

South Africa and Namibia



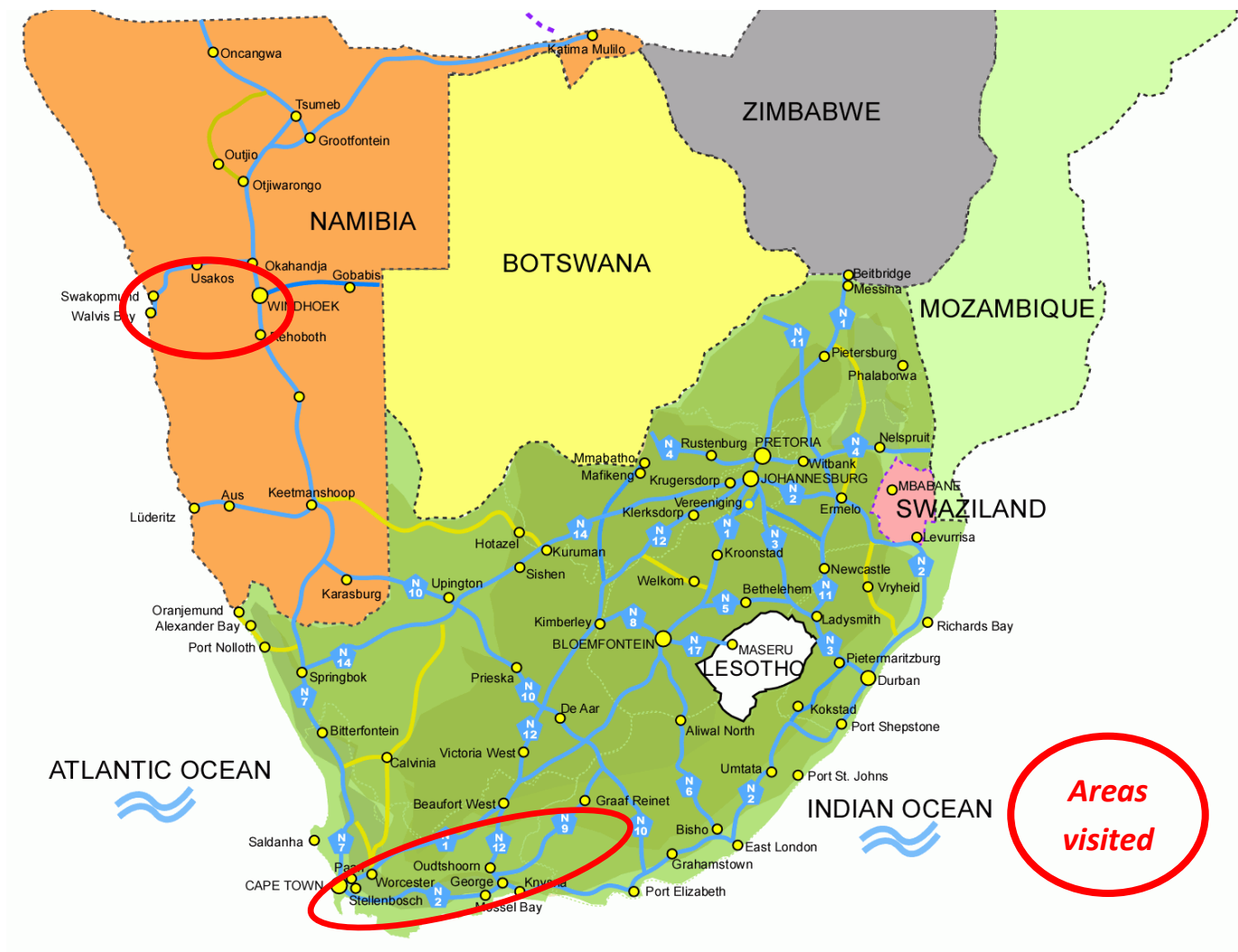
November 2014

Bob and Molly Hillery

This was our third visit to South Africa but our first to Namibia. In addition, this was our first time to stay at our nephew's beautiful home in Cape Town. This is located on the Atlantic Ocean at Bantry Bay, just a few miles from the center of Cape Town. Not only is it a fantastic location from the standpoint of its views and its luxurious accommodation, it is very convenient for trips into town and to the Cape Peninsula.

Our trip to Namibia was only three days but it was a wonderful experience. We flew by commercial jet to the country's capital, Windhoek, and then by a small Cessna to a lodge in the Namib Desert on the edge of huge sand dunes. These dunes and the Atlantic Coast are the two highlights of the country and we were fortunate to see both at close range, both by Land Rover and, again, from a small plane.

The balance of our three week trip was spent driving along the Garden Route on the south coast and then via the Wine Route inland back to Cape Town. Despite having done both of these on previous trips, we were even more impressed with the scenery this time—and can't wait to make another visit.



South Africa and Namibia, November 2014

Sunday November 9

We left home about 7 for dinner at Morton's downtown before driving to the airport Marriott for the night.

Monday November 10 (73 Today!)

We were up by 8am, had breakfast in the lounge at the Marriott and then took the 9:45 shuttle to the airport. We checked in and were quickly through Security and in plenty of time for the first leg of our journey – a one hour flight to Chicago! Following that we had four hours in the lounge at O'Hare before our 4pm flight to Amsterdam.

This flight was operated by KLM and, although they don't compare with Asian airlines, they do provide in-flight service that beats Delta. The plane was a Boeing 747 and we were on the upper deck in very comfortable seats. Both of us got several hours' sleep after a good dinner.



Tuesday November 11 (Veterans' Day)

We arrived in Amsterdam at 6:30am local time and had almost three hours there before boarding our next flight to Cape Town. This, too, was operated by KLM and was an almost 11 hour journey across Europe and Africa. It was turbulent much of the way, so much so that cabin service was stopped at one point and the seat belt light was on most of the time. However, we managed a few hours' sleep and arrived in Cape Town almost on time just before 11pm.

After clearing Immigration (easy) and Customs (similarly easy) we were met by Brenda and Jerome. Brenda is Mark's concierge who takes care of all needs of his and his guests when in Cape Town and Jerome is the driver. We were not allowed to carry a thing to the waiting SUV and were driven straight to Mark's home on the edge of the Atlantic in Bantry Bay.

Here, despite the late hour, Brenda gave us a quick tour of the home. It was a lot to take in after 30 hours on the road as there are three main floors, each with bedrooms, sitting rooms, decks, kitchens, etc, etc. I am afraid that we won't truly find our way around in the week we are here. Brenda plans to join us tomorrow for more intensive training and review dining plans and other aspects of our visit.

We retired about 2am local time and slept soundly.

Wednesday November 12

We were up before 8 on a partly cloudy but bright morning and made our way down one level for breakfast on the deck. Danie, Mark's on-site chef, had prepared a huge fresh fruit salad, juice, salmon and prosciutto and then cooked us our eggs and sausage meal. It was just a little cool but what a wonderful start to the trip – sitting outside eating breakfast and overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and Robben Island.

We decided to relax "at home" for the morning and have a light lunch before Brenda joined us around 1pm. In the meantime, we did a little exploring of the house, with its pool, sauna, exercise room and everything else imaginable!





The Home on Bantry Bay

We had a “light” lunch of quiche and cookies, once again sitting out on the deck. About 2pm, Brenda arrived and we discussed her suggestions on where and when to dine out over the next few days and then she took us to one of her favorite local coffee shops for a quick drink. Actually the shop is more like an Italian deli with a very big dine-in and take-away clientele, as well as a grocery store with lots of specialty meats and cheeses.

Brenda then drove us through the downtown area of Cape Town and to the Victoria and Alfred waterfront area. We remembered this large complex from our previous two visits, with its dozens of shops and restaurant, but there has been so much expansion in the almost six years since our last visit that I

certainly didn’t recognize it as the same place. Similarly, as we drove through the downtown area I sometime felt that I recognized a building or a street but for the most part it was like driving in a new city. Maybe when we get into it ourselves, things will become more familiar.

Tonight we had reservations at a restaurant about 30 minutes’ drive from the house, so Jerome (who had picked us up at the airport last night) took us there and brought us home after our evening out. It was an excellent seven course tasting menu meal with wine pairings served by a very knowledgeable and attentive staff – and with a unique twist. The first course (basically a three piece savory amuse bouche) was presented at the end of the meal also as a “full circle”, but this time it was three sweets – all “dressed up” exactly as the first course. It was an interesting way to end an excellent meal – at a very reasonable price.

A phone call to Jerome 30 minutes before we finished the meal had our driver pulling up to the restaurant door just as we walked out and we were home in half an hour after a wonderful evening out.

Thursday November 13

After breakfast we ventured out in the Lexus SUV and drove to the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront shopping and restaurant complex. This is a huge facility (ever expanding, it seems) where we have spent quite a bit of time in our previous two visits. We have probably dined in most of the restaurants here at least once.



The Victoria and Alfred Waterfront Complex

- with cloudy views of Table Mountain

We spent a very pleasant two hours strolling through the area, with its view of Table Mountain (with its tablecloth today) and finished with a coffee inside the high end shopping mall near where we had parked. The journey there and back was an easy drive and a good way to get used to driving the car that we will be using for our 12 day trip along the Garden Route.

We relaxed in the warm sunshine on the deck for a couple of hours and then were picked up at 3:15 for our evening out. We were driven first to a winery in Stellenbosch where we were invited to join a wine tasting session. Molly chose the "chocolate and wine pairings" and I added to that the standard five wine selection. The cost was very reasonable (about \$10 for both of us) and it was a very pleasant way to spend two hours in the shaded courtyard of the wine estate.

At 6:30 we had a reservation at Rust en Vrede, a favorite of our nephew's and one of the top restaurants in the country. There we were greeted by a hostess as we walked up the path to the door and she escorted us to our table where two waitresses were standing ready to seat us. That was the level of service we received all evening; extremely efficient, unobtrusive and everything presented with class – and a smile.

The food was equally good. We chose the four course dinner (with a choice between three or four dishes for each) but we noted that they also offer a six course tasting menu (next time!) Actually, our four courses turned into seven or eight dishes with the canapes, the amuse bouche and palate cleansers along the way. All the courses were relatively small but sufficient and each was explained in full detail by the waitress – an almost necessary detail since every dish had many little extras and sauces that were not obvious from the line item in the menu. The sommelier recommended a bottle of chenin blanc, which we both enjoy, and we finished the meal with espresso and chocolates. Here again, the waitress brought a full box of chocolates with eight rows, each containing a different selection of about eight pieces, and invited us to "take as many as you want". The box presented was completely filled so we felt that we were the first to have it presented: a small touch but representative of the attention to detail.

Our driver had waited for us the entire evening (he said he had eaten at a local gas station café) and was sitting outside ready to drive us back to Cape Town when we finished the meal after a full 3 ½ hours!

Friday November 14

We had both slept well after our evening out (maybe five hours of drinking wine helped!) and got up to our usual breakfast on the deck on a sunny but quite cool morning. There was a stiff breeze blowing so, even in this sheltered part of the bay, a light sweater was very welcome.

We had decided that this would be the first of two days spent in town and we chose the Hop on/Hop off bus as our means of getting around. We had first to drive a few blocks to park the car and pick up the bus on its circular route around the city. There are two main routes for the buses in addition to two shorter routes that cover the downtown area and the Constantia wine estates.

We took the first bus that came, which happened to be the Red Route, purchased our two-day tickets on board and rode as far as the center of downtown. From there we walked through a street market (where I bought a hat, having left my collection in the house!) and then to St George's Cathedral. This is the cathedral where Bishop Tutu preached and became famous for his quiet-spoken, peaceful approach to fighting apartheid and he is still emeritus archbishop there. It is a large cathedral very much in the European style with some fine stained glass windows and a large open nave. No photography is allowed inside.



Lion's Head (near Table Mountain);

Cape Town Anglican Cathedral;

Statue of Queen Victoria



From the cathedral we walked through the Company Gardens (which seem to have changed the name recently to the Company's Garden) which were originally established quite literally as vegetable gardens by the Dutch East India Company. Now the area is more like a park with pleasant walkways, many trees (all identified), flower gardens and (still) a small vegetable garden. There are also a number of statues throughout the park of figures important in South African history, most notably a large statue of Cecil Rhodes who had the ambition to place all of Africa under





British rule – and to connect Cape Town and Cairo by road and railway. He didn't succeed in either but obviously came very close in the former – and ultimately had a country named after him.

We left the Gardens just below the landmark Mount Nelson hotel (home to the famous afternoon teas and a place where anybody who is anybody stays while in Cape Town) and found a small café on a nearby street for a coffee lunch.



We then took the downtown bus on its entire circuit, passing through District Six, site of the infamous bulldozing of an entire community in 1967 at the height of the Apartheid era. The whole area had been left as wasteland as a memorial to that event but, since our last visit here six years ago, there has been some new housing built and the area is now home to a brand new university complex. Apparently there are mixed opinions on whether this prime real

estate should be developed or left as a perpetual memorial but it seems that a compromise is being formulated that will keep some land undeveloped as a continuing reminder of those decades of Apartheid.

Also on the route is the city hall which sits across from huge square where hundreds of thousands gathered to hear Nelson Mandela after his release from prison on Robben Island.



Downtown Cape Town has a pleasant mix of fine Victorian buildings and modern skyscrapers and is a vibrant area with amenities and entertainment venues to suit all tastes. It also has a relatively new and high-tech convention center which has made the city a conference center for both Africa and the world.

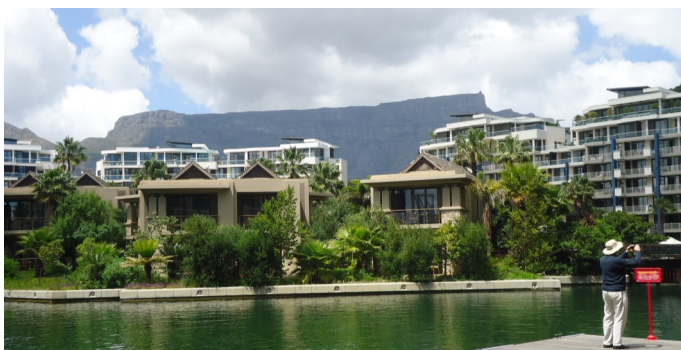
From downtown we took the Blue Route bus all the way back to Bantry Bay. This was, however, a long ride (perhaps 1 ½ hours) which had several stops at major sites of interest, including the world famous Kirstenbosch botanical gardens situated right below the “back side” of Table Mountain. We visited there on our last visit and were very impressed with the gardens and its plants but today was not a good one to repeat. After a sunny and mild morning, the wind picked up, clouds rolled in and, inevitably it seemed, it began to rain. We were on the upper (open) deck of the bus but had fortunately moved forward to a small covered area just before the rains came.

The “monsoon” started in earnest just as we reached Hout Bay and we spent the remaining portion of the ride – along a beautiful stretch of the Atlantic coast – trying to avoid the streams that came through leaks in the obviously inadequate roof. Fortunately, by the time we reached the spot where we had left the car, the rain had stopped but the very strong wind made it feel much colder than the low sixties registered on the thermometer. We were glad to get back into the warmth of the house, have a hot cup of tea and get dried out.

This evening we were driven to another restaurant on a wine estate in Constantia which Mark had recommended. Once again we chose a meal with wine pairings and, as on the previous two evenings, the food and service were excellent. The Greenhouse was perhaps not quite as exquisite as Rust en Vedre but certainly better than many restaurants that we enjoy at home. It was once again almost 11pm by the time we arrived home.

Saturday November 15

After breakfast we drove to the Hop on/Hop off bus stop and rode into town, getting off at the V&A Waterfront. Here we took a 30 minute canal boat trip (as part of the bus ticket) which went as far as the convention center and back. Table Mountain was clear on top for the first time on this visit so we had some great views of it, the Lion’s Head and Rump and of the city from a different perspective. Much of the ride was alongside luxury hotels and apartments which we were told were home to many famous people from around the world, including Oprah Winfrey and Lance Armstrong.



***Finally, a clear view of Table Mountain, and
Statues of South Africa’s Four Nobel Peace
Prize winners at the V&A Waterfront***



What do Albert Luthuli, former president of the African National Congress, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, last president of the 'old South Africa' FW de Klerk and the legendary Nelson Mandela have in common?

They all won the Nobel Peace Prize and their effigies stand together at Cape Town's V&A Waterfront.

After this short ride and a cup of coffee, we hopped on the bus again and took it up the very steep and twisty road to the Table Mountain cable car station. Following a forty minute wait in line we were in the car which took us to the top (at almost 3500 feet) and on which the floor rotated so everyone got some great views across the city and harbor.

The main feature of Table Mountain is the level plateau approximately 2 miles from side to side, edged by impressive cliffs. The plateau, flanked by Devil's Peak to the east and by Lion's Head to the west, forms a dramatic backdrop to Cape Town. This broad sweep of mountainous heights, together with Signal Hill, forms the natural amphitheater of the City Bowl and Table Bay harbor. The highest point on Table Mountain is 3,563 ft above sea level. The flat top of the mountain is often covered by orographic clouds, formed when a south-easterly wind is directed up the mountain's slopes into colder air, where the moisture condenses to form the so-called "table cloth" of cloud.

Just as we reached the top it started to rain. It wasn't particularly heavy and at first didn't cloud the views of the still sunlit city below. However, the rain did pick up and everyone it seemed made a rush for the cafeteria and/or the gift shop. Both were far too crowded for us, so we walked a little in the rain as the clouds began to envelope the summit and then got in line for the ride back down.



The rain had





stopped (or perhaps never started) at the lower station so we were once again in sunshine, although it was still breezy and cool, so a warming cup of coffee went down well. By this time it was almost 4pm so we got the next convenient bus back to Bantry Bay and the house.

Tonight we ate in and Danie (Mark's chef) prepared us a steak meal.

Sunday November 16

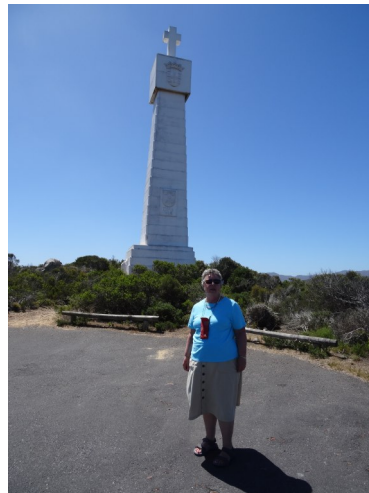
Today was a glorious day for our drive to Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope. The drive took us along the western coast of the Peninsula, first along the world famous Chapman's Peak drive (a short but stunning toll road) and then a little inland before descending to the coast road again which took us to the entrance to the Cape National Park (part of Table Mountain National Park). Within the Park were the southerly and southwesterly points of Africa, Cape Point (with its lighthouse) and the Cape of Good Hope, respectively.



At the Cape of Good Hope we (along with numerous others, mainly Japanese) took pictures marking this historic spot and then we drove a short distance to the lighthouse at Cape Point. This is the spot where all the tourist gift shops are so we chose simply to catch a glimpse of the lighthouse and the magnificent coast around it before heading back north.



Along the way we had a light lunch at a restaurant we just happened across but which was delightful (sitting outside under grape vines in a warm sun) and visited two monuments to the early Portuguese explorers who came around the Cape in the late 1400s - Dias and Vasco da Gama. It is amazing to think that these two had rounded the Cape and (in the case of de Gama) opened up a sea route to India before Columbus had returned from his discovery of America. The two monuments are 20th century forms of identification markers that the two explorers had built. [Bartholemeu Dias, left; Vasco da Gama, right]



We returned to Cape Town along the eastern shore of the Peninsula where the crashing waves were, if anything, even more impressive than those on the western side. For those who have driven the coastal route along California's coast between LA and San Francisco, the scenery here is reminiscent but perhaps even more spectacular. And on a beautiful day such as today, it is difficult to imagine a more beautiful drive. We even saw baboons and ostrich along the route!



The Cape of Good Hope and the Sea Route to the East

There is a misconception that the Cape of Good Hope is the southern tip of Africa, because it was once believed to be the dividing point between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. In fact, the southernmost point is Cape Agulhas, about 90 miles to the east-southeast. The currents of the two oceans meet at the point where the warm-water Agulhas current meets the cold water Benguela current and turns back on itself—a point that fluctuates between Cape Agulhas and Cape Point.

When following the western side of the African coastline from the equator, however, the Cape of Good Hope marks the point where a ship begins to travel more eastward than southward. Thus, the first modern rounding of the cape in 1488

by Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias was a milestone in the attempts by the Portuguese to establish direct trade relations with the Far East.

Dom Vasco da Gama, was another Portuguese explorer. He was the first European to reach India by sea, linking Europe and Asia for the first time by ocean route, as well as the Atlantic and the Indian oceans entirely and definitively, and in this way, the West and the Orient.

This discovery was significant and opened the way for an age of global imperialism and for the Portuguese to establish a long-lasting colonial empire in Asia. The route meant that the Portuguese would not need to cross the highly disputed Mediterranean nor the dangerous Arabian Peninsula, and that the whole voyage would be made by sea. The sum of the distances covered in the outward and return voyages made this expedition the longest ocean voyage ever made until then, far longer than a full voyage around the world by way of the Equator.

We returned to the house in Cape Town about 5:30 and were treated to another superb meal by Danie the Chef – this time a fish Thai curry and a traditional African sweet dessert, together with espresso and limoncello to finish.

We retired early in preparation for our very early start for Namibia tomorrow.

Monday November 17

We were both awake even before the alarm went off and we were ready well before Jerome picked us up at 4am. It was a quick drive to the airport and we were soon checked in and through Security, so we had some time in the Air Namibia lounge.

The flight left at 6:30 and we had a good breakfast on the plane before arriving two hours later at Windhoek, the capital of Namibia. Again it was an easy process getting through Immigration and Customs and we were soon in the open area and looking for someone from Wilderness (the tour arranger) to pick us up. There was a brief feeling of panic as there was no one there with a sign but Molly then spotted a Wilderness office and we were soon introduced to our pilot, Christopher, who was to fly us to our lodge.

We were advised that there would be some turbulence in this six seater Cessna Citation and indeed there were a number of startling bumps as we took off. However, it soon became relatively smooth and we both enjoyed the 70 minute flight over mountains (perhaps 5000 feet?) and desert.



The Namibian Desert on our flight from Windhoek to Sossusvlei and "our" plane.

Landing was on a gravel strip in what appeared to be the middle of nowhere but we were met by Albert and his Land Rover. Albert would be our personal guide and driver for the next three days. We set out on a 15 minute (Namibian time) drive to the Kalula Lodge.

Along the way, Albert stopped several times to point out springbok, oryx, ostrich and many weaver bird nests, as well as giving us a good description of the geology and geography of this area. He certainly seemed well-versed in the flora and fauna and he was very pleasant, had an infectious laugh and a beautiful deep bass voice.



The trip to the lodge took about 30 minutes and there we were greeted with a cold towel and a welcome drink before being shown to our room. The lodge has a total of eleven rooms, each one being a detached “cottage” spaced well apart from each other, so we felt like we were in our own private beach (no water, however) house. Indeed, it was a small house, with a large bedroom/sitting room, bathroom, dressing area and an additional rooftop bedroom where one could sleep under the stars. It also had an outside shower – in addition to the more conventional inside facilities.

The main reception area of Kalula Lodge

We unpacked, explored the deck and (small) pool area and then walked back along the sandy path to enjoy a good lunch sitting in the glass fronted restaurant of the lodge – overlooking a small watering hole to which were frequent animal visitors. The temperature was already approaching 100F – about 50 degrees warmer than Cape Town earlier this morning.

The 3am wake up overtook us in the afternoon and we both slept for over two hours before our evening drive. Just as we had experienced on our safari ten years ago, tours in the desert leave very early in the morning or in the early evening. These are the best times to spot wildlife and, in the evening, the drive is topped off with the traditional “sundowner” –

wine and snacks taken on a peak with beautiful views of the sunset. Tonight's experience was no exception and after about 1 ½ hours of driving on the edge of the enormous dunes (which are the major attraction in this area) and up mountain paths – during which we saw many springbok and oryx – Albert found his favorite peak. Here he let down a small table from the Land Rover, unwrapped a plate of meats and other snacks and opened a bottle of local wine. We then watched the sun set. It cannot get much better than this!



After the sun was completely out of sight, we drove back to the lodge and immediately sat down to dinner, this time on the open deck with the watering hole floodlit for our animal viewing pleasure. We had a very good meal, plenty of wine and a beautiful setting before walking across a small dune (just a few feet) that had covered part of the path back to our room. As we left the lodge, we were asked to join three Americans for dinner the following evening, to which we readily agreed.

I briefly lay under the stars (the sky seemed to be absolutely filled) on the rooftop bed but was unable to persuade Molly to spend the night up there so joined her in the main room, where we both slept soundly.

Tuesday November 18

We had breakfast at seven (most other guests had been out since five) as we were today taking a scenic flight across the dunes and along the Atlantic coast. The airstrip for this excursion adjoined another lodge (Sossusvlei) about a 30 minute gravel road drive from Kalula. When we arrived there we were greeted with the news that the winds in Luderitz, where we were to make our first stop, were so strong that air traffic control had stopped all in bound flights. For a while it looked as though we would have to settle for the flight only or, possibly, not be able to take off at all. As it turned out, we were allowed to take off about 9:45 – a very bouncy climb over the first mountains – but still unsure exactly what our final itinerary would include



Fortunately, not only did the turbulence weaken as we proceeded towards the coast at an altitude of 8000 feet, but we were given permission to land as planned. The flight over the mountains (my guess no higher than about 4000 feet) and particularly the sand dune areas was spectacular and we were very comfortable in our four passenger Cessna. The pilot, Christian, was very good at pointing out areas of interest (although having to shout over the noise of the propeller – not to mention flying the plane – made it difficult) and we were soon on our descent into Luderitz, with its paved runway.

Here we were met by a local guide (a somewhat crusty appearing German) who whisked us away quickly to a mining ghost town very close to the airport where we tagged on to a larger group tour which had just begun.



Kolmanskop is an abandoned diamond mining town in the Namib desert in southern Namibia, a few kilometers inland from the port town of Lüderitz. The town was once home to almost 1,000 miners and their families, but today only tourists with a permit may enter.

The story goes back to 1908, when a railway worker named Zacharias Lewala found a shiny stone and showed it to his supervisor, August Stauch who recognized it as a diamond. Stauch obtained a prospector's license and the migration of German miners and fortune-seekers to that area started. It used to be common for prospectors to lie on their bellies and slowly crawl across the sand, picking up diamonds by the dozen. The German Government quickly stepped in and declared a large area surrounding Kolmanskop a "Sperrgebiet", or forbidden area.

By the end of the 1st World War, the diamond field was near-exhaustion, and by 1956, Kolmanskop was completely abandoned. The remaining homes today are slowly filling with sand and only visited by tourist groups who come to see the ghost town.

This part of Namibia had been a German colony when diamonds were discovered by a railroad engineer in 1908, setting up the “Diamond Rush”. A small town was built (by German architects and builders and with materials mostly imported from Germany) and this thrived until the Second World War and for a brief period following 1945. At that time the area came under British rule but the mining continued and the new town of Luderitz is still a diamond mining hub, although interestingly, the majority of today’s mining is done offshore by pumping up tons of material from the sea bed.

The ghost town of today’s tour was very well-equipped when functioning with, as just one example, a 240 bed hospital for its employees and families. Most of the management staff were Germans but a large number of locals were employed and appear to have been well taken care of and, presumably, relatively well paid. Many of the buildings are available to visit on the tour but some have been lost or made unsafe by the unrelenting encroachment of sand, which covers all the streets and has made its way into many of the homes. However, we were allowed in several buildings (bars, skittle alley, main store, several homes) and – since they were furnished and outfitted with early to mid-20th century goods – we were taken back to our childhood. It is a rude awakening to visit a museum that is filled with things you instantly recognize from your youth!



***Kolmanskop Ghost Town and
(below right) Luderitz from the air***



Following the tour we were taken to one of the present day town’s larger hotels for a very nice lunch overlooking the harbor. The pilot joined us, although our guide went home (a guest house run by him and his wife) while we ate. The guide then re-joined us and took us on a tour of “his” town, which to this day retains a strong German tradition and whose street names are still marked in German.

The small town has a very nice harbor and has diamond mining and a small fishing industry. Our guide also suggested that lead and zinc smelting are also here and pointed out large sulfur warehouses but his explanation wasn’t very definitive. However, the diamond mining aspect was of interest since the source is in the sea bed and boats use large suction pumps to bring the silt (hopefully with its precious stones) to the surface. Another interesting point was that all the diamonds found here and further south actually originate in Kimberly, South Africa, which we had visited on our first visit ten years ago. It seems that the stones are carried downstream along the Orange River to the coast where the sediment follows ocean currents to this mining spot.



Other than that the town retains a rich German heritage with schools, churches and civic buildings often appearing to be more Bavarian than African. The guide was obviously very proud of this heritage (and very prejudiced against the local black population!) and insisted on stopping every few minutes to give details on almost every building and point of interest. In all, he made a good twenty minute tour last about 2 hours.

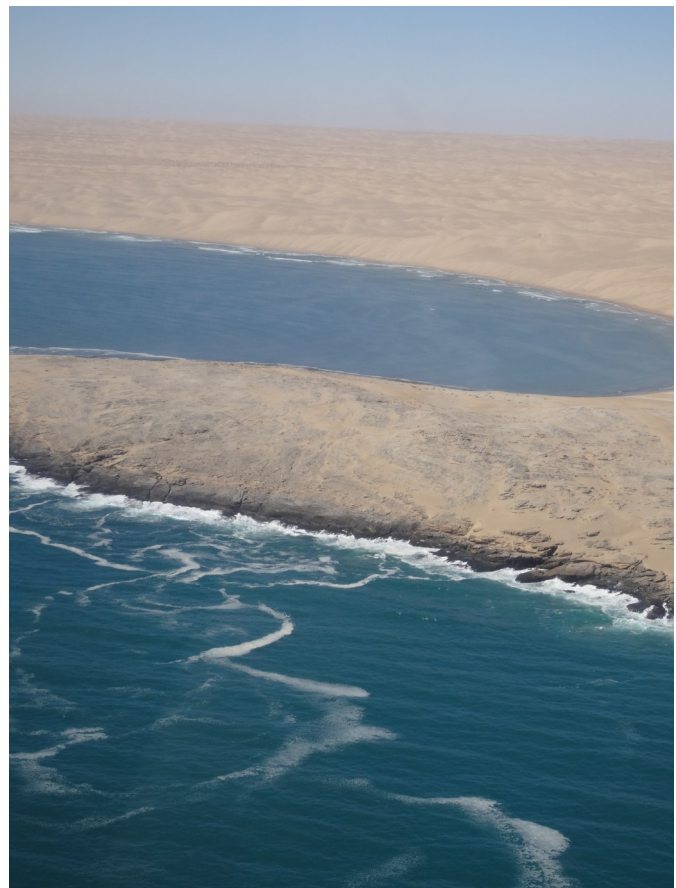
All this was made worthwhile, however, by the return flight to Sossusvlei. We flew north along the beautiful coast where huge sand dunes (as high as 1000 feet) “grow” directly from the ocean in places. The area is called the Skeleton Coast as it has caused the demise of hundreds of ships over the centuries and we saw two of these shipwrecks very clearly. One had obviously been beached for quite some time but another (which the pilot said was “new”) looked to be in reasonably good condition and it appeared that it would not be impossible to right it and recover it to service. There was no indication that this would happen, so presumably it will eventually become another skeleton.



Shipwreck and thousands of seals

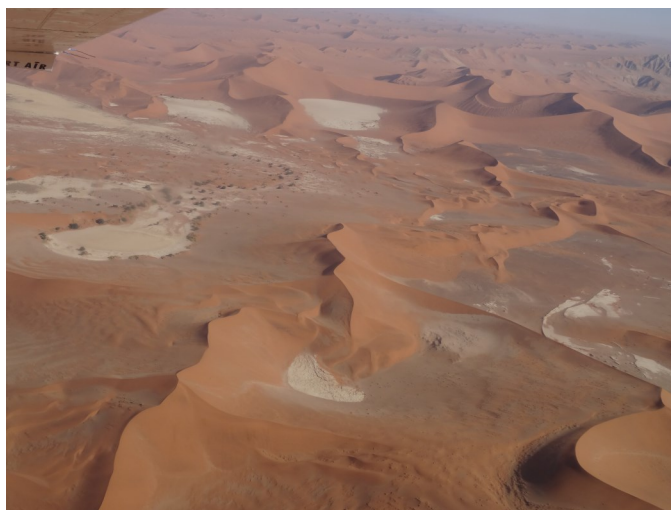
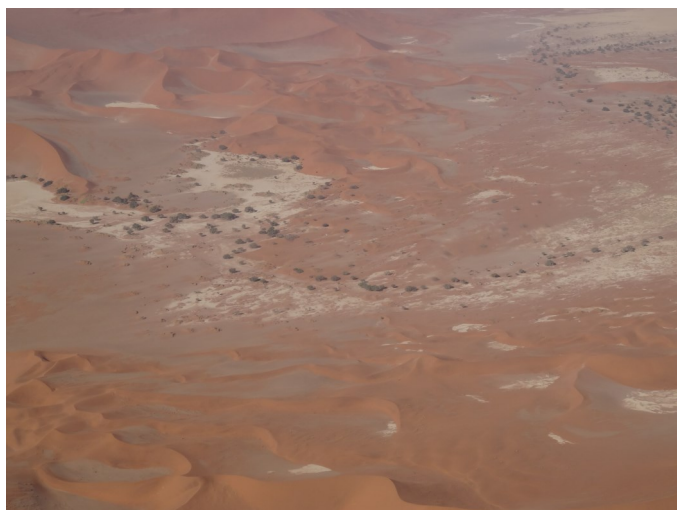
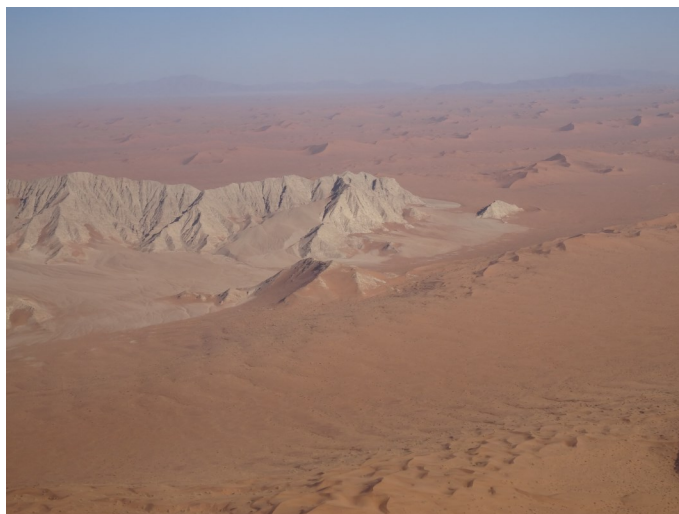


A “new” wreck



The Skeleton Coast

Also along the white sand beaches and rocky points we clearly saw hundreds (thousands?) of seals as we were flying at an altitude of less than 5000 feet at this point. This made some of the sand dunes appear to be very close to the wing tip and it felt as though we could reach out and touch the sand.



The Amazing Sand Dunes

When we turned inland and proceeded east, we were now over the best of the sand dune area. Here they reach their highest points, are a rusty red in color and have been formed into some of the most fascinating shapes, with razor sharp ridge's

and beautifully curved surfaces. Some even had deep bowls dished from the surface by the winds. Altogether it was a magnificent sight; difficult to capture in words but worth every penny of the somewhat costly day out. And, as I have indicated previously, there probably is no other way to see them at this close range.



Back at the airstrip we were met again by Albert and taken back to our lodge. Most of the other guests were out on their afternoon safaris so we had a couple of hours to relax, clean up and enjoy a drink before joining our new friends for dinner. They were good company and we had a very pleasant time with them as we dined (inside tonight due to the strong winds) and it was almost 11pm by the time we turned in.



K
U
L
A
L
A

