

If the Rolling Stones could go on tour when they had a combined age of 309 then we (a mere 303 years) certainly could. We'd got ourselves a 'roadie' and as long as it didn't involve singing – Jeannie said Baz was a hopeless singer – then our tour of South Africa was on. Ok getting there was a bit of a pain – especially for J and B whose flight was cancelled requiring them to cart their not inconsiderable luggage half way across Paris and then to find their seat reservations had been cancelled as well – but we got to Port Elizabeth in the end to be met by the lovely Olaf (who I'm still convinced was blond when we met him on Zoom!)

Day 1: We settled into the Conifers Guest House which was beautiful and more like staying with friends. Had a huge bed and sitting area and opened up onto the terrace where we had a drink before we went out exploring PE (into the acronyms already!). PE was founded by British settlers in 1820 and sits on the shores of the Indian Ocean in Algoa Bay. It's reputed to be the bottlenose dolphin capital of the world, although we didn't see any. This is where our good friend Keith went to school, but we couldn't find a blue plaque anywhere. So, we walked along the beach, looked out to sea, enjoyed some welcome sunshine and then somehow got dragged into a bar for a glass of chilled white wine. This turned into two bottles, but after a long and arduous journey we really felt we deserved it. Poor Olaf – you could see him thinking, the budget isn't going to go very far if they drink like this! Moved on to the restaurant, had a lovely meal and fell into bed early.

Day 2: What a fabulous day!

Had a delicious breakfast at the Guest House served in the sunshine on the terrace by the delightful receptionist whose name I can't remember. She, like everyone we were to meet, was so incredibly friendly you felt really welcome. After breakfast we packed ourselves into Olaf's van along with the luggage and all the food he was going to cook for us and set off for Addo Elephant Park...but not before we had called at Sanccob a charity which has been saving seabirds for nearly 60 years.

Sanccob's mission statement is to try to reverse the decline of the seabird population – particularly the ever-diminishing population of African penguins - by rescuing and rehabilitating injured, abandoned and oiled seabirds and ultimately releasing them back into the wild. If that can't be done, then the birds are looked after at the Port Elizabeth centre or its sister centre in Cape Town.

Sampson took us round and spoke with huge enthusiasm about the work at the centre, he was so passionate he talked for a good half hour before we had our tour. Olaf told us he had once volunteered to clean striken seabirds which had fallen victim to an oil slick in the bay. He said it was an awful experience both for him and the birds!

The facilities are modest and paid for by much-needed sponsorship and charitable donations. There are a few staff and a lot of volunteers who care for the recovering birds and patch up the injured ones. Most of them were young people who come from all over the world, many on a gap year, and spend hours and hours looking after the sick inmates. It was lovely to see how dedicated and gentle they were. Of course, when the opportunity came to adopt a penguin at the end of the tour it was a no brainer. J and B adopted Rocky II and we adopted Jacob. The penguins come complete with an adoption certificate and a letter of introduction and we came away happy to have helped the charity in a small way. The next unexpected treat was a trip up the Sundays River in a boat captained by Dave Shires-lookalike Les and his sidekick Andre. Les's company 'Addo Cruises & Sand Sledding' is

the oldest river cruise company on the beautiful Sundays estuary - and despite the nightmare of Covid, has managed not just to stay afloat but to thrive.

Les has a lifetime's experience of the river - first he took us to see the nests of the White-fronted Bee-eaters' built deep into the sand banks. En route we saw the Red Bishop Finch, Water Thicknee, Golden Oriel, Hardida, Black Winged Stilt, Kingfisher and Wimbero.

Then we sailed to the magnificent Alexandria Dunefields - an enormous pile of sand covering 142sq kms. These dunes are 140 metres high, 2.5kms wide and are currently on the waiting list for evaluation to be recognised as a Unesco World Heritage Site.

It was a challenge we couldn't ignore – how hard could it be? The answer is 'quite hard'. The problem is that with every step the sand is displaced so it takes absolutely ages. As we trudged to the top we watched a load of kids having a great time sliding down on their sandboards. They offered us a go and indeed, we would have taken up their but for a complete lack of courage and the distinct possibility that we would overshoot the dunes and end up in the river.

The view from the top was breathtaking and worth every step.

When we made it back to the boat Les gave us a lesson in how to find fresh water near a sand dune in case we ever needed to. It seems the dunes act as a giant sponge so you simply look for grass (which is a good indicator of moisture) and dig a deep hole and fresh water will miraculously appear, and it's perfectly safe to drink...well who'd have known?

On the way back to base we picked up Maggie, Les's lovely wife waiting on a jetty. She was charming and clearly very good at marketing – there is now a picture of our jolly tour grinning and posing by their company sign.

And so on to Addo Elephant National Park. Addo is South Africa's third largest national park, home not only to the Big Five (rhino, leopard, elephant, lion and African buffalo (cited because they are the most difficult to kill) but also the Big Seven because the Southern Right Whale and Great White Shark come into the Addo marine environment.

Addo's lions have had a bit of a chequered history – the last original lion was hunted in 1879 and there were no lions in the region for more than a century. Addo reintroduced them into the area in 2003 and now the park is home to 17 beasts with others in private game reserves in the area. It seems however that they make very few public appearances - our game drive leader Fish said he hadn't seen a lion on the reserve for 18 months. Why are there so few? Because lions kill buffalo and buffalo are very valuable, so the majority were moved out.

In contrast Addo has around 400 buffalo and every June they hold a massive auction with buyers coming from all over Africa. Addo beasts are very much in demand with even South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (who runs a buffalo herd on the side) getting in on the act - he paid 22m Rand for a single female at one auction!

We'd just arrived at the Addo bungalows where we were staying for three nights when the threatened outage occurred (although on this occasion it was the supply at Addo and not the fault of the power companies) The lights went out and we really had no choice but to open the wine, put on our head torches and have a laugh while Olaf in his Super Hero cape went into the garden and cooked a fantastic meal on the braai with only his headtorch for light! We were very impressed – the food was amazing and very welcome.... and that wasn't the alcohol talking.

Day 3: The power was still not on so we had breakfast in the restaurant and then walked to the Addo exhibition on site which showed how the reserve was set up, the development of

the land and the introduction of the animals. It also outlined exciting plans to more than double the acreage over the next few years. It was humbling to see the dedication to conservation and the hard work of all the people – many of them volunteers - who work at the park.

Later we went on a game drive with Olaf where we watched families of elephants at the watering hole. A big bull elephant came right up to our vehicle, but seemed completely unfazed by our presence. That said we were very careful not to spook him!

We saw zebras and warthogs, nyala and a black-backed jackal all in their natural surroundings – it was wonderful. Later we drove to the top of the ridge where we could see where the new part of the reserve would be established.

Sitting looking at the stunning scenery from the ridge we learned some interesting facts; did you know that the lions in Kruger National Park have worked out a more successful (and I have to say devious) way to hunt giraffes. It seems they drive the giraffes onto tarmac surfaces in the reserve where they skid all over the place, fall down and make them easy prey for the lions!

Or that academics at Oxford University had worked with Fudan Uni in China to replicate rhino horn, virtually indistinguishable from the real thing. The idea was to flood the market and make the real horns unprofitable to hunters and smugglers and so protect a fast-reducing number of rhinos. Not sure if it's had the desired effect!

As the sun went down we went to the hide to see some beautiful birds – including the African Harrier Hawk, a long-tailed widow bird and weaver birds with their incredible ball nests expertly attached to reeds.

Then it was back to the restaurant where Six Nations Rugby was on. Clive had said (half-heartedly) that it really didn't matter if he didn't see the match, but Olaf in Super Hero mode again, organised a table near the screen that allowed him to watch England beat Wales 16-14. Bliss – what more could he wish for South Africa AND the Six Nations!!!

Day 4: Did we fancy walking with giraffes? That was the question Olaf put to us at breakfast. Is the Pope a Catholic we asked ourselves...yea we really DID fancy walking with giraffes! We set off to a private reserve with Sean who talked about how the park was established and how we should act so as not to worry the animals.

Fact check: the name Giraffe means 'fast walker' in Arabic; they can cover more than 50km an hour and can run at 35mph over short distances (faster than some horses and all humans) or cruise at 10mph over longer distances.

As well as being a giraffe expert, Sean was an exponent of the art of giraffe poo-spitting! He produced a tiny ball of the stuff (which looked like a large blueberry) popped it in his mouth and spat it as far as he could! Well, you only come this way once...we all followed suit although we were none of us very good at it! We needed practice – but then when would we be asked to do it again?

The whole visit was a magical experience – such a privilege to get up so close to these beautiful animals, so elegant and unhurried and something which will stay with us.

Then lunch at a roadside café and back to Addo where we did a short board walk to look at different shrubs and plants on the reserve. At 5.30 we were on the sunset game drive with Fish, a shiny happy ranger who clearly loved his job. It was a rich drive with lots of different animals - elephants, zebras kudu, impala, nyala et al. When we stopped for refreshments at a watering hole we were each given a large brown paper bag filled with goodies – mostly

different versions of biltong which no-one seemed to want. I came back with enormous quantities of the stuff especially for South African son-in-law Norman.

Back at the bungalow Olaf had been busy cooking supper in a Poike Pot – a bit like a witches cauldron – which was absolutely delicious with moreish tender lamb and exotic spices. This chap knows how to cook! He told us he'd learned as a child because his mum wasn't very good at it. Clearly mum had other priorities and loved adventure – on her 80th birthday Olaf took her camping and she climbed up and slept on top of the vehicle...Respect!

We all retired early ready for a 5.30am start next morning.

Day 5: Up at 5 for the sunrise drive and it was surprisingly cold. It was Fish again and we saw much of the same in terms of animals until....

We were parked at the watering hole waiting for the elephants to wake up and come and drink when all of a sudden Fish shoved the truck into gear and shot across the country at goodness knows how many miles an hour. He screeched to a halt and pointed.... and there, casually trotting through the bushes about a hundred yards away was a rare black rhino. Baz was beside himself with excitement – such a rare sighting and we were there! It really was the cherry on the cake of the whole Addo experience.

Olaf had cooked breakfast for us when we got back then we packed up and headed off for the three-hour drive to Plettenberg stopping at Storms River for lunch – or rather Storms River Village where we experienced Marilyn's 60s Diner.

What a crazy place – all fuchsia pink and turquoise with wall-to-wall pictures of Elvis and Marilyn, juke boxes, pinball machines even vintage restored Chevrolets and Cadillacs, everything you could imagine in an American diner.

A great trip down memory lane for us oldies – we could sing along to all the songs and relate to an awful lot of stuff on show. Is it any wonder that when we saw the dressing up box full of wigs and an Elvis costume we simply couldn't resist? The picture of Baz in full Elvis appeared on Facebook and Darren immediately denied any relationship with his father! Onward to the spectacular Storms River where we trekked through the Tsitskamma forest, down the steep path and across two access bridges to get to the famous suspension bridge. This is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the National Park. It spans 77 metres and hangs just seven metres above the churning waters of the river where it meets the Indian Ocean. It was built in 1969 but has since been rebuilt by San Parks to make sure it is safe and stable.

The views were stunning and to stand on the bridge watching the many different birds flying round was wonderful.

En route to the hotel we stopped at the famous Bloukrans Bridge which marks the border between the Eastern and Western Cape – but that's not why it's famous. This is the world's highest bungy jumping bridge, 216 metres above sea level and number one on many a thrill seekers bucket list. Sorry but not ours – thank goodness it was closed or we could see Olaf offering us another hand-picked experience, although rumour has it that Prince Harry has done it...

Arrived at the accommodation which was lovely, a stylish apartment room with sitting area and bedroom and terrace with easy access to the beach. We ate well and slept well.

Day 6: Olaf is the sporty sort and likes to get up early to go running and then swim in the ocean – did we fancy joining him? Don't think it had actually crossed our radar to be that physical (and certainly running at our ages was probably not a good idea if we wanted to

keep hips and knees in tact) but why not join him for a dip in the Indian Ocean? Which is how we came to be stripped to our cossies at 8 in the morning daring each other to leap into the foam. And yes it was freezing, but once you'd got used to the water it was exhilarating. Jeannie and I couldn't stop giggling, whether that was due to the cold or out of embarrassment we're not sure. But what a fabulous way to start the day.

Dried off, hearty breakfast and back into the van to drive to the Robberg Peninsula a short distance away for a trek on the coastal path. The scenery is breathtaking and we felt so lucky to be sharing it with other walkers – although the two small boys moaning to their mum about having to walk were less enthusiastic about the experience.

Then came another 'do you fancy?' suggestion...this time Knysna Elephant Rescue where we could feed the elephants by hand! DID WE?

This amazing park set up 30 years ago was the first facility in South Africa to house and care for orphaned African elephants. Since then it has looked after and raised more than more than 60 elephants. These include relocated animals, orphaned calves, and elephants rescued from culls. Some have become part of the resident herd while others have moved to other reserves and facilities in the Cape, depending on their personalities, bonds with other animals and welfare needs.

The USP of this park is to allow visitors to get up close to the elephants – but on the elephants' terms. Hence there are no fences to bar a close encounter and the elephants are encouraged to just be themselves. We were each given a small bucket of vegetables and shown how to feed the animals with an outstretched flat hand. It all seemed so natural as you stood there and the trunks came waving towards you. This was clearly a ritual they knew well for when the bucket was empty you were of no further interest to them and they just wandered off to carry on snatching at the grass. One thing that was particularly fascinating was watching how the elephants grabbed the grass with their trunks and steadied it with a foot before tearing it off. Would we have been given this experience on a regular tour? Maybe not which is what made it so special.

On the way to the hotel we stopped to look at the Kaaimans river railway bridge across the mouth of the river linking George and Knysna and running all along the coast weaving its way to Cape Town.

The idea of the Bridge was first hatched in 1922; building started two years later and with workers starting at each end it was finished in 1928.

The Bridge is 210m long and 36m high and became a must-see attraction. Sadly in 2016 heavy floods caused so much damage to the railway that it closed and despite hopes that it could be reopened in 2020 after repair work, it now seems unlikely it will ever happen. Olaf told us that one of the stumbling blocks was the fact that a hermit had decided to live in a cave by the tracks and had become something of a tourist attraction himself by decorating his home with hundreds of shells. Did we fancy walking along the track to see him? Olaf looked at us and hastily withdrew the offer!

Arrived at hotel which was lovely and ate at Scirocco Restaurant in Knysna where I had the most delicious paella.

Day 7: Another magical day – and it was Valentine's Day, cue Olaf to give Jeannie and me a red chocolate heart each! What a lovely gesture.

After a lovely breakfast we drove to Knysna marina to catch the boat for a sea safari. After safely negotiating the infamous Knysna Heads where the lagoon meets the sea we sailed along the rugged, beautiful coastline passing the coves and caves and into the ocean. We

were in the natural habitat of dolphins, seals, penguins and loads of different sea birds and it was such a privilege to be there. But the best was yet to come....

A pod of dolphins – up to 100 according to the girl ‘spotter’ at the back of the boat – were frolicking (do dolphins frolick?) alongside the ship. It was a spectacular sight as they leapt and swam close by and not for the first time Jeannie and I were in tears at the magnificence of it all! On the shore you could see dozens of folk watching them, but we were right in the middle of the action – how lucky were we? The ‘spotter’ said she also saw a bottle-nosed whale, but sadly we didn’t!

Off the boat and it was time to try Knysna’s world famous oysters – the deal was two natural and two cultivated. Glad I tried them, but they didn’t really taste of anything... bit Emporer’s New Clothes I thought?

Lunch was delicious hake with a cream sauce pesto and tomato. Olaf told us that we were eating on our own that evening because he had hooked up with an old friend who he had just found out was in Knysna. Jeannie and I got very excited that he’d got a date – he’s such a lovely guy - but on this occasion we didn’t feel the need to cry!

Had a lovely romantic Valentines’ evening at the very English sounding Brenton-on-Sea Hotel which overlooked the bay where we had seen the dolphins earlier. It was just magic, delicious food, good wine and company of course – but we couldn’t help wondering how Olaf was getting on!

Got a taxi back.

Day 8:

And the excitement never stops!

We set off on a two and a half hour drive to Warmwaterberg with two stops – the first at the Cango Caves in the foothills of the Swartberg Range near Oudtshoorn. Nothing could have prepared us for these caves, one of the world’s great natural wonders and South Africa’s oldest tourist attraction. To say they were spectacular was a vast understatement – they were awe-inspiring.

According to legend the cave was first discovered in 1780 by a simple farmer holding a very small lamp who could have had no idea of the treasure he’d uncovered. Klein Karoo is a 4500 million year old cave full of an astounding collection of stalactites and stalagmites in a variety of colours – like a mighty underground cathedral.

The first tour was organised in 1891 and since then thousands of people have visited to admire the beauty and enjoy the natural acoustics. With so many visitors it was vital to protect the cave, so it is now the subject of environmental legislation.

While we were there a visitor was invited to test the acoustics by singing. Her voice was incredible and all the more haunting in the dim light of the cave....and yes it did move us to tears!

On our way to the surface we met a guide who told us of the most unfortunate incident he’s witnessed in his career. It involved a large lady who insisted on going on the adventure tour on offer. This meant squeezing through various small underground passages – and of course she got stuck...in the chimney! She couldn’t move forward or back and had blocked the way for anyone else. It took eleven hours to get her free during which time the rest of the party was stuck down there.

Lunch was at the Surval Boutique Olive Estate where we did some olive tasting and bought olive jam...isn’t that tapenade?

The afternoon proved even more interesting. We pulled up at a white farm building emblazoned Ronnie's Sex Shop! Apparently some years ago Ronnie had decided to set up a regular farm shop. He left a couple of mates in charge while he was away on business and they got bored so, as a joke added Sex to Ronnie's Shop – and a legend was born! The inside walls are covered in graffiti and above the bar dangle a huge selection of signed bras and pants and socks souvenirs from all over the world. There are banners from different clubs – several South African Round Tables – and good luck messages everywhere. And sitting on a bar stool taking it all in sits Ronnie, looking like an ageing rock star.

He's really cashed in on the notoriety and even sells Ronnies Sex Shop T shirts...and yes we did buy one, although we need to choose the time and place to wear it!

Our destination, Warmwaterberg Spa was a total contrast – not your actual spa as in Champneys, but natural hot springs full of minerals and goodness. The pools themselves are green one hot and one cool – we didn't try the cool one! It was a very relaxing experience and very friendly talking to the dozen or so other submerged people.

We stayed in Studio Bath Houses – a modern day spin on historic bath houses – plain but comfortable. You went up a few steps from the living area to the bed area which also contained a giant-sized bath. It looked inviting but the challenge was getting in and out so we stuck to the spa pool outside.

Ablutions were interesting - outside the bedroom in two corrugated iron silo type buildings one with a loo and the other with a washbasin and shower. Basic but clean and another experience although having abluted in much simpler facilities in Nepal, it was almost luxury. Olaf had planned to do a brai again but we decided it was probably easier to get a take away which we did – but it wasn't a patch off his cooking!

I think today was the day Clive realised he had left a T K Maxx carrier bag full of dirty washing at the hotel in Knysna. Super hero Olaf managed to track it down and arrange to have it delivered to Muizenberg at the end of the trip – this guy really does go above and beyond.

Day 9:

We set off early because we had a big drive ahead of us. Breakfast at The Blue Cow in Barrydale where we met Hanette the lady who owned the eaterie, who launched into her life story! Widowed ten years ago, she decided to sell most of the farm and set up the café which was hugely successful. On top of that she was working with Japanese farmers to develop leek and carrot seeds which were 90 per cent disease resistant – an interesting woman.

On the way to Camps Bay we stopped off for a spot of wine tasting, nice as it was, we didn't really like anything they had to offer.

We arrived at the accommodation in Camps Bay and it was just the icing on the cake – and we were there for two nights! The most beautiful apartment with three large bedrooms, en suite bathrooms, a spacious kitchen, diner, terrace overlooking the sea....just Wow!!!

This is Olaf's home city so he was heading home while we went to the Codfather for supper. A highly-popular fish restaurant up the road it was chaotic, but fun. Customers must huddle round the fish counter, choose the fish they want and wait for it to be brought to the table when it was cooked. The place was crammed, we were lucky that Olaf had thought ahead and booked, but everyone was so friendly and it was a good laugh.

As we walked back to the apartment we were struck by the number of women nursing babies on the pavements outside the restaurants...we couldn't just walk by.

Day 10:

Today was market day and Olaf picked us up and took us to the famous Old Biscuit Mill market in the heart of Woodstock. Unlike UK markets which are increasingly run down and tatty, the Biscuit Mill was a delightful mixture of food and artisan crafts. It brought together talented people eager to share their passions with visitors from all over the world. It was great fun walking round checking out the different dishes on offer – from fabulous street food to delicious desserts - and just people watching. Clive met a lady who regularly travels from Durban and comes to Cape Town for some culture! Bit touristy maybe, but a great experience.

Then we were in for a complete change of mood when we visited the District Six Museum in the heart of the city. As children of the sixties of course we were aware of apartheid, but at arm's length. This museum really brought home to us just what apartheid really meant. District Six – established in Cape Town in 1867 – was a living example of a diverse community. People who lived there included freed slaves, merchants, artisans, labourers and immigrants – District Six embraced language, religion, economic class and showed how people could live and work together without fear.

In February 1966 under the apartheid regime it was declared a white area and life in this vibrant community was over. More than 60,000 people were shipped out to barren areas on the edge of the city and their homes and businesses were bulldozed.

When apartheid ended it was important that no-one should forget District Six and the District Six Museum Foundation was born. An exhibition charting the history of the district was opened at a local Methodist Church. Painstakingly put together, it carefully documents the real-life experiences of some of the people who were forcibly removed, through photographs, poetry and voices. It's hard to witness and could have been full of resentment, but this museum doesn't wallow in the unfairness of it all!

We met a delightful man called Clive who was happy to talk about how at the age of 14 he and his family were made to move from their home and taken to settle in a virtual no man's land. He was visiting the museum to show to the students who lodge with him and his wife, the history of District Six – and we listened in. He was so forgiving and just wanted to move on with his life – no malice, no hatred for white people, just forgiveness. Very humbling.

From there Olaf took us to the amazing Zeitz MOCAA - South Africa's biggest art museum, which was created from an historic grain silo – by a Brit! The silo has been a landmark on the city's waterfront for more than 100 years – now it has been transformed into the most beautiful and elegant art space by architect/designer Thomas Heatherwick. By carving out huge sections of the tubular interior he created 80 different spaces to house the largest collection of African art in the world...all without sacrificing the integrity of the building. It was awe-inspiring, although I must confess I didn't understand very much of the art on display.

Finished the day at Bovine & Wine in Camps Bay for supper. What a day and how thankful to live with freedom.

Day 11:

We left Camps Bay and headed for the West Coast National Park, to Langebaan and Die Strandloper. We knew it was lunch, we knew it was popular and we knew you had to book months in advance, but nothing prepared us for the sheer joy of this giant family beach picnic!

A hundred or so people of all ages, all sizes and colours gathered under the fishing net roof to share in this fantastic ten course meal. Everything was cooked over charcoal by the team who even managed to dance and sing as they turned the fish on the brais. We were given a mussel shell to eat with and had everything from African black mussels and snoek to harders, cape bream, smoked angel fish and crayfish. There was even a team of ladies taking the bones out of the fish! The meal finished with koeksister, a sort of long thin sweet doughnut. And we had entertainment with a guy singing and playing the guitar – although I think he thought we were Irish because he struck up a rousing chorus of ‘No Nay Never!’ It was wonderful to see the different generations of families from small babies to grannies all enjoying themselves. It took me back to the years pre-mobile phones when families in the UK would have done the same. And sorry Debbie (she was the maitre ‘d) I did cry, not because I was sad, but because it was overwhelmingly beautiful!

On the road again, this time to meet Daniel and Katherine on the Kraalbaai Lagoon where we were to spend the night on a houseboat. They had already arrived and were sorting out a snack (yes, a snack in case we were still hungry!) as we were ferried from the shore in small boat. So began our unique experience of ‘living on the water’ as the houseboats are billed. Katherine was already in the lagoon, Clive and I ventured in, but it was very salty and so we didn’t stay submerged for very long. Jeannie and Baz decided to do a bit of fishing – and it was interesting how they got the bait! Daniel hacked some barnacles off the side of the boat and extracted mussels from the rock. Baz hooked them up and cast the rod - the fishing was serene, but sadly not very productive. Good job Daniel had cooked a beautiful piece of beef on the braai...so yes, we were eating again.

As we sat and watched sun go down, listening to the laughter coming from the boat next door and the waves gently lapping on the sides it was bliss. You felt life didn’t get much better than this.

Day 12:

We disembarked after a restful night during which the boat seemed to have turned round 180 degrees! Apparently it’s anchored but able to move – interesting. We were heading for Muizenberg where we were to spend our last two nights, but broke the journey with another wine tasting at Durbanville Hills and this one far more to our taste than before. We were presented with a tray of six different wines and morsels of food - cheese or chocolate depending on choice - which we tucked into with interesting results. Jeannie and I became uncontrollably giggly and at one point wine spilt on the table was mopped up and wrung out back into the glass – it was hilarious, although probably not very ladylike!

Got to Dan’s place at Muizenberg, it was sad that Adrian and Meg were still away and that we wouldn’t see them. Later we got a taxi to Kalk Bay where we had a drink in the Hemmingway Bar at the Cape to Cuba Restaurant. It’s a must-see watering hole for tourists, very pleasant and very Hemmingway!

We moved to the Kalk Bay Kitchen to eat which was interesting...great food, but awful service and seriously awful loos! Such a shame that a place with an obviously good

reputation let itself down, but it didn't spoil the night and because we had a taxi Olaf was able to have a drink.

Day 13:

Our last day before heading home. Jeannie and I, having been very restrained on the shopping front, headed for the Kalk Bay shops to buy a few souvenirs and have a spot of lunch while the lads did lad things. We bought some nice linen shirts, Jeannie bought a beautiful cushion cover and I got a necklace to replace the one I'd carelessly lost. Daniel picked us up and we headed back to get ready for the brai that evening, really quite subdued because our tour was nearly over.

I'd mentioned to Olaf that Norman wanted some special South African chutney and chocolate and asked him where I could get it. No problem - he went and got exactly what was wanted. He also gave us each a map with the different places we had visited marked on it and a special message which we very much appreciated. Above and Beyond!

Oh and the T K Maxx bag full of dirty washing surfaced too...

We had a fascinating evening with Daniel slaving over a hot brai while we were introduced to a very outspoken lady called Andrea., who had lived in South Africa for a number of years, but I think I'm right actually came from the north east? She was very interesting and we had big discussions on a load of topics from the current state of South African politics to the implications of AI. If nothing else it made us grateful we didn't have to cope with their problems.

Day 14:

And sadly the tour was over – we septuagenarians had made it through some of the most exciting and varied days of our lives, experiencing sights and sounds we had never dreamed of with a young man who could not have done a better job.

We'd already packed so took the time to walk along the beach for an hour and have a coffee while mulling over what a wonderful trip it had been. Back at the b and b Baz presented Olaf with a beautiful wooden bowl he had made and inscribed and we gave him a pair of socks with a brai on so remind him of us. He took us to the airport and our South African adventure was at an end – it was wonderful ...here's to the next time!

