

DRAKENSBERG TRIP

23 - 25 SEPTEMBER 2006

We packed Rissiepit for a weekend in the Central Drakensberg mountains, at a resort called Dragon Peaks (www.dragonpeaks.com), on the N3 between Harrismith and Pietermaritzburg.

Leaving Johannesburg at 5 the Saturday morning, we felt rather peckish around 7. Wanting something different for breakfast, not the usual 1-Stop restaurants, we took the Roadside/Reitz offramp – about 200km from Johannesburg. You can easily spot the restaurant cum art gallery “MAKITI” from the highway – bright orange with interesting architectural features.



What a surprise it turned out to be! Very artistically decorated, with scrumptious meals served in oval plates.

Besides your normal English breakfast options, you can also choose a Biltong Breakfast – homemade bread with biltong. For lunch they serve Bobotie / Traditional Chicken Pie / Curry Fish / Lamb Chops / Steak or a Cold Meat Platter.

Look at the ostrich on the table – the wire body is filled with a “Goldilocks” scourer. So cute.



The Art Gallery is filled with unusual tapestries and at the little shop you can stock up with homemade jams and breads or even buy a small puppy for R40. What a welcome change from the mass-stampede at the petrol stations!

We arrived at Dragon Peaks around 9:30am. Dragon Peaks Mountain Resort originated in 1963. In 1967 the family started the famous Drakensberg Boys’ Choir. Although the chalets and camping site are only metres away from the school, you very rarely see any of the boys.



The Resort has numerous stunning accommodation options:



B&B SVITES

Luxury Thatched Cottages each with 3 individual Suites. Each Cottage shares a lounge, fireplace and dry bar. They do not have catering facilities and coffee/tea sachets are provided daily. All meals are taken in the restaurant.

PARK LODGE

A luxury double storey Thatched Cottage, 3 bedrooms en suite. Oak furnishings, fireplace, underfloor heating, air con, kitchen with oven & hob, microwave, dishwasher, washing machine. Each bedroom has it's own TV. The braai area is secluded and this is a stunning self-catering option for friends and family.



CARAVAN & CAMPING SITES

You can either tow your caravan there every time, or leave it in their storage bays. If you phone them a few days ahead of your stay, they will (at an additional cost) park your caravan at a spot and even pitch the tent for you. The ablution facilities are really outstanding with washing machines, hair dryers, etc.

For the lazy bones, Dragon Peaks is a beautiful holiday spot. We normally braai, braai and braai, take leisure walks to the dams or read a book.

Every day at 11h00 tea is outside the restaurant and sometimes they sell flapjacks or muffins. This weekend they had nothing and we were quite disappointed. The restaurant is separate from the pub and serve lovely meals. Or you could watch the sport in the pub and enjoy a pub meal. If you have forgotten your shampoo or soap, there is a little shop stocked with "bits of everything".

For the energetics amongst us, Dragon Peaks offers the following:

- Hiking – Challenging at some spots
- Rustic Pub – Beer anyone?
- Fishing – Even for the kids
- Horse riding – Supervised horse trails
- Games Room – Pool tables & arcade style
- Swimming Pools – With a slide
- Bird Watching – You hear them all day



Drinking coffee the Sunday morning around 6am, we were amazed to see kids on the trampolines, busy fishing, on the swings or just “goofing” around. We also saw lots of “sleepy-eyed” parents nursing huge mugs of coffee.

One warning: if you do not like kids, do not go to Dragon Peaks. You might just find it all a bit too busy and noisy.

Leaving the Resort on Monday morning, around 9am, we decided to drive over the Oliviershoek Pass, the R74. We stopped at the “Caterpillar and Catfish” Restaurant (www.cookhouse.co.za) for breakfast, situated on the crest of the Oliviershoek Pass.



A dream house. Wooden floors, stone exterior, a wrap-around verandah with long dining room tables, comfortable cane sofas and a picturesque gazebo for romantic summer evenings.

We were served the usual English Breakfast, with flavoured coffee and “Kenny G” in the background.

They have a menu with creatively named dishes, for example:

Nana & Cado Salad (salad with trout, avo, banana...)
 Jamaican Jerked French Hen (marinated and flat...)
 The Legendary Pint ‘O Prawns (12 large black tigers...)
 Trout Festival (@ R55)
 The Po Bo (snack platter...)
 Chocolate Lava (my kind of dessert...)



In the dining room they have this frame with cutlery glued on a piece of camouflage material (actually, it looked like water stains). What a clever way to display odds and ends.



With our hunger pains dealt with, we continued home.

We arrived home around 2pm, unpacked Rissiepit, did some laundry, played with the kids and settled down with a beer in the hand and a chicken on the Weber.

We just l-o-v-e to braai!