

## THE SCENIC JOURNEY TO STANFORD (from Cape Town)

Whether you arrive at Cape Town International Airport or reside in Cape Town, this is the most beautiful city in the world. *Table Mountain* towering above the city either shrouded in cloud or starkly clear, boldly proclaims “this is Cape Town”. Your journey to B’s Cottage starts here.

Do not take the N2 up Sir Lowry’s pass. Rather find your way to Gordon’s Bay Village (R44) and take the coastal route. It may be slightly further to Stanford but it is definitely worth the trip.

The bay you see on your right as you pass through Gordon’s Bay Village is *False Bay* (so named because some 300 years ago sailors on their way back from India, thought it was Table Bay as Cape Point and Cape Hangklip, you are going towards it, look similar). The road winds along the coast; sometimes almost through the spray of the sea as it crashes against the *rocks*. To the left the mountain covered in *fynbos vegetation* seems to dwarf your car. If it is June to October you may see *Southern Right* and Humpback whales. The Southern Right whales send up a double plume of spray when they breathe. Dolphins can also be seen.

After crossing the Dwars River you pass the small hamlet of Rooiels. (Rooiels is also the name of a local tree). You could turn right into the village and enjoy a cup of something at the restaurant (or pub!) just off the main road. Pringle Bay, just next door to Rooiels, is equally beautiful with a small centre that has an excellent deli, and coffee shop close by.

The R44 now turns away from the coast and traverses a rather bleak part of the landscape. You enter the spread-out holiday resort of Betty’s Bay. Betty’s Bay is situated within the only Biosphere Reserve in Southern Africa: the Kogelberg (“berg” being mountain) Biosphere Reserve. Look out for the turnoff to the right which leads to the *African Penguin* Colony at Stony Point. This is the only penguin species that breeds around the African coast. The boardwalk leads you to the viewing site. The best time to see the penguins are between the months of April to June but there are usually some penguins the whole year round.

Back on the R44 you arrive on your left at the *Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens*. This is definitely worth a visit. Here you will see the main Fynbos families (*proteas, ericas and restios*) as well as irises, daisies and orchids. You can choose to walk a mere 100 meters to the restaurant or one of several kilometres of nature trails.

Continue along the R44 through Betty’s Bay with glimpses of the sea to your right. The road now turns towards the mountains, across the Palmiet River and into the village of Kleinmond. To the right you could go to the Kleinmond harbour which offers a variety of restaurants and shops.

The R44 passes through Kleinmond. Some five kilometres down the road to your right, you should see the mouth of the *Bot River Estuary*. It is claimed that when HM Birkenhead floundered off Danger Point so many years ago, horses from the ship swam ashore and made the Bot River Estuary area their home. Descendants of these horses can still be seen here. If you do have the time you can turn right into the Rooisand area (signposted) – a nature reserve where you can walk on a boardwalk to get closer to the estuary and maybe see the wild horses.

The R44 once again turns inland past the Arabella Golf Estate until you reach a “T” juncture. Turn right and proceed along the R43 to Hermanus and Stanford. After crossing the Bot River bridge look to your left and you may see some *blue cranes*, SA’s national bird, or to the right in the lagoon, pelicans and flamingos.

The R43 is now busier as you approach the sprawling town of Hermanus. The bay to your right as you enter Hermanus is *Walker Bay*, one of the best land based whale viewing sites in the world. As time is running out leave the exploring of Hermanus for another day. It is only 25km from Stanford. Drive along the main road through Hermanus. On leaving Hermanus behind you see the *Klein River Estuary* on your right and as you round the bend the *Kleinrivier Mountains* are in front of you. The road runs all along the foot of the mountains, past the Hermanus Yacht Club and through a grove of trees.

Immediately on exiting the grove of trees, look to your left at the mountain to identify the “*Pig’s Snout*” in the mountain. The pig’s nose is at the base of the mountain with his eyes and ears near the top. If it has been raining, two waterfalls frame his snout as if he has a runny nose.

As you pass vineyards on you left you know that you are reaching Stanford. Cross the Klein River bridge, this river feeds the Estuary you just passed, and you can hire a boat for a trip on the river. When you see Stanford to your right, turn into the main road (Queen Victoria Street) and proceed to our cottages as per the directions given.

We hope you enjoyed your trip.

*Basil & Bea Whittaker*