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THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2018

Wine Concepts Craft Festival



This new festival was held last Friday night between 5 and 8 pm and was well attended. There are so many new craft beers vodkas, even Rum, Whisky and Brandies being made in the Cape. Mike Bampfield Duggan decided it was time for us to sample some of them. We were delighted to be invited, but worried about tasting lots of alcohols. Uber was very popular indeed that evening I decided just to sample beers and Lynne did one very interesting rum, she is not good with high tack after beer. We hope to taste one at a time in the future. It was a lot of fun; these crafters are very committed to their products

A brewery that has taken the Cape by storm is the CBC Brewery at Spice Route in Paarl, and run by Paulaner-trained German brewmaster Wolfgang Koedel - we especially like its Imperial IPA



A novel name for a Cape Gin: A Mari Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean Gins. We like the label and the bottle very much. Hope to soon



From Boplaas in Calitzdorp, a Cape Gin, A Cape Pink Gin, A Craft Whisky and an 8 Year old Potstill Brandy made by Carel and Ma Net



A close up of the bottles



From Cederberg Winery, Boggom Beers: a light and well flavoured Lager, a biscuity and citrus zing Blonde Ale which Lynne really enjoyed, and an IPA with granadilla notes, nicely fruity and not too bitter. We know it's good with food, we have ordered it in restaurants



The winemaker having fun on the Cederberg stand



James Copeland was showing his Copeland Rum which is selling well. Lynne found creamy toffee and pineapple on the rum with of licorice, salt, chocolate and fennel leaves



He made us a great sour cocktail with rum, sugar syrup, fresh lime juice - what a difference that makes - coconut water and no much ice. Absolutely superb



The lads from KCB, Karoo Craft Beers, which is actually made in Paarl. We liked these very much, they are real beers, with not added, skilfully made



Lynne really enjoyed tasting the Kudu Lager and the Jackal Indian Pale Ale



Our friends Carol and Roddy Mills. Carol makes the Kaapse Liqueurs and we really like her new packaging. Her Limoncello has all been authentic



There were quite a few interesting sounding mixers on show, and several new tonics. Nicole Kuhnert showed the Pura range, which includes Soda Cucumber Lime, Soda Seville Orange, a Soda Cranberry, Soda Lemon Elderflower and Soda Pomegranate, all to add flavour length to your alcohol of choice



Mark McCarthy of Inverroche Gin giving Carol a taste of one of the three gins. They also have a Ltd Edition Blackstrap Rum and Edition Botanique Liqueur



Another of our favourites: Devils Peak Brewery - their King's Blockhouse IPA is one of Lynne's best beers



And young Jonathan Gilloway was punting The Italian Job, who showed four of their five Le Grande Cinque Italian sounding be Famiglia Pilsner, Forza IPA, Amore Amber Ale, & Amicizia Weiss. The Forza was a bit cloudy but enjoyable. They are made by an I family from Cape Town



The Woodstock Brewery has beers with slightly louche names, Happy Pills, Hazy Daze Belgian Witbier, Pot Belge Belgian Amb, Californicator IPA, Rhythm Stick English Pale Ale, Mr Brownstone Hazelnut Brown Ale, Sugarman Belgian Quad and a fruity Bom Imperial IPA. These beers are flavoured with food extracts, not something we are fond of. The Hazelnut one smells and tastes l Cadbury's Hazelnut chocolate. If that is your thing....



The Darling Brewery is always worth visiting when you visit Darling and doing a tasting. We did it last year, very fine beers



Steel Cut Spirits showed their Sugarbird Fynbos Gin and with it a new Tonic called Barker and Quin. Lynne loved it, as it is not as some of the newer tonics available locally and has a good dose of lemon, so you don't have to go searching for a slice in desperation. Perfect if you have a "dry" month but want to pretend you are drinking a G & T



Marine Point, whom we usually see promoting wine, sampling a beer



All the alcohols, mixers and beers are available from Wine Concepts in Newlands or in Kloof Street. This was a great idea and we it should be repeated. But make sure you book an Uber home or get your mom to come and fetch you if you are going to sample than a mouthful or two of beer, and some of the hard stuff

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2015

Akasha Mountain Retreat - The beauty of nature

When Chris and his wife Elana arrived we followed them through the outskirts of Heidelberg and then up the dirt road approximately 12 kilometres, climbing all the time. It's a good road and you don't need a 4x4 . We came to the top of the hill a countryside opened up before us. The hills slope down steeply towards the Duiwenhoks Dam and then climb again beyond it to the far Langeberg mountains. You can see no houses, no people, only nature.

The garden is full of birds who come to feed on the ripe mulberries and later there will be figs and other delicacies for them.
Mouse birds play on the lawn, rolling around in fights for the females



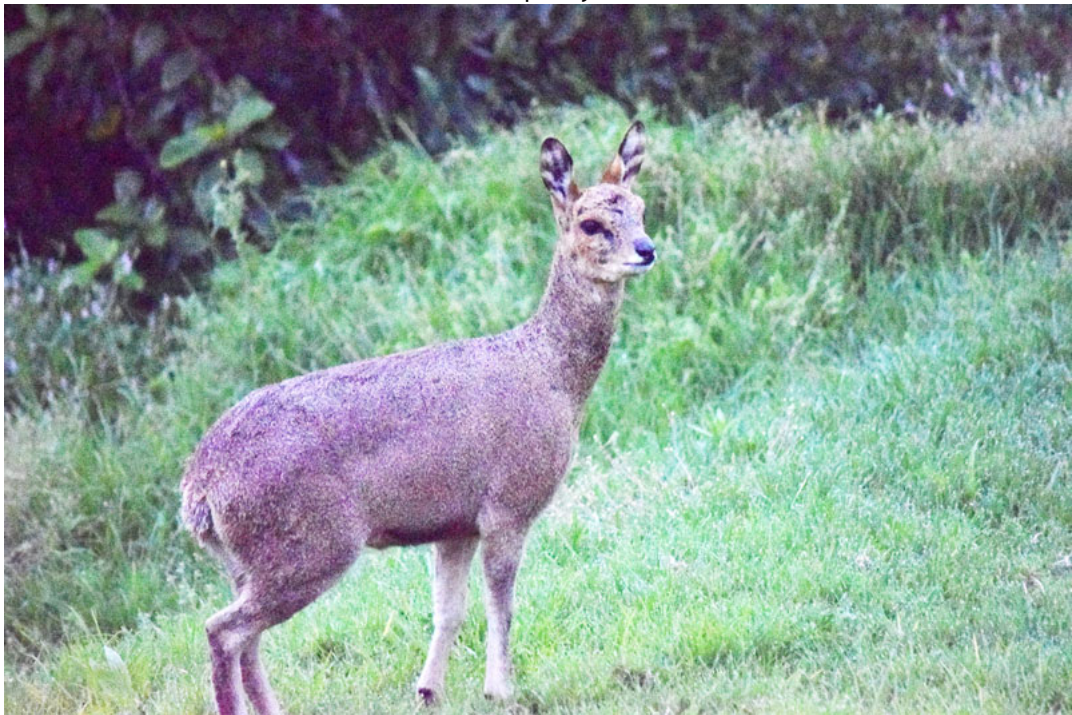
The early morning mist



And the early light on the dam is like a mirror



Lynne woke very early on our first morning, peeped through the curtain and found two of these klipspringers grazing on the grass in front of our window. She quickly roused John who fetched his camera. They did not seem to be bothered by us watching, but did so quickly



After those ripe mulberries?



Chris arrived at about 11 and took us on a small veld walk to see the local plants and birds



The wild flowers are in bloom in October



There is this interesting 'kraal', possibly a shelter or ceremonial site on the farm; there are two interconnecting circles and the s are covered in lichen which must mean that they have been here many years.



Lynne took close-up photographs of the many tiny flowers in the veld



You can sit amongst the proteas













A Pagoda *Mimetes* attracts lots of birds



We sat down on the ground and watched for a while amongst the Pagodas and the pincushion proteas



Singing sugarbird



Far away on the top of the hill you can see cattle grazing under the trees



It is the end of the season for these Waboom trees, which the birds love



The river below the dam



Lynne spotted this baby kingfisher on a branch overhanging the river. It didn't seem frightened at all, just interested in us. It looks like it has just fledged. We identified it as the Malachite Kingfisher



It rained heavily that night and this is the misty sunset, warning of the wet day to come



It is a beautiful sunset



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