

South Africa

Birds & Wine Tour in the Cape

Friday 01 October – Sunday 17 October 2010

Leaders: Peter Lawson and Mariana Delport

2010 Cost **£3,899** single room supplement **£290**



We have visited the beautiful Cape on numerous occasions for birds and wildflowers and have now devised a tour and itinerary, which is a little different. The Cape is well-known for superb quality wines and so what better combination than a Birds and Wine tour which explores the wine routes in this southern tip of Africa. We will cover a diverse variety of habitats for birds, at a time of the year when the Cape wildflowers are still looking great. We will find a large number of the Cape's endemic birds and visit some beautiful reserves. Highlights may well include the African Penguins at Boulder's Beach, Black Harriers at Langebaan or perhaps Cape Sugarbird in the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens. This itinerary has been carefully planned to avoid long driving distances and thus give ample time to visit many beautiful wineries to learn about and sample the best of the Cape's fine wines. The cost of the holiday even includes some wine with the evening meals. Why not send for a previous tour report and read all about this unique holiday?



Boulder's Beach

ITINERARY

Days 1 to 4

We leave London on an evening scheduled flight and we arrive into Cape Town early next morning where we meet our guide, Peter Lawson. We then transfer to Noordhoek on the Cape Peninsula driving through the suburbs of Cape Town, skirting Table Mountain on our way. Our base for the first three days of the tour will be a private guesthouse, Afton Grove. The owner is a keen birder as well as an expert on Cape wine. No doubt they will have some good and unusual wine for us to taste in the evenings. During our time here we visit some good birding spots such as Kommetjie for Bank, Cape and Crowned Cormorants, African Black Oystercatcher and others. The African Penguin rookery at Boulder's Beach is a must and so is Cape Point for Cape Siskin, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Peregrine Falcon and Cape Gannet. There should still be a good display of flowers and we can look for

various *Proteas*, *Leucospermums*, *Leucodendrons* and *Ericas*. There are a number of good wine estates on the Peninsula, which we can visit as well. These include Steenberg, Buitenverwachting, Klein Constantia and Groot Constantia. The latter is a must as it has cellar tours and wine tasting. Apart from this it is one of the oldest wineries and the closest to Cape Town city. Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens can be visited before the wine tasting at Groot Constantia and here we should see Cape Sugarbird, Cape Francolin, Karoo Prinia and hopefully Sweet Waxbill and Red-chested Sparrowhawk. In the evenings we will dine at excellent restaurants close by and indulge in some superb Cape wines.

Days 5 to 7

We leave Afton Grove early and drive along the shore of False Bay to the Strandfontein Water Treatment Works. The extensive settlements ponds and dams form a wetland reserve of international repute. Waterbirds are plentiful and

we could see Great White Pelican, Greater Flamingo, Black-necked Grebe, Maccoa Duck, Cape Shoveler and numerous others.

We then head for Stellenbosch and the Middelvlei winery to taste some fine wines and enjoy a ploughman's platter lunch. Should time permit we can also visit Neethlingshof and/or Jordan wineries, before we move on to Franschhoek where we stay three nights. This beautiful Cape valley has some fine restaurants, which we could experience such as Rueden's or Le Bon Vivant. There are excellent wine estates in the area such as La Motte and Haute Cabriere. Perhaps wine tasting at Rickety Bridge would go down well. Nearby Paarl is famous for the birth of the Afrikaans language and is the home of well-known Fairview wines. There is also good birding at the Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve and the Paarl Bird Sanctuary, which is in actual fact the local water treatment works. Here we could see Lesser Flamingo, African Black Duck,

Southern Pochard, African Purple Swamp-hen, South African Shelduck, Malachite Kingfisher and other waterbirds. Paarl Mountain has the rare Protea Seedeater and other fynbos specials such as Cape Grassbird, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Black Saw-wing, Cape Batis, Fiscal Flycatcher and White-backed Mousebird.

Days 8 to 10

We leave Paarl and travel via Worcester and Robertson to McGregor, where we stay for three nights. This area is on the edge of the Karoo and is home to many dry habitat birds such as Karoo Chat, Rufous-eared Warbler, Double-banded Courser, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Fairy Flycatcher and Namaqua Warbler. Not far from Robertson the small Dassieshock Nature Reserve will give us another chance at Protea Seedeater if missed at Paarl. This is also a good place to find Victorin's Warbler, another Cape endemic. Other birds we may see here include Greater Double-collared and Amethyst Sunbirds, African Olive-Pigeon, Tambourine Dove and Ground Woodpecker. Nearby wine estates include Graham Beck, Springfield, Bon Courage and Zandvliet, which is famous for Shiraz wine as well as their race horse stud.

Days 11 to 13

We move north to Ceres today where we stay for three nights. We will visit Tulbagh to sample wines from Rijks Wine Estate and Tweejongegezellen. Our guest house has their own restaurant and a choice of fine wines for us. Birding will be in the Tanqua Karoo and we will leave early and take a picnic breakfast with us. The Karoopoort area has good birding and two specials we will be looking for are the elusive Cinnamon-breasted Warbler and Karoo Eremomela. There will be plenty more as well here.

Days 14 & 15

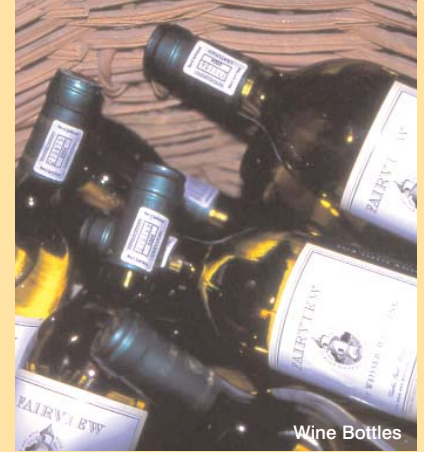
We move to the west coast and stay for our final two nights in the village of Langebaan. On the way we will drive down the spectacular and very scenic Bain's Kloof Pass where there is a good chance to see Cape Rockjumper, one of the Cape specials that only occurs in a few places in the Cape mountains. We then head for the little

village of Darling where we visit Groote Post Winery. Here we will experience wine tasting at the beautifully restored Cape Dutch Klaver Valley Homestead. Our destination will be reached in the late afternoon where we will be made welcome with a glass of sherry on our arrival and, of course there will be wine with dinner in the evening as usual.

The following day will be spent in the nearby West Coast National Park, where we can take a picnic lunch. This unique National Park surrounds the enormous Langebaan lagoon, which is tidal. There are a couple of hides in strategic positions and if the tide is right for us there will be plenty to see at close range. Countless waders frequent this lagoon and at this time of year some will still be in breeding plumage as they would have recently arrived from their breeding grounds in the Arctic. We should see Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers, Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Little Stint, Red Knot and many more. On the salt marshes we will see White-fronted, Kittlitz's, Chestnut-banded and Three-banded Plovers. The surrounding Strandveld vegetation also offers good birding and we could see Black Harrier, the colourful Bokmakierie, Grey-winged Francolin, Grey Tit, Cape Penduline Tit, Large-billed and Karoo Larks and others. The plants may include many daisies in flower and the families will include Arctosis, Grielum, Gazania and Ursinia. This area will be a fitting end to the trip, even though there are no wineries in the vicinity. However, we will not be without wine this evening!

Days 16 & 17

After breakfast we leave for Cape Town International Airport to catch our evening flight. On the way a detour will give us a stunning view of Table Mountain over Table Bay and Robben Island should also be seen. The final bird for the list will probably be House Crow as some of these alien introductions frequent the airport. The bird log can be updated at the airport whilst waiting for the flight and free Cape wines should be on hand during the journey home. We arrive into London the following morning.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Depart London
- Days 2-4** Noordhoek, Cape Peninsula
- Days 5-7** Franschhoek
- Days 8-10** McGregor
- Days 11-13** Ceres
- Days 14-15** Langebaan
- Day 16** Depart Cape Town
- Day 17** Arrive London

Party Size

Maximum of 11 clients (two leaders with more than six clients).

Accommodation

Comfortable accommodation in twin/double and single rooms, with private facilities in lodges, hotels and National Park restcamps.










Transport

By minivans

Includes

All flights, meals, accommodation, transport, entry fees, services of the leaders, airport taxes and tips.

Gradings

-  Good
-  260
-  Warm
-  Moderate
-  Special
-  Moderate
-  Good
-  Easy
-  Scheduled

