

GANSBAAI VAN DYK FAMILY WEEKEND



A few years back, Kallie, one of my dad's brothers from Boksburg, Gauteng, started a 'family day' tradition.

We are quite a few cousins in Gauteng and Kallie manages to keep us in touch with one another. We usually braai on that day and 9 out of 10 times we have been surprised by a Cape guest – usually one of Kallie's sisters.



After attending a few of these gatherings, Kallie's 2 youngest sisters, Esmé and Lorraine, decided to have a Cape family gathering. In Gansbaai, at the old Van Dyk house.

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Karel Albert van Dyk (my dad's dad) was born in 1911. He married Susanna Elizabeth Smith (known as Suzie) in 1937. They lived in Napier (Overberg) and had 11 children. 6 Boys, 5 girls.

In 1960, Karel & Suzie bought a big house in Gansbaai – right on a hill overlooking the harbour. As their holiday home. Later the whole family moved

to Gansbaai, where one by one, the children grew up and left home, got married, had kids ... and started to come back to Gansbaai for holidays.

One of their boys, Freddy, died at age 45. Wilnand, Esmé, Lorraine & Rita stays in Gansbaai. Sarene and Marlene stay in Napier. Bertie in Paarl, Smitty in Bellville, Audrey in Graaff-Reinet and Kallie in Boksburg. 10 of 11 children still alive!



Going to Gansbaai for holidays, meant I grew up with crayfish, 'viskuite' (fish roe), galjoen, perlemoen (abalone) and shark biltong. The house has a kitchen, dining room, 'spens' (pantry), lounge/TV room, 5 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, guest toilet and enclosed balcony with outside stairs. It also has a huge (probably about 80 – 100m²) garage. Although the house is sometimes used for holiday rental, it's still the old Van Dyk family home.

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On the 7th of August, invitations were sent out for a Van Dyk Cape family gathering – in Gansbaai, at the old Van Dyk home, for the weekend 28-30 September.



Esmé and Lorraine started to gather family details (birthdays) to create a family tree. With their help, I created a family tree-calendar, menus were drawn up, sleeping arrangements were made and the Van Dyk family garage in Gansbaai was dusted and 'furnished'. I will refer to it as **'THE GARAGE'**.



(Left) The shelves were marked with each family's name to store snacks, handbags, drinks. (Centre) Photos were on the wall of those who cannot attend the weekend. (Right) Carpets, comfy couches and chairs, even a cot, transformed 'THE GARAGE' into a party place!

Hein and I arrived in Gansbaai on **Thursday, 27 September**, around 5. We unpacked at Esmé's house, had coffee, showered and went to Mike & Lorraine's house for dinner. Some of the family were already there - Audrey, Alta, Helet, Trevor, Dewald, Darius, Attie, Marlene, Lizette, John, Riaan, Maryka, Anuskha & Makayla. Some I've never met, others I haven't seen since high school.



We had chicken, galjoen, a fish they called "Roman Oil Fish", salads, fresh baked bread, cheese, jams ... Alta has baked tons of rusks for the weekend. The party has started!

Friday, 28 September

While Hein and I had coffee, my parents arrived from Paarl. We showered and went to 'THE GARAGE'. There were still a few things to be moved and unpacked. Slowly, slowly the rest of the family arrived. Most of them at least. Quite a few only pitched on the Saturday.

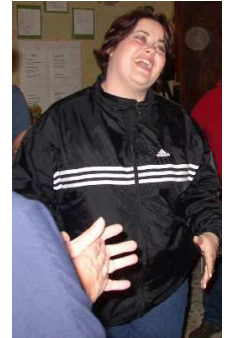
It was quite a challenge to remember names, especially since I've never seen some of them before. The weather was a bit choppy, but we managed to braai some scrumptious Gansbaai boerewors.



We had bean soup, pea soup, pap & sauce, custard cake and chocolate bites. The rain prevented the chefs to braai 'roosterkoeke' (griddle cakes), so instead they made 'vetkoeke' (Apparently they are called dampers, but I'm sure everyone knows a vetkoek.) We enjoyed them with home made jam and cheese.

Marlene showed us how to roll the dough to create the perfect 'vetkoek' (ha, ha).

Halfway through the evening, we handed out the calendars. We have kept it a surprise and every family received one. It made it so much easier to remember names and to identify the family.



After quite a few shots Jaegermeister, Marlene entertained us with a dance, Arno (Esteé's hubby) played a masterpiece on a wire guitar, Wilnand was the Idol & Megan (DJ's wife) did the 'leuloop'.

We went to bed at 11, but the young ones kept their cool and Gansbaai's local clubs were tried, tested and approved of!

Saturday, 29 September



There were a few tired-looking people on Saturday morning, but after a hefty breakfast of tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, sausages, eggs (Breakfast Paella), buns, cheese and a beer (yes, somewhere in the world a plane has taken off) everyone was right and ready.

Sarene, Helet, Esmé & Marlene inspecting the paella.



After breakfast, most walked to the graveyard close by. Fresh flowers were put on the graves of Freddy (only son of 11 who passed away), Jan (Rita's husband) and Frikkie (Esmé's husband).

The rest of the flowers were taken to Napier for the graves of my grandparents, Karel and Suzie.

A photo session was scheduled for 1 o' clock. It was a sight for sore eyes! 9 of the 11 children with some of their families! 51!

Photos were also taken of:

- 1) individual families
- 2) female cousins
- 3) male cousins
- 4) couples
- 5) the 5 brothers & 5 sisters
- 6) mothers with sons
- 7) mothers with children ...

The photographer had her work cut out for her!

Fortunately, it was an amazing day! Blue skies, no rain!



Quite a few disappeared for a few hours ... or took advantage of the comfy beds and chairs in 'THE GARAGE'.



Left is Maree (Jaco & Ilze's boy - 4 months old), centre is Vicky (Esmé's 'baby') and right is Rita & Albert (Johan & Maryke's boy - 4 months old). All fast asleep!!!!



A chocolate cake was specially made for the day - decorated with scrumptious choc icing, strawberries and white chocolate. Decorated with chocolate shards and red ribbon.

Makayla & Anuskha (Riaan & Maryka's girls) definitely loved the cake!



Loads of chicken pieces were marinated for the evening's braai. Johan (nicknamed 'Takkies') helped Esmé with the daunting task! Lizelle, Maryke (Takkies's wife) & Estée made an interesting salad ... in an interesting bowl.. or square? 'Lagieslaai' (layered salad). To be made few hours before serving.



Crisp lettuce, carrot strips, butter lettuce, half-frozen peas (will be crunchy and keep salad cold), fried bacon, grated cheddar cheese and mayonnaise on top.

There was also potato salad, pasta salad and 'slaphaksteentjies' (cooked baby onion salad). Dessert was small pastry shells filled with yummy stuff and chocolate bites.

Although quite a few people partied till late, we went to bed early.

Sunday, 30 September

Quite a few family members wanted to leave early, so breakfast sandwiches was officially skipped.

Instead, we had (around 8:30 am) - Kudu pie, mince pie, left-over braai'd chicken, buns, cheese, jams, pink sago pudding & malva pudding with ice cream! That is SO my kind of breakfast!

Hein downloaded all the photographers' photos on his laptop and cut a few cd's. He certainly was the man of the hour! Everyone started to greet - and hug - and kiss - and then we also said goodbye.

It was a fabulous weekend. Old memories were rekindled and relived, new memories were made ...

'THE GARAGE' gave a contented sigh - he has made the Van Dyk family proud.

And we hope he will continue to - for many more years...