



CONTENTS

The Most Luxurious Train in the World

GEORGE JOURNEY

Pages 2 - 6	Timetable & Journey George
-------------	----------------------------





The Most Luxurious Train in the World

ITINERARY

GEORGE ITINERARY

FRIDAY	CAPE TOWN TO GEORGE
09h20	Depart from Cape Town Station, Platform 23. Guests may freshen up in their suites before joining fellow travellers in the midway Lounge car or Observation carriage at the rear of the train.
13h00	Lunch is served as we head towards Worcester.
15h30	Arrive in Ashton where, time permitting, enjoy a wine tasting excursion at Zandvliet Wine Estate.
17h20	The train departs Ashton en route to Voorbaai.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
01h20	The train arrives in Voorbaai.
SATURDAY	
07h00 – 08h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s.
09h00	The train arrives in George.

SATURDAY	GEORGE TO CAPE TOWN
12h30	Board the Pride of Africa. Guests may freshen up in their suites before joining fellow travellers in the midway Lounge car or Observation carriage at the rear of the train.
13h30	The train departs from George as lunch is served in the dining car/s.
18h30	Arrive in Riversdale where we will be stationary till 20h00. This is good opportunity to take a shower or bath before joining your fellow guests for the evening.
19h30	As we depart from Riversdale dinner will be served in the dining car/s. The train arrives in Swellendam.
SUNDAY	
07h00 – 10h00	Breakfast will be served in the dining car/s.
11h00	We arrive at Worcester and if time permits we will disembark to visit the KWW Brandy Cellar, the largest of its kind in the world, with 120 copper pot stills under one roof.
12h20	The train departs for the final leg to Cape Town.
13h00	Lunch will be served in the dining car/s.
16h55	The train arrives on Platform 24, Cape Town Station.

Excursions may be changed according to schedule achieved

Times are approximate and cannot be guaranteed

The George Journey

Cape Town, internationally known for the majestic beauty of Table Mountain, is the 'Mother City' of South Africa being the site of the first European landings and settlement in Southern Africa. The subtle interplay of sea and mountain, which characterises the Cape of Good Hope moved intrepid explorer Sir Francis Drake to call it "the fairest Cape in all the circumference of the globe" a description which settles rapidly into the consciousness of all visitors.

It is here, beneath the 1 086-metre high sandstone face of Table Mountain, that the Dutch East India Company set up a refreshment station in 1652 to re-victual the ships en-route to and from the spice islands of the East Indies (Indonesia and Malaya). The arrival of the first Europeans at the foot of Africa met with little resistance from the Cape's only human inhabitants, the yellow-skinned Khoikhoi (old name: Hottentots). These ancient remains of Mankind's Stone Age childhood were innocent onlookers who by 1713 had been all but decimated by the Great Smallpox Epidemic. Black tribes were encountered for the first time by eastward migrating white farmers after 1702 about 700 km east of Cape Town around the Great Fish River - a meeting of two divergent cultures, the consequences of which are still unfolding today. Close to Cape Town, the vegetation is either tinged green by the winter rain of the Western Cape, a region, which enjoys a Mediterranean climate, or burnt brown during the long hot summer. In winter, the vines shed their autumn leaves baring their gnarled limbs. A few months later as spring moves into summer, the vineyards are richly covered in fruit. Some of the best wines in the world are made from the grapes harvested from these prolific vineyards.

Dominating the wine lands centre of **Paarl** is the domed Paarlberg, with its three rounded outcrops known as Paarl Rock, Bretagne Rock and Gordon's Rock. From their summits there are superlative views of the town below, the splendid Berg River Valley, its flanking ranges and, in the distance, the ocean and the distinctive bulk of Table Mountain. It is from these granite outcrops that Paarl derived its name. When the early explorer Abraham Gabbema saw them in 1657, on a morning when the dew glistened on their mica-studded surfaces, the heights reminded him of a 'diamantende peerlberg (diamond and pearl mountain).

Paarl is a romantic town built on both sides of a 10-kilometre Main Street, shaded by oaks and jacarandas. Although Europeans settled in the valley in 1687, Paarl did not take shape until 1720 when a church was built and a street laid out and planted with the oaks for which the town is famous. Paarl became a principle centre in southern Africa for the manufacture of wagons. The local granite provided ample raw material for the manufacture of tombstones and prepared building stone. Other industries include fruit growing, wine making and the canning of fruit and vegetables.

Swellendam, which is situated in the area known as the Overberg, has many architectural and historical attractions. The early farmers in the district used the surrounding mountain peaks as natural sundials calling them Ten O'clock, Eleven O'clock, Twelve O'clock and One O'clock. From the start the local burgers were an idiosyncratic bunch, living as they did on the frontier of the Cape Colony. When they became too difficult to control from Stellenbosch, the Dutch East India Company appointed a Landdrost, or administrator, in 1745 and Swellendam's establishment as South Africa's third oldest town followed.

Nonetheless, the burgers eventually rebelled against the Dutch governor and declared a Free Republic on 17 June 1795. As luck would have it this coincided with a British fleet attacking the Dutch colony at the Cape. The burgers then loyally rallied to the overall Dutch defence, sending a mounted force, and arrived just in time to join in the Dutch surrender to the British after the defeat at Muizenberg. Their independence had lasted only 91 days. Those events give the exhibits in the Drostdy Museum a special interest, since the building dates from 1746 - though later it was enlarged - and was taken over by the Burgers. It stands at the end of the wide Swellengrebel Street, planted with ancient oaks.

Worcester is the largest town in the Breë River Valley. Founded in 1818 and named after the Marquis of Worcester, brother of the Governor of the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset. The town lies at the entrance to the Hex River Valley and is a busy commercial, communications and industrial area. Grapes are grown in vast quantities and there are seventeen co-operative wine cellars and several brandy distilleries.

This KVV Brandy brandy cellar, the largest of its kind in the world, is in Worcester and has an incredible 120 copper potstills. It is not the most modern brandy distillery in the world, but it is the biggest distillery in the Southern Hemisphere. This is the heart of the brandy industry in South Africa and is probably considered the main jewel in the company's (KVV) crown. Visits to this cellar include demonstrations of the ancient craft of the cooper, and a tour of the expansive maturation cellars. Tours are concluded with a tasting depicting the versatility of brandy.

The town of **Ashton** serves as the residential area for employees of the Langeberg Koöperasie, the largest producers in Southern Africa of canned fruit, jams and vegetables. Their principal factory is on the southern slopes of the Langeberg range near the entrance to Cogmans Kloof. Between Robertson and Ashton the Sheilam Cactus Garden is an unusual commercial enterprise which produces more than 1 000 cactus varieties. The area is also noted for its rose nurseries and horse breeding.

Zandvliet Wine Estate is found in the scenic Robertson Valley, not far from Ashton. The farm straddles the Cogmans River, with the great Langeberg Mountains throwing a giant arm around it from the north and disappearing to the southeast. A small range of low limestone hills lie on Zandvliet's southern half, bringing the special magic to its kalkveld (calcareous earth) terroir. Only 130 kilometres due south is the southernmost point of Africa, Cape Agulhas, dynamo of the breezes that cool our hills in summer. Zandvliet was proclaimed as a 5 000 hectare farm in 1838, along with the rest of the Robertson district at that time, being granted to a Van Zyl and a Balthazar Kloppers. Jacobus Stephanus de Wet bought the property in 1867. Upon his death, the farm was subdivided into Zandvliet, Prospect and Excelsior, with Paul de Wet (the first Paul on Zandvliet) buying the family farm from his eldest brother, who was an invalid. Today, over 130 years later, the fourth generation, Paul and Dan, are the proud custodians of this magnificent family heritage, Zandvliet. In its long history as a De Wet family legacy, although always a wine farm, Zandvliet in turn became well-known as an ostrich farm, famous as a racehorse-breeding stud, and now respected as a wine estate specialising in the growing and making of fine Shiraz wines.

Mossel Bay has several sides to its character. It is a commercial seaport on the slopes of Cape St Blaize, which enjoyed a boom in the 1990's due to the discovery of off-shore oil; a holiday centre for water sports, rock angling and big game fishing (especially black marlin); and a town with a niche in history. Mussels and oysters flourish here and it was from these molluscs that the Dutch name of Mossel - 'mussel' - was given to the bay.

This bay is where the Portuguese navigator, Bartholomeu Dias, made his first landfall after unknowingly rounding the Cape of Good Hope in 1488. The museum has a full-size replica of Dias' caravel, an astonishingly tiny ship (100 tons) for a voyage that was scientifically as adventurous then as exploring space is now.

Because the bay has a spring, which never runs dry, it became a provisioning stop for sailing ships on the way to India. In 1500, with what little remained of his fleet after confronting a fierce storm, Pedro d' Ataide ran for shelter in the bay and left an account of the disaster in an old shoe which was hung on a milkwood tree. João da Nova visited Mossel Bay in 1501 and found d' Ataide's report in the shoe.

The Post Office tree is a venerable milkwood to which a sea boot was nailed for many years. Seafarers collected letters from, and posted them in, the boot. Today the tree is part of Bartholomeu Dias Museum complex and letters posted in a boot shaped post-box next to it are specially franked.

George is a quiet inland town, founded in 1811 and named after King George III, with a fine white 1840 church and streets lined with ancient oaks. Behind it rises the 1,698m Cradock peak of the Outeniqua Mountains, which forms the backdrop to the Garden Route and in whose foothills stand forests of the yellowwoods, stinkwoods and other indigenous trees. There was a forestry station here as early as 1778 and George's timber-orientated history is displayed in the Museum in the handsome Old Drostdy. George became a municipality in 1837 and in 1850 Bishop Robert Gray, founder of the Diocesan College for Boys in Cape Town, consecrated the town's St Mark's Church, which became a cathedral in 1911. Today George is more of a commercial centre. However, there is an active sports centre, a flying club, an excellent golf course and the 137km Outeniqua hiking trail starts nearby at Witfontein.

George Bennet, bought an area between George and Knysna and called it **Wilderness**, for that is exactly what it was. The forest-covered hills of the region tumble down to a sandy beach more than 8 kilometres long. It has a dangerous backwash, but is fine for sunbathing, angling and walking and has long been favoured by honeymooners. Behind it are a series of salt-water lakes, set among forested hills that are a fisherman's and birdwatchers paradise. They extend almost to the Knysna Lagoon and are partly managed by the National Parks Board.

The first lake, the Serpentine, leads from the river estuary to Island Lake where there is a yacht club. Further East Langvlei and Rondevlei are protected. The much larger Swartvlei has a channel to the sea at Sedgefield, where regattas are held. Finally, the freshwater Groenvlei, beyond Sedgefield, has a small nature reserve where you can walk. The lakes are a sanctuary for water birds, the forests protect the scarlet-winged Knysna Loerie, and there is good fishing in the Swartvlei for leer fish and for black bass in the Groenvlei. These lakes are representative of many similar lakes which are found parallel to the sea and a short distance (less than 500 metres) from it all the way along the east coast as far as the Zambezi river. These coastal wetlands are reminders of an ancient world where the water level of the oceans was

at least 100 metres higher than it is today. The wetland marshes and lakes are now where the beaches used to be.

Knysna has a lot to offer, historically, recreationally and in its delightful setting. It was founded by one of the most intriguing characters ever to set foot in South Africa. George Rex arrived from England at the turn of the 19th century and in 1817 was the first man to sail a ship safely into the lagoon so establishing a timber port. Why the Cape Governor treated him as a VIP was never recorded, but the belief held, subsequently proved completely false, that he was the illegitimate son of George III and a London Quakeress called Hannah Lightfoot. The town's Millwood Museum has a collection of his belongings. He certainly chose an attractive spot to settle.

The lagoon, now protected as the Knysna National Lake Area, runs out to sea between the two sheer red sandstone cliffs called the Heads, whose perils Rex defeated. The eastern of the two is easily accessible by land and gives splendid views and good rock fishing.

Pleasure boats do trips up the lagoon and to the Featherbed Nature Reserve on the Western Head, so called because the anchorage offshore is so calm. On the way out is Leisure Island, facing Knysna across the Lagoon. An oyster hatchery makes oysters a local speciality in season. Sadly the new N2 road is routed along the lagoon.

The town is proud of its semi-French atmosphere with pavement cafes, markets and sophisticated shops. Being among thousands of acres of hardwood forests, Knysna's craftsmen have become expert at making South Africa's highly prized traditional stinkwood furniture. The wood's hard, fine grain gives it a satiny finish usually oiled rather than polished. Yellowwood furniture is also attractive, similar to pine and light yet strong.

The area around Knysna is a tourist's paradise with not only the beautiful scenery but also the nearby Tsitsikamma Coastal and Forest National Park, Plettenberg Bay and Nature's Valley are certainly areas that must be visited.

Updated 18 July 2009



0 KMS	Cape Town		553 KMS
			45
19	Belville	●	508
			19
58	Paarl	●	489
			12
73	Wellington	●	477
			64
136	Wolsley	●	413
			39
176	Worcester	●	Brandy
			47
227	Roberson	●	327
	Wine Tasting Excursion Ashton	●	27
246			300
			54
311	Swellendam	●	246
			14
322	Buffelsjagsrivier	●	232
			34
353	Karringmelk	●	198
			43
388	Badenhorst	●	155
			19
409	Riversdale	●	136
			75
495	Voorbaai	●	61
			13
508	Hartenbos	●	48
			29
534	Outeniekwa	●	19
553 KMS	George		0 KMS