got the brief", which was to successfully appeal to the interests of a younger audience, as well as established Mercedes-Benz owners.

The two racers of different generations had an immediate affinity, according to Culhane. "They even met up several times before to practise on Red Hill Road in Cape Town, so that they would be well prepared," he said.



Lourenco is a graphic design student who has brought downhill skateboarding to the fore, since his widely watched brush with a speeding camera. Serious about the sport, he is the winner of many South African competitions, including Houteq HDX, Peg Street Kings 2013 and the King of the Fort Downhill Challenge. Smith has been a professional precision and stunt car driver for the past 20 years. "Getting these two generations together in an exhilarating chase was exactly what we wanted to showcase the A 45 AMG, which represents a significant point of departure for Mercedes-Benz," said Culhane.

"The A 45 AMG merges the solid motoring performance of this well-respected brand with a new, compact, sportier look that speaks to a younger, energetic audience, so why not make a video that brings together two generations of masters of speed? We've done it in a dramatic South African landscape, with breathtaking effect."

This year, for the second year running, Walters was on the shortlist for the Marketing Leadership and Innovation Award at the 2013 Loeries. "The exhilaration embodied in the video clearly shows that Mercedes-Benz does not only encompass luxury, style and sophistication, but also personifies what it is to be cutting-edge, contemporary and trendy," she adds on the 'Silver Slipstream' video.

"In the online era, everything that goes live is publishing," said Heléne Lindsay, New Media's Head of Strategy and Marketing. "At New Media, we are always looking at how we can communicate compelling content in new and exciting modes. 'Silver Slipstream' breaks new ground for us, shifting the boundaries of what a publishing agency can do.

A behind-the-scenes video will be released on [mblife.co.za](http://mblife.co.za) in October.

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