

*In*Clarens

EN OMGEWING / AND SURROUNDS

R15-00

November 2011 November
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Eastern Free State Tourist Magazine
Oos-Vrystaatse Toeristetydskrif



Eastern Free State welcomes
Steel Wings

Nr. 11



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So klop die gees van die Kersiefees

November is kersiemaand of kersiemaand is November. Hoe dit ook al sy, November word daar gekersie lank nadat die koek verslind is. Die organiseerders verwag weer eens 'n rekord getal besoekers nadat verlede jaar die beste en winsgewendste fees in die meer as veertig jaar van die Kersiefees se bestaan, was.



Vanjaar se kersie-klingel Kom na Ficksburg en vang Kersiekoors is van toepassing en die program is uiteenlopend maar met die gewone vermaak wat van die Kersiefees so 'n gesogte oesfees maak.

Christiaan van Zyl, deurwinterde Oos-Vrystaatse sanger het pas sy eerste CD die lig laat sien en hulle sal by die Kersiefees te koop wees terwyl hy sy stem en kitaar sal laat saam dans op maat van die Cherry-wals. Hy sal die verhoog deel met kunstenaars soos Andriette Norman, Gerhard Steyn, Ray Dylan en Monique.

Die gewildste item op Saterdagoggend se program is natuurlik die steil voetpad op teen die Imperani-berg as deel van die 23 energietappende kilometers oor die bekendste baken in Ficksburg. Die marathon spring 07:00 weg net na die bergfietse wat 06:30 die pad vat. Die bergfietsresies word gereël deur Boet du Toit. Bel hom by 084 600 4519.

Kersietoere na die oorsprong van al die lekkerte, die omliggende en kersieproduserende plase word elke dag van die fees onderneem. Kersies in alle vorme word dan aangebied: vars, geglasuur, in konfyt en dan natuurlik die immer gewilde likeur.

Ficksburg se Tafelronde (Round Tablers) is verantwoordelik vir die biertent en almal kan verseker wees van 'n gesellige fees en niemand hoef op te droog waar daar kersie-sider of sommer gewone kersiesap ook sal wees nie.

Die grootste aantrekkingskrag van die fees is natuurlik die klein rooi vruggie maar omdat aspersies terselfdertyd gepluk word, word dié lekkerny vars en vrolik, of gaar en geblik opgedis en die twee oeste het nou al sinoniem van mekaar geword.

Die kersiepitspoegkompetisie is ook so eie aan die Kersiefees as wat rooi en groen is, want 'n groot deel van kersies eet is die uitspoeg van die klein harde pitjie. Die kompetisie lok jaarliks talle inskrywings en sorg vir groot pret.

Verder vul die letterlik honderde stalletjies en perdevertonings en noemens musik en lekker kos deur vaardige hande berei, die dae van die fees. Abba se Magic Show belooft om baie aftrek te kry maar so ook die suutjies trap van spogperd en -karretjie. Die kampioenskappe word jaarliks hier aangebied en nostalgie omvou die fees vir 'n wyle wanneer vervloë dae in herinnering geroep word.

Daar is ook vermaak vir die kinders met meganiese sweef-en rygoed maar gewoonlik kry die begeleide perderitte ook groot aftrek.

Kom deel aan vanjaar se Kersiekoors in Ficksburg van 17 tot 19 November.

www.cherryfestival.co.za



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Letters to the Editor
Briewe
editor@inclarens.co.za



InClarens invites you to tell us how you the reader experienced the Eastern Free State. The last letter we receive before the 15th of the month, will win a gift voucher to the value of R150,00.

InClarens nooi lesers uit om aan ons te skryf en te vertel hoe julle die Oos-Vrystaat, Clarens en InClarens ervaar en wat julle graag meer van sal wil lees en doen. Die laaste brief wat ons voor die 15e van die maand, wen 'n geskenkbewys ter waarde van R150,00.

Beste Amanda,

Ek dreig al hoe lank om my briefie te stuur. Ons was gedurende April in Clarens en daar het ek die InClarens vir die eerste keer gekoop maar kry dit nou by Malanshof, Randburg. So lekker en ek kan nie wag vir die volgende uitgawe nie.

Die storie oor Caveman Spies is heerlik, geluk en dankie aan Leon Strachan. Dan geniet ek natuurlik vir Adél en haar vreemde-hoek insig in storieskryf vreeslik.

Wanneer ons weer die geleentheid kry om in daardie wêreld aan te doen, wil ons ook oor die uitgestrekte randjieryke Oos-Vrystaat draal in 'n lugballon en ontbyt by die Phatt Chef gaan eet. Dit is waar die heel beste kos in die Oos-Vrystaat gekry kan word.

Hierby aangeheg, 'n foto wat ons by die Phatt Chef geneem het en wat ek graag wil inskryf vir julle Restaurante in die Oos-Vrystaat-fotokompetisie.

Moet nooit ophou met die tydskrif nie. Dit lê ons nou so na aan die hart.

Groete

Elizma Bezuidenhout.

Geagte Amanda

Ons was onlangs met 'n groep van ons Buitelandse Gaste in Clarens - Die dorp is pragtig en sy mense was ongelooflik vriendelik. Ek het per toeval 'n boekie gekoop en toe kom ek op my oupa Andries Spies se artikel af. Ek en my suster is die afgelope jare al op soek na inligting en foto's van hom. My moeder lankal oorlede en ek het geen kontak met haar familie nie. Ek sal dit hoog op prys stel as jy my in verbinding kan bring met die skrywer van die artikel: Leon Strachan. My oupa het by ons in die huis gebly toe hy oud was later na 'n tehuis vir bejaardes waar hy oorlede is.

Wanda Sippel

Nelspruit

Wanda is deur Caveman Spies se storie weer in kontak met haar broer gebring. Dit was haar broer, Vic Bothma, wat die liggie oor Caveman aangesteek het waarvoor ons hom baie dankbaar is.

Elizma en Wanda verdien elkeen 'n CD van Con Grazia geskenk deur Marchelle, lid van die drie-vrou vioolgroep. Geniet dit.



Words of mass distraction

by Ric

InClarens celebrates one year of publishing in November and Ric writes.

The mountain path has been well travelled both by four and two legged beings. The earth is bowing into the birthing of a new day. The sun warming away the chill of the night. Now walking along this old mountain path, there is no sense of loneliness but an immense feeling of but an immense feeling of aloneness (all-one-ness); a certain kind of interrelatedness. The little robin sitting on a rock ledge singing its song with such passion that it is easy to think that it is the first song ever sung.

The many different plants showing off their new offspring (children), little flowers everywhere.

A scent of the Divine is in the air.

The trees with their new bright green leaves are standing tall and proud like sculptures amongst the sandstone rocks. The sun kissing the shadows and bringing them to light and caressing his beloved earth.

Is this not the expression of a proud mother?

If we as humans realized in that sacred corner of our hearts, that we are part of that intimate love affair between the sun and the earth, every moment of every day everywhere, would we still harm our Mother the earth, or our children?

So when an idea of a book or magazine comes into expression, it is not the idea that is virthed. The idea is already there. It is the creator of the idea, the nurturer of the seed that was originally planted, that comes to life. When that nurturing continues, the idea, which is now a magazine or book, will continue to grow in compassion and love.

Like the little robin who sings his passion and the flowers that give off their heavenly scent.

Could we as humans recognise our rightful place in nature again?

What would be the quality of our life when we do

Happy days birthing InClarens

Much love and respect



InClarens is celebrating one year.

When we started InClarens, we didn't expect anything. We didn't have a grand master plan for a successful Eastern Free State tourist magazine. We created something that we found useful and that we thought others would find useful, too. We relied on instinct more than once, we stayed patient, and we pulled the occasional night shift.

You have passed the word along, left comments, dropped us emails. You let us know that we are in the right direction. You let us know that we were doing something meaningful. And you let us know that our humble work deserved your attention. And we listened. Carefully.

A year has passed, and the magazine has changed. That obscure, no more than a pamphlet, little magazine of a year ago has evolved into a professional publication. The InClarens family no longer has only two members, but dedicated contributors, photographers and sponsors.

We all do our best to bring you interesting articles and good pictures. InClarens is a quality-obsessed, passionate team, but it is every single reader who has read the magazine this past year who we wish to thank. Thank you for being with us; thank you for your support, criticism and encouragement.

Of course we have to thank all our sponsors and advertisers as well. We most certainly could not have done any of this gloss without you.

Die jaar het so vinnig verbygesnel met op- en teenslae. Heelwat wenners en natuurlik baie tandekners. Maar ons het InClarens laat groei, soms soveel dat ons moeilik kon byhou, maar volharding en ondersteuning het dit moontlik gemaak om sirkulasie te laat styg asook om 'n tydskrif van formaat op die rak te kry.

Dankie aan die span en aan al ons medewerkers en baie dankie aan al ons adverteerders. Sonder julle sou ons dit natuurlik nie gemaak het nie.

Front Cover Picture:

The Eastern Free State welcomes
Steel Wings by Amanda van Blerk,
edited by Vanessa Coetzee

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InClarens
EN OMGEWING / AND SURROUNDS

November 2011 November

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Working on Fire



Pupils from Clarens Primary

Mr. Charl Fouché & Johan Hattingh, Mayor Tjhetane Mofokeng, Clem Harrington & Michael Scheepers with the cheque of R55 000.



Town in a winning mode Clarens, Volksblad's tourism town of the year!



On Saturday 22 October, Clarens celebrated its win as Volksblad newspaper's tourism town for 2011 and once again the square was engulfed by festivities, just a week after the merriment of the visual arts festival rippled through town. Greater Clarens was very much in the lime light and intended to stay there for as long as possible. Much needed exposure was given to the Eastern Free State and to Clarens in particular.

On show was once again the dedication of people who embrace cultures other than their own and go beyond borders to include their neighbours. At the handing over of the cheque to the Clarens Tourism Forum, the makietie on the square put forward the unique style of various participants. The marching team of Working on Fire paraded past the jubilant crowd and moved with military precision while their voices raised goose bumps in their rendering of the Fire Song.

In the shade of an oak tree, Clarens ladies Colleen McLachlan, Erika Naude and Louise Brits entertained the young learners of Clarens Primary School. They dramatized old fables and told stories from storybooks much to the delight of the young children listening wide eyed to every word. They were treated to ice cream and lucky packets and they will always remember the day that Clarens became the town of the year.

In the tent well renowned pianist Donvé Fullard entertained the audience while they waited for the dignitaries to arrive. She played a selection of classical and contemporary works for the piano and her music flowed to the far corners of the little village.

When it was the turn of the pupils of the Clarens Primary School to perform, the audience doubled in size and they swayed to the music of Michael Jackson. Annatjie Coetzee, Erika van Rensburg and the team coached the learners to render a melodramatic version of the musician's work to the sheer enjoyment of the audience. This was just a curtain raiser to the main event, the school's annual music revue, which took place on 26 October.

The executive mayor of Dihlabeng Councillor Tjhetane Mofokeng and MEC of Tourism Clem Harrington received the cheque on behalf of the Clarens Tourism Forum and Mayor Mofokeng granted in his speech that retaining the award was the difficult part, but said that he was quite convinced that Dihlabeng would continue to produce winners.



All the hard work and many hours of negotiating, the stress and adrenaline, all fell away and there were smiles on all the faces. They accomplished what they had set out to do and all members of the Clarens Tourism Forum congratulated one another on a job well done.

Two Eastern Free State towns, Bethlehem and Clarens, were among the top three in the competition, the third being Upington.

Volksblad, Capitec, Central University of Technology, Afrikaanse Handels Instituut and Dihlabeng were the main sponsors of the cheque that was presented by Mayor Mofokeng.

A Harley gives you wings of steel



This is the rally not to be missed. The annual get-together of all the Steel Wings members and other Harley Davidson owners in Clarens is something to behold. Harley Davidsons from all over the country rock up in their masses to party and enjoy one another's company. This year our live entertainment includes Ghapi, who will rock the night away. Many games are lined up for the Saturday and will be held during a mass out-ride to surrounding towns.

Gone are the days when motorcyclists were seen as a rowdy bunch of duck tails that come to kick up dust, drive around town naked, race and speed and draw knives on their mates when drunk.

The new-breed motorcyclist is far removed from that image. Firstly, they are from the upper income group, since their bikes are very expensive. The average Harley Davidson costs R200 000,00

A club like Steelwings set high standards for members and all have to adhere to the club's rules. They do drive out to have fun, but they are civilized fun-lovers who know how to party without offence.

Clarens lures the club on an annual basis and this year will be the eighth consecutive year that they will

roar into town to boost the town's economy. They buy fuel, spend money on accommodation and browse the shops. That is what makes it feasible for businesses to continue in Clarens.

If rallies such as Steel Wings cease to be, Clarens will end up as a ghost town with only a few fossils that will have to drive into Bethlehem for a box of matches or to fill up with fuel.

This year Ghapi will provide live entertainment at the rally. He is the big man with the huge voice and even bigger drum kit. The drummer that sings was introduced to the public in 2005 and he has entertained at many group events and festivals. His unique ability to communicate with the audience and the way in which he involves the audience in his performances, places him in a league of his own. With twenty seven years of experience, Ghapi is no newcomer to the music industry. Most people got to know Ghapi between 1989 and 2004 as singer and drummer for the group Georgia but he is not only a singer, writer, composer and drummer of note, but also manages his own record company, Rock Till You Drop Records.

The Eastern Free State welcomes Ghapi and Steel Wings to the mountains that are calling those with wanderlust. Enjoy your stay.

"A buttoned shirt is available for sale this year and all proceeds go to the Charity Chest from where it gets distributed to the needy."

Harley enthusiasts in competition mode

There will be a marquee on Clarens's town square to cater for the Steel Wings rally on the weekend of 12 November, but members participating in the poker run will visit surrounding towns in their quest to get all their cards stamped.

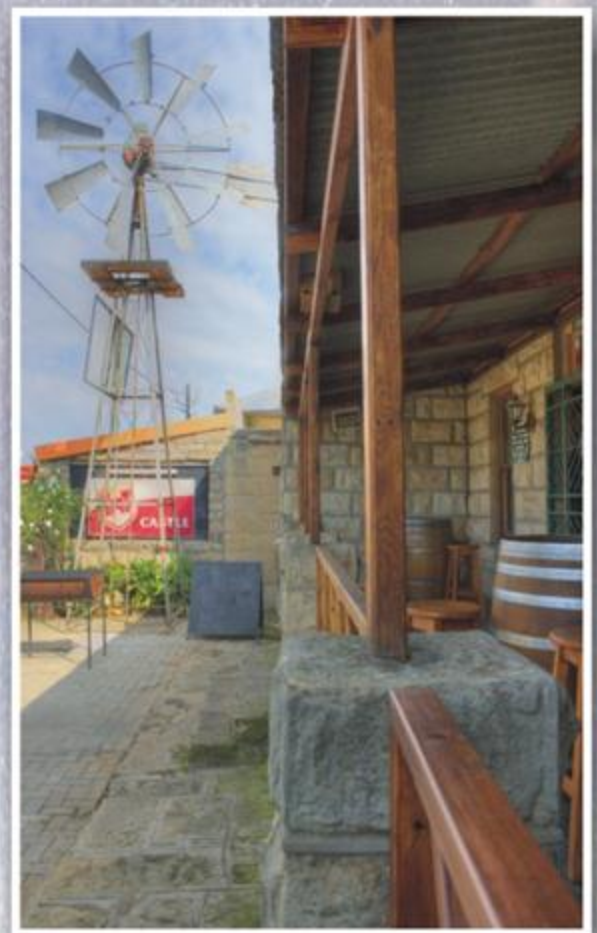
The poker run starts in Clarens and the different chapters will compete against one another in various competitions, from slow racing to paintball and the hosts at the different stops will keep score of each game taking place at their premises.

The slow race will take place at the Windmill Pub and Grill in Fouriesburg where the Main Street will be cordoned off. The hosts are Nelis and Li-Ann Roos.

Paul Roux's Watergat will host the balloon throwing, while the next stop will be the Frontier Inn and Casino where Ollie of Clarens Xtreme will be presenting and monitoring the paint ball shooting game.

Then on to Farmstead where the guys will compete in tyre throwing and darts.

Wisely and for safety sake, it was decided to have the beer drinking contest in the marquee on the square in Clarens.





Die einde van die storie ...

maar juis die begin

“Die geskiedenis van shweshwe loop wyd en ver. Adél Steyn het dié brokkie geskiedenis, wat amper ongesiens verbygegaan het, gaan opdiep en vir ons hier kom weergee.”

In die beginjare aan die Kaap van Goeie Hoop het die slawe-, Khoisan- en Voortrekkervroue almal rokke gedra van 'n pragtige gedrukte indigo-materiaal. Die oorsprong van hierdie lap het gelê in Oos-Europa sowel as Indië, waarvandaan die blou kleurstof gekom het. Toe die Duitse setlaars in ongeveer 1858 in die Oos-Kaap kennis maak met hierdie materiaal, wat sterk herinner het en histories verwant was aan hulle eie Blaudruck, het ook hulle begin om daarvan klere te maak. So het die lap in die volksmond bekend geword as Duitse sis. Kort voor lank het dit ook die Xhosa-vroue se verbeelding aangegryp, en het die ouer en getroude vroue dit by spesiale geleenthede saam met hulle rooi kombersmateriaal begin dra. Hulle het hierdie kledingstuk uJamani genoem, 'n woord waarmee hulle erkenning gegee het aan die Duitse gebruikers van die lap (“uGerman”), en wat beteken “die einde van die storie”. Maar nadat die kreatiewe Xhosa-vroue hulle Afrika-stempel op hierdie Europees-Indiese lap afgedruk het, was dit inderdaad net die begin van 'n baie mooi storie. Want vandag word rokke van shweshwe, soos dit nou bekendstaan, in enige kleur en fatsoen deur vroue oral in Suid-Afrika gedra.

Shweshwe is aanvanklik in die historiese Tsjeggo-Slowakye, Hongarye en toe in Engeland vervaardig. Die produksie daarvan in die bekende blou, bruin en rooi kleure soos ons dit vandag ken, het in 1982 in Suid-Afrika begin, en Da Gama Textiles het die alleenreg vir die druk daarvan in 1992 gekoop. Die koperrollers, met die verskillende patrone op die oppervlak daarvan geëts, is van Engeland na Suid-Afrika verskeep, en is steeds vandag in gebruik.

Die geheim vir die styfheid van ongewaste shweshwe lê in hierdie stukkie geskiedenis opgesluit. Die lap moes destyds, voor die vervaardiging daarvan op eie bodem, met stysel behandel word om die klam toestande op die skeepsreise te oorleef. Jy sal dus, deur net aan die materiaal te voel, weet wanneer jy met ware shweshwe te doen het. Maar as jy steeds twyfel, dop die lap om. Shweshwe, wat terloops, van suiwer katoen gemaak word, word vervaardig in die bekende Three Cats-reeks, en jy sal die watermerk van die drie katte, Three Leopards, Toto of Fancy Print aan die binnekant van die lap vind.

Shweshwe het sy buiging as modemateriaal in 2003 gemaak, maar dit bly sedertdien in aanvraag. Suid-Afrikaanse ontwerpers soos Amanda Laird Cherry, Bongwiwe Walaza en

Marianne Fassler se shweshwe-geïnspireerde ontwerpe het hierdie trots Suid-Afrikaanse produk tot in Parys en New York geneem. Vandag is shweshwe selfs in aanvraag by Amerikaanse kwilters, en word dit in 'n magdom ander produkte gebruik: van kussings, boekomslae, lampskerms, plekmatjies en yskasmagnete, tot hondekomberse, kinderklere en selfs speelgoed. Onder die vaandel van Shwe Shwe Poppis in Soweto maak vroue van daardie gemeenskap unieke shweshwe-poppies waarvan die ontwerpe gebaseer is op oorspronklike kindertekeninge. Shweshwe is ook vandag beskikbaar in ander kleure soos pienk en pers, wat dit 'n nuwe en speelse karakter gee en nog meer gebruiksmoontlikhede open.

Volgens legende het Franse sendelinge in 1840 aan koning Moshoeshoe I 'n stuk van die indigo-materiaal as geskenk gegee, en so het dit gekom dat die lap eers shoeshoe, en later shweshwe geheet het. 'n Ander verklaring vir dié mooi-klinkende naam is dat die Xhosa-vroue dit so genoem het na die swiepgeluid van die rompe om hul bene.

Hoe dit ook al sy, vandag is ons bly dat hierdie vroue vir ons met naald en gare die begin van 'n baie mooi storie geskryf het. Suid-Afrika se diverse kultuurgeskiedenis loop soos 'n bont katoendraad deur die storie van shweshwe, sodat hierdie besondere materiaal nou 'n kosbare erfenisskat geword het. En shweshwe het lankal reeds sy weg grasieus vanaf die kus tot in die hart van die Oos-Vrystaat gebaan, waar ook trotse Sotho- en Zoeloe-vroue vandag met daardie sagte swiep om hul heupe gesien word. Daar moet 'n betowering wees aan 'n stof teen jou vel so bekoorlik en met so 'n rijk geskiedenis.

Komaan, word deel van die tradisie. Koop shweshwe. Gee 'n shweshwe-geskenk, verfraai jou huis daarmee; wys jou ware kleure en dra dit self! Skryf saam aan een van die mooiste stories van hoop in die wêreld. My rok hang reeds in my kas, en joune?

Met dank en erkenning aan Helen Bester van Da Gama Textiles vir haar insette tydens die skryf van hierdie artikel.





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Die grotman bly kordaat

In die derde aflewering in ons reeks oor die legendariese Andries (alias Caveman) Spies, daag hy in Europa wild en wakker bokkers uit en maak amok.

In Stockholm was daar 'n relletjie wat baie tipies van Andries was. Die taal was 'n bietjie van 'n probleem toe die skeidsregter die geveg teen Anders Anderson na die derde ronde probeer stop omdat Anderson uit was op sy voete. Spies kon nie verstaan wat aangaan nie, want die man staan dan nog. Toe die skeidsregter aan hom pluk om sy boodskap deur te kry vererg Caveman hom. Toe slaan hy sommer dié ook uit. Van die toeskouers en beamptes takel hom toe, maar ook hulle het vir Spies onderskat. Hy het glo by die hotel aangekom met net sy boksbroekie en -handskoene aan.

Hy het ook in Holland, België en in Frankryk geveg voordat hy Duitsland toe is. Daar was dit dieselfde storie totdat sy reputasie die opponente laat opdroog het.

Andries besluit toe maar om vir Max Schmeling uit te daag. Schmeling was die nuwe swaargewig-wêreldkampioen, en het geweier om teen die onbekende Suid-Afrikaner te veg. Die volgende oggend is Andries by Schmeling se oefenkamp met nog 'n uitdaging. Maar die Duitser wil niks weet nie.

Twee weke later is Andries weer daar en toe willig die wêreldkampioen in om privaat teen hom te baklei, vir 500 mark.

Dit was glo gelykstaande aan die totale bedrag wat Andries tot in daardie stadium in Europa bymekaargemaak en in 'n geldband om sy lyf gedra het. Andries Spies vertel self: "Toe ek in my gewone gebukkende houding kom, slaan hy my kop terug met 'n geweldige kort regterhaakhou, en daarna onthou ek nie veel nie. Behalwe dat dit vir 'n minuut of twee bokshandskoene gereën het, tot die genadiglike verlossing van bewusteloosheid. Dit was die slegste pak wat ek nog gekry het, maar ek het ten minste die voorreg gehad om die bekende Schmeling te ontmoet. Dit was die moeite werd, hy was 'n goeie sport, want ek is vol bier en Rynwyn hotel toe, met 'n allemintige 1 000 mark in my sak. Schmeling het my die ander 500 mark ook gegee."

Toe is Andries Rusland in, maar sonder 'n visum. Hy is gou ontdek en teruggestuur sonder dat hy daar geveg het. In Spanje het hy die "Baskiese Stoeier", Antoine Germatte, in die eerste ronde uitgeslaan. Toe droog die opponente weer op, en hy begin dink aan bulgevegte. In Toledo het hy na een gaan kyk, en vertel:

"Ek het al enigiets in my lewe probeer, meesal net een keer, maar nadat ek een bulgeveg gesien het, het ek besluit dis bokant my vuurmaakplek."

In Frankryk is Leon Cartout gediskwalifiseer omdat hy vir Caveman gebyt het, en daarna is Andries, ná agtien gevegte op die vasteland, weer terug Engeland toe. Hy was nou bekend en 'n rits uitdagings van beter opponente het op hom gewag. Dinge was net aan die regkom toe kry hy 'n erge griep, en doen asma op, 'n kwaal wat hom sy lewe lank sou bybly. Dit het hom veral in die Engelse weer gekortwiek en hy het besluit om terug te kom.

Terug in Suid-Afrika het hy uitstekend geveg totdat hy op 'n dag sleg teen die ervare en swaarder Tommy Holdstock verloor het. Andries het besluit dis tyd om iets nuuts te probeer. Rofstoei het intussen baie populêr geword, en dit het natuurlik sy ekstroverte persoonlikheid en ongewone krag soos 'n handskoen gepas. Hy het dit uit die aard van die saak ook baie geniet.

Andries en 'n Rus met die naam Boganzki, het 'n reeks gevegte oor die lengte en breedte van die land gehad, en ook groot vriende geword. Die promotor het die Caveman-legende goed uitgebuit. Hy is by elke nuwe bestemming so 'n paar myl buite die stad of dorp afgelaai voor die geveg sou plaasvind, sodat Caveman net voor die geveg papnat gesweet met sy fiets opdaag, al die pad van Harrismith af! Daarmee het hy plaaslike ondersteuners in sy sak gehad.



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Trust a never-ending story

Thanks to CAT, Makoti beat the odds and Dusty stays upbeat

The Cluny Animal Trust (CAT) that was founded earlier this year to provide care for animals whose owners can't afford veterinary services is holding out a lifeline to animals that would never have made it without care.

Initiator of the trust Dr Kathrine Barker shared the stories of two dogs that would have been doomed had they not received the necessary treatment. Dr Barker is a veterinary practitioner in Fouriesburg.

Makoti, an Africanis of indeterminate age, was brought in 10 days ago after being poisoned with a rodenticide left out by the neighbours. She had been vomiting blood and passing blood in her stool.

She was hospitalised and treated for poisoning, but despite medical treatment continued to deteriorate until her abdomen was filled with blood. With her chances of survival at zero without dangerous surgery to stop the bleeding and her chances of surviving surgery negligible, her owners begged me to save her life.

So into theatre she went -her clotting ability grave. I opened her up resulting in a pool of blood from her abdomen soaking into numerous towels around her, and found her uterus filled past capacity with blood that it had ruptured, causing more blood vessels to bleed, including major ones. Not having a suction pump in theatre (put that on my wish list!) I started to mop through more than two litres of blood to clear the area and find the major bleeders, which I managed, with much sweat and a few tears.

After removing the uterus, I could close her up with only seeping of blood into the surgical site. This was controlled with a pressure bandage. For three days and nights she was kept under heavy sedation, and gently turned every few hours, even during the night, while vitamin K and liver support was administered with her drips.

To everyone in the hospital's surprise and great relief, Makoti pulled through and is recovering well with on-going treatment -a bit pale and wan, but eating well and very demonstrative in her appreciation. Her treatment to date, if charged at normal vet rates would be in excess of R5 500, for which the owners have promised to pay R500, leaving a deficit of R1 500 just to cover direct costs. This is where the Cluny Animal Trust helps indigent people, covering those costs that they cannot afford.

Dusty is also in hospital at the moment. She is a seven-month-old Africanis, who was brought in because she was not eating, and one of her legs was "growing crooked". The dog had a fever of 40,5°C, septic arthritis in her right front wrist joint, broken radius and ulna of this leg, and a broken tibia and fibula of her right hind leg, shown by x-rays under anaesthetic.

Dusty has now been with me for three weeks in Robert Jones bandages and treated for her infection. She gets around just great on her two good legs and bandages, but needs the dressings changed every 10 to 14 days, as she is still growing, and in her exuberance, wears out the foot of the bandages. Each time we do this, Dusty has to go under anaesthetic, as she will not keep still for the procedure.

So far, this would normally have cost in the region of R3 500, but CAT is paying the balance of R1 900 that the owner cannot pay, to cover direct costs of the x-rays, multiple anaesthetics, bandaging materials, antibiotics, pain killers and food.

Photographs by Daniel Naude and the Africanis Foundation

In this challenging economic times, please spare a thought and a Rand or more for this noble case.

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Come show you care

On 17 December Cluny Animal Trust will have a stand on the square in Clarens as part of the annual Christmas fair. They'll sell T shirts, all-purpose greeting cards, baked goods, souvenirs, dog and cat treats and accessories and toys, books and anything else they manage to collect. It is part of their on-going effort to treat, vaccinate and sterilize animals in the townships of Clarens, Fouriesburg and sometimes further afield. It is the only organisation serving the needs of these animals.

Where to be these holidays Shumba Valley Bush Camp



This stunning new addition to the camping and caravanning options in the beautiful Eastern Free State offers some of the finest scenery from every site. Here, one can breathe in the fresh mountain air; watch the horses, gaze into the distance and soak up the beauty of the Malutis; listen to the birds and re-charge your soul.

With 22 grassed sites with power points and braais, this is one of the most attractive camping options in the Free State. Not all of the sites are shaded, but hedge rows and trees have been planted for the future. Six sites are for tents only and these are nestled away in private little areas along the base of the bush camp for ultimate in privacy. These sites have no power points at the moment. There are ample taps throughout the camp.

Bob and Di Armour of Shumba Valley Guest Farm want to preserve the natural flora as much as possible in order to create a haven for the birds.

An exquisite ladies' ablution block, newly finished is a wonderful addition. The gents' block is next door to it. A maximum of 60 people can be accommodated in the new bush camp, while the top campsite can accommodate 20 campers and is used for one- or two-nighters. The top camp has a very quaint little ablution facility and the site is all grassed and close to the other amenities. Every site has a power point.

For the children there are swings under the trees, stunning walks to the dam for a swim, excellent cycle tracks, and hours of fun can be had in the river. Horse riding and Quad hire is available on the farm. Shumba offers a great 12km 4x4 track with a number of thought-provoking obstacles. Above the cottages is a farm Reservoir converted to a plunge pool with a wooden deck on one side for a dip on those really hot days.

A few visits to the nearby Clarens with its stunning art galleries, interesting little shops and a delightful quantity of superb restaurants, are a must. For golfers,

there is a beautiful course. White-water rafting is done on the Ash River just outside of Clarens; dinosaur footprint trails can be walked in Clarens and visitors simply have to drive to the Golden Gate National Park. Pop across the border for a day exploring Lesotho and the impressive Katse Dam, Bokong Nature Reserve, or drive up to the ski resort that offers good 4x4 trails in the summer months.

The Eastern Free State has more to offer lovers of the great outdoors than one can imagine. Book in to Shumba Valley Guest Farm's camp site for 10 days and they will keep you occupied every day, with more to see when you come back to the jewel of the Free State.

The rates are R75 per person per night, half rate for children under 12 and under 2-years stay free. There are no site fees. Power points are R35 per day. Advanced booking is essential.

Firewood is available on site and there is DSTV for rugby mad visitors! Fouriesburg is only 8kms away with two excellent butcheries, three great restaurants and a wonderful new shopping centre. Grocery shopping is limited but there are two good bottle stores. Beer, biltong and braaivleis and who needs more! Grocery chain stores are available in Ficksburg or in Bethlehem.

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Caring for the valley

Gregg Mousley, chairperson of the Clarens Conservancy, spoke to us about the successes and the difficulties of running a conservancy in an area with very diverse interests and priorities.

Photos by Amanda van Blerk.



In its 26 years of existence, the Clarens Conservancy has seen an about turn in the extinction of fauna and flora in the valley with various species finding their way back to where they once were prevalent.

With increased environmental awareness and with Clarens attaining star status in the tourism industry, a group of farmers from the Clarens Valley founded the conservancy in 1985 with the intention of preserving the natural resources of the area. The conservancy was incorporated into Free State Nature Conservation and a delegation of local farmers visited conservancies in Natal for guidance on how to conduct a conservancy. Initially, some 12–14 members in the Clarens area joined and contributed on a voluntary basis.

The number of members has increased over the years from 8 to 16 and the conservancy now employs four permanent trained guards to do the legwork in the field. Two of these guards have been with the conservancy virtually since inception.

The Guards are:

Nyatu Motaung has been with the Conservancy for 22 years!; Seapi Khabu; Koloji Mokoena

Thabang Mosea;

The Members are:

Ralph Burls - Koeberg, Awie Viljoen- Adullum , Janie Wilson – Caledon Park, Brad Goldblatt – St Fort, Rob Martin – Tevrede & Clifton, Christine Walwyn - Schaapplaats, Geoff Lipman (a supporter from Gauteng) , Rett Orsmond - Bethel, Anne Boland - Sunnyside, John Shires - Sunnyside, Bethel Estate, John Damant - Doloriet , John Damant Jnr. – Corrie , Dave Dix & Len Bines - Craigrossie, Doug Hancock – Guddleburn , George & Gregg Mousley – Madrid & Joubertsvele

All the selfless efforts are now paying off and signs that nature is returning to glory are there for all to see.

Among the mammals:

- There has been a noticeable increase in the grey duiker population, as can be seen when one goes out with a spotlight at night. Previously, these animals were mercilessly hunted with dogs;
- The numbers of the Stevenson's rock rabbit have increased, since they too are no longer hunted extensively;
- African wildcats, which used to be indiscriminately killed in the early days because they preyed on poultry, can now be seen even at daytime; and the genet population has also increased dramatically;
- Serval is seen on a regular basis and is often excitedly reported as leopard!
- When one takes a walk along a river or dam, the tracks and dung of otters are visible;
- The aardwolf, which appeared to be just about extinct, has also increased in numbers;
- A new resident is the slender mongoose that didn't stand a chance until the conservancy days. Its cousin the grey mongoose has also benefited; and
- Even the much-persecuted jackal and porcupine have benefited.

Birdlife is picking up nicely and some of the new birds that have come to the valley are the large spur-winged goose, southern bou bou, two species of lapwings, Greenwood hoopoe and the long-crested eagle. These birds would never have come

here if the environment was not looked after.

“By re-establishing the food chain, we have even managed to bring back to our area a pair of Verreaux's Eagles, a speci that had been gone for the past ten years.

“In co-operation with SAFRING and the Bethlehem Bird Ringers group we did a number of bird ringing or banding sessions in the conservancy area.

We have been doing raptor rehabilitation and relocation for the past seven years and in this year have released more than 70 rehabilitated birds of prey into our conservancy,” says Gregg.

Reptiles are also protected and these benefactors released 20 mountain tortoises into the conservancy area with the guards monitoring them.

A survey of dogs in the valley has shown very few greyhound-type hunting dogs, a real threat to fauna, and those are carefully watched.

Other steps are taken to make the valley a safer place for its rightful inhabitants, and snares are being removed, which means that almost no animals are now strangled to death on a fence. The monitoring of skins and animal parts too has all but eradicated the muti trade in animals and plants in the conservancy area. Another challenge, namely that of wild animals being kept as pets, is being resolved by monitoring permits for these animals and educating the owners about the law.

The guards have been instrumental in crime prevention over this period and have made more than 100 arrests that have ranged from poaching fish to stock theft. They work with the police on a continuous basis and are a valuable asset to the security in our valley.

“These are the visible battles we have won not to mention the smaller battles won. Like insects, this will then attract the insect eaters to the valley” Gregg added.



In addition, the conservancy has been of great educational value and, with the help of Jan Lesale from Free State Nature Conservation, the guards did education among residents. Gregg says their guards have been on numerous training courses with Free State Nature Conservation. Sadly however involvement from the Department's side has all but dried up over the last years as they feel the pressure from lack of funds and running vehicles. Despite this the conservancy has a very good relationship with the department and we communicate on a regular basis.

The committee and members too have attended several seminars on conservation and have worked hand in hand with Nature Conservation for all this time to preserve the environment. All this was done at their own expense, in their own time and for no remuneration. Representing the view of all members, Gregg says the reward has been in the successes he told us about.

We have recently managed to get the approval from FS Nature Conservation on an eland management plan. With their help the conservancy is now issued a permit from the department and the committee then distributes the permit amongst the members who are affected by eland and we then sell off the remainder as a fundraiser. In this way we attempt to share the resource as well as raise much needed funds.

He assures us that the conservancy is in it for the long haul. “We are building up a data bank of photographs of all the conservancy work for the next generation to take over in order to ensure the long-term protection of our valley from exploitation.”

The conservancy has several hiking trails and an overnight hut for hikers to enjoy the beauty of the area at an affordable price. These hikes are well worth the effort and bookings can be done with Annali on 073 050 8030.

For any information contact Gregg Mousley at gmousley@netralink.net.



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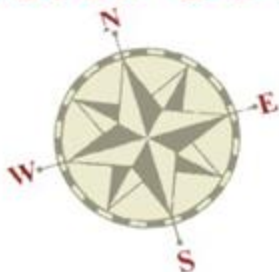
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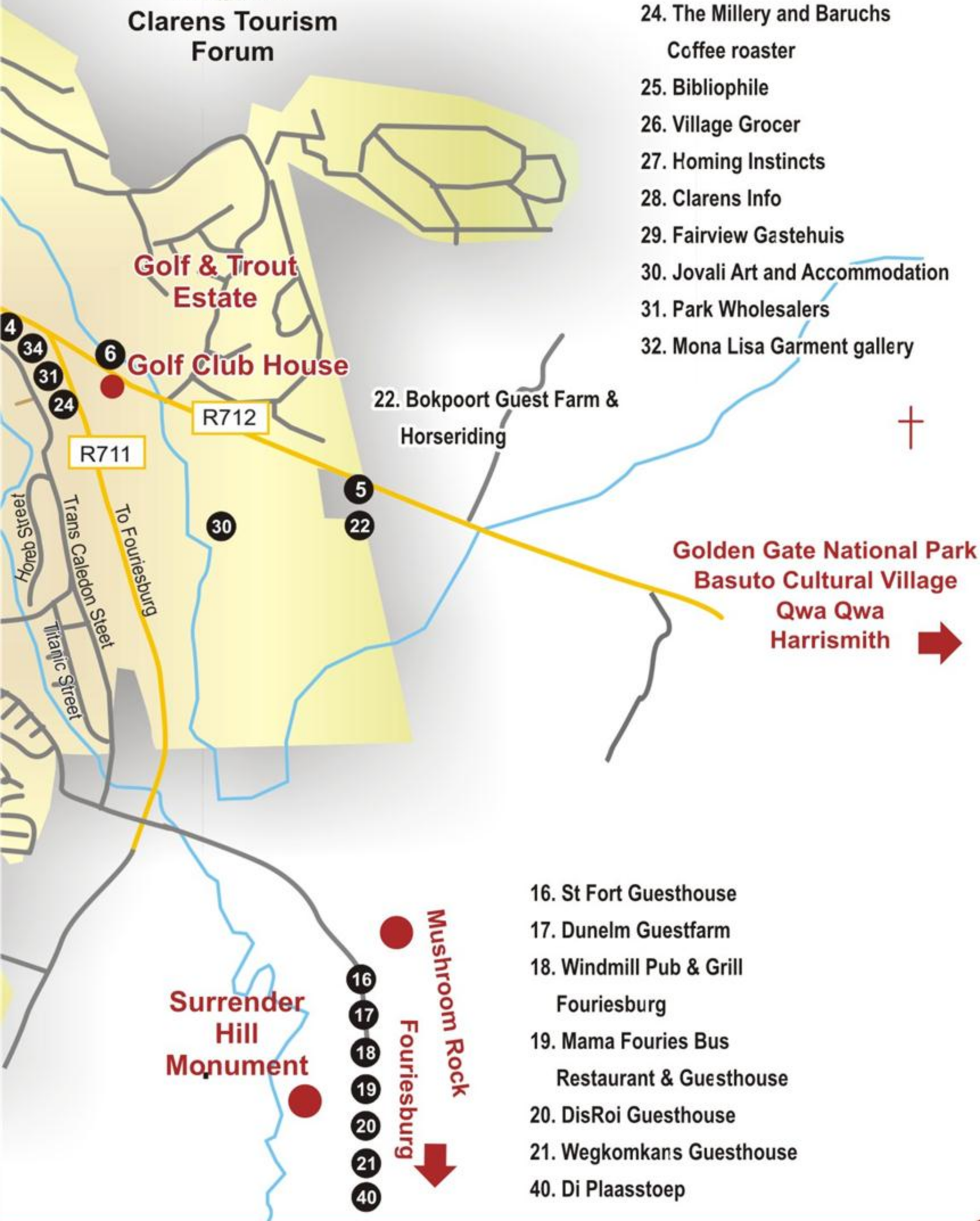
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Gerhard Snyman
at some of his works in
the Robert Badenhorst
gallery.

www.gerart.co.za



Robert Badenhorst Gallery on Main Street

An amazing maze

There is an air of excitement in Main Street Clarens and it is for a very good reason: The tree-lined street's face is changed by the opening of a new-concept gallery – a labyrinth of alcoves where different artists each have an own exhibition space.

The Robert Badenhorst Gallery officially opened on 28 October and since, it has been a hive of activity with artists flowing in and out and art lovers visiting and revisiting. This complex offers established and young artists the opportunity to exhibit in a communal environment, making it bliss for art lovers.

Developed by Bruce Weyer, the man who enjoys being brand named the man who put Clarens on the map, the gallery (nicknamed the Rabbit Warren), is situated across the street from Richard Rennie's gallery. Robert Badenhorst is one of Richard's protégés, who attended many of Richard Rennie's workshops at Sunnyside Guest Farm. Richard officially declared the Gallery open at the function and he introduced all the newcomers to an appreciating audience.

Robert Badenhorst knew he wanted to paint for as long as he can remember and he often watched his father who is the well-known landscape artist, Francois Badenhorst. "I can remember those hands swiftly applying quick strokes of oil on canvas that resulted in another beautiful landscape, says Robert. "I grew up with the scent of paint in my nostrils."

In another burrow of the maze, Gerhard Snyman's explicit nudes dominate the narrow space. They are almost overwhelmingly bold and without pretence. Gerhard says he has no preferences and paints what he likes – be it nudes or ngunis, old cars or bright landscapes –without giving critics a thought. People love his work, or they don't. His Gerart signature is as bold as his paintings and today, he is an artist to be reckoned with.

There are other artists sharing the burrow of this close-knit artist family. Ryett Pienaar's simple straight lines of church and figures catch the eye. She is no newcomer to Clarens, as she exhibited at Richard Rennie's gallery in the past.

When strolling along Main Street, don't miss the maze. You'll certainly be the richer and wiser for it and just maybe, you'll fall prey to the temptation of beauty and talent. You'll most definitely loose out if you don't.

Robert Badenhorst ART·GALLERY





An amazing maze on Main Street Clarens

And then there is André Espach. When he returned to Clarens last year, after an absence of a few years, he found suitable space for a little gallery above Friends restaurant, which he called Namasté. This was where he painted and exhibited his art, but when realised that art lovers don't always find their way to this newly built attic, he closed up shop and waited for an opportunity. Such opportunity presented itself in this ideally situated gallery.





Kitsweelde op jou werf

Die storie van gras... Om die sagte tapyt van malse en weelderige groen gras onder jou kaal voete te voel, is sommer oornag moontlik. Met die aankoms van die nuwe seisoen en verskyning van groen sprietjies, is Frans Venter naarsdig aan die werk om te verseker dat daar nie 'n haard se werf in die Oos-Vrystaat is wat nie uitgevoer is met 'n perfekte groen grasperk nie.

Natuurlik voel dit vir Frans se kliënte asof hy sommer so oornag die braakgrond om hulle huise omtower het in die aanloklikste netjiese groen grasperk wat elke Suid-Afrikaanse tuinier se hartewens is. Dit is immers die grondslag van enige tuin en om oornag so 'n grasperk te kry, was vroeër jare net 'n droom maar vandag 'n werklikheid. Die gras word in rolle gesny vir maklike meting, klam gehou en vinnig gelê om seker te maak dat dit gou groei.

En natuurlik is dit vir Frans en sy span werkers g'n toordery hierdie nie. Nee, die proses begin reeds douvoordag en net na sonop hoor jy al die masjiene kreun soos hulle werskaf om 'velle' grond en gras uit te sny in netjiese halfmeterblokke. Die nuwe grasperk word letterlik opgerol, gelaai en voordat die son sy hoogtepunt bereik, word dieselfde velle op die voorbereide en vrugbare grond van nog 'n nuwe Oos-Vrystaatse erf oopgerol, ingepas en vasgestamp om 'n mooi egalige groen tapyt te verseker.

Wanneer water deur die gietergaatjies wasig oor die nuwe grasperk sproei, stap Frans terug na sy lorrietjie en knik tevrede na sy span wat 'n rugbreek-werk agter die blad het. Met genoegdoening talm hulle om nog 'n rukkie die dag se werk te bewonder. More is dit dieselfde werk met ander gras op 'n volgende plek.

Om jou agterplaas in groen weelde te omskep, skakel Frans Venter by 082 090 0597.



It's a paradise out there

The Eastern Free State is home to many wild flowers and there are various ways to explore these. Wim Wybenga writes about some of the flowers one is likely to come across in the hills and fields of the area highlighting it with outstanding photographs. Wim Wybenga is a qualified field guide and botanist.

Wim Wybenga is a qualified field guide and botanist

Wandering in the veldt this time of year, you might have noticed a very sweet fragrance but were unable to spot the flower, that is because it is so tiny and from a distance quite insignificant (only 3mm in diameter). The Firesticks (*Diospyros austro-africana var rubriflora*) is a shrub or small tree that bears hundreds of little perfumed

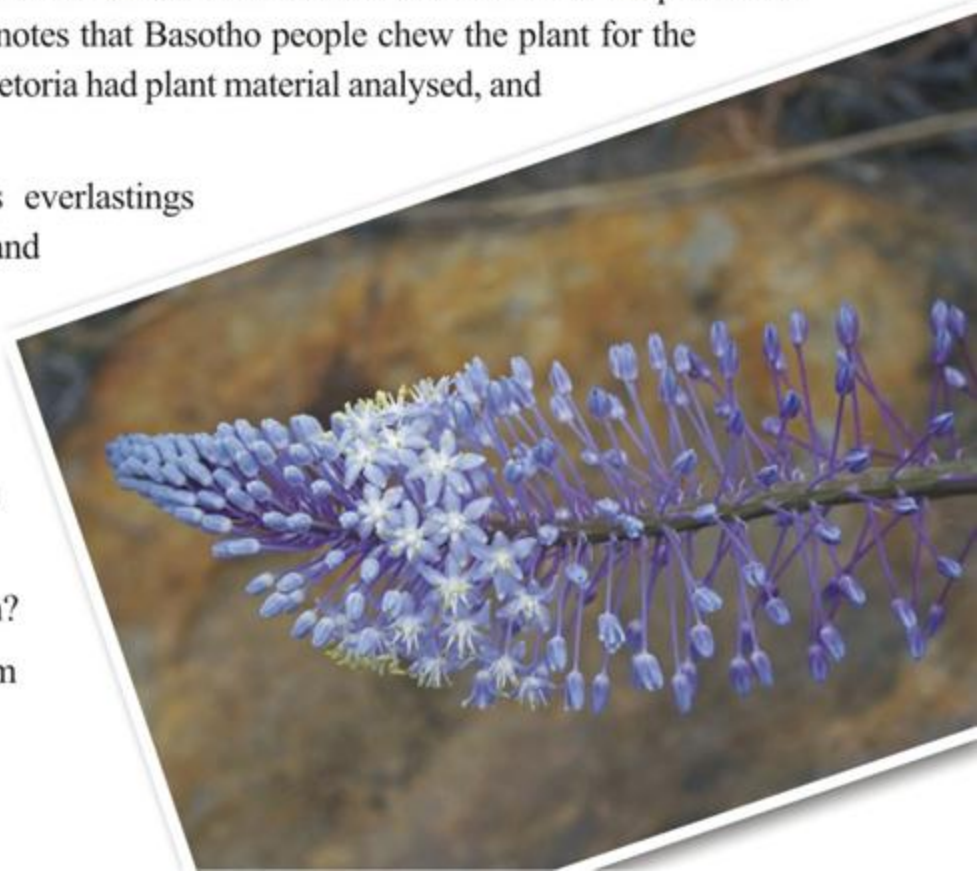
flowers attracting a variety of flying insects. Up close at macro level (1:1) the infinite detail and different hues of salmon pink is quite inspiring. The vernacular name refers to the use of its dried twigs by later stone-age mountain Bushmen for the making of fire by friction, since the plant contains a variety of inflammable oils.

On sandstone cliffs and boulders the purple and blue shades of the Blue Scilla (*Merwillia plumbea*) brings new life to the dry grasslands that have since been discoloured by the long winter frosts. Its conspicuously large bulbs are a source of various traditional medicines, including the dressing of fractures and wounds since it contains anti-inflammatory and analgesic compounds. Internal use is not recommended, however, since it is slightly toxic. Because of over-exploitation in Kwazulu-Natal it has become an endangered (red listed) species, it's also listed as a protected plant in the Free State.

As sunset approaches, the reminiscent smell of narcissi can become quite intoxicating with the yellow heads of the 'Harige Gifbossie' (translated as the *hairy poison bush*) emanating its attractive fragrance to unsuspecting pollinating insects like hawk moths. The scientific name is *Gnidia burchelli*. It's reported to be poisonous to livestock, although they rarely feed on the plant. Interestingly, it's usually only the offspring that is affected by the toxins, creating deformities and deaths in juvenile animals. If you can put two and two together: the plant occurs mostly in disturbed and overgrazed areas. Isn't it wonderful how God created nature to keep itself in balance! A local field guide Mr Neil van Schalkwyk notes that Basotho people chew the plant for the relief of toothache. One of his clients, a dentist from Pretoria had plant material analysed, and confirmed the presence of analgesic compounds.

Lastly on my menu of wild flowers, the various everlastings (*Helichrysum spp*) are beginning to open up again and what a display! In the Clarens valley there are close to 40 species, some with less conspicuous inflorescences, but still of important medicinal value. At Witzieshoek Mountain Resort in QwaQwa, you'll find thousands of pink, red and yellow ones coming into flower round November.

Did you come across an unusual wild flower this month? Let me know, send me pictures: w Wybenga@gmail.com



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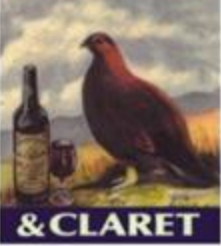


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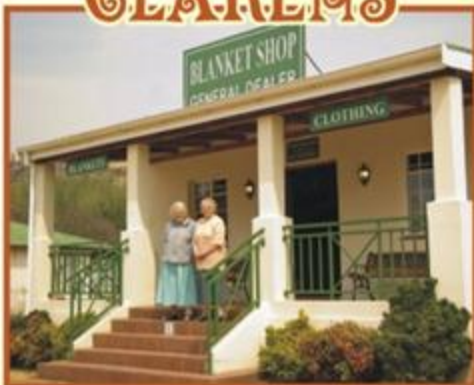
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Ter Gedagtenis

AAN

MIJN TEER, DELIEFDE EDDENOOT EN PAPPJE

JOHANNES JACOBUS BRUWER

GEB. 10 MAART 1895

DOORL. 10 NOV. 1947

RUST IN VREDE ONS LIEFLING

IN TERE NAGEDAGTENIS

AAN

ONS GELIEFDE MOEDER

ANNA CATHARINA BRUWER

(GEB. DU PLESSIS)

GEB. 17 NOV. 1877

DOORL. 13 JUNIE 1954

OPENB. 14 VERS 13.



Davelrust-begraafplaas vertel Katie se verhaal

Die stamvader van die Bruwer-familie in Suid-Afrika was Estienne (Bruere) Bruwer van Blois wat op 13 April 1688 as een van die eerste Franse Hugenote aan die Kaap land. Hy het net een seun gehad wat afstammeling nagelaat het. Sy naam was Johannes Bruwer en dié se nasate word in drie takke verdeel. Die Schalk Willems Bruwer-tak trek in 1838 saam na Natal waar baie die lewe laat tydens die slag van Bloedrivier.

Johannes Jacobus Bruwer (13/03/1870-20/09/1943) oorleef Bloedrivier maar neem afskeid van die ander Bruwers en trek saam met die familie Du Plessis wat hy in Natal leer ken het, terug Vrystaat toe. Die Du Plessis-gesin vestig hulle by Reitz, maar J.J. trek verder en hy en sy mense gaan bly in die Brandfort-distrik.

Anna Catharina of Katie, soos almal haar genoem het, het J.J. se oog gevang en hulle trou op 27 Maart 1898, sowat 18 maande voor die Anglo-Boere-oorlog uitbreek.

Hulle oudste seun, Johannes Jacobus word 'n jaar na hulle troue gebore en is sewe maande oud toe die oorlog uitbreek en sy vader na die front aan Natal opgeroep word.

Vir die eerste maande van die oorlog bly

Katie en haar seuntjie alleen op die plaas, maar hulle huis word as deel van die verskroeiende-aarde-beleid afgebrand en hulle na die konsentrasiekamp in Bloemfontein geneem.

J.J. word tydens die Surrender Hill-oorgawe gevange geneem en na Ceylon gestuur. Die gesin sou eers weer in 1903 herenig word.

Toestande in Brandfort was haglik ná die oorlog en oorlogsvergoeding minimaal. J.J. het besluit om sy grond te verkoop en na sy oom in die Bethlehem-distrik te trek om in die Oos-Vrystaat 'n nuwe lewe te begin. Hulle woon as bywoners op Bruwershoop, 'n plaas net buite Bethlehem en hier word Katie se drie dogters gebore.

Toe Davelrust op die mark kom, kon hulle dit koop en die gesinnetjie 'n ware nuwe begin maak met 'n nuwe sandsteenhuus eerste op die lys.

Dit is egter nie die einde van Katie se droefheid nie. Haar man word weer tydens die Rebelle aangehou en sy en haar vyftienjarige seun is weer alleen om na die plaas en die jonger kinders om te sien, maar gelukkig nie vir lank nie en hulle kon weer die onderbreekte bouery hervat

Op vyftigjarige ouderdom voltooi J.J. die sandsteenhuus op Davelrust. Sy seun J.J. nou 21 jaar oud, het gehelp met die enorme taak. Bokant die voordeur word J.J. Bruwer 1920 uitgeknap en so word pa en seun se handewerk vir die nageslag bewaar.

In 1918 tydens die Groot Griep sterf drie van Johannes se susters. Die jongste enetjie was drie maande oud. Maar Katie bly sterk staan en verloor haar man na 45 jaar getroude lewe en net vier jaar later begrawe sy haar seun in dieselfde rooi grond van Davelrust. Na sewe jaar van alleenwees het haar oorblywende kinders haar langs haar eggenoot begrawe.

Fotos deur Garth Brook



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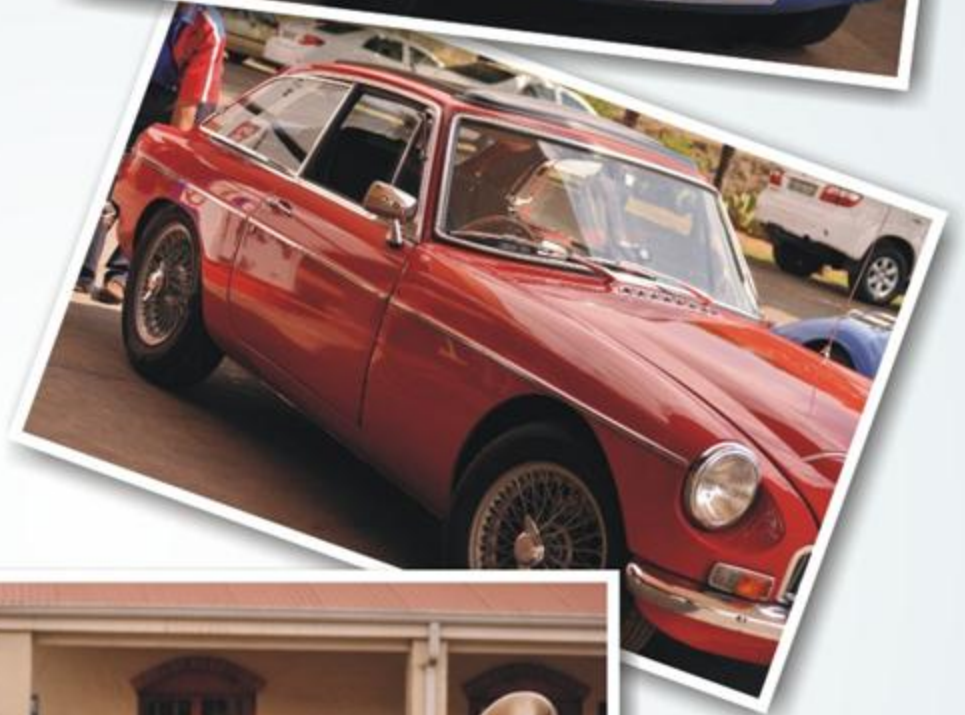
All roads lead through Clarens

Whether on your way to the Rhino Rally at Harrismith on your Harley Davidson or Yamaha, or on your way to Graaff Reinet in your MG V8, all the way from Pretoria, you are sure to find the turnoff to Clarens.

Recently, members of the MG Club ascended on Clarens en route to a society gathering at Graaff Reinet. They enjoyed a one-night sleepover at Clarens -some stayed at the Protea Hotel, while others opted for the country feel of the Maluti Lodge.

These shining machines of yesteryear passed the younger generation en route to the Rhino motorcycle Rally at Harrismith. They exchanged smiles and waved and each went on their merry way. But they will return to spend more time in Clarens than just to fill up with fuel and a cup of coffee.

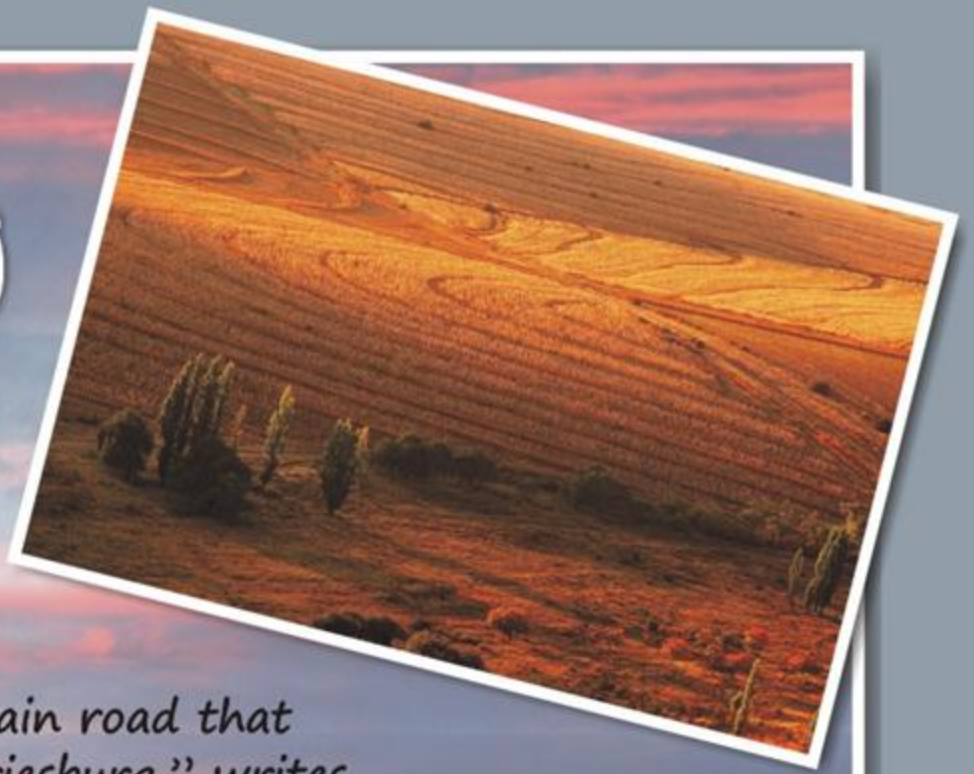
Next year, Clarens will be hosting the MG Club's 50th anniversary while Steel Wings will be enjoying their annual outride to Clarens in this month.



Images along the road

*“Most of the landscapes
presented themselves from*

*the immediacy of the main road that
connects Clarens with Fouriesburg,” writes
Noel Hutton about his photographic
experiences in the Eastern Free State*



I have been a regular visitor to the Clarens region for a number of years. My first real photographic trip was in April 1994. I accompanied a group of photographers to the region as a young wide-eyed beginner, and was in awe of the phenomenal landscapes that seemed to endlessly unfold at every turn. I can recall one member of our group voting at the voting station set up just opposite the Van Blerk farm, Rendezvous.

Most of the landscapes presented themselves from the immediacy of the main road that connects Clarens with Fouriesburg. This 30-odd kilometre ribbon of roadway has continued to provide me unabated opportunity to photograph spectacular landscapes on every occasion that I have revisited the area. I have grown to rely on this roadway for a continued flow of photographic opportunities. I have never been disappointed.

On most visits to the area, I have lodged at Lesoba farm, some 10 km from Fouriesburg. From here, the R711 (Maloti Route) is easily accessible and I have pounded the tarmac innumerable times in pursuit of yet another great shot. Iconic elements such as the small dam with a row of submerged poplars within it located just outside Fouriesburg; the distinct and well known butte located to the west of the Oranje farm; and the magnificent valley that lies at the foot of the Malutis to the south of Surrender Hill are only three of many landscape elements that make this roadway so well known. I have photographed these and others many times, with no two images ever being "the same". The unique play of light and subtle colours ensures that all features that I have encountered along the roadway have presented themselves differently and provided challenging and ultimately very satisfying opportunities.

The relationship that I have established with the roadway is one that continues to bring me back year after year. Not only the immediate access to great landscapes, but the wonderful people who live and work along the roadway that I have met and revisited together with their hospitality and long suffering acceptance of my trespassing on their land have ensured that there will always be a special place in me for it.

The R711 or Maloti Route has been the backbone and central conduit to many interesting and fruitful sojourns onto adjoining farms. I have thought little of stopping along or indeed turning off the roadway to access an intriguing landscape. Not once have I been confronted or ordered to vacate the property I was on. All that I have been required to do was make a friendly request to photograph on the property, with the invariable reply that all is OK and that I can carry on. This is testimony that the friendly folk who live along the roadway accept that they reside in an area that attracts image making individuals who need to explore to capture the ultimate image. I am one of these image making individuals.

My relationship with this route has not been without a little danger and close shaves, however. I have nearly been struck by lightning, almost driven into errant cattle, been cut by and stuck in barbed wire fences and had my vehicle mired in soft ground just metres off the hard shoulder. One accepts, however, that these trials are part of the overall whole and, without being too self assured; they can be seen as relatively trivial when compared to the reward that the end results bring.

I will continue to return to the region and hopefully be able to make and capture images that remain fresh and worthwhile, as well as rekindle the great relationships I have made over the years. For these reasons and the simple pleasure of being there, I will always hold the Maloti Route in highest esteem and regard it as one of my favourite pieces of tarmac.



When the editor takes leave ...

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Plettenberg
Bay

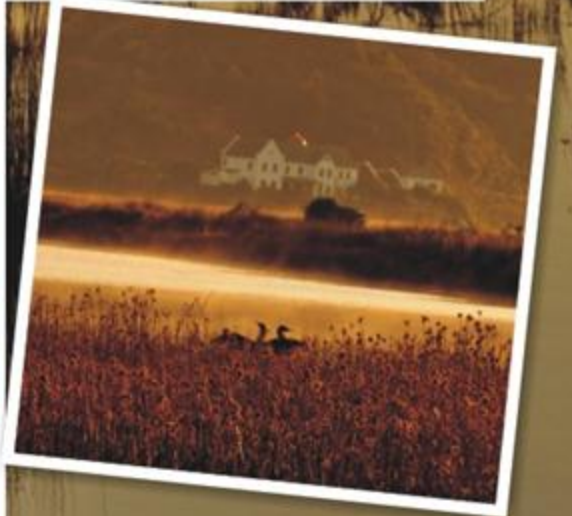
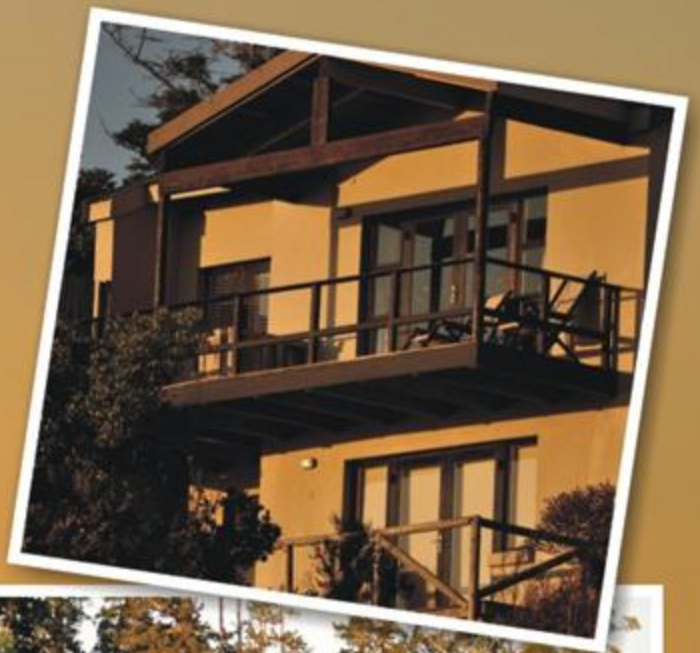
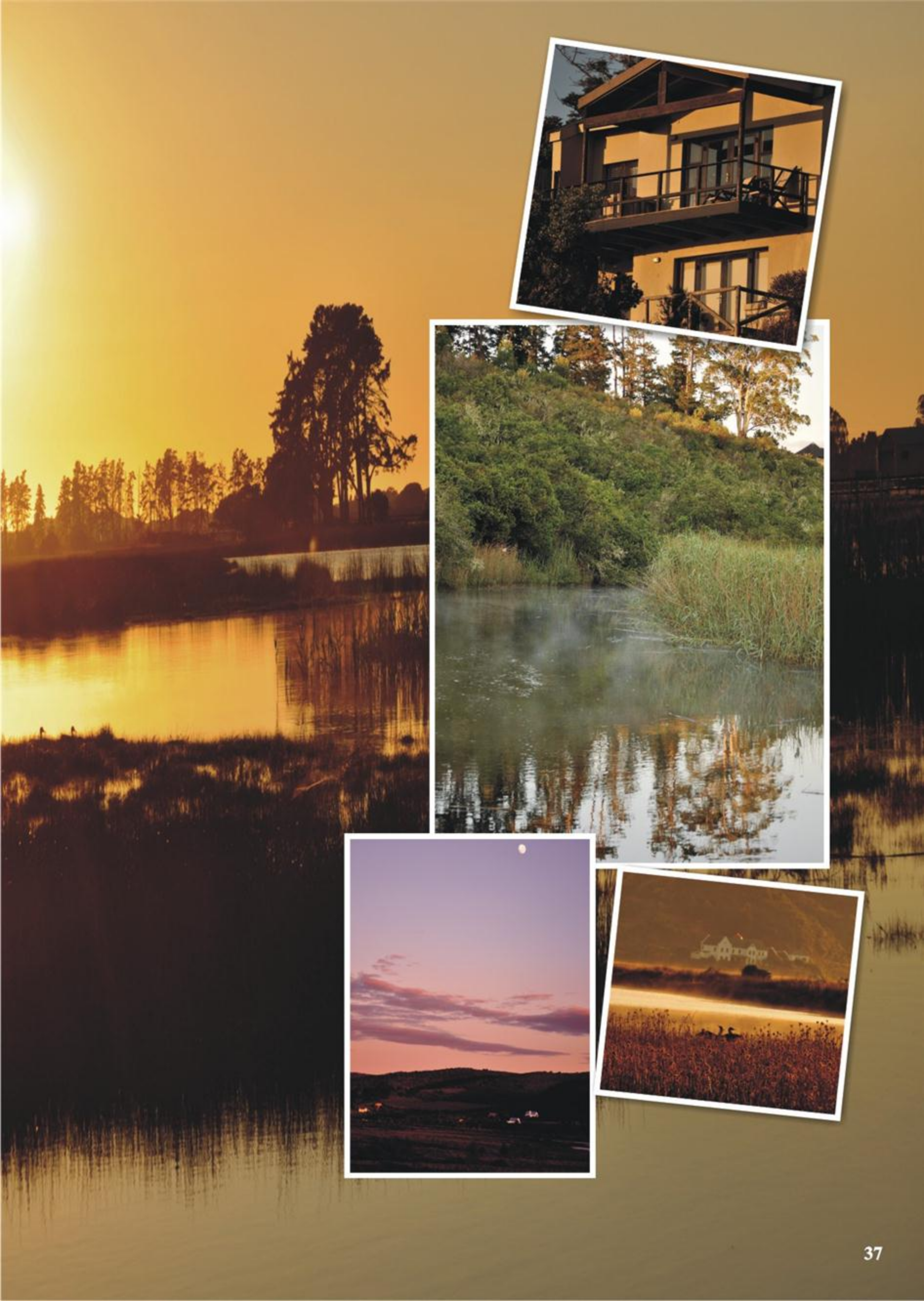
A weekend stay at the Emily Moon River Lodge was first prize of a Facebook photography competition and we journeyed to this bird's haven on the Bitou River near Plettenberg Bay for a well-needed getaway after months of serious rushing and of deadlines and timeframes. As to be expected of a four-star graded lodge, the Emily Moon's luxuriously fitted chalets are second to none, the staff friendly and the owners accommodating and hospitable. The Lodge is an Oriental cut and paste into the Western Cape. The interior is designed to Eastern atmosphere with light colours and cane furniture. But it is the view from the covered and private patio that sets this lodge apart from any other. The view almost matches the beauty of any place in the Eastern Free State, until the sun rises, carelessly hinting from behind a few clouds, that is. When the sun's first rays hover above the horizon and as if gilded, the dawning day opens its golden shower over marsh country, turning a beautiful landscape into a mysteriously glistening water world where trees differentiate barrier islands from land's end. Then it is hard to distinguish beautiful from ultimate beauty or to choose which is best.

The Bitou River is home to an abundance of many different water and other birds, chirping or rasping in the tall grass and wild geese seemed to be in perpetual flight, to the north, to the south, east and west. One can hear their rasps from afar and catch their reflections in the tranquil waters of the estuary any time of day. Human development has not yet reached the inner circle of this fresh-water marsh near the river mouth. It is unspoilt beauty from the top of the ridge and yet, so near the business hub of Plettenberg Bay.

We have to convey our sincerest gratitude to the owners of the Emily Moon River Lodge. Simon and Di Valentine as well as Adri and her team for welcoming and accommodating us in their little Oriental paradise near Plettenberg Bay. And we are forever grateful to our Facebook friends who, in the end, were the driving force behind the competition. Without their votes and support, we could not have won this wonderful stay at the Emily Moon.

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Kgubetswana in a winning mode

Many people work very hard to brighten the lives of the people of Kgubetswana and Kanana, Clarens's neighbours and part of the Greater Clarens. Continual input and support to the people who live in close proximity of the little Village come from various sources and while Clarens has always looked after its youth and neighbours, promoting the area creates much needed jobs and improves the living conditions of all the people who chose to make this place their home.

A recent soap-box derby is but one example of people employing energy to improve the lives of their neighbours. Mandy and her husband Robin Prior are ardently devoted to the people of Clarens and Mandy felt that the youth of Kgubetswana was at an all-time low and that something had to be done to keep the kids busy. And what would be better than a bit of healthy competition. Mandy approached the businesses in Clarens to sponsor the event. She knew she could rely on them to make it happen and sponsor they did. On the day, there were only winners. The teams competed furiously and the event was a huge success.



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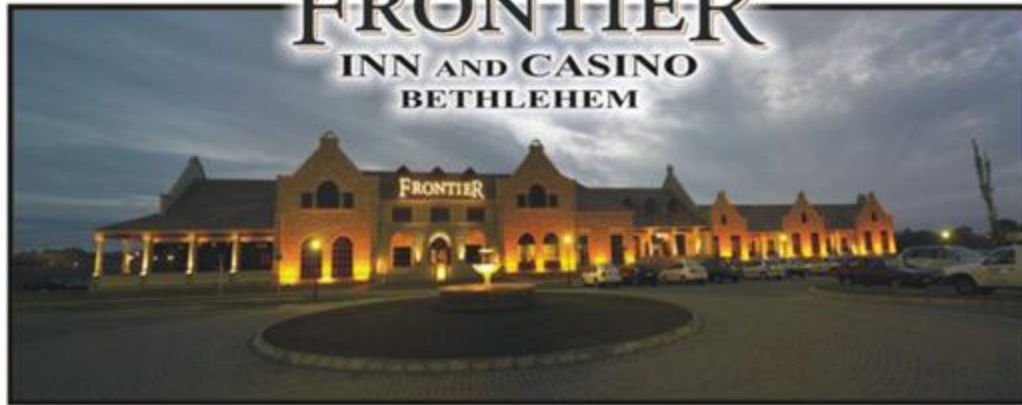
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