

I'm a Robe iSpiider – Don't Get Me Out of Here!

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Robe's new IP65 rated iSpiider LED wash moving lights passed some serious jungle tests on the latest edition of "I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here Germany" (Ich bin ein Star – Holt mich hier raus) ... which was recorded at Blyde River Canyon in Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

Lighting was supplied by Blond Productions and designed by Mauritz Neethling for production company Triosphere who facilitated the series for franchisee ITV. Normally it would have been shot in Australia, but that was not possible this year due to Covid travel restrictions, so instead they chose South Africa as their new production hub.

Previously four Australian and one French versions of the show have been recorded at the same South African location, and Blond has been a production supplier for the last six years, over which time they have refined the lighting and the processes involved to ensure it is a smooth and efficient operation.

The iSpiiders were a new purchase specifically for this show at the start of 2022. This followed a

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site recce in late 2021 when Mauritz met the German team including director Michael Maier and DoP Roberto Piersanti.

When the series was broadcasting from Australia, due to the time difference, they were shooting in daylight from three different areas - the camp, the studio, and the trials locations. However, with SA's time zone being so close to Europe's, now everything needed to be lit for night-time transmission.



The iSpiiders were used for the show's studio segment that facilitated the live link up, and the task was to provide location lighting over large distances bringing all the dramatic contoured valleys and bush environment into the foreground and background shots. This even incorporated a waterfall approximately 800 metres away, so lighting had to capture all these spectacular exterior vistas.

They used HMI fixtures to illuminate the background and furthest parts of the bush, with the iSpiiders positioned for optimal lighting of the closer backgrounds that were between 10 and 30 metres away from the presenters in the studio.

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Show hosts Daniel Hartwich and Sonja Zietlow with lighting tech Lucky Lewele in the middle.

The lighting control position was around a kilometre away with no direct line-of-sight to the studio.

Three iSpiiders were deployed on the studio roof, two were positioned behind the Studio in trees, with one on the jib platform immediately facing the studio. The lights were all purchased with the wireless DMX modules so data can be daisy chained from the first one, saving in cable and time during the set up.

iSpiiders were chosen for several reasons including their IP rating so they did not have to worry about rain and other environmental challenges in all these very exposed positions on the studio roof and in the trees.

Mauritz loves “the versatility, the accuracy of the colour rendering, the indexable moves and the fact they just work perfectly for television,” he said, adding that they also knew that being a Robe product, they would be tough and reliable, thanks to Blond’s large stock of different Robe fixtures and their commitment to the brand as a long-term investor.

The fixtures were certainly put to the test with South Africa’s exceptionally heavy rainfall over the last few months, and they worked every day without fail. Additionally, they stood up well to another major challenge for outdoor lighting – bugs – none of which could penetrate the sealed

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lenses!

Two of Mauritz' regular crew – Lucky Kilur and Jack Mogoboya – provided his 'eyes on the floor' positioned over in the studio, they related information back via Grand Ma network so he could tweak and update his lighting focus positions as needed for the recorded sections.

Lighting was programmed by Braam Avenant – using his grandMA onPC with a Node and a Wing – who was highly impressed with the iSpiiders.

A different approach was needed when utilising these LED washes as studio lights in an outdoor environment, concluded Mauritz, but “both the director and the DoP saw first-hand the power and versatility of the luminaires,” and appreciated how using them saved a lot of extra kit being needed to create the desired spectacular results.

Blond's iSpiiders can also be used indoors where they are equally as effective as was the case for the studio elements of Big Brother South Africa 2022. Christiaan Ballot and his team are all delighted with the purchase and the lights have yet to spend any time in the warehouse!

Photos: Courtesy Blond Productions