

KRUISBESSIE, SCHOEMANSHOF

www.schoemanshof.co.za

Tuesday morning, 30 October, my husband Hein told me he wanted to go away for the weekend of 3-4 November. Somewhere peaceful – looking out on some kind of water – not too far from home ...

I must have phoned 20-30 places. All fully booked. By Wednesday afternoon, I felt defeated. But I tried one more time ... and got lucky.

Schoemanshof is an old family farm, about 20 km outside Potchefstroom – about 1 ½ - 2 hours' drive from us. Originally, I enquired about this little house, Kollegerus, that sleeps 4. At first I pronounced it Kolle-gerus (Spots-quiet), but GP (the owner) corrected me immediately – it's Kollege-rus (College-Rest). Built in 1947, as a camping site for the Potch College students. About 20 metres in front of the house, is this lapa that looks out on the Vaal River. **But it was fully booked.**



However – GP suggested that we take the big house. A HOUSE THAT SLEEPS 14. The house is called 'Kruisbessie' and is built next to the Vaal River. (Kruisbessie, also called Cross-berry is a plant *Grewia occidentalis* – Buttonwood.) Although I haven't seen these plants around the house, it's probably where the name came from.

Friday morning while Hein was at work, I started to get everything ready. Although he said he'll probably only be home by 2:30pm, I packed the bags and watched some TV.

He was home by 12 – we left half-an-hour later. Drove to Potchefstroom, had some McDonalds and stopped for some fishing bait.

Arriving on the farm, we drove past some old outbuildings, through a farm gate and very slowly past sheep, while a sheepdog with a sore foot, playfully led us the way.

Now although I've seen photo's of the house, Kruisbessie, **NOTHING** prepares you for the real thing.



It's built out of natural stone with a thatch roof – even the inside walls are stone. The lounge-dining-kitchen is open plan.

There is a huge fireplace for the winter, books, magazines and also a TV with a comfortable lounge suite.



Hunter's trophies, old guns and family photo's make you feel at home.

The kitchen has got a back door, a pantry, 2 fridges and a chest freezer. It is extremely well stocked – lovely plates and cups, steak knives and –forks and a few braai forks. A microwave on top of the fridge and my personal favourite –



The wooden island in the centre! Have you ever seen such a magnificent piece! It has cupboards and drawers on 2 sides.

The counter tops are made of slate and can you imagine – washing dishes while you look out on bushes, birds and the occasional cow.



(Left)
In the one corner, is this small thatched pub area.

And next to it a long table with bench seats.

(Right)
There are 2 bathrooms, both downstairs. This is the bigger one, with a shower. Look at that basin! The other bathroom has got a shower, toilet and basin.



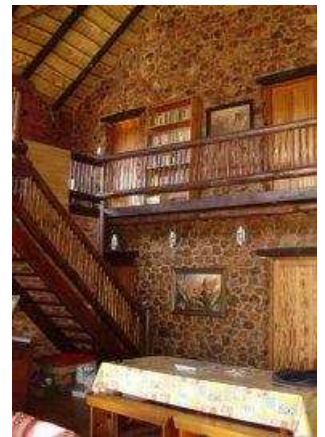
The house has 5 bedrooms, with 4 single beds on the top landing.



There are 2 bedrooms downstairs – 1 with a double bed, looking out over the deck and 1 with 2 single beds.

Upstairs, there's 1 bedroom with double bed (left) and balcony, 1 bedroom with 2 single beds and 1 bedroom with 2 bunk beds.

Linen and towels are provided.



Then you walk out on this deck – it's probably the same size as the house – maybe even more. It's HUGE! And half of the deck is covered with this amazing lapa with a braai and a long table and benches.

Plastic chairs are stacked for those in need of some back support.

Wood is provided in a half barrel and for some extra bucks, they give you more. We had 2 half barrels and could only manage to finish the one half. And we tried our best!

SO – are you drooling yet? Please don't – you have not seen the best part yet. Oh, there's more? YOU BET YOU!



Can you see this amazing view of the Vaal River?



Wouldn't you love to sit on those 2 chairs during the day with a cuppa or a cold one?

Wouldn't you?



Well, at Kruisbessie –

YOU CAN!

This is the lapa I've described on the previous page.

You and your friends/family can be part of this unbelievable adventure!

Depending on the season, tariffs are R200/person/night – minimum of 8 people.

We unpacked quickly and settled down with a cold one – and felt the blanket of peace and tranquility wrapped around us. We sent up a few thank-you's to Him.

GP came around, had a quick chat and then we braaied some chicken and sausages with salad. Ate it outside under the lapa and then read for a bit.

Saturday we woke up, had coffee on the deck and heard all these loud splashes in the water. Fish! You can see them jump out of the water catching little insects.

Schoemanshof is well known for superb yellow fish. To catch this indigenous fish on a fly, is an experience. Hein tried very hard, but will have to come back to try some more.

There are also hiking routes and routes for jogging and mountain bikes. Close to the farm you can go for game viewing, river rafting as well as bow hunting. Quite the latest hunting trend – a lot more skill involved.

For breakfast, we braaied some sausages and relaxed.



We were also visited by some moo's.

Peacefully munching away and when they were finished, they splashed through the river to the other side.

(Right)
Saturday afternoon, we had this refreshing thunderstorm.



It truly is an experience to sit cosily under the lapa, watching the rain splash on the deck a metre away. The fresh rain smell intoxicates you and places you under a heavenly spell.

This is my chance – I thought. I quickly ran to the bathroom, filled the bathtub with bubbles and when I was safely covered with them, raised the blinds and opened the windows – I looked out onto shrubs, trees and once again, smelt the wet earth and the rain. Oh yeah, I didn't have a cold one, but a cuppa. What else?



For dinner, we braaied some chops and sausages and Hein took this photo of the Vaal.

Sunday we braaied sausages again for breakfast (we really, really tried to use all the wood) and then packed up.

We took a different route back home, through a 'blink-and-it's-gone' little town, Viljoenskroon.

Although only a weekend – we felt quite refreshed and 'recharged'.

And are already planning the next weekend...