

# destination cederberg

When photographers DEBORAH DA SILVA and PIPPA HETHERINGTON took their urbanite boys to the Cederberg for a weekend adventure, they discovered far more than a beautiful World Heritage Site



drive-time in the back of the Landie

## day one

Armed with flasks of coffee and a chock-a-bloc Landie (the Game Boys are the only electronic equipment and they've only been packed in case of extreme emergencies) we take the N7 north.

A detour through picturesque Riebeeck Kasteel, and Riebeeck West, is worth it – we can recommend the cheesecake at the Riebeeck Valley Hotel!

We arrive in Citrusdal for lunch, forewarned that the town is in short supply of everything except *drankwinkels*. The minute chicken pies that constitute lunch are a case in point!

That night, we sleep in Clanwilliam, at the home of a friend-of-a-friend. It beats the campsite – a magnet for the motorheads who ski on the dam – hands down. You could try the Bloemenberg B&B in town, or the Rectory Guesthouse. There are self-catering cottages at the Clanwilliam Dam Resort too.



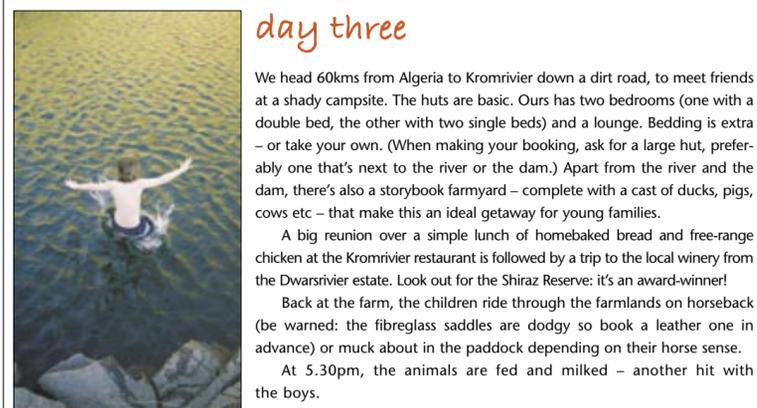
## day three

We head 60kms from Algeria to Kromrivier down a dirt road, to meet friends at a shady campsite. The huts are basic. Ours has two bedrooms (one with a double bed, the other with two single beds) and a lounge. Bedding is extra – or take your own. (When making your booking, ask for a large hut, preferably one that's next to the river or the dam.) Apart from the river and the dam, there's also a storybook farmyard – complete with a cast of ducks, pigs, cows etc – that make this an ideal getaway for young families.

A big reunion over a simple lunch of homebaked bread and free-range chicken at the Kromrivier restaurant is followed by a trip to the local winery from the Dwarsrivier estate. Look out for the Shiraz Reserve: it's an award-winner!

Back at the farm, the children ride through the farmlands on horseback (be warned: the fibreglass saddles are dodgy so book a leather one in advance) or muck about in the paddock depending on their horse sense.

At 5.30pm, the animals are fed and milked – another hit with the boys.



## day two

The boys need some action and the city slicker moms are game for the challenge. At the last minute, another friend, Leah, joins our expedition. We head out of town, in search of a donkey ride, and are waved down from the top of a remote koppie. The cart resembles a go-cart, and the still unharnessed donkeys graze in the fynbos. We get the shakes from giggling as we watch, through our camera lenses, the boys and their new-found friends trying to catch and harness the long-eared beasts.

Then we're off. The cart is surprisingly comfy, and while our driver-cum-guide is no expert in flora and fauna, he entertains us with colourful banter as he urges one donkey on with the retort, 'Klim, jou gat! Klim!'

We ascend through pristine mountain vegetation on a narrow track – this is not for vertigo sufferers! We stop for brekkie next to a mountain stream and then descend to Heuningsvlei, a forgotten village that dates back to the 18th Century. Lunch with Tannie Annie at the local guesthouse is a real treat and after a quick reconnoitre we mount the cart for the two-hour return trip along the mountain track, catching sight of klipspringers in the long afternoon shadows.

Back at the Landie, we resolve to return for a sleep-over at Heuningsvlei Guesthouse (you can book through Cape Nature Conservation) if only to experience the handmade crimpoline linen. But tonight it's a classic Cape Nature Conservation self-catering cottage in Algeria and it's an hour-and-a-half down the road. On arrival, we find an extremely spacious, clean, three-bedroomed cottage complete with linen and a fully-equipped kitchen. An unexpected shower of rain prompts us to make a fire, open a bottle of Cab Sauv, have supper, play board games and crash into bed. It's been a long day!



left: Tannie Annie lovingly serves lunch  
below: getting cosy in Algeria  
right: brekkeie – honeybush tea, pot bread, apricot jam, boiled eggs – delicious!  
below right: Heuningsvlei began as a farmstead – home to a Dutch criminal, a Khoi San woman and their 9 children



## day four

The boys join a large group that's embarking on a 15-minute hike to check out awesome San art while the moms pack the Landie with Bloody Marys and a picnic lunch. We all finally meet at the Stadsaal caves, where spectacular San art is to be found. The caves are ten minutes down the road from Kromrivier. Don't forget to arrange a permit (for your car and to picnic there) from Cape Nature Conservation at Algeria. The hikers have seen waterfalls, caves and a pair of black eagles.

Bonus of the afternoon is meeting microbiologist Quinton Martins and his pet scorpion Clawdia. Quinton is researching the presence of mountain leopards in the Cederberg, and he and his wife hope to involve disadvantaged kids in groovy environmental programmes.

A farewell braai is the perfect end to a great getaway ... there are hundreds of kids and no bedtime curfew.



## MORE PICS FROM OUR TRIP



## day five

We bundle the boys into the Landie, stop for them to have a last look at the mountains, and head home via Ceres on a much better road. We arrive in Cape Town four hours later – the Game Boys are still at the bottom of the suitcase. Need we say more?!



top: Debbie in action, above: Cederberg gang

## where to stay

Clanwilliam – tourism information: (027) 482 2024/  
www.clanwilliam.info  
Bloemenberg B&B – (027) 482 7851  
Clanwilliam Dam Resort – (027) 482 8012  
Kromrivier – (027) 482 2807/www.cedarberg.co.za  
Sand Drift – (027) 482 2825/www.cedarbergcellars.com  
Algeria – (022) 931 2088/www.capenature.org.za  
Jamaka – (027) 482 2801/www.nieuwoudtfarm.com

## what to pack

Raincoats in winter, cozzies in summer	Bird book
Cab Sauv	Board games
Sunblock	Bikes
Waterbottles	Hats
First Aid kit	Binocs
	Rescue remedy

## things to do

Donkeycart ride (book through Cape Nature Conservation on (022) 931 2088)  
Check out Stadsaal and loads of other San art – also through Cape Nature Conservation  
Wine tasting at Dwarsrivier (027) 482 2827  
Horse riding  
Animal farmyard  
Hiking  
Swimming (rivers and waterfalls)  
4x4 trails  
Get in touch with the Cape Leopard Project (www.capeleopard.org.za) – it's worth supporting!

## resources

**BOOKS**

- *Beyond the Cederberg* (Baard Skeerder, R59) by Peter Slingsby and Ed Coombe.
- *The Snob's Guide to Budget Getaways in the Western Cape* (Red Press, R87) by Paul Leger.

**MAPS**  
Map of the Cederberg (Baard Skeerder, R43) by Peter Slingsby