

'OOPS, AAH, we did it again ...'

Schoemanshof, Potchefstroom, 1 – 3 October 2010

Friday, 1 October 2010

After our Tai Chi class at gym, at 12h00, the usual Tai Chi coffee group sat down for a well-earned R9 cappuccino at JB Rivers, next to the gym. A sms from Hein said 'I love you' and when I responded with the same, he phoned me. And said: 'I want to go away this weekend.'

I didn't bat an eyelid. Scrolled through my cellphone contacts, phoned a few numbers but they were all fully booked. Oh yes, it's the last weekend of most schools' September holidays. We had lovely coffee and fresh Swiss Roll cake with Irene (right)(who turned 86 on Friday – isn't she amazing?), then I dropped Irene off at her house and drove off to the Berliner Butchery.



As per our usual routine on Saturday mornings, I bought sausages and buns. But they have the most amazing goodies ... so I bought a Pork Roast filled with cheese, Chicken Prego pieces, Pepper Cream Sirloin and Turkey Viennas. A friendly guy tried to persuade me into buying a piece of carrot cake. In the end I gave in and we had a nice chat in Afrikaans. I was back home by 13h30.

Had a quick look through my emails and started to search for a chalet. At 14h00 I found a place, right on the Vaal River, 28 km outside Potchefstroom. We've been there before, but in a different chalet. I forwarded their bank details to Hein, grabbed our weekend crates, packed self-catering stuff and clothes, showered and by 15h30 we were on our way to the river ... now that's what I'm talking about!!!

At 17h30 we arrived at Schoemanshof. (www.schoemanshof.co.za – Hesmé 073 1423 899) Our chalet was called 'Kollegerus' (not spots rest, but college rest)(photo below left). It's an open-plan bedroom/kitchen and bathroom with bath, toilet & sink and small fireplace. There is a single divan for a 3rd person. For this weekend, we paid R440/night.



Just across the chalet is the lapa. Lovely big under-thatch lounge area with table and chairs, fridge, sink and braai area. Then there's a lovely patio with another braai area overlooking the Vaal River. Absolutely bliss!!! A small building contains a toilet, sink and shower. When you sit on the loo, you look out over the river (top far right).

With our crates quickly unpacked, my face cleared of make-up, we took the small cooler box and camping chairs to the lapa. With our feet in the air, we enjoyed the cool of the early evening. Slowly all the tight knots in our shoulders start to disappear. Just out of sight, there's a little waterfall. Nature's musical of water, ducks, birds and ice-cubes were heaven!



With small sticks and branches, Hein built a fire. Then he discovered a heap of pine cones. And oh my gosh!!! You cannot believe the flames! I have managed to capture these burning cones and thought they were spectacular. Drink after drink disappeared down our thirsty throats while we talked about business, dreams and prospects. It was pitch dark but we just kept staring at the flames, while my pashmina did a good job of keeping the chill at bay.



At last we listened to our rumbling tummies and walked back to the chalet. And we walked right into a bug-infested area! All around the outside light, they were swarming like mad! And as soon as you flick on a light inside the chalet, they were there.

Sneakily, by torchlight, I made one-minute stywe pap (maize) in the microwave. Hein had the Pepper Cream Sirloin on the braai with a small piece of boerewors. We managed to eat without ingesting any foreign flying visitors, but only just ... on my packing list will now be a 'bug zapper'. For sure! By 21h30 I quickly washed the few dishes with my lovely funky gloves and we hit the bed.

Only to be awoken by Hein's cellphone just before 1 am ... our security company, our alarm went off. Luckily when they walked around the house they couldn't see anything amiss ... but we slept fitfully after that.

Saturday, 2 October 2010

Just before 6am, we woke up. My turn to make coffee. Hein walked down to the lapa with our chairs and camera. In my one hand I balanced the 2 mugs of coffee and in the other hand ... come on – a girl's allowed something sweet before breakfast! The Berliner's Butchery's carrot cake was amazing! I loved the orangey cream cheese and it was topped with glitzy gold.



While drinking our coffee, the shallow waters started to swirl around like mad. From the distance we could spot huge fish swimming around, their backs exposed. (My sis, Sanet, is surely having a fit now! She was so looking forward to hear about our fishing weekend in Pietermaritzburg and now she'll freak on hearing we forgot to bring the fishing rods.)






This is really how close the river is to the lapa ... unfortunately we didn't hear the Fish Eagle's call. Hein ready for action ... yip, of course, it is Saturday morning!

Hmm, German-made boerewors on crispy buns with a quickly-heated-up microwave tomato-chilli relish
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As I booked this chalet, I realised that it was the yearly musical festival at Potch, Aardklop. I knew my friends, Ant, Willie, Carina & Rinus would be there. So I dressed in an ankle-length denim skirt and sms'd Ant: if you want to see me in a skirt, keep your eyes peeled. Hahaha, what's the chance?

Just before we reached the showgrounds, Hein realised he wanted to draw money. Soon we saw a huge ABSA sign, followed it and realised it's an ABSA party held at a church ... At a mall we stopped. While Hein drew money I went to the public restrooms. And what do you know ... as I approached, I saw this black lady sitting at a small table in the hallway, opposite the Ladies' Restrooms.

I turned towards the Restrooms, she called me. I didn't even look at her and said 'no thank you' and walked on. She then told me I had to pay R1 before I enter the restrooms. Hmm. I paid it and went in but then started to think ... is this really legit?? Anyone can stick a poster on the wall and place a table in the hallway ... I walked out and asked her for her papers ... she said I could talk to the centre management. If I had more time, I would have ... but if this was a scam ... well, it is quite clever.

Kobus se Gat! TRADISIONELE VELD RESTAURANT		
	1. Van sy ma af - Pasgebore Roosterkoek	R 9.00
	2. Koekie met sy gat in die botter	R 11.00
	3. Appelkoooskonfynt koekie vir die 'babbelaas'	R 15.00
	4. Kaasplesier - eet hom hier koekie	R 18.00
	5. Bederf die koekie met kaas en konfynt	R 24.00
	6. Sit een worsie in die koekie in	R 25.00
	7. Looi hom! Dubbelloop boerewors koek nou!!!	R 37.00
	8. Die BESTE - Prima Sosatiekoek	R 30.00
	9. Gaan groot - Dubbelloop Sosatiekoek vir my!!!	R 45.00
	10. Mega Kerrie-maalvleis-koek - as jy honger is...	R 30.00
	11. Sit die aival in die koekie in - mmmm lekkerte!!!	R 42.00



Battling to find a parking space, we saw this young hip guy (left) with a pretty pink umbrella and yuppy white-rimmed sunglasses.

Numerous food stalls were to be seen and we laughed at 'Kobus se Gat' – the menu is just so funny ... if you're Afrikaans.

Although there were interesting food for sale, we didn't buy anything, but browsed through the stalls looking for an Aardklop t-shirt or cap. The next moment my handbag was grabbed ... and there was Ant & Willie. Unbelievable! After 'hello' and 'good-bye', we walked to another part of the show and passed them again!

Not planning for the festival, we didn't buy any show tickets, but next year we'll definitely do. At 'Die Beeld' tent (the Afrikaans newspaper), we rested our legs, Hein had a boerewors and beer while we listened to 2 local unknown performers. And headed back to our chalet.

On our way back Hein stopped at the Spar for ice – and bought a Spar brand bag of Niknaks, called 'Naks'. Very yummy! At half past one we closed all the blinds of the chalet and closed our eyes.

We started up a fire with 2 bags of wood, just after 4pm. My toes were still sore from the morning's festival walk, so I propped them on a chair. As soon as the sun went down, the Frog Choir started - monster frogs! At 8pm, we doused the fire and walked back to the chalet.



Knowing the bugs' attraction to light, I've cooked some Basmati rice in the microwave earlier the afternoon. Cubed cheese and left-over tomato relish stirred in and we relished that with a can of sweetcorn and some lovely rare steak.

With a lovely cup of decaf coffee and the rest of the Carrot cake, I joined Hein in bed. We finished off the cake, brushed our teeth and closed our eyes.

Sunday, 3 October 2010

Before 6 we were up again. While I carried the camp chairs down to the lapa, Hein made coffee. After drinking in the silence, we decided to pack up and have breakfast in Randfontein, at the roadhouse, Uncle Harry.

While Hein used the lapa's shower, I packed the crates. Bathing while looking out to trees and grass is just so amazing!

At 7h30 we closed the chalet's door and were off.

A whole weekend with no TV, no radio (except in the car), no reading (I didn't even remove my reading glasses from my handbag) – absolutely priceless!!!

Just before 9 we arrived at Uncle Harry. And found they only open at 10! Oh dear, we were starved by then!

Onto Die Boomhuisie (The Tree House) in Krugersdorp. (011-660 9617). A very eccentrically decorated restaurant.



Strong Americano coffees, chicken liver pancakes with cheese sauce and a Kassler Chop Breakfast (Hein) and we were ready for home.

What a wonderful unexpected weekend away!

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