

## RICHARDS BAY

### MONDAY 19 March 2007

With the kids booked into their hotel, we left on Monday morning for Durban. Only on our way there, did we hear about the monstrous waves on the Natal coast. We arrived in Pietermaritzburg after 2, had some tea and chit-chat with Hein's parents and drove on to Durban.

We booked ourselves into a guesthouse, called Huntley House in Westville, Durban (<http://www.wheretostay.co.za/huntleyhouse/>). What a lovely, wonderful house! Dot is a mature lady with a shock of white curly hair to her shoulders – framing a face ageless with beauty! Lovely old country-style guesthouse with the most sumptuous sofas and chairs, clustered in small groups. Her breakfast table seats all the guests, "forcing" you to greet one another, which is something quite different than we're used to. We were indeed very lucky to have a room (although the bathroom is across the passage – but then, what a bathroom! Photo's didn't do justice.)



Jarno, one of Hein's business partners were already booked in there and we went for dinner in an Irish pub. Afterwards, we dropped Jarno at the guesthouse (just before 8) and drove to the beach, but couldn't really see anything.

We then phoned Vicus, one of Hein's oldest friends, in Amanzimtoti and invited ourselves over for coffee. It's only a 20 min drive. Vicus and 3 other guys share a furnished flat right on the beach. We sat there for an hour, drinking whisky (they) and coffee (me) while watching the – quite normal – waves breaking in the dark.

### TUESDAY 20 March 2007

Hein had a meeting till around 1 o'clock. And then we were on holiday – on our way to Richards Bay. Took us about 2 hours.



From left to right: Mzingazi flats ([www.mzingazi.co.za](http://www.mzingazi.co.za)); View from our flat over the yachts at sunset; the same view at nighttime.

Our flat was in the harbour, overlooking the yacht club. Studio flat with small kitchen, bathroom and bedroom/lounge in one, balcony and a swimming pool and small jetty right in front of us. We paid R550 per night for both. Seemed a bit steep, especially when the loose carpet was so filthy, I promptly rolled it up and stashed it along a wall.

Our lifesaver in the flat was the airconditioner – a gay drama queen. Yes, that’s what you’ve read. When you switched the aircon off, it had a “beep” that went slower and s-l-o-w-e-r (like a flat battery) and will then end in a quick series of 5 beeps. Hilarious! But without the aircon – oh boy, you will suffer! When you slide open the balcony door, the heat welcomes you with a “smothering embrace”.

I quickly unpacked our clothes and then we drove off to Lakeside Mall to surprise Myra, my friend. Myra owned a Mimmo’s in Randburg, but after quite a few years, decided to open her own baby – Myra’s. A stunning Mediterranean restaurant with warm olive tones all over – soft wall paint, gorgeous curtains, small details in her décor and her crockery – plates like you’ve never seen before. Not oval, not round – somewhere in-between.



We decided to have dinner there. Hein had the Kleftiko, a Greek roasted lamb specialty, with spinach and pumpkin. He thoroughly enjoyed it. I ordered the Trinchado Chicken, smothered in Myra’s special cream-tomato-white wine-sauce, also with veggies and a bun – a must for the sauce! Dessert was a meringue, filled with ice cream, berries and custard. Mamma mia! Absolutely divine!

### **WEDNESDAY 21 March 2007**

Woke up with a tummy bug, but ignored it completely. Made some breakfast in the flat, took a mid-morning nap and went for lunch.

On the other side of the harbour are quite a few restaurants, although Charlie’s Croft flooded with the monstrous waves. We decided on Zack’s – overlooking another part of the harbour and only opened the previous week. Hein had fish and chips and I chose the chicken bunny chow. Lots of food and presented quite nicely, but not sure if they would keep up this standard.



After lunch we had another nap (one has to adjust slowly to this kind of weather...) and made seafood paella for dinner.

#### **THURSDAY 22 March 2007**

We had breakfast with Myra at Jack's Corner – overlooking the lagoon as well as the sea. At 8am, the humidity was high and we couldn't wait to drive around in our well-airconditioned car.

After breakfast, we drove to St Lucia. Probably an hour's drive or so. We couldn't see much damage, but found these "fruits?" on the beach.



On our way back to the flat, Hein took this photo of a beach outside Richards Bay. We read books and magazine throughout the afternoon and made macaroni-cheese-mince for dinner.

#### **FRIDAY 23 March 2007**

Had breakfast on the patio and then went to Myra's for some computer-troubleshooting. Hein had a much-needed haircut and we lunched again at Zack's. This time I had a platter with all sorts of Greek titbits, but way too much for 1 person. Hein had some gorgeous blackened chicken breasts with coriander mash. We drove to Pelican Island, a picnic spot just across the Richards Bay harbour and saw something strange – a boat tied to the pier, but on its way out to sea ... after a while, it "reversed" closer, untied the boat and left again.



For dinner we braaied some boerewors, had some divine Gino Ginelli's ice cream and watched TV.

**SATURDAY 24 March 2007**

Our last day in Richards Bay. We decided to drive to Sodwana, some 250kms up north along the coast. The scenery en route is spectacular. We drove through fields and fields of pineapples and sunflowers. At one stage, we passed something on the road – braked immediately and took some photo's.



A snail. Looks quite normal on the left-hand-side. Until Hein placed his wallet next to it – wow! Imagine 6 of them, smothered in garlic-butter. It will definitely have to be a Main Course – not a starter!

Just before Sodwana Bay, we stopped for coffee at Tamboti and had a quick sandwich. The rustic décor of the coffee shop is amazing. The bathroom is outside in a "log cabin" – tiny, but so cleverly decorated. Small pink fake flowers are pasted all over the inside. They also have an amazing art gallery, where they sell gorgeous oil canvas paintings for under R2000!



At the entrance to Sodwana Bay beach, you have to pay an entrance fee of R20 and you HAVE TO HAVE A 4X4. If you don't have one, you park outside the gate and walk in.

The beach is amazing – going nearly as far as the eye can see, although we were a bit hesitant to try driving there – didn't feel like getting stuck.



**Top picture:** All the 4x4's parked. Of course the sea is nice and warm, so everyone enjoyed it.

**Bottom left:** Those not swimming, went out on these small boats to scuba dive.

**Bottom right:** This was the only car seen there – although the Fiat Panda is 4x4, we didn't think it would manage the loose sand. Obviously it did!

We fell in love with Sodwana (although we don't swim or scuba dive) and will definitely go back there for a holiday. From Johannesburg, it's definitely the closest sea. That's if you drive along Secunda and Piet Retief.

Back in Richards Bay, we had lunch at Maritino's Tavern – next to Zack's in the harbour. Funny thing was, according to Suzy (our Garmin gps), we were actually 15m underwater.



Early evening, we went to Myra to say goodbye and ordered some take-aways from her:

Hein had a Steak (medium done) with melted blue cheese sauce and veggies and I had Chicken and Prawn Curry. We had our dinner in bed, watching the cricket.

### **SUNDAY 25 March 2007**

By 7am, we were packed and ready to go.

For lunch we stopped in Secunda at Anton & Erika and their 3 daughters. He's my cousin from my dad's side and we haven't seen them since March last year.

Home sweet home was around 5pm. Bought some food at Woolworths and then washed and ironed Hein's clothes – he had a 7am Cape Town flight the next morning. On Monday I fetched the kids, cleaned the house and settled in for a lonesome few days ...