

# VERLORENKLOOF MOUNTAIN CALL SUMMER 2015



Dear Verlorenkloof Owners and Friends

I have been holding this newsletter back for 6 weeks now – waiting for the rains. Last Thursday the heat broke with the arrival of our first thunderstorms; since then we have had 64mm of rain and counting. The transformation of the grasslands has been amazing and we pray for continued rains. We are also reminded of how blessed we are with a water rich landscape, but also how fragile it is, and so deserving of our care.

We are all well and looking forward to a wonderful December and January at Verlorenkloof for our guests—walking, hiking, cycling, fishing or just stoepsitting. For the children we have lots of fun planned and for the mothers – **please order in!** Our tasty homemade **croft food** from Foodspace has proven to be very popular this past year and this holiday we introduce **daily LUNCH specials**. We thank you all for the fantastic support.

## Some news snippets on activities and events at Verlorenkloof:

**Fishing:** After the retirement of our long time trout supplier, we sourced fish from our neighbours, Lunsklip Hatchery, and are happy to report that our fish stocking is back on track with excellent quality trout. The extreme heat and warm waters over the last two months were tough on the fish but the river maintained its stock very well. We do thank all our fishing visitors for their kind understanding.

**Birding:** The last weekend in November saw Verlorenkloof a-twitter with over 40 guests participating in our annual birding weekend, to coincide with Birdlife SA's national **BIRDING BIG DAY**. They were led by birding doyen **Geoff Lockwood** and long-time owner **Jane Smart** and included a number of members from the **Rand Barbets Club**, which celebrates its 25th birthday this year. A full report will be available on the website later, but participants reported that this was a very special weekend – the group recorded over 159 species including **all the Red Data species** which Geoff illustrated beautifully in his Friday night talk.

Verlorenkloof was also on the route of the **Escarpment Bird Club** led by owner, **George Skinner**. This group worked the entire escarpment area from 4am and .... "We managed a credible 175 species including *African Crowned Eagle, Lanner Falcon, African Rail, Red-chested Flufftail, African Jacana, Half-collared Kingfisher (twice), Pearl-breasted Swallow, Broad-tailed Warbler, Croaking Cisticola* and the bird of the day, *Short-tailed Pipit*".

**Botany:** As always, Frans Krige managed to spot birds and listen to the call of his beloved orchids at the same time. This past weekend he added *Mystacidium capense*, a beautiful epiphytic orchid in full flower, bringing Verlorenkloof's orchid list to an impressive 30 species! Cynthia Lockwood added *Orthochilus welwitschii* to the Verlorenkloof flower list – thanks Cynthia!

**SAVE THE DATE!!** Our annual **Botany Weekend** will again take place from 5 – 7 February 2016.

**Accommodation: R2000 per ROOM in a number of allocated crofts**

**Meals: R 280 per person – Friday night DINNER & Sunday PICNIC/ BRUNCH (weather permitting)**

**BOOK NOW!!**

**Archaeology:** After the overwhelming interest in the launch of the seminal work about the archaeology of this area, *Forgotten World*, we hope to fit in another special interest weekend in 2016. If this is your thing, **please let me know** and I will start planning it. We have had to restock our copies of the book 4 times already!

**Horse riding:** We have recently schooled four of the Verlorenkloof born-and-bred offspring of our original Nooitgedacht stock into wonderful lively but safe trail horses, lending a new dimension to an outride through the foothills or along the river. Give this a try when you visit.

**Hiking:** Our new hiking trail map and the continued awareness and improvement of our “**Respect the Mountain**” campaign has brought new appreciation to hiking at Verlorenkloof. And we regularly meet the **trail runners** when we walk the new cycle trail.

**Cycling:** For the very first time, over the weekend of 27–29 May 2016, Verlorenkloof will, together with some cycling friends and neighbours, host the long dreamed about **Croc2Croc MTB Challenge**. 200 riders in 2 person teams ride over a 3 day period through the Highlands, Lowveld and Mountains of this epic multi-day stage event. **Distance:** ~222km (max), **Elevation Gain:** 2500 – 4500m, **Altitude:** Min. 1140m / Max. 1940m. The best part is that the cyclists, spouses partners and supporters will be hosted on a catered basis in the Crofts. **Please join us and tell all your cycling friends!**

Visit <http://www.verlorenkloof.co.za/activities/croc2croc-mtb.html> for more information.

**Ownership at Verlorenkloof:** Look out for our letter setting out the excellent value to be had in weeks and slots on sale from previous owners. Research in the USA (which often wonderfully states and then proves the obvious) concluded that owners of Timeshare actually do take more holidays and are less stressed as a result, than other folk. So, take some more..

### **In conclusion...**

As a management team and staff at Verlorenkloof our work revolves around your ownership and enjoyment of the estate and all it has to offer. We feel continually enriched by the wonderful people who visit Verlorenkloof and the strong sense of custodianship that owners express over the estate.

Verlorenkloof has over the 17 years of its existence made a huge positive contribution to the lives and livelihoods of the surrounding community. We thank you for this and for your valued support over the past year. Also accept our best wishes for a happy and blessed festive season wherever you may be.

Warm regards, till we see each other again

Eric, Heidi and the Verlorenkloof team

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