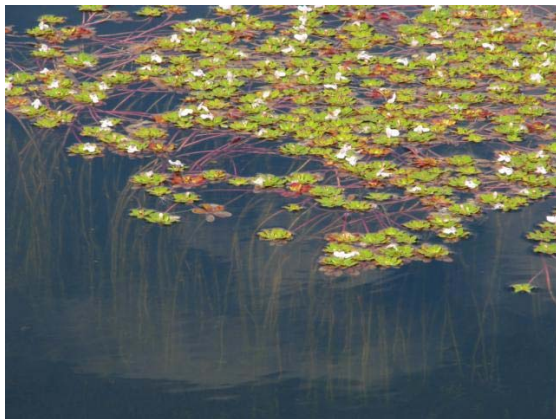


Dear friends,

Today the mile recorder showed over 7'000km and we still are not further north than the Zim border – but very much to the west. Considering the total distance from Maseru to Laufenburg which is approximately 14'000 km, we already have made 50% of our trip. Nevertheless, yesterday we arrived in Windhoek/ Namibia only, still 13'999 km from Laufenburg.

In the last month we mainly toured around South Africa, which we left two days ago through the border post within the Kgalagadi National Park. But not to forget the 3 wonderful days at Selabathebe National Park after successfully buying new shoes in Bloemfontein for Monika's feet.



We think this is the most beautiful national park in Lesotho and the only one where you can rent the whole vacation residence of a former Prime Minister for 300 Maloti a day. So we had to relax in PM Jonathan's lodge for these days.

The repair of the clutch in Grahamstown was successful, and since then the car is running smoothly like a new one. Grahamstown is a nice university town with many old buildings and we really had plenty of time to walk around.



After Grahamstown we went to Addo National Park, which is famous for its elephants. Of course when we arrive nothing was normal. The attraction was two lions, too lazy and too tired to consider their surroundings. So, not at all interested in Martin taking pictures.



But, if awake, they really can look frightening – does anybody know whether they ever jumped onto a car???



Later we saw some of these boring elephants, the park is famous for. The elephants were not impressed by all the cars on the road and crossed the road between them.



After Addo we were ready for some landscape, nothing dangerous at all. So we decided to drive up the Swartberg pass and into Die Hel. That is Afrikaans for the hell. A place people may visit if they are not sure about future availability of space in haven (well, that is Martin's own interpretation).



Well, the highway to hell is a gravel road – not too bad, but it is cut into a very deep slope. Martin was driving and Monika was praying that no other car would come in the opposite direction. But as usual in the hell, prayers don't work, other cars had to cross – fortunately they were on the outer side, so no problem at all. The picture only shows the lower part, which is not as steep. At the top Monika could not look down and

therefore not take a picture.

The hell showed from her best side: A lovely green valley with a small river and nicely restored old farmhouses for the odd tourist to relax.



Up to the sixties Die Hel only was accessible on foot or mules. With the access road constructed everybody left the valley... - according to our experience, we cannot understand this decision. The Hell is quite a nice place, maybe the best between earth and heaven if you're equipped with a six-pack of beer and a bottle of Pinotage.

We went on. To a strange area in Western Cape called the wine lands. The farmers grow grapes, white ones and red ones. Wonderful, tasty, sweet grapes. Instead of selling them, they process them in order to avoid the wonderful fruits to spoil. That's why this area is called wine lands - the land of rotten grapes. We wanted to know this strange culture a little better. We went to a winery famous for Pinotage (Maybe you remember if rotten grape, then Pinotage). We went to a wine tasting: white, reds like shiraz, cabernet, merlot, tinta barocco, blends, etc. – the usual sort of different wines, until we came to Pinotage. Our favourite, must be good. The guy told us it has a taste of (of course rotten grapes) plus cappuccino mixed with decaf espresso mixed with an unusual Nescafe – thus must be excellent. In order to really enjoy this great experience, we had to eat a fudge, then drink some of this decaf grapes and we could experience the full flavour of this rare wine. Pinotage and meat, cheese, nothing – all ok, but with a fudge? Let's go back to real rotten grape, preferably Pinotage, without decaf Nescafe and sweets. If you want to experience it – it is Diemersfontein Pinotage, available at Checker's in major South African towns, also outside the wine lands.



After Martin's shock what all can be done with those wonderful grapes we went on to something drier, the great Karoo, starting with the Tankwa Karoo. Former farmland that was converted into a national park - well, those poor sheep probably did not have very much to eat.

A wonderful area with lots of birds and some wildlife.



What remained from the former farmhouses was renovated and turned out to be very nice accommodation – however, we could not get the donkey heater working and the shower in the morning was very cold!

Coming out of the park we had some minor problems. One of the brand new (!!!!) tires burst. Changing tires is no problem, but finding an appropriate tire was quite a problem.



To solve the problem, there are specialised companies. One of them is SupaQuick. As the name pretends, they do not take too much time to solve your problem – once they know what to do. On calling SupaQuick in Upington, immediately they understood that we need a tyre – probably they do not sell anything else than tyres. They could even find the desired brand and called back

within a few minutes to confirm that it is next to available – meaning not exactly the model, but a better one at a cheaper price. Great, only after some research on internet we understood, that the tyre was perfect for car racing and shopping trips to Sandton Mall, but less suitable for Namibia's gravel roads. Next morning the Supaquick guy in Upington admitted (after consulting his colleague, his 2nd girlfriend and the local politicians) that he made a mistake. He'll organise immediately another one, another brand, suitable for gravel roads, correct dimensions until the next day. After arriving the next day in Upington in SupaQuick he repeated supaquickly his order, ensuring us that we would get the tyre by tomorrow at 9 am. At 9 am this famous day he phoned us to inform that it would take another day, week, month or year. We bought it finally in a small town in Namibia within a few hours.



Well, anyway we had to leave Upington without 2nd spare wheel for Kgalagadi National Park. Fortunately we managed to get some accommodation during the ZA Easter holiday and we did not want to leave those reservations for somebody else. We spent 5 days there, drove all the roads and looked at each and every waterhole of the park – no lion but plenty of other animals, including a “nice” and fat puff adder the last evening curled up in front of the entrance door to our bedroom, brr!!!



Very nice – except the puff adder – and good accommodation and food.



On 4th April we finished our long lasting relationship with South Africa – it's not a divorce, rather consider it a new girlfriend waiting on the other side of the fence. We crossed the lonely border at Mata-Mata into Namibia, looking forward to experiencing some more adventures and getting some guys and girls jealous. This will be part of our next edition.