

VERLORENKLOOF MOUNTAIN CALL CHRISTMAS 2014



Dear Verlorenkloof Owners and Friends

As always at this time of the year, we look back with gratitude and humility for all the blessings we received this year. And, as Eric and I look forward to a December AT HOME, we cannot wait to share Verlorenkloof with our friends and family who will be spending their holidays here.

Verlorenkloof is absolutely beautiful now – although the rains came late this year - first good rain only started late in October - the heavens have opened and to date we have had over 200 mm the last month alone – the wettest December in 10 years.

Since I have written to you in June, much has happened.

- **Fishing:** As is the case every year, the rain has played a huge role in the quality of Fly Fishing. The dams have held out pleasingly well with regards to clarity and temperature. As a result we have had higher catch records than what we did last year this time. The river quickly turned to flood with the large amounts of rain of late. This, however, is always welcomed as it re-shapes the river, making it an ever evolving piece of water that anglers will need to read differently each year. Our Development clinics continue to run to great effect. Special thanks to Stuart Smith and the Gauteng North Fly Fishing Association for this.
- **Birding:** The annual national **Birding Big Day** late in November got a special cloak this year. Verlorenkloof has been participating in this event for 10 years under the brilliant leadership of owner Jane Smart and longtime friends, Geoff Lockwood and local environmentalist, Frans Krige. This year we were visited by a group from Birdlife, Northern Gauteng and the game was upped with specialists talks and a lovely get together and orientation at the lodge on the Friday evening. MANY thanks to Jane and Geoff and also to Frans, who hosted an early birding and nature weekend for those who could not get to the official weekend.
- **Hiking:** Our new hiking trail map is complete and continues to be distributed into our check-in packs. The map is updated almost weekly according to comments and suggestions from guests. New signage has gone up to aid hikers of their current position in the Estate. Hiking trails are cut and kept clear of grass as often as possible. Again special thanks to Josh Smith for diligently working away at this work-in-progress!
- **Cycling:**
- **The Kwena Basin Education Trust** had a busy year of introducing the four-year Teacher Development Programme, which targets Foundation Phase teachers and aims to have a significant impact on the youngest children at the Kwena schools.
Two Wits School of Education Teaching Experiences were hosted in the Kwena Basin this year, which once again exposed the schools to successful and passionate young graduates.
We are also proud to announce that next year we look forward to welcoming Meghan Baiocchi and Natalia Nicholson to the staff of Umthombopholile Primary School. They will be focusing on Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phase, and will be working under the wing of Mrs Poppy Phetla.
The Trust has been very fortunate to have a group of enthusiastic and dedicated donors to whom we are all extremely grateful.
Thanks to Kirstin Legg for this update – **PLEASE CONTACT Kirstin on kirstleelegg@gmail.com to JOIN**

In October Eric and I had the privilege to visit the USA for the first time. We visited our old (school) friends in Washington DC and together with them, took a fantastic trip to New York (saw Mpumalanga's own Pretty Yende sing at the Met) and then by car to Massachusetts where we spent a week staying in a picturesque little village exploring the country side and visiting dairy farms to gain insight into the local dairy business. I realised a dream to see the Glass Flowers at Harvard (google it, it is amazing!) A road trip took us via Upstate New York and Connecticut to enjoy farm hospitality on a huge dairy farm in Lancaster county in Pennsylvania and then it was back to DC for a final dose of friendship, culture and history. A wonderful holiday and only possible because we could leave Verlorenkloof in the very capable hands of Douglas, Jeanne, Debbie and Tian, our supervisors and staff. They were all very glad to have us back, though!

The year ahead will bring many new challenges – most of you already know that we are planning to develop a very special yoghurt to give new purpose to the dairy farm, which have been tagging along for many years while we focused on building Verlorenkloof. That said, we are also experiencing renewed interest in timeshare sales and resales and maybe it is now time to complete Croft 24! It is also very reassuring that a good percentage of new owners are from our children's generation.....

Henry and Cherie and Erica and Werner together with Eric sr join us in wishing you and your loved ones peace and joy during this blessed time. May you experience the true meaning of Christmas and may you be safe and sound, wherever you are.

Warm regards, till we see each other again.

Eric, Heidi and the Verlorenkloof team

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SAVE THE DATE:

BOTANY weekend: 7 – 9 February 2015

FOCUS ON BOTANICAL ART AND ILLUSTRATION, but aimed at all and every one – you just need to love nature!

Friday evening dinner and talk by Buffelskloof resident botanist and author, John Burrows.

Saturday excursions and afternoon demonstration by Gill Condy – resident artist at SANBI Pretoria

Join us and book your room or croft now.

R 2000 per room in shared crofts, Meals only R 260 per person. (dinner and talk on Friday and brunch and wrap up on Sunday)