

# ***South Africa***

## ***March 2024***



***Bob and Molly Hillery***

*This was our seventh visit to South Africa in the past 20 years, so it is perhaps not too surprising that we covered much of the ground that we had enjoyed so much in the past. We decided that we would make the vacation as relaxing as possible by enjoying the scenery, interacting with the people as much as possible and, of course, sampling the great food and wine that the country has to offer.*

*We flew via Amsterdam to Cape Town (versus the direct flight from Atlanta (17 hours) and found the journey in both directions to be manageable and not too tiring. Once in Cape Town (very late in the evening), we stayed at an airport hotel before starting our journey the next day. We drove west to Hermanus and on the Garden Route before crossing to the Klein Karoo and Oudtshoorn over a period of nine days. The drive back to Cape Town and our stay there (also over a nine day period) took us through the wine country, the Cape of Good Hope, and some amazing scenery along the way.*

*Once again, we were reminded of the friendliness and hospitality of the people (despite continuing high unemployment rates and poverty) and pleased that, for the most part, costs were significantly lower than at home. We got an overall impression that conditions for locals were improving some (particularly in housing) and infrastructure improvements seemed to be taking place at a good pace. We learned that our observations were accurate for the region in which we travelled (the Western Cape Province) but that the rest of the country was not keeping pace.*

*We had a wonderful three weeks in a country that must be high on our list of favorites and, despite, an overall familiarity, we experienced its beauty and diversity through more experienced eyes and at a very relaxing pace. Fantastic!*

# *South Africa, March-April 2024*

## ***Sunday to Tuesday, March 17-19***

We left home about 7:15pm on Sunday evening and had dinner at our usual location, Phoenician Taverna in Mason. We left there (after discussion with staff and owner on our projected absence) and drove in our rental car to the airport Marriott hotel. After checking in, we went to the bar for a nightcap before retiring about 10pm.

On Monday morning we got up before nine, had a coffee and pastry in the lounge, and then returned the car at the airport. We were quickly checked in and through Security, so had another snack in the SkyClub lounge. Our 12:20 flight left the gate on time, but the plane had to be de-iced (there were a few snow flurries) which delayed take-off for about 20 minutes. Nevertheless, after a smooth flight, we arrived in New York (JFK Airport) on time and were greeted by a sunny and mild (50F) afternoon.

Signage in JFK was poor, so we wandered in what we thought was the right direction for a while before taking the inter-terminal shuttle train to Terminal 1. Here again, signage was limited, and we reached the departure gate (with four hours to spare!) without seeing any signs for a SkyClub. I looked on the airport map and got directions to one "15 minutes" walk away, but we were fortunate to come across an Air France lounge where we were welcomed. (Our next flight was on Air France to Paris).

We still had about three hours in the lounge, but it was sparsely populated and well-stocked with food and wine, so the time before our 7:30 flight passed relatively quickly. The walk back to our gate took less than 10 minutes, and we were ready for boarding soon after 6:30pm.

The overnight flight across the Atlantic was smooth and passed very quickly with dinner and a good sleep. We arrived at CDG a little ahead of schedule and started our transfer. This, too, was relatively easy with a five-minute bus ride and a significant amount of walking. Signage here was far better than in JFK and much improved over some experiences we have had at this airport.

We didn't pass any lounges, so we had to wait at the gate for about an hour before boarding began. This involved another bus to the plane at a distant stand, but the weather was good, so we were not outside in rain or cold. The flight to Cape Town (over 11 hours) was on board a Dreamliner, which was only our third time on this type of craft. We had lunch shortly after departure and then settled down for some sleep. Despite some persistent turbulence over Western Africa, we both managed to sleep for five or six hours.

There was more turbulence at times as we flew over the South Atlantic Ocean, south of the "bulge" that is West Africa, but once again it didn't affect our sleep! It seemed that we were soon on our approach to Cape Town, where we landed to a warm and humid evening about 10:30pm local time - 28 hours elapsed since we had left Cincinnati.

Security was easy and our bags were off the carousel relatively quickly, so we were soon dragging them to the area designated for hotel shuttle pickup. I saw what I thought was our van leaving the pickup spot and thought that we would have to wait 30 minutes for the next (and last?) one. However, traffic was so jammed leaving the lot (via pay gates) that we caught up with the bus and the driver very kindly waited while we got ourselves and our cases on board. It was a ten-minute ride to the airport hotel.

We checked in and went to our air-conditioned room – except that this and all the other electrical accessories, only work when the door key is inserted in a wall appliance. Hence, we unpacked and stripped off in a "sauna" and took showers while the AC kicked in and slowly cooled the room. It was approaching 1am by the time we were cool enough to sleep.

## ***Wednesday March 20***

We were up about 8am to a cool room (!) after a relatively good night's sleep. We had breakfast in the hotel dining room and then I took the shuttle back to the airport and the Hertz rental car office. Car pickup went very smoothly, and I found my way back to the hotel where I picked up Molly, checked out and we set out for the drive to Hermanus.

This was a less than 90-minute drive along the N2 and then over Sir Lowry's Pass and another pass before the relatively flat lands along the ocean near Hermanus. We arrived in town about 11:30, had a light lunch sitting outside in 80+F weather and then drove to our hotel. We had a short wait before the room was ready (it was still only 1pm) but we were upgraded to a very nice suite overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. It was the view that reminded us that we had stayed here once before,

I went for a two-mile walk along the sea front and then we both relaxed until our dinner reservation at the hotel's restaurant. We went at 7:30 and had an excellent meal – starter, very good fish course, dessert, bottle of wine and after-dinner drinks – all for \$70 USD. The service was excellent also and we felt extremely satisfied without being "stuffed". We retired to our room about 10pm after a very good start to our sixth (seventh?) visit to South Africa.

### *The lobby at Misty Waves*

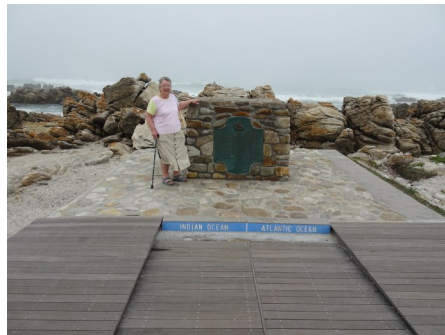
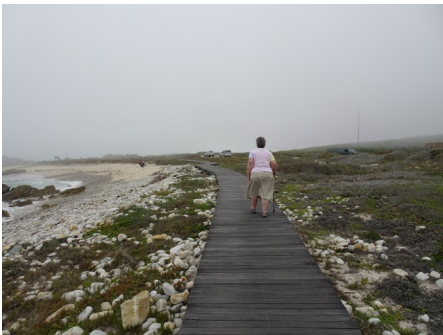


### **Thursday March 21**



We had breakfast in the hotel and then we started our drive to Cape L'Agulhas, about 90-minutes from Hermanus. The day started out sunny and warm and the drive was very pleasant through farmland, vineyards and mountains. We went over two modest passes and then it was more or less flat as we approached the coast once more. As we got close to water we could see a marine layer hovering over the water and inland for some distance and by the time we reached the cape, the visibility was very much reduced.

We parked in an area that we thought was next to the most southerly point (on the African continent) but it turned out that we had about a one-half mile walk, mostly on a wooden boardwalk, to the plaque and the photo opportunity. The breakers were very high (10 to 15 feet?) but the visibility was such that we couldn't fully appreciate the swell.



We were able, however, to get to the area (considerably expanded since our last visit) where a plaque marks the most southerly point, and a marker indicates the boundary between the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. A large relief map of Africa has also been put in place here since our last visit. The lack of direct sunshine kept the temperature to a modest 70F so walking and admiring the (limited) view was comfortable.

As we left the area and approached the lighthouse, we spotted a café where we were able to sit outside and enjoy a sandwich lunch – with fries! We then returned to Hermanus by the same route and were soon in brilliant sunshine again and much higher temperatures. At one point the car temperature gauge registered 95F, and it was still in the high 80s by the time we reached our hotel. I decided against a walk, and we relaxed in the room until a little after

7pm, when we left for dinner. Tonight, we ate at the Pavilion restaurant in the Marine hotel, which is probably the largest facility in Hermanus. It was a very good meal in excellent Art Deco surroundings, and we had a very good exchange with our excellent waitress (“guess your age” – she guessed I was 90!).

### **Friday March 22**

It was quite overcast and relatively cool when we went for breakfast in the hotel. We then spent a little time in our room before our walk. We then both went for walks along the cliff walk across from the hotel (it was much brighter now) before spending a little more time on the balcony.



*Hermanus from the Cliff Walk*

At 2pm, we drove into town and had a very nice cheeseboard lunch sitting outside in pleasantly warm conditions. We then returned to the hotel where Molly spent time knitting on the balcony and I went for another short walk in search of an ATM.

Tonight, we ate at the 1904 Café (where we had made reservations on our early afternoon walk in town) and had another excellent meal in “old-world” surroundings reminiscent of the establishment’s heritage. Again, the staff and the manager were very friendly and we had good conversations.

### **Saturday March 23**

We had breakfast in the hotel again and had a very nice conversation with the waitress who told us about her High School Prom and how she “turned from a Tomboy to a beautiful young lady”. She is still (at 20?) a lovely young lady and seemed very intelligent and motivated.

We then checked out and started our drive to Wilderness, about a four-hour drive along the N2. It started out a drizzly morning (there had been a significant storm at bedtime the night before) and the rain intensified a little as we moved inland. Nevertheless, it was a very pleasant and scenic drive and the traffic was not too heavy, even once we reached the main West-East road to the Garden Route.

We made one stop at a roadside coffee shop, and it stopped raining just as we pulled in the driveway. It remained dry for the rest of our journey and the temperature ranged between 65 and 80F, depending on the amount of sun that peeped through the overcast skies. We had intended to stop at one of the Aloe shops in Albertinia, but missed the first one and saw that the second one looked closed. So, we decided to drive on and perhaps visit later in our trip – if we confirmed that they were still in business.



We arrived at Wilderness and our Serendipity hotel about 3pm and were very warmly greeted by Elsabe, our hostess. She – and subsequently her daughter, son-in-law and two of the waiters (at least) – remembered us from 18-months ago and from previous visits – all very flattering!

*The deck outside our room at Serendipity*



I walked into Wilderness and back (3 miles) and then we sat on our deck for a while before getting ready for dinner. This was the usual excellent meal, with the usual introduction by Rudolph (son-in-law) on what we were about to eat and how it was prepared. We then went inside to our table (just as another huge thunderstorm began) and enjoyed the six courses and (in my case) the wine pairings. Everything was superb and the service was excellent as we spent three hours on a very leisurely evening before retiring around 10pm.

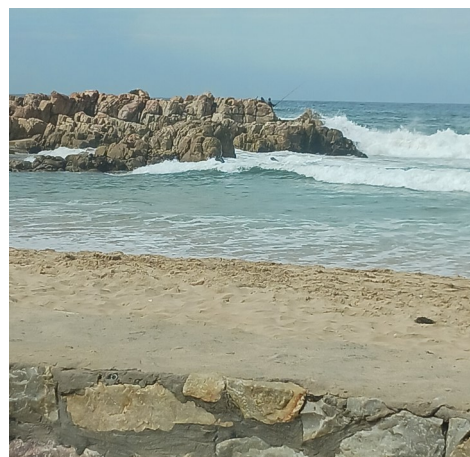
### ***Sunday March 24***

We were up about 8:30 and had breakfast in the restaurant. We then set out for our drive with the intention of visiting two spots in Knysna. However, we went straight through Knysna and on to Plettenberg Bay, which we remember from our first visit to South Africa in 2004 as the first place that we swam in the Indian Ocean!

No swimming today but we did get a coffee in town before sitting in the car and watching the huge breakers dashing the shore. We sat there (and maybe napped) for about an hour and then decided that it might be better to go straight back to Serendipity and do Knysna tomorrow. This we did, getting back soon after 3pm, which allowed Molly some knitting time and gave me a chance for a 3-mile walk - in extremely humid conditions. The temperature was still in the 80s but moderated from the 95F we saw on the way back to Wilderness. The day had been generally overcast but we had significant periods of clear and sometime sunny skies.

Tonight, we drove into Wilderness for dinner at Italia, a restaurant that we had enjoyed on our last visit here. We chose five Tapas dishes (four would have sufficed!) and a bottle of wine, with espresso and a whisky to finish – all for \$50!

There was another severe thunderstorm during our time at dinner, but it had stopped raining when we left, although thunderstorms were still in the area. We retired about 9:30 after a very relaxing day.



### ***Monday March 25***

After breakfast in the hotel, we drove to Knysna on a beautiful sunny day with temperatures in the seventies. We first visited The Heads for some spectacular views at the narrow rocky inlet where the Indian Ocean feeds the lagoon.



***The Heads at Knysna***



We then went to the Waterfront Mall (with a brief stop at the market in town) where we had a lovely, light lunch sitting outside near the harbor.

***Restaurant 34  
South — as far  
south of the  
Equator as Los  
Angeles is North***

We then did a little shopping and returned to the hotel for a short walk into Wilderness and a couple of hours of relaxation before another amazing dinner at Serendipity. Tonight was made even more special in that the menu was adjusted for us, as we had already dined there on the menu for this period. So, Molly was able to sample pigeon as a starter

(“excellent”) – shot earlier in the day by Rudolph – and we both had impala for the main course. In all, everything was excellent, and we were able to finish the evening in the lounge for after dinner drinks.

### **Tuesday March 26**

We had breakfast, finished packing and left Serendipity (with hopes to return) about 10:15 and started our round-a- bout journey to Oudtshoorn. We went about 100km west to Albertinia on the N2 (most of this road is expressway here) and did our Aloe shopping and had a light lunch before heading north.

We had to drive a little west to Riversdale, where we were able to take a north route via Garcia’s Pass to the R62 at Ladismith. The route north climbed through the pass and the scenery was magnificent before leveling off for about 25 miles to Ladismith. Here we joined the R62 (“the Wine Route”) that took us another 100km to Oudtshoorn. We stopped at the edge of town for a coffee and snack in a lovely, friendly place, and then drove non-stop to our destination. This, too, was extremely scenic and especially so as we descended for several miles into the valley. Then it was a straight shot to Oudtshoorn, where we had to take a minor detour to the hotel as the main street was closed for a couple of blocks. This was due to the “KKNK” (Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees) Festival being held in town. This is an arts and drama festival held annually and our hostess at Serendipity had told us of it and the fact that she was planning a visit. Apparently, this is held throughout Holy Week and is a very popular destination.

The **Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees** (Afrikaans for *Little Karoo National Arts Festival* and usually abbreviated to *KKNK*) is an Afrikaans language arts festival that takes place yearly in the South African town of Oudtshoorn. The festival includes both the visual and the performing arts and is officially recognized by the South African government as a national arts festival. Based on the number of visitors, it is also the largest South African arts festival.

We were able to get to our hotel and, once checked in, I went for a walk into town and back (3-miles) before we both went for dinner at Jemima’s. We have generally had great experiences here in the past and tonight was no exception. We had an excellent meal (Molly had ostrich) and everything, including dessert, wine, after-dinner drinks, was about \$95. Amazing value – and a very enjoyable 2 ½ hour experience.

### **Wednesday March 27**

We got up about 8:30 and drove to Nostalgie for a very nice breakfast sitting outside on a cool and overcast morning. Yesterday’s temperature had hovered around 70F but it was projected to be a little cooler (mid-sixties) today. We wanted to drive to Prince Albert but decided that it would be better to go via the N12, rather than our usual route over the unpaved Swartberg Pass. We felt that the possibility of rain in combination with our small car (with little clearance) might make for a less than easy drive. In addition, the clouds were very low over the mountains so the grand views that we have usually seen from the Pass would be less than ideal.



Nevertheless, our drive via the main road to de Rusk and then on to Prince Albert took us through some magnificent scenery and an amazing pass – much like Cheddar Gorge in England on a grander scale.

Once in Prince Albert, we took a nap (!) before a long lunch sitting outside at a lovely coffee shop/café on the main street which we have visited several times before. It was 3pm before we started the drive home and almost 4:40 before we arrived at the hotel. This left sufficient time for a walk before getting ready for dinner at Nostalgie.

We were seated outside (apparently that's all they have now) in a packed establishment. The seating was a little uncomfortable (bench style) but the food we had was excellent. We were both still a little full from the late lunch so had only main courses, but both were excellent. After a long period when we were left to finish our wine, we got dessert (also very good) and espresso and an after-dinner drink. All in all, it was a very pleasant evening and cost just a little over \$40 for an excellent meal.

#### **Thursday March 28**

We had an excellent breakfast at Jemima's, sitting outside on a beautiful morning. We then walked the rest of the way into town and did some shopping before returning to the hotel for a cup of tea. We also visited an area quite close to the hotel where many ostriches were out in the fields.



*Oudtshoorn's ostrich industry dates back to 1864. The main reason for the surge in Oudtshoorn's prosperity was the ostrich, whose feathers had become fashionable accessories among European nobility. Exports saw a sharp increase from the Cape Colony during the mid-1860s, which is generally accepted as the launch of the industry in South Africa. Between 1875 and 1880, ostrich prices reached up to 1,000 British pounds a pair. The value of ostrich feathers, per pound, equaled almost that of diamonds. The farmers of the region, realizing that ostriches were far more profitable than any other activity, ripped out their other crops and planted lucerne, which was used as feed for the ostriches. By 1877, feather auctions were also being held in Oudtshoorn itself. The rising wealth also finally allowed for the completion of the Dutch Reformed Church, which was opened on 7 June 1879. Such was the worth of the white ostrich feather, that it was dubbed "white gold".*

The day was so sunny and warm that we decided to head up the Swartberg Pass and go at least a little way on the unpaved road that leads to Prince Albert. We weren't sure how rutted and rough the road might be and how well our small car would handle it.

At first, we made it up the steep grade very well and, little by little, convinced ourselves that it wasn't too bad, and the car might make it. Eventually we reached the summit (almost halfway), at which point I had anticipated that Molly would want to turn round and head back to the hotel. However, she was happy to continue. Going down the north side, with its many switchbacks, was a little more challenging than I had remembered, and the road was in very poor shape in many areas. But we eventually (1 ½ hours) covered the 20 Km (my odometer registered 24) and we were on the paved road just outside Prince Albert. From there it was another 90-minute drive home on the route we had followed yesterday. Today, with the sun shining

(it was almost 90F as we approached Oudtshoorn) the mountains were even more spectacular.



After a very enjoyable drive, I took a shorter walk before getting ready for dinner – at Jemima’s once again. It was another great meal in which we shared a huge tapas plate for two followed by dessert and after-dinner drinks. We had the same waitress who had served us on Tuesday evening, and she made quite a fuss about our return and apparently insisted on being our server. It was a nice way to end this visit to Oudtshoorn and we can’t wait to return.

### ***Friday March 29 (Good Friday)***

We checked out of the hotel before 9:30 and went to Jemima’s for breakfast. Our waitress (the same as yesterday) remembered our tea preferences and we had another nice chat with her while enjoying a good breakfast.

At 10:30 we set out on our drive to Robertson, about 200 miles west on Route 62. The drive was extremely pleasant and scenic as we were now moving into the heart of the wine country, as well as the rich fruit and farmland of the wide valley between the two huge mountain ranges. We made one stop at the Blue Cow in Barrydale – a somewhat iconic dining landmark in this part of South Africa. It is quite rustic and showing its age, but the food is good, and the service is efficient.

Once in Robertson, we easily found our hotel and checked in. The hotel is small (It is called the Robertson Small Hotel) but the room is large and very well-equipped. We made a reservation for dinner in the dining room here, so we don’t have any more driving for the day. I went for a three-mile walk before getting ready for dinner. I had one little “scare” in that I thought the pedestrian gate and the drive-in gate were locked, but after trying both and returning to the pedestrian gate (they are quite a distance apart at opposite ends of the hotel grounds) I realized that this gate was not locked – merely bolted on the inside which I could reach. Panic over! Excellent meal.

### ***Beautiful Dutch Reformed Church near our hotel***

At 7:30, we went to the hotel restaurant for dinner and were a little disappointed to see a very limited menu. However, we both found starters we liked, and we both had



the line fish for our main course, which was excellent. With a lovely bottle of wine, good desserts and after-dinner drinks, it ended up being a two-hour plus.

### **Saturday March 30**

We had breakfast sitting outside on the patio of the hotel restaurant on a beautiful clear sunny morning, with temperatures predicted to get near 90F. We then started our drive around the relatively short, but very scenic Robertson wine route, which we have enjoyed from Montagu several times. We extended the drive by doing a larger loop that took us to the very busy town of Swellendam, with its magnificent Dutch Reformed church, before we stopped for lunch at the Van Loveren Estate. Here we both had wine and



food tastings (not “pairings” so we could sample in any order) – mine the six-wine “Master” and Molly’s the four-wine Chardonnay grouping. We both enjoyed our selections (as did the group at the next table!) and spent close to 1 ½ hours there before the short drive back to

the hotel. It was now 90F, so I decided to forego my walk and took a nap in the room.

Tonight, we went to the Four Cousins restaurant, about ½ mile from the hotel. We were surprised to see that it was almost empty (Saturday evening, Holiday weekend) and more of a “family” place than we had expected. Nevertheless, we enjoyed sharing tempura prawns and a pizza, with a bottle of wine. Not haute cuisine, but enjoyable.

When we got back to the hotel we sat outside and ordered nightcaps. After a



while, we were joined by a local (Cape Town) couple who had been at the same restaurant and were quite apologetic about a mini shouting match that had occurred there. Obviously, it was not their fault, but they were concerned about the impression made on foreign tourists. We had not been overly concerned about it, but it prompted a very nice conversation which lasted for over an hour. After they left, we chatted with another couple (two guys) who also live in Cape Town but traveled widely. One of them was originally from France. Again, we had a very pleasant conversation, such that it was almost 11pm by the time we retired.

**Sunday March 31 (Easter Sunday)**

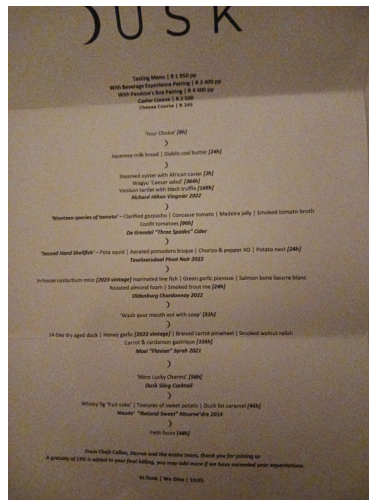
We had another good breakfast in the hotel, finished packing and checked out shortly before 11am. We arrived at our car just as one of the hotel employees was finishing washing it! Apparently, this is part of the service for guests.

We then started our drive to Stellenbosch on another beautiful morning. After only 30 minutes driving, the temperature was in the mid-eighties, and we saw a high later of 90F. We were now in the heart of the wine country and the wide valleys were filled with vineyards and other fruit crops that extended from the road to part way up the distant mountains.

Eventually, we climbed part way up one of the ranges as we took the pass that led to the ritzy town of Franschoek, where we stopped for a light lunch sitting outside in the now-moderated temperature resulting from a stiff breeze in this valley.



We strolled along the main street for a while before completing the drive to Stellenbosch, where we arrived before 3pm. The hotel is part of the Marriott chain and we had been upgraded to a very spacious suite.



I went for a short walk into the center of town (almost deserted) before we got ready for dinner at Dusk restaurant, only a mile from the hotel. This was a seven-course tasting menu, but with a difference. The food and service were excellent, but it seemed that there was as much emphasis on presentation (on the plate, in the written menu, and by

the staff) which made for a very pleasant and entertaining evening. As noted, the food was excellent, and we were in that dining experience for three hours.

### ***Monday April 1 (Easter Monday)***

Today is a public holiday so we had no idea what to expect as we drove into the middle of town after breakfast at the hotel. Once at the main green, we parked (no fee as it was a holiday) and walked into the shopping/café area. At first, the streets were rather quiet, but the shops were open, and as the morning wore on everywhere seemed to get busier – especially the cafes. We shopped for a while and then stopped for a drink – which turned into two and lasted about 90 minutes. The weather was about perfect, not too hot or humid and perfect for watching the world go by.

***City Hall Stellenbosch (right). Almost all buildings in the town are painted white and most are in the Dutch Colonial style as the Information Center (below). [I am sure that was not its original use!]***



We shopped a little more after our stop and then returned to the hotel about 2pm. I went for a short walk and then we relaxed until dinner time.

Tonight, we had planned to take an Uber to the Delaire Graffe Estate (about 15 minutes' drive) for another tasting menu experience. Unfortunately, I had made some mistakes in making the booking online and there was no booking! Luckily, I had checked before we left and called to double-check, and we were still able to find a restaurant open and available in town.

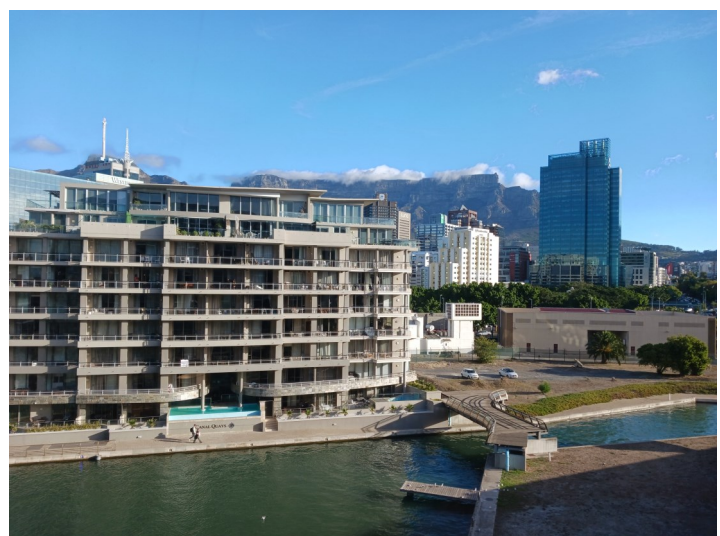
The restaurant (Helena's) is part of a boutique hotel, and the dining room(s) are unusually decorated. The food and service were very good, and we both enjoyed our meals – and were the last to leave about 10pm.

### ***Tuesday April 2***

We were up before nine and we decided to pack and check-out before going to breakfast at a lovely café just a couple of blocks from the hotel.

The drive to Cape Town was short and the traffic was quite light, so we were at our hotel by noon, having missed just one turn on the approach to our destination (we made many more the last time we were here!) We were able to check in and I went for a walk along the canal that we can see from our room and in less than a mile, I was in the V&A Waterfront complex. I strolled around a little before heading back to the room.

***The view of Table Mountain from our room***



Tonight, we took an Uber to the Hussar Grill overlooking Camps Bay. It was dark, so we didn't see much from the restaurant but had a very nice meal. The place was much bigger than we had remembered from our previous visit in 2022 and was very crowded when we first arrived. The tables emptied as we continued our meal (excellent service at a leisurely pace) and we were one of only a few diners by the time we left at 10pm for the short ride home. We had a very nice young waitress and another, very jolly server who kept visiting our table to comment on our dress, give a "massage", or just have a laugh. She made pretend moves to Molly to take me with her, until Molly said "Put him down, you don't know where he's been". It's not clear whether my new friend had heard that expression before, but it prompted a big laugh and more hugs as we left.

### ***Wednesday April 3 (Christopher's Birthday)***

We had an extremely lazy day today. After breakfast in the hotel, we took an Uber to the V&A Waterfront where we shopped, strolled, and had two drink/snack breaks. It was a lovely sunny, warm day and the area was not too crowded, so we were able to stroll, sit and watch the world go by. Lazy – but great.



***Everyone uses this to capture their visit to Cape Town***



Tonight, we ate at the rather formal Dash restaurant in the Queen Victoria hotel, a 10-minute Uber ride away from the hotel. When we arrived, we were surprised to see the main dining room almost empty. It did get a few more patrons a little later and the quietness meant that we had excellent service and some good conversations with our waitress. The meal and wine were very good and we were in the restaurant for over two hours.

***Happy Birthday,  
Christopher!***

**Thursday April 4**

After breakfast, we started our drive to the Cape of Good Hope. We had a beautiful drive on a sunny morning as far as Simon's Town, where we stopped for coffee. From there, it was a short drive to the entrance to the National Park – with a surprisingly high entrance fee (for non-nationals) of \$40 per person.



### *The drive down the Cape Peninsula*



From the entrance it was about a 20-minute drive to the Cape, where the weather was overcast, and we saw a few minor showers. We watched the crowds clamoring for position to get photographs taken (no need for us as we had done that in the



past) and admired the rocky coastline.



### *Cape of Good Hope and Cape Point*

We then drove to Cape Point, here I took the ½ mile walk up to the lighthouse and Molly did a little shopping. By now, the rain had stopped but it was still overcast and very windy – especially near the lighthouse!





We then drove back to the hotel (no missteps despite no GPS navigation), arriving back at 4pm. The most surprising aspect of the day – and a little disappointing – was that we saw absolutely no baboons. On past visits we have always seen dozens. Why this was, we don't know.

Tonight, we dined at the Conservatory in Constantia. We have eaten there several times in the past when it was sometimes called the Greenhouse, and at that time it was a tasting menu. Now it is A La Carte but still has a good menu and excellent food and service. We were there about 2 ½ hours and came home by Uber in a light drizzle.

### **Friday April 5**

After breakfast, we took an Uber to the Waterfront where we bought tickets for the Hop On/Hop Off bus. There are several routes covered by the ticket but we chose to take the longer drive that took us out of the city and on to the Kirstenbosch Gardens, Hout Bay and then up the extremely scenic Atlantic Coast to Camps Bay. Here we had a very nice pizza lunch and a short stroll before taking the bus back to the Waterfront.





From here we took another Uber home – but had to seek help getting a phone signal so that we could order it!

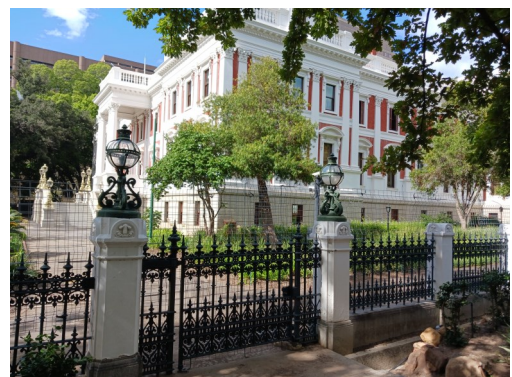
Tonight, we ate at Elgr, a restaurant on one of the main streets in the city. We had eaten here on our last trip and noted that we had enjoyed it but had little recol-

lection of the menu. We entered at street level and went down only a few steps but the ambiance inside was of a basement jazz club. It was a much younger crowd and seemed to be bustling all evening.

We were given the menu, most of which we didn't recognize but our waitress told us we could get the "chef's choice", a three-course offering and one that we didn't have to make any decisions. We opted for this and first received a charcuterie board, followed by a very nice salad accompanied by another dish that we tried but were not enthused about. Finally, the main course was pork with several vegetables and accompaniments. We were quite full after this but managed to share a dessert, followed by coffee and an after-dinner drink. Altogether, it was a very nice meal and an unusual assortment of dishes.

### **Saturday April 6**

We had breakfast in the hotel and then I went for a walk into the center of town where I "visited" the cathedral, the Houses of Parliament, the Company Gardens and a couple of street markets. I also watched two groups performing (singing and dancing) at different locations.





### *Last look at Cape Town....*

#### *For this visit!*

Later, Molly and I took an Uber to the V&A Waterfront, where we did a little more shopping and strolling and enjoyed a very leisurely lunch before coming back to the hotel about 3pm.

Tonight, we took an Uber to Camps Bay and had a very good dinner at Bilbao, a restaurant we had enjoyed on our last visit. Tonight, however, we had to sit inside (as opposed to on the balcony with great ocean views) as the wind was very strong and certainly not conducive to al fresco dining. The food and service were excellent, however, and it was a great way to end our latest visit to Cape Town and South Africa.



#### ***Sunday April 7***

We had breakfast in the hotel again on another very windy day with the threat of heavy rain later. We had requested a late checkout so had little to do until late afternoon except pack and get to the airport. I walked to the V&A Waterfront area again and found an alternative way back – all the time battling the strong wind gusts – but no rain so far.

We checked out at 4pm and drove to the V&A Waterfront parking area (underground) and went into the covered mall to find a restaurant for an early dinner. We went in the first that we came across – Karibu, South African cuisine. We chose to share one of the daily specials, a meat dish including samples (quite large) of impala, kudu, springbok, beef, ostrich, and warthog. We both thought that it was very good, although we were unable to finish the beef.

We left the waterfront, drove to the airport and returned the rental car (without a hitch) and were soon checked in for our overnight flight to Amsterdam. This left on time (11:30pm) and, although it was quite bumpy most of the way, we both got about 7 hours of sleep on the 11-hour journey. We made a relatively easy transfer in Amsterdam (quite a walk) and spent perhaps an hour in the KLM lounge before our 7-hour flight to New York.

We arrived in JFK a little earlier than scheduled and were glad of the extra time as transfers in JFK often require going through Security (which we did). We were also lucky enough to be there at the time of the eclipse, and although it wasn't total at this location, we were able to get a decent view.

Our flight to Cincinnati was uneventful (we slept again) and we arrived on time. We picked up the rental car and arrived home about 10pm, 36 hours after leaving the hotel in Cape Town, following a very relaxing and enjoyable trip.

