

## BLIND DATE ANNIVERSARY IN WATERVAL-BOVEN

Suffering from weekend-away-withdrawal symptoms, we jumped at the chance to visit Waterval-Boven on 29-30 August '09.

*Waterval-Boven is a tiny village amidst one of the prime fly fishing areas in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa, with Machadodorp, Belfast, Lydenburg & Dullstroom within easy reach.*



*Established in 1898 as a railway depot, Waterval Boven is Dutch for Above Waterfall and is named after the waterfall in the Elands River. The village of Waterval Boven is nestled in the Drakensberg Mountains on the fringe of the escarpment, at the foot of the South Hills. It is rich with historical sites and buildings which are now proclaimed national monuments. One of the main activities is rock-climbing.*

Looking at the calendar, we realised that 31 August is also the 18th anniversary... when Hein and I went on our first date, a blind date (pic left).

In 1991, being invited to a dinner and with no-one as a partner, one of my friends asked her boyfriend from Majuba Residence, Stellenbosch, to arrange a date. He asked one of the seniors, who couldn't attend (when I met this guy I didn't like him at all and he was shorter than me), but had a friend staying in town. And so Hein and I met.

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### **Friday, 28 August 2009**

Racing back from my Tai Chi class, we packed Rissiepit and left Johannesburg at 1pm. The traffic was light and we arrived in Waterval Boven exactly at 4pm. By then Hein was 'dying' for a beer.

From the road, the village looked absolutely quaint. Suzy, our gps, didn't know the turnoff, but we soon realised the mistake.

The house only has single beds, but we pushed 2 together and with 2 King-size fitted sheets, we had a lovely King-sized bed. The fitted sheets keep the mattresses snugly together.

Only 'allowing' me to unpack our clothes and change into a jersey, the beer-urge chased us into town ... scouting for a suitable pub.

Bypassing one or 2 rowdy pubs, we saw the Irish guesthouse/pub, Shamrock Arms, and pulled in. ([www.shamrockarms.co.za](http://www.shamrockarms.co.za) +27 (0) 13 257 0888)

A beautiful sandstone Victorian house with a long verandah and lush green garden. Terry & Cheryl, the owners, welcomed us together with Jaco, the manager. And the first beer of the weekend was cracked.



(Shamrock Arms)



(Terry)



(Cheryl)



(Jaco)

Munching on peanuts, we chatted about this and that – and found that from Zim he moved to Durban, landed up in Northriding, Johannesburg (only a few kms from us) and yes, he'll have the rugby on the next day. Talking about my website, Jaco seemed keen on all my quick dessert recipes.

When the sun set, it got a bit chilly so we moved inside to the pub. A few other guests joined us and we talked about fishing. A big fishing competition took place the next day and everybody was psyched. When our tummies rumbled, we asked advice on a nice restaurant. Jaco said he'll phone the Stone Circle Bistro and book us a table. He came back laughing and said he told the waiter at Stone Circle I'm a food critic.

Leaving Shamrock Arms, we drove to the Stone Circle Bistro. And found the waiter, Kris, waiting for us on the steps.

Inside, there's a huge room with a pub and pool tables. Outside on the veranda, old music was played for the few dancers.

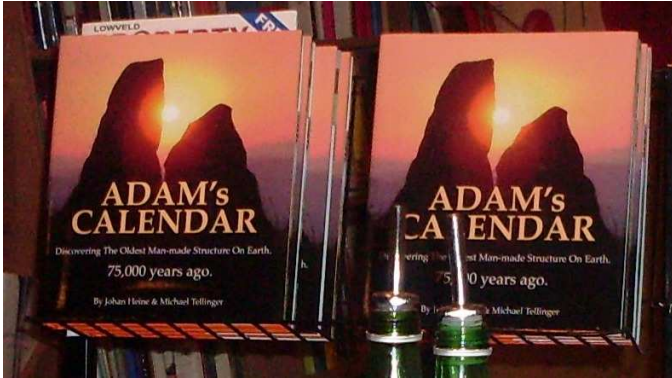


Stepping through a curtained door, we entered the restaurant part. Oh, pure heaven! Bookshelves lined the walls and were stacked on shelves (pic left). Hundreds and hundreds of books. The Bistro/Bookshop is also used for book-club-nights. One of the authors, Michael Tellingier, has written a few songs, more than a dozen screenplays but "Slave Species of god" is his first published book, as a result of a 25-year obsession with the theories of [Zecharia Sitchin](#), who translated ancient Sumerian clay tablets and discovered the early creation of man by the Anunnaki. Talks and tours about the ruins around the area are regularly given by Michael.

Hein chose a nice bottle of red wine and we ordered the snails as starters (pic right). Served uniquely in a hollowed-out-half bun, then 'bordered' with bread fingers. Quite nice, although a bit too much butter to my liking.

Ordering a steak, medium, I decided on an omelette with cheese, bacon & mushrooms. The steak was cooked perfect and my omelette was fine, but Hein and I nearly 'killed' ourselves laughing at Kris, the waiter. Every 5 minutes he came around, asked if everything was to our satisfaction, is there anything else we needed .... And when Hein sent back his plate with chips left on it, he asked if there was anything wrong with the chips ... Of course I was taking photo's of every dish and wrote in my little black book. He must have really thought I was a food critic. Poor kid.

*One of Michael Tellinger's books is called 'Adam's Calendar', a beautifully illustrated coffee table book - A 75,000 year-old stone calendar - In the cradle of humankind.*



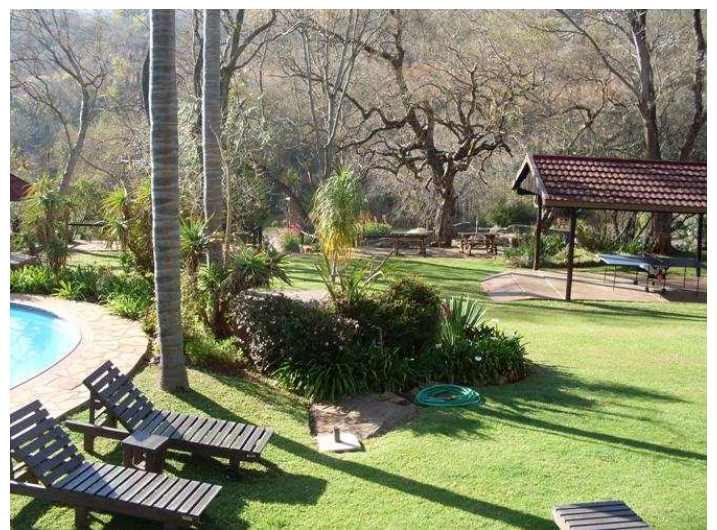
*A new discovery of an ancient circular monolithic stone calendar site in Mpumalanga has proven to be at least 75,000 years old, pre-dating any other structure found to date. Southern Africa holds some of the deepest mysteries in all of human history. What we are told is that at around 60,000 years ago the early humans migrated from Africa and populated the rest of the world.*

After coffee and Milktart, we left with a copy of Adam's Calendar, leaving Kris a big tip.

### **Saturday, 29 August 2009**

Drinking coffee in the backyard, I practised Tai Chi fan and then we dressed for breakfast. Although we did drive past the Stone Circle Bistro, we couldn't see any activities, so decided to drive to Waterval Onder, a few km's away.

On our way, I saw the sign for 'Bergwaters Eco Lodge' ([www.bergwaters.co.za](http://www.bergwaters.co.za) - 013 257 7081) My friend, wanting to attend one of Michael Tellinger's talks, asked if we could 'suss' out the accommodation. Driving through trees and shrubs, we arrived at the Lodge. What a peaceful atmosphere. Huge rock formations formed a natural backdrop.



Peeping into the lounge, we found it filled with people but Ivan and Chantell, the owners, assured us they can give us breakfast on the patio. Gazing over the swimming pool and lush garden, we talked to Ivan and found they owned a Wimpy in Johannesburg. And that he played rugby against Hein in school. Small world.

With divinely strong coffee, Hein and I both enjoyed our omelettes. Ivan told us that the guests were from a retirement village in Van der Bijl Park, Gauteng, on their way from the Kruger Park back home. When we paid our breakfast, I was surprised to see that they only charged us R28 and R35 for the omelettes.



Leaving Bergwaters, we drove onto Kaapse Hoop, a 30 minute drive. Kaapse Hoop is another tiny village, famed for its ghosts and wild horses. Once a mining facility, it now boasts private houses, guesthouses and coffee shops. Look at this quaint house, called Flintstones (pic left).

On our way back to Waterval Boven, we saw a few wild horses grazing next to the road (pic right).



Passing a big factory, we realised it's a paper mill – Sappi Ngodwana. Huge piles of wood, wood chips (pic centre) and paper rolls (pic right) were next to the road. One can also smell the sweetness of sawed wood.



Looking out for the Waterval Onder village, we saw the sign and turned into the village. Well, village is too big and strong a wrong. Waterval Onder consists of 1 street, about 500 metres long (pic left). There's some lovely tall, smooth-trunked Bluegum trees (pic right).





The 'village' consists of a few houses next to the 500 metre road and a lovely restaurant on the corner, The Tickled Trout (pic left). Owned by Lawrence & Lidia, we had a few drinks and to our amazement, Lawrence used to own The Corner House, in Witkoppen Road, Gauteng.

With the rugby game between Springboks & Aus, we drove back to the Shamrock Arms. Armed with a Jeffery Deaver book, I settled myself in the dining room, while Hein joined the rugby enthusiasts. Guessing the end score with a R10 bet, Hein was closest and we won R70.

For lunch, we thought we'll drive back to The Tickled Trout, Waterval Onder.



Hein ordered a burger and I had the trout pie with salad. Absolutely divine!!!!

Itching to watch the Sharks game, Lawrence & Lidia told us they didn't have DSTV.

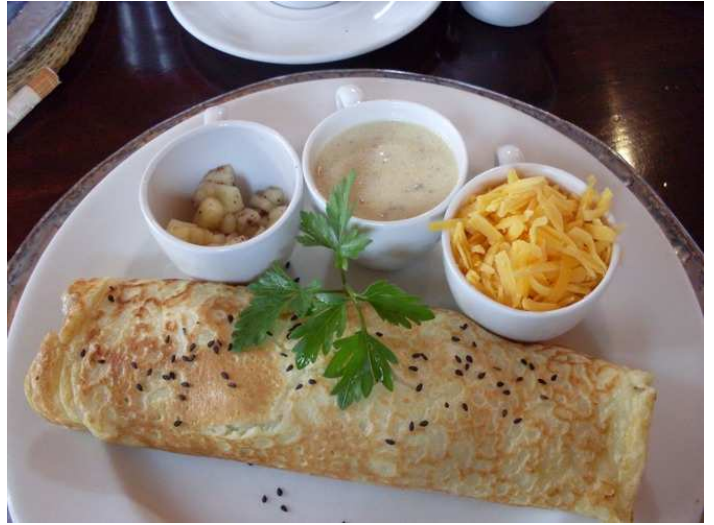


I was driving back, when Hein suggested we stopped again at the Bergwaters Eco Lodge. Ivan invited us to watch the rugby and surely if he's from Durban, they would watch the game. Hein found an unopened bag of Jelly Bears, opened it and we burst out laughing. All the multi-coloured bears melted into one jelly mess. He did his best eating it (pic left), but I had to stop the car for some Wet Wipes.

With the poor Sharks not up to scratch, we drove back. With Hein snoozing, I finished my book. What a thriller. Heating up soup for dinner, Hein started to read the Jeffery Deaver book and read up till 1 am.

## Sunday 30 August 2009

Not having to leave early, we decided anyway to pack up and escape the rush back to Gauteng. Leaving at 9, I suggested we stopped at Harrie's Pancakes, Dullstroom, for brunch (an hour's drive from Waterval Boven). I haven't had one of their pancakes in years!



*This is a lovely dinner party theme. Have a few different hot fillings, eg: creamed spinach & feta/creamed spinach, feta & bacon; chicken livers with pepper cream sauce; chicken curry; Bobotie. Sweet options are: strawberries & cream; Milktart filling; brandied cherries and ice cream; choc mousse with ice cream; fresh fruit.*

Hein's choice was mince and scrambled eggs with toast, I chose a pancake with Chicken Livers with pepper cream sauce (pic right). Absolutely sublime!!!!!! And quite filling. Although I was eyeing the sweet pancakes, I just couldn't. Another good idea when you're 4 people is to have each person order a different pancake. Then quarter each pancake and hand it around. That way each person has a quarter of a different pancake.

Driving on a very bad potholed road from Dullstroom, we arrived back home at 2pm.

With another new 'discovery' notch on our belt, we relaxed and settled back in everyday-life-mode.

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