

## **Cape Town – Vanwyksdorp – Calitzdorp – Die Hel – Prince Albert – Fraserburg – Sutherland – Ceres – Cape Town (1500km's)**

I would like to share my personal experience on a recent trip that I was invited to go on with Hamman Motorrad. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August we gathered at the Winelands Engen on the N1 near Paarl. This was a much anticipated ride that I was really looking forward to. Why? Because,

1. we were going back to Die Hel, a favourite destination of mine, and
2. I was going to ride with my buddy, Chris Hamman, who has been too busy to take any time off to go ride, and he had invited some of his staff to join him, Rynier, Jandre and Johan, double bonus

Rynier was on a standard R1200GS, Jandre on a new single cylinder 650GS and Johan sweeping (or is that chasing) in a bakkie with trailer. The rest of the group consisted of 10 other bikes ranging from a F800GS and standard R1200GS's and R1200GS Adventure's. Chris was on a R1200GS Adventure, how he does the stuff he does on that Adventure I don't know. Respect comes to mind.

Back to the details of the ride. Here is my photo story.

Ronny briefing us, "ride in staggered formation and keep an eye on your buddy behind you". Jandre would later experience the consequences of not waiting at a turnoff for his buddy behind him. You see, there is this etiquette you have when out riding, you wait at any turnoff for the guy (or girl) behind you to catch up to you, they give the thumbs up and you then ride like hell to catch up to the guy in front of you. This ensures everyone stays with the group, and does not end up in Mosselbay.



We were 13 bikes in the group.



Everyone soaking up the early morning sun. The mornings got progressively colder.



A quick last minute check and we are ready to ride.





Naturally we chose to go over Du Toits Kloof Pass rather than through it, these big bore bikes are just so much fun in the twisties.



The famous Du Toits Kloof tunnel.



Ronny took us on a shortcut via Rawsonville to Robertson where we filled up.



We had 4 days of the best weather.





We had a SAPS escort take us to the best place to eat in Vanwyksdorp, The Barking Frog.



Everyone waiting eagerly for their food. And wait we did, half the group was heading to Moselbay because a certain individual did not wait at the last turnoff.



Hein and I enjoyed a cup of tea while we waited. Hein ordered mint flavoured rooibos, he wanted to test them and see if they could deliver on his order. The next minute some mint was plucked from the garden and popped into his pot, easy peezy, just like that. What a different life it is out in the country. Notice the concerned look on Jandre's face, what was he thinking?





After lunch we headed off to Calitzdorp, we were going to camp at the Calitzdorp Spa. The route we would take was 'oor die berg', a route I last rode last year when me son and I returned from the CABC. We encountered some flooded river crossings, nothing serious, not yet.



The Rooiberg Lodge, the venue of the 2010 CABC. The 2011 CABC is going to be in this same area, the location is a closely guarded secret, if I told you where I would have to kill you.



That is 'oor die berg' in the distance. What a beautiful road, what a beautiful day, what a beautiful country.





Our first casualty. Wilhelm decided to buy a piece of land with a river running through it. What can't be seen in the pic is he discovered oil on his land, lots of it. The fall cracked the cylinder head tappet cover, a weakness of the boxer engine. We loaded his bike up on the trailer and he joined Johan in the bakkie. While loading up the bike I took a ride up the pass to inform the rest of the group now wondering where we were. I almost ended up as a hood ornament on a Landrover.

In Calitzdorp we patched up Wilhelm's bike with steel putty, a must to carry with you. And ducttape. It lasted 2 days until he bought another piece of land. He accompanied Johan in the bakkie for the rest of the trip.



Waiting for the rest of the group and the bakkie to arrive.





A thumbs-up says it all. Bike loaded, time to ride.





Riding into the sunset.



The second casualty of the day. Ralf came in too hot into a corner and braked hard, locked up the front wheel and went down. He injured his wrist and later returned to Cape Town on his own. Hope he is ok, haven't hear from him since?



Rynier, looking good for a first timer on dirt.





Just around the corner we came across this flooded road. We did seriously consider crossing it, some attempted it, but common sense prevailed and we turned back and went an alternative route via Calitzdorp and the old cement road.



We should have heeded the sign earlier.



Eventually we reached the Calitzdorp Spa and shared stories. Here Ronny tells of a fishing story while everyone listens excitedly.











The Calitzdorp Spa (Uhuru) is a great stopover and has many awesome places to see in the surrounding area. We are going to see more of this place soon. Watch this space.





The next morning we headed off to Calitzdorp to fill up with fuel. This cement road is the original road between Calitzdorp and Oudtshoorn and was constructed in 1937. Those snow-capped mountains are where we are headed.



After filling up we headed to Gamkaskloof, better known as Die Hel via the Calitzdorp Dam. This sign always puts a smile on my face.



This road is stunning, the views extraordinary.



The Calitzdorp Dam







The dam was full; I haven't seen it this full in years.



Chris exploring the Swiss Alps.





The weather was just perfect, not a breath of wind. Little did we know at the top of the Swartberg Pass it was a different story.



A quick stop to make sure everyone was together and up the pass we headed.





The Swartberg Pass is a sight to see, built between 1881 and 1888 by Thomas Bain it is a must to ride. It's one of those 100 things to do before you die. A little snow was seen along the sides of the mountain, nothing in the road. Not like my previous experience here.



The wind on the top of the pass was vicious.



After leaving the trailer at the top of the pass we headed down to Die Hel.



See what we saw on the way down, wtf! Notice the winding road in the distance.





A Klipsringer.



We had to cross a couple of drifts.











The last piece of road down into the Kloof. The infamous winding decent, not for the faint of heart.







Once down in the Kloof it is stunning. You have to do this at least once. I can strongly advise to stay in the restored farm houses belonging to Nature Conservation, they are awesome. Hot showers, warm duvet, gas fridge and stove. This means you don't need to lug a tent and sleeping bag with you on your bike.





We had lunch at the kiosk with Piet and Maronette and then headed back out and down to Prince Albert where we camped at the Olienhof campsite.







In Prince Albert



Olienhof campsite, and the process of pitching our tents starts all over again.





The next day we headed to Sutherland via Fraserburg.



A locked gate stopped us and it wasn't long and Ronny had us on an alternative route.





At Fraserburg we enjoyed a superb lunch...









...and rest



It was then off to Sutherland along some dusty roads.







Arriving in late in Sutherland it was time to pitch our tents, again.





Our first braai was in Sutherland, Ronny put on a feast fit for a king, fillet, wors and vegies.



It was a pleasure having the bakkie as a backup vehicle with us. The peace of mind knowing it is not far behind was awesome. Not having to ride with all our camping gear was great.



We filled up at the local pump and headed back home via Ceres. The mood was sullen. Our trip was coming to an end.



On the way to Ceres we came across this refreshment stop. It is a 'self-help honesty kiosk'. It is run by Santa Bothma and quite an experience. There is no-one here, you pick what you want and put your money in the milk urn. This is an experience that reinstates your faith and trust in mankind.



We sat in the boma and enjoyed a quiet break.











This sign says it all.





god nê: "Jy mag mie steel nie" —  
en dit is dit! So — eet en drink,  
kyk en krap, koop en betaal  
en reis veilig verder met 'n  
skoon gewete! K'roo liefde!

We headed off to Ceres.





Bainskloof. In Wellington we had a drink together for the last time.



Cheers Chris, another great ride with Hamman Motorrad.



I have many more photos here:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/kevin.vanblerk7>

Should you want to comment on this trip or want to join Chris on a future trip, join his HAMMAN MOTORRAD facebook group and experience what BMW adventure riding is all about. It is a lifestyle.

Thank you  
Kevin van Blerk  
^-----^  
R1200GS-WP