

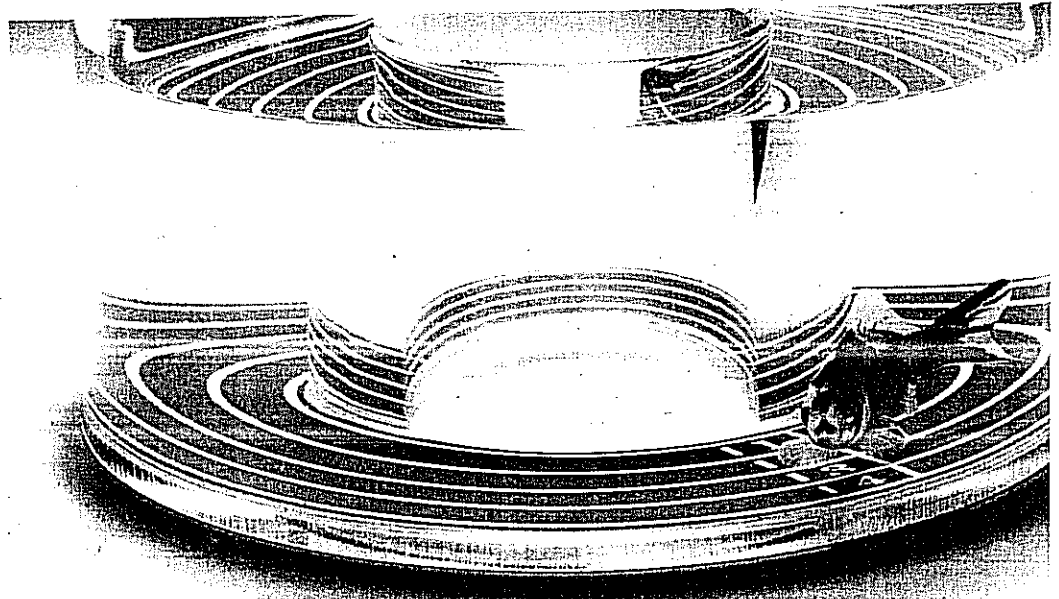
**T** PROFESSIONAL GARETH Knight returned after seven-and-a-half years in the UK. He found the transition tricky but not as painful as the Van Dyks. Why? Knight, you see, always planned to eventually come home. After a recent holiday in the country he knew the time was right both business- and lifestyle-wise.

As with most Internet-based organisations, the project he is helping to head up here has a multinational team. "The cost of people (labour) in South Africa is less than London, so it makes sense to have some costs based in the UK and as many as possible in South Africa," he says.

The trifecta that Schaffer mentioned – family and friends, lifestyle and sense of belonging – also prompted his decision. "My parents are in Somerset West and I want to spend more time with them. That and I met a great girl who happened to live in Johannesburg, so it made a lot of sense to come back."

He's had his frustrations, though. Knight feels he's coming back to make a valuable economic contribution and this should be recognised by the government. "There needs to be some sort of assistance around starting again," he says. "So that you can actually do something productive instead of untying red tape." But he realises the only way to deal with the sticky bureaucratic stuff, or any other change-type situation, is to attack it with the right attitude. "No one is forcing you to make the choice, so just get on with it. Don't think that there's a magic formula."

Yes, coming back can be a lot harder than leaving in the first place. But think about sitting in your back garden, frosty in hand, braaing while you wait for the big game to start, and it suddenly all makes sense, doesn't it? **MET**



## MIND THE GAP

So what about the good old two-year Euro stint?

Your brother did it and your cousin before him... Six months of pouring pints in a dodgy little pub or stacking fruit in a warehouse to make enough travel money to hit Portugal, Spain and France. Footloose, as they say, sort of fancy free – until the cash dries up and you're back behind the bar. This little cycle lasts until your two-year UK working visa runs out and you board that jumbo jet bound for OR Tambo, armed with a 500 foreign Facebook friends, a passport full of stamps and a bit of a funny accent.

But with the abolishment of the traditional two-year UK working holiday visa and the current global economic situation, is it still a good idea (or even possible) to go overseas?

"It depends entirely on what the person wants to achieve," says Robbie Bense, director of Overseas Visitors Club (OVC). "Even though the UK no longer offers young South Africans the two-year working holiday visa, there are still a number of travel options and we see hundreds of young travellers going abroad after school to do casual work."

Bense believes that the global job market has definitely tightened and the best option open to those looking for overseas experience is to further their education abroad. "The UK and New Zealand governments are incentivising foreigners to study in their countries by offering them the opportunity of a work visa on graduation," he says.

So you might not be going over there for a job, but perhaps that's not a bad thing. Do your homework properly and come back a better (qualified) man. "The global economy is favouring applicants with middle management skills and those candidates with overseas experience are hugely advantaged," says Bense.

If you are looking to pack your bags, check out [www.ovc.co.za](http://www.ovc.co.za) for assistance.

## SKILLED EXPATS ARE TURNING THE TIDE AND RETURNING TO SOUTH AFRICA

### PLANT NEW ROOTS

Successfully settled after seven-and-a-half years in the UK, here are Gareth Knight's top practical tips for coming home

1. Figure out what you want to do before you come back, so you can start making contact with people in South Africa before you return.
2. Make sure you come back with enough cash to cover you for long enough to get settled or have an income ready to support you.
3. If you can, bring your car into South Africa instead of buying one here – cars are massively overpriced locally and the second-hand car market is very different to the UK.
4. Realise that you're coming back to a country that's not quite First World, but not quite Third World. This requires readjustment in thinking and expectations.