

# Tail piece

By Philippe du Preez



No smelly shoes. These baby striped polecats were found when they came crawling out of a storm-water pipe in Riviersonderend in the Overberg, with their mother presumably run over. They were initially installed in our bathroom, with a length of plastic pipe to sleep in, and a sandbox for doing their business. The first few days they were fed milk with a syringe. Our two Golden Labradors completely accepted the newcomers, who soon played around the house and greatly enjoyed getting into bed with us when we woke up in the morning. They are now almost four months old and have taken up residence in an old doll's house on the stoep, where they are free to come and go as they please. Their diet now consists of insects, small snakes and frogs, as well as mice. Their species, *Ictonyx striatus*, resembles some skunks and also shares the latter's ability to excrete a pungent liquid from their anal glands. This, however, is only a defence mechanism used when the animal is cornered, and we've had no such smelly experience; rather, we have greatly enjoyed their company and would be sad to see them go.