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NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2017



MYSTERY VENUE & OLD YEAR TOUR REPORTS—SEE PAGES 2 & 3

## 2017 Planning



New Additions



Update

## UPCOMING TOURS

The following schedule is current as at 3rd January 2017. We will continue to provide updates & additional information in future newsletters, as planning progresses:

**2017** (Tour dates in blue are confirmed / In black are Provisional)

- 7-10 February: Nuy Valley / Leipzig (4 Days) - Short Break ★
- 2-4 April: Aquila Private Game Reserve (3 Days) - Short Break ★
- 7-12 May: Natal Midlands (6 Days) (Including Optional Battlefields) ★
- 18-23 June: Mpumalanga—Kruger National Park (6 Days) ★
- 6-14 July: Namibia-Classic Kaleidoscope (9 Days). ★
- 17-22 August: Springbok Spring Flowers (6 Days) ☆
- 26 August: West Coast Park Flowers (Postberg) (1 Day) ☆

### 2017 PLANNING STAGE

- June: Sutherland (3 Days)
- 28-31 August: Wild Flower Adventure (4 Days)
- Late August: Northern Cape Flowers (5 Days)
- 22-24 September: Whale Watching (5 Days) Short Break
- 29 Sept—8 Oct: Hogsback & Surrounds (Under revision)
- 10 December: Mystery Venue

More in next issue...

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## MYSTERY VENUE TOUR (11th December 2016) -TOUR REPORT (Abridged)

For a comprehensive tour report with all the photos, please visit our website:

<http://www.traveltime.co.za/portfolio/mystery-venue-2016>



What happens when you put 45 people on a coach and head into the blue yonder on a Mystery Tour? First off, you have that wonderful expectation from those who didn't enter our annual competition – “Hey, where are we going” “I hear it's Langebaan” “Is it close to the beach?” “Hope it's not too HOT” With a predicted temperature of 31+ degrees, many were worried about where the lunch would be. We headed out of Tableview (on schedule) at 10h00 and had a 20-minute stop at Vygevallei Farm Stall. On leaving the stop we phoned the venue and gave our expected time of arrival as “within an hour”!



As luck, would have it, just near the West Coast National Park turnoff, we came to an abrupt halt with a traffic jam ahead. Black smoke billowing on the horizon, in the middle of the road. We all anticipated the very worst – “A head on collision” “How many are injured?”. After what seemed like “forever” (only about 30 minutes) we started to move forward again, to discover it was a construction vehicle that had ‘caught fire’ on the side of the road. Thank goodness – no ambulances in sight and hopefully the truck driver escaped before the fire burnt out his vehicle!



On arrival at the **Blue Bay Lodge**, our mystery venue in Saldanha, we were thrilled to see a board welcoming all to our Mystery Tour! So very thoughtful of them – and this is how we experienced the rest of the day – extremely pleasant and helpful staff; everything going to plan; which made for such a happy, wonderful day out with so many people! There was a gift for everyone, wrapped, numbered and set out on a gift table; a Christmas Cracker on each plate and the scene was set. A welcoming sherry or orange juice and a view-to-die-for – “Gosh we don't have to head ALL the way to Mauritius for these views” was heard!



At 12h45 everyone headed into the private dining room which was very cool and comfortable. Carol gave out a few ‘awards’ to several of the ladies – she appointed two ‘nurses’ to look after everyone (as she has done so ALL year and needed a break today); some funny masks were handed out as well as ‘BEWARE Girls on Tour’ badges, an annual trophy which needs to get polished and brought back every year, to the mystery tour!! – all in the name of FUN!



A few fun items were introduced, from small confetti & streamer “poppers”, A ‘gangsters bankroll of money’, a mobile drum set, a device for increasing the heart rate (skipping rope) and a few chattering teeth, amongst others.



Our starters were served – 4 vegetable spring rolls with sweet chili sauce. Very tasty!



Brian gave out a few spot prizes too (via coloured stickers on some hats). What was very popular was a ‘spray cannon’, a container which ‘sprayed’ little bits of paper over the table (with a big bang!) – and a few questioned where they were purchased so they could get them for their Christmas meal! Cherry on the top was won by Dennis, who received ‘The little drummer boy’- a push toy with a little figure which plays a drum when rolled! “Coming with me to the States on my next trip” said Dennis!!



Mains were *Chicken with Spinach and Feta Cheese/ Sirloin Steak / Garlic Roast Potatoes / Savoury rice / and roast vegetables*, served buffet style.

Then the fun continued – Susan jumped in as a Father Christmas (with the requisite Santa face), and handed out the gifts – amazing how gullible everyone is in reacting to “kissing Santa” or “Give Father Christmas a hug” – oh it was great fun!

After our dessert of *Bar One Cheesecake* there was still time to go outside and enjoy the views from Blue Bay Lodge for ¾ of an hour before we returned to the coach and Petrus safely drove us back to the City.





**Put 14 people in a coach and head out of Cape Town to celebrate the end of the year; couple this with everyone determined to have a great time and what do you have? A jolly good time!!!**

Our group consisted of 13 South African citizens with one British (ex SA resident). Tom fitted in very well with the initially unknown people in the group. We left the city just after 10h00 and headed through Du Toitskloof tunnel to Robertson where we had a stop at the **On-Route Wine Deli** where Tommy Foulkes warmly welcomed us all with a tasting of the famous Blush Sparkling Wine! Delicious and refreshing and a wonderful way to stand and chat to our dear friend, Tommy! Many purchases later and we headed to **Van Loveren Wine Estate** for our lunch at **Christina's!**

Christina's is a fabulous restaurant – some of the tables are inside and others out on their patio with a fine mist spray helping to cool the air. We needed this spray as temperatures were in the mid 30's! Orders were placed and everyone spent the time finding out what lay ahead for the next three days!

After lunch some time was spent walking through their magnificent gardens – what a treat they are! - see the photos. We then boarded the coach for our short drive through to Montagu and the **Montagu Country Hotel**. A warm welcome from Adri who introduced us to a few of the staff who took us all through to our super spacious rooms – beautifully air conditioned and comfortable. We settled in and later all met in the bar for a drink before our dinner at **Kokkemans** over the road from the hotel. **Sadly, the evening turned sour with the attitude of one of the owners of the restaurant and left everyone very sad with the country 'hospitality' we received! We all met back at the Montagu Country hotel and decided to put our evening down to a bad experience and move on – after all we still had 2 glorious days ahead of us.**

Saturday morning and everyone was down early for breakfast and eager to start the day. A delicious breakfast and soon we all headed to the Country market next to the church. Sadly, this was not the size of previous markets (maybe stall holders were also taking a holiday?) and we headed to Cape Dried Fruit where the tills rang happily – this factory shop has wonderful prices and everyone took advantage of this.

After this we headed to **Joubert House Museum** where the curator took our R5 as an entrance fee, and we all headed into this wonderfully restored house which has a fabulous history. Well done to everyone who maintains the standard of this little museum!

By now everyone felt like a coffee (and, of course, a slice of decadent cake!) – we stopped in at **The Orchard**, and what wonderful country hospitality we all enjoyed. Efficient staff handled our orders and in no time, we were ready to enjoy what they had prepared.

Four of our party were booked on the 2.00 pm **tractor ride at the Protea Farm** and they headed out of town to enjoy this. They came back having thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon; the views; and the hospitality of the family who run this very special attraction!

The rest of our party had a leisurely afternoon; some sat and chatted; some went to their rooms and rested ; after all we all had a long-evening-ahead of us! By 7.00 pm we had 'all-glammed-up' and were ready down at the tables set for festivity at the Montagu Country Hotel.

Several **canapes** were served by waitresses which included Zucchini & Blue Cheese Croquettes; onion marmalade tarts with goat's cheese; curry battered prawns and a seafood bruchette! **Starters** were laid out on a buffet and included a decadent chilled avocado & creamy cheese soup with watermelon & feta; pesto mayo potato salad; Waldorf salad; savoury wheat salad and a salmon, brie & nut salad. **Mains** were sticky pork belly ribs; a chicken, spinach and capsicum roulade; chilled beef load; mutton curry with roti's; roasted almond green vegetables; orange & aniseed sweet potato; pommies Anna and capsicum arancini! **Desserts** (if you still had place) were delightful champagne and liqueur jellies; Montagu muscadel ice cream; Apple wheels with cream and strawberry& marshmallow kebabs with chocolate sauce – and even a cheese platter with local cheeses! **A sumptuous feast!**

During courses, the music started and **we all danced – AND danced – & danced!** A happy time on the dance floor with many of the other guests asking WHO we were & WHERE we came from!

All too soon it was midnight and the Montagu Country Hotel laid on extra treats for all who were still there! Sparklers; sparkling wine and a great song to welcome in 2017! A great, happy evening and by 12h45 we all headed to our rooms where sleep came easily. Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2017 arrived and we all enjoyed a breakfast – although many of us were not in the least bit hungry (wonder why – must have been all the GOOD food exercise the night before!).

We left Montagu shortly after 10h00 and headed back to Cape Town. Thankfully **Affie Plaas** WAS open for trade and we all found various items to spend our money on! (Not that this is ever a problem!). We had an hour long stop at the **Blaauwklippen market** where long lines had formed at all food providers. Someone told me "If there's NO line it means they have RUN OUT of food to sell". A short time later we were back on the coach heading to the airport holding bay where our shuttles were waiting to take us all back *home!*

**Every time you tear a leaf off a calendar,  
you present a new place for new ideas and progress.**

Charles Kettering



## NUY VALLEY

7-10 February 2017 (4 days).

*Grape Picking in De Doorns, Plus*



Accommodation  
booked

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Join us and enjoy three nights in this wonderful valley. Make lasting memories with good people, good food in a GREAT setting at **Leipzig Country House** in the Nuy Valley.– visiting **Willowcreek Olives** (they have won countless awards for their olives and olive oil) ; come and meet **Dihanna Kloppers** who makes wonderful preserves from her farm within walking distance of Leipzig – she will serve us morning tea ; and enjoy lunch at a stunning new restaurant called **Nuy on the Hill** with great views of the surrounding area. We also have to explore the area around the Nuy Valley – close to the Nuy Valley are several **wine estates** and wonderful **pad-stalletjies**; Dinner at **Leipzig** is always an 'affaire of note'!

*Please request a priced tour brochure*

## AQUILA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE-Short Break Tour

2-4 April 2017 (3 days)

*A 4 Star, Big 5 Reserve 2 1/2 hours from Cape Town*

Rooms  
Available



Accommodation &  
Pricing Confirmed



Aquila Safari Lodge is a 4 star establishment in the Southern Karoo. The reserve is a 10,000 hectare conservancy and home to the big 5 legends of the wilderness - elephant, lion, buffalo, leopard and rhino

The Aquila overnight safari doesn't spare on spoiling our guests. Welcome cocktails are served on arrival, either outside, around the pools, or in front of a log fire in the cigar bar. Before the safari departs a sizzling lunch is served at the African character restaurant. The overnight safari boasts a 2 – 3 hour game drive with an Aquila Game Reserve specialist. Awaiting your return is a traditional African meal, sparkling wine over swopping-safari-stories, and luxury accommodation.

There is an early morning game drive and visit to ARC (Aquila Rehabilitation & Conservation Centre). Accommodation options at Aquila Private Game Reserve include premier, family or luxury chalets. There are also options of Horseback safaris, Quadbike safari's, or combinations. Combo safari combines a 3 hour game drive and a 1.5 hour horseback or quad bike outride.

*For full details and pricing, please request a tour brochure*

*Experience the Friendship & Fun*



## NATAL—Midlands Meander

7-12 May (6 days)

*Including a Battlefields tour Option*



Accommodation  
booked



May is an excellent month to visit Natal. It is Autumn—high day temperatures of summer are a thing of the past and day temperatures of high teens and night temperatures that drop down a bit lower! We have already made a provisionally booking at the five star rated **Fourdoun Hotel** in the heart of the **Kwa Zulu Natal Midlands**. You will fly from Cape Town and meet a Hylton Ross coach at the King Shaka International Airport.

Visit many places along the **Natal Midlands route** including the **Drakensberg Boys Choir**, where we will attend an afternoon performance.

Have the option to do a **Battlefields Tour**.

Enjoy lunch at **Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse**.

**Dinners at great restaurants, including Skye Bistro,**

**Fourdoun's own fine dining restaurant.**

**Visit the Mandela Capture Site!**

**Plus a few surprises**

Midlands  
*Meander*<sup>®</sup>  
a good place.

*Please request a priced tour brochure*



**PREVIOUS NATAL TOUR**

[http://travelttime.co.za/old\\_site/Slider/Natal13/natal101.htm](http://travelttime.co.za/old_site/Slider/Natal13/natal101.htm)

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## MPUMALANGA - KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

18th—24th June 2017 (7 Days).

*Including Panorama Route, Blyde River Canyon & much More*



Now open for  
Bookings

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2011 tour group, in front of the Three Rondawels

Escape the **COLD winter** in Cape Town and go to the Mpumalanga area. Cape Town has a max temperature of 15° whilst Nelspruit's max is 23°.

**Fly into Mpumalanga** and stay in Hazyview, which is close to the Paul Kruger and Phabeni Gates of the Kruger National Park!

**Travel into the Bush** in the Kruger Park with experienced guides **in an open vehicle. Explore the Panorama Route** - Blyde River Canyon; Bourkes Luck Potholes; Pilgrims Rest; God's Window.

Full details & pricing in the February newsletter

**Please request an information brochure**

Previous tour: [http://travelttime.co.za/old\\_site/travelttime/previous/Kruger\\_blyde11.htm](http://travelttime.co.za/old_site/travelttime/previous/Kruger_blyde11.htm)

## NAMIBIA—Classic Kaleidoscope Tour

6th—14th July 2017 (9 Days).

*Experience the Skeleton Coast & Namibian Wildlife*



Now open for  
Bookings



### Highlights:

Fly in to Windhoek & overnight / Tour will visit Swakopmund (optional local activities, Dolphin Cruises, Desert Excursions) / Damaraland, Brandberg Mountains, Twyfelfontein Heritage Site, Living Museum of the Damara, the Petrified Forest, encounter the Welwitschia mirabilis plant, the oldest living desert plant on earth.

Travel towards the Etosha National Park, famous for its vast amount and variety of wildlife. Spend one night outside of the Park at the **Etosha Safari Camp**. (Leisure activities).

Spend two days game viewing in the Park whilst staying at the **Mokuti Etosha Lodge**.

Return to Windhoek and visit the local craft markets before checking in to your hotel. Tour length 7 days plus 1 night pre tour and one night post tour in Windhoek = 9 days.

Flights from Cape Town and other major Cities.

**Please request a priced tour brochure**

## SPRING FLOWERS—NAMAQUALAND

17-22 August 2017 (6 days).

*Springbok Floral Splendour*



Accommodation  
has been booked



**“Every year nature plays a magic part in transforming the normally arid dry area in the Northern Cape into a glorious tapestry of colour and beauty”**

Each turn you take in the road will yield a different picture which you will treasure for days and months to come. These tours are very popular and it is most important that you secure your place on this tour ASAP. We have to book accommodation 12 months in advance!

We travel up the west coast through Clanwilliam and Vanrhynsdorp into Springbok, where we spend 3 nights. Visits are planned into Hester Malan Garden in the Goegap Nature Reserve, Namaqua National Park, Skilpad Wildflower Reserve near Kamieskroon.

We will also visit the Kokerboom Nursery in Vanrhynsdorp and the Ramskop Wildflower Reserve in Clanwilliam on our return to Cape Town.

You will also be able to stock up on some Rooibos tea in the area in which it is grown.

**For provisional details, please request an information brochure**

## Tours currently in the planning stage:

*Sutherland / Hogsback / Northern Cape Flowers / Wild flower Adventure / West Coast Flowers / Whale Watching & Mystery Venue*



Details to follow as  
planning progresses

END