

THIS WEEKEND

Stay on a remote guest farm, eat in Vic Falls, take time out in Tulbagh.

STAY HERE • EAT THIS • TAKE FIVE • TOWN OF THE MONTH

STAY HERE



NICK DALL

MATJIESVLEI COTTAGES, CALITZDORP

Matjiesvlei might only be 16 km from Calitzdorp, but this guest farm will take you back at least a century. Accessed via a winding gravel pass, the cottages are surrounded by mountains so the only passing traffic is from goats, cows and the odd child with a *draadkarretjie*.

There's no cellphone reception or TV, but there is electricity and all of the cottages are well equipped and tastefully decorated.

Take your mountain bike, your hiking boots and your swimming costume and settle in for some old-fashioned R&R.

Accommodation: Die Stalle (sleeps six) and Die Bokwagtershuis (sleeps four) are both at the heart of the valley, with 360-degree views, easy access to the farm dam and fantastic braai areas. Middelplaas (sleeps four) and Die Skuur (sleeps eight) are 2 km away on the banks of the Gamka River. Die Skuur is more basic, dorm-style accommodation. Depending on the season, you might have to share the space with pallets of tomatoes or a tractor!

Things to do: Visit the small museum near Die Bokwagtershuis, which tells the story of the valley. The Calitzdorp region produces

some of South Africa's best port: Visit Boplaas (☎ 044 213 3326) and De Krans (☎ 044 213 3314) for tastings. Also drive the Groenfontein route (53 km) at the base of the Swartberg for views of red sandstone hills and quirky stops like the Kruisrivier Gallery (☎ 044 213 3100) and the Groenfontein Toy Project (☎ 072 118 5008). Back in Calitzdorp, peek inside the Dutch Reformed church, which has a magnificent organ (☎ 044 213 3311).

How to get there: Coming from Ladismith along the R62, turn left 2 km after you cross the Gamka River (5,5 km before you reach

Calitzdorp). From there it's a 7 km drive to a T-junction: Turn right for Die Stalle and Die Bokwagtershuis and left for the other cottages.

GPS: S33.443362 E21.630417 (Skuur & Middelplaas); S33.447458 E21.651295 (Die Stalle & Bokwagtershuis)

Rates: Die Stalle, Bokwagtershuis, Middelplaas R320 – R360 per adult; Die Skuur R240 per adult. Children under 12 pay half-price.

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– Nick Dall