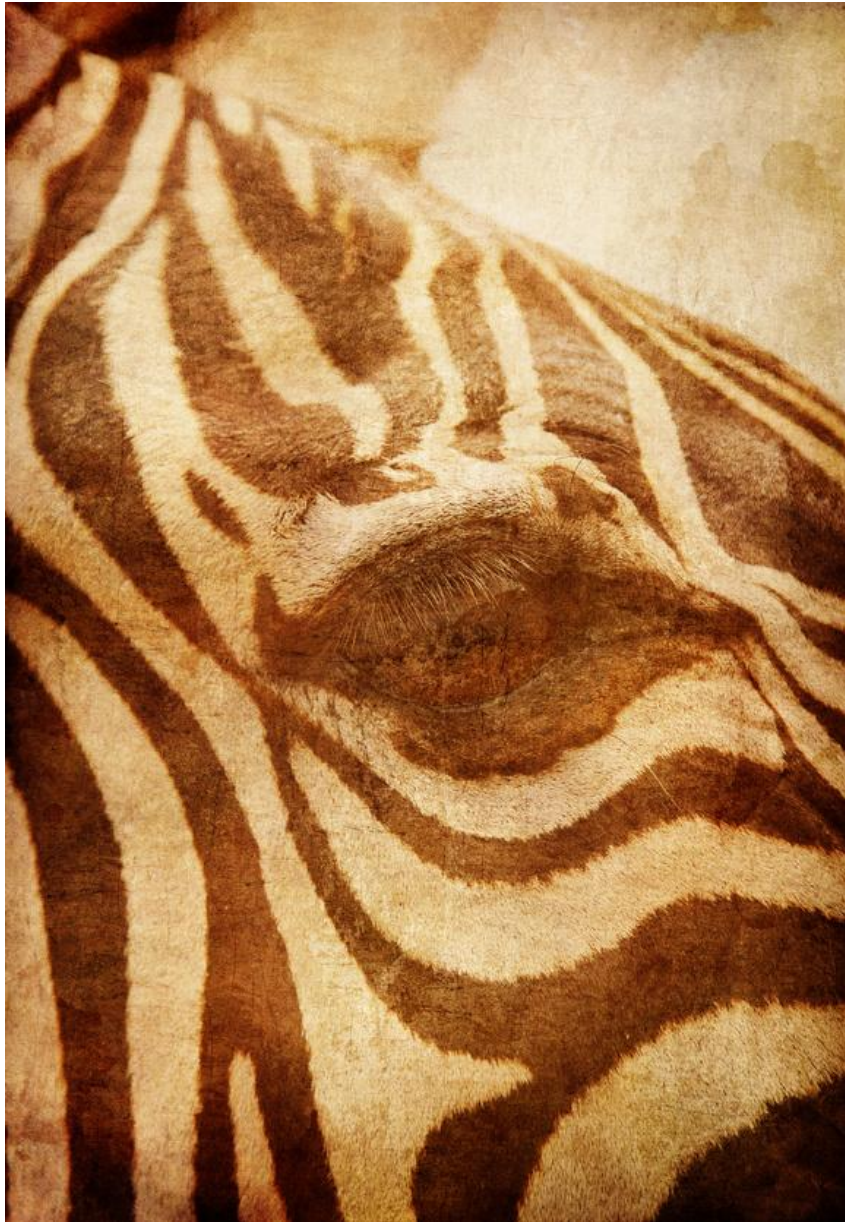


Robert Crick

South Africa 2014



Johannesburg / Pretoria

0 kms

Day 1

By today we should all be ready to assemble in Pretoria for the first roll call (with the exception of the Man from Magadan). Our B&B is located in the south of the city, handy to the MotoBerlin depot.

Day 2

With a private bus and driver, we'll set off to see the sights of Pretoria – including Freedom Park, Voortrekker Monument, Union Buildings, and the famous jacaranda-lined streets (which will be ablaze with purple flowers, allegedly). But our first stop will be at MotoBerlin to do some advance paperwork for the motorbike and car rentals. At some stage we'll meet up with our friends and fellow travellers Andre & Thelma and the Man from Magadan.

A warm welcome awaits at Johannesburg Airport



Pretoria to Magoebaskloof 345 kms

As soon as you're all astride those motorcycles, it'll be a case of 'Get your motor runnin' and head out on the highway'. For us that's National Highway One heading north into Limpopo Province. Most of today's ride will probably be the least picturesque of the whole trip, but near the end of the day we'll be rewarded by curvy mountain roads with lovely views of the hills below. A small thing of note is that we will pass through Polokwane (Pietersburg) where Harry 'Breaker' Morant was based during the Anglo-Boer War. Tonight's hotel is in a beautiful garden setting, on the edge of an indigenous forest, with views over the valley.

Magoebaskloof area



Magoebaskloof to Baobab Ridge 195 kms

Descending the mountain, via Magoebaskloof Pass, we travel through an area of tropical fruit orchards and tea plantations. Our destination is a private lodge within the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve. As a part of the Greater Kruger National Park, the Klaserie has no fences dividing it from the main park, and our lodge offers the Kruger experience in open Land Rovers, but with the bonus of flexible timing. Baobab Ridge Lodge sleeps a maximum of 16 guests, so we'll have the place to ourselves. The bikes will be parked in a safe area *before* we enter the reserve, as part of our general plan to avoid being eaten by lions.

Baobab Ridge Lodge



Baobab Ridge rest day

To paraphrase the brochure ...

The best times for wildlife viewing are the early morning, late afternoons or evenings. This is when the hunters such as wild dog, lion and leopard are most active. It is suggested that guests have a quick coffee with cereal or rusks then start a game drive at around 6.30 am, returning to camp three hours later for breakfast. From 11.00 to 4.00 o'clock it is usually very hot so this is a great time to find a shady place and read a book, cool off in the pool, have a siesta (or a chat with the Fet Borsted). Game drives start again at around 4.00, going through to 7.00 pm, and include a sundowner in the veld.*

For those who speak South African, dinner tonight will be a braai in the boma.

**This bit wasn't actually in the brochure.*

Kudu



Baobab Ridge to Long Tom Pass 295 kms

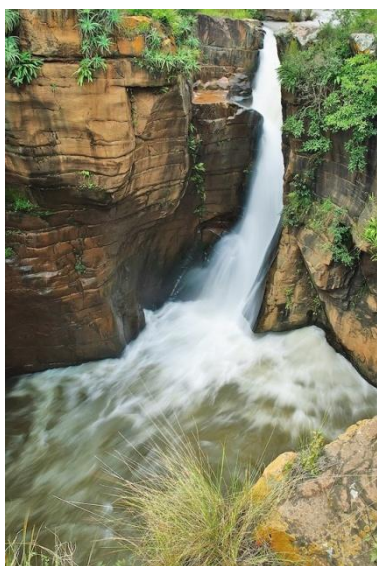
On the program today is a very scenic ride along the top of the Drakensberg escarpment, taking in the spectacular Panorama Route. The Blyde River Canyon is the largest 'green canyon' in the world, being covered with subtropical foliage, and third in size to the Grand Canyon and Fish River Canyon. From the God's Window viewpoint you can see (on a clear day .. fingers crossed) all the way to Kruger Park and Mozambique. Our lodge tonight is beautifully situated on the Long Tom Pass with views across the escarpment and into the lowveld.

Blyde River Canyon



Panorama Route Touring 195 kms

On our second day here, we'll need to get busy to cover several must-see waterfalls and some more of those must-ride mountain passes.



Long Tom Pass to Mlilwane Sanctuary, Swaziland 260 kms

Today we head to the amusingly-named Hhohho district in the Kingdom of Swaziland. Our accommodation is inside the Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary, Swaziland's pioneer conservation area, located in the Ezulwini Valley (Valley of Heavens). We have been given special permission to ride inside the Sanctuary to our lodge, on condition that there is no yahooing. Watch out at the water crossings for any prehistoric reptilian creatures.

Reilly's Rock Lodge, Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary



Mlilwane Sanctuary to Rorke's Drift 330 kms

After 130 kms this morning, we complete our north-south traverse of Swaziland and head for Kwa-Zulu Natal Province in SA. This region has known many battles, the earliest of which occurred during the rise of Shaka and the formation of the Zulu nation. En route to Rorke's Drift we will visit the Blood River memorial, erected on the site of the 1838 Voortrekker victory over the Zulu. Our destination tonight is a hotel just 100 metres from the Rorke's Drift (ford) across the Buffalo River where in 1879 the British Army invaded Zululand, provoking the conflict that followed.

Battle of Rorke's Drift

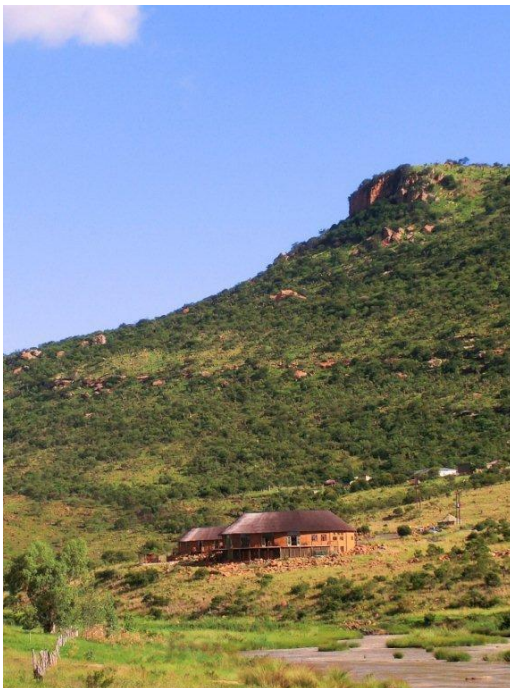


Rorke's Drift to Nottingham Road 210 kms

This morning we visit two significant battle sites of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. The first is Isandlwana, where the British general, Lord Chelmsford, suffered the greatest defeat meted out by an indigenous force in the history of the British Empire. Of the 1800 soldiers, only 55 survived. The Zulu also suffered terrible losses of over 2000 men (not surprising as they were armed with antiquated percussion rifles, assegais and cowhide shields and were facing carbines and field pieces). The second site is the Rorke's Drift battlefield where, only hours later, a garrison of 139 British soldiers famously withstood an assault mounted by a Zulu impi of around 4000.

After lunch at the hotel we head for our accommodation in the town of Nottingham Road, in an area known as the Midlands Meander.

Rorke's Drift Hotel



Zulu memorial, Rorke's Drift



Voortrekker memorial, Blood River



Nottingham Road to Sani Pass 190 kms

We'll make time to visit the Nelson Mandela capture site and museum, as well as the Howick Falls, on our way to Underberg and the Sani Pass. The road from Underberg to Sani is mostly good quality gravel, but the last nine kilometres are challenging. Arrangements have been made for the pillion passengers (and those not taking their bikes up) to travel by 4x4 vehicle from the SA border post. The reward for this hard ride will be an overnight stay in Lesotho at the highest pub in Africa. If the day is clear, we'll be treated to some eye-popping views.

Sani Pass



Sani Pass to Golden Gate Highlands 430 kms

A longer ride today - starting with the slowish descent of Sani Pass and then easy travelling to Golden Gate Highlands National Park via Midlands Meander and Van Reenan's Pass, with more views of the Drakensberg Mountain Range. More blood and guts as we pass close to Spioenkop battlefield, the site of one of the bloodiest battles of the Anglo-Boer War. Gandhi's stretcher bearer unit performed with distinction at this battle and the Boer commander, Louis Botha, went on to become the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa after the war. Our accommodation is in the heart of the national park and affords good mountain views.

Golden Gate Highlands National Park



Golden Gate to Malealea, Lesotho 290 kms

Once through the last of Golden Gate, we are treated to yet another lovely road, now with views of the Maluti Mountains. We re-enter the mountain kingdom of Lesotho, this time via Caledonspoort (near Fouriesburg). Lesotho has a few major bitumen roads, but much of the interior is only accessible to 4x4s and adventure motorcycles (but we're not going in there). Our ride takes us along the north-western border through the capital, Maseru, to Malealea. Malealea Lodge is a former trading post that is run these days as a community-based tourism enterprise. The sign at the top of the pass that leads to the village says 'Wayfarer, pause and look upon a gateway of paradise'. A suitable pause has been scheduled in our itinerary.

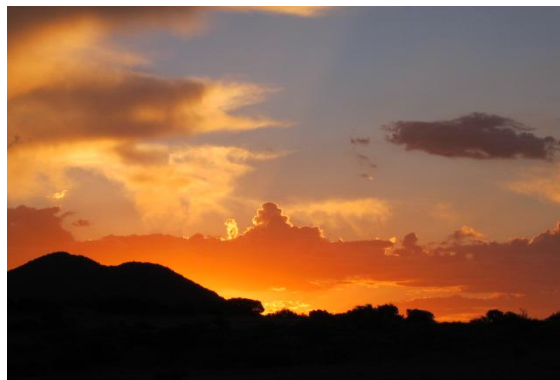
Malealea area, Lesotho



Malealea to Kareedal Farm 290 kms

Heading down the western boundary of Lesotho, we re-enter SA via the Tele Bridge border post. The easy riding through the Karoo offers long straight roads with distant views of mountains and kopjes. Tonight we stay on a game farm with the added bonus of going by 4x4 to a mountain-top hunters' hut to enjoy some sundowners while watching the sky come alive at sunset. This will be followed by a braai in the boma at the main farmhouse at the foot of the mountain. Some lucky riders will have the opportunity to spend the night in the hunters' hut (sleeps six) and enjoy the sunrise before joining the rest of the group for breakfast down at the farmhouse.

To/at the mountain hut, Kareedal Farm



Kareedal Lodge to Graaff-Reinet + rest day 405 kms

More travelling through the Karoo. We'll do a scenic side-trip to Nieu Bethesda, a small isolated village that hosts the 'Owl House', the unusual home and studio of the late artist Helen Martins. Today's final destination, Graaff-Reinet, was established in 1786 and is the fourth oldest European town in the country (expect more jacaranda-lined streets). The Camdeboo National Park is close by and we will have plenty of time (today or tomorrow) to ride to the Valley of Desolation and see the spectacular views of rock formations set against the backdrop of the Great Karoo.

The King (and lackey) at the Valley of Desolation



Graaff-Reinet to Storms River Mouth 410 kms

By midday the Great Karoo will be behind us and we start heading west along the coast. A visit to the surfing Mecca of Jeffrey's Bay will include time for a leisurely seafood lunch. Our accommodation tonight is in a national park and set within spitting distance of the Indian Ocean. A boat trip to explore the Storms River gorge is on the agenda for late this afternoon or first thing tomorrow.

Storms River Mouth



Storms River Mouth to Robinson Pass 245 kms

Back on the bikes again, we head off to explore the Garden Route. The Garden Route is South Africa's most famous stretch of lush coastline - a wonderful combination of beaches, mountains and forests. Storms River is the start of this region, consisting of ten nature reserves that protect the diverse ecosystems of the area. We will ride the entire length of it, including the Natures Valley loop, dropping into coastal holiday towns along the way such as Plettenberg Bay and Knysna. Just before Mossel Bay we turn inland again to head for our accommodation at the foot of Robinson Pass.

Nature's Valley on the Garden Route



Robinson Pass to Oudtshoorn 245 kms

Our first treat of the day is to ride Robinson Pass through the Outeniqua Mountains. We then do a loop starting at Oudtshoorn, continuing up and over the Swartberg Pass, stop for lunch at Prince Albert (a delightful Karoo dorpie), ride through Meiringspoort, and pass through Oudtshoorn again to finally arrive at our accommodation of Rooderandt Lodge in the picturesque Schoemanshoek Valley. At some point we will need to shop for supplies for a delicious potjie/braai that we plan to conjure up in the evening.

Swartberg Pass



Oudtshoorn to Montagu 330 kms

Most of today's ride to Montagu will be on the very scenic Route 62 through the Klein (Little) Karoo. Depending on the weather, we hope to take a side-trip to Seweweekspoort (34 kms round trip on good gravel). Seweweekspoort is considered by many to be the most spectacular pass in South Africa. Further along the way we'll stop for refreshment at Ronnie's Sex Shop. We deviate from Route 62 after Barrydale to take in the magnificent Tradouw Pass. Then we push on through to Cogmanskloof and the lovely town of Montagu, the centre of a large wine growing area. The vines should be in full leaf for our benefit.

In the backyard at Montagu Vines



Montagu to Cape Town 345 kms

We start the day with a repeat of Cogmanskloof and then head for DuToitskloof Pass. Here we are afforded a great view of the Paarl Valley, famous for producing most of South Africa's premium wines. We descend into the valley and then head up to the top of Bainskloof Pass for a lunch stop. Returning to the valley, we turn west for the Atlantic Coast. The ride down the west coast of South Africa will treat us to a great view of Cape Town's iconic Table Mountain. Late afternoon gets us to Villa St James where a sundowner or two will be called for to mark the end of the 5000 kilometre ride.

View from Bloubergstrand



Cape Town Environs

Suggested riding / things to do:

- Cape Point
- Cape winelands: Stellenbosch and Franschhoek
- Chapman's Peak Drive
- Gordons Bay Road
- Silvermine Nature Reserve
- Groot Constantia Wine Estate
- Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden
- Nearby Kalk Bay fishing village (15 min. walk)
- Robben Island
- Penguin colony at Boulders Beach
- Table Mountain Cable Car
- District Six Museum
- Shark cage diving at Gansbaai
- Victoria & Alfred Waterfront
- Company's Gardens
- Castle of Good Hope