



## CAMPERS CHATTER

Thank you Greg P for the camp report

### **OPPI-PLAAS RAWSONVILLE 6 - 8 DEC 2019**

Campers:

Greg & Jenni

Martin & Annette

Michelle, Chloe & Michael

Greg & Glynn

With year-end shutdown almost upon me, and a wife enjoying her new pensioner status, we decided to head out to Oppi-Plaas campsite (near Rawsonville) on the Thursday, to enjoy the benefit of an extra night.

We arrived around 3pm with the mercury at 37 degrees and stepped out of an air-conditioned car, to be greeted by what is best described as an invasion of flies! (A problem that the area has had for the past 3 weeks.)

Amidst all the swatting and sweating, we managed to position the caravan and set up, stopping for a few breaks in-between to replenish our bodies with some much needed liquid refreshments. How I also wished for one of those Aussie hats I had seen on TV with the corks all around it!

The campsite is positioned on a large very well maintained grass field between the farmer's house and a large barn/shed housing his equipment. (There is a fair amount of human activity in-between the two on a week day.) The back of the campsite also borders the vineyards with some lovely views looking towards the distant mountains.





I decided to put up the wind lapa in front of our set up, just for a bit of additional privacy. (This later turned out to be a plan from Plan-land, as I happened to be facing South East. With the full brunt of the morning sun the next morning and the wind that followed, it provided a bit of shade and protection from both.)



Being on a working farm, the sound of tractors could be heard until late afternoon, working in the vineyards. I took my time in setting up the braai and all the lights needed, and settled in for a relaxing evening around the fire. Well, nobody told us that load shedding was on the cards again! So at 8pm when we were suddenly left in darkness, the scramble was on to set up the back-up 12v lights and solar lanterns.

Jenni later went for a shower, only to discover that without electricity, the water pressure pump does not switch on and therefore without sufficient pressure, the gas geyser does not ignite. So a very cold and very brief shower it was for her!





Friday morning dawned early for us, being awoken by the sounds of Peacock, Hadida's and Guinea Fowl.

I switched on my data to find a message from Sandy V to say that both her and Johnny were down with the flu and were going to see the doctor and would unfortunately not make the camp. (As keen campers they were very disappointed, but more so myself at having to do without some of Sandy's famed potato salad, which now owned a spot in their fridge for the weekend!)

It was a normal working day on the farm and activity started early. (Even the flies!) We discovered that the gas geyser in the kitchen area had blocked up with soot, and so once again there was no hot water. I got hold of the farmer, who after several attempts to blow out the soot with his compressor, eventually took the unit off the wall and sent it to the agents in Worcester for a service, returning later with it working again. A team of workers were collected from their fruit picking job in the field, to clean up the kitchen area where the farmer had 'spray painted' soot all over the walls, fridge and sinks, whilst trying to clean out the geyser with a pressure hose.

We decided to use this as an excuse to head out and find a spot to have a late breakfast or early lunch. Our travels landed us at NUY (on the hill), about 10 or so kms outside Worcester on the way to Robertson. It was our first time there and we were stunned by the views and very pleasantly surprised by the quality and quantity of the food. Jenni went as far as to say it was the best wrap that she had ever eaten. I think a glass or two of their very reasonably priced wine, also played in their favour.

We arrived back at camp just after 2pm, to find Martin and Annette (AKA Ingrid) already there and all set up. We grabbed some chairs and joined them at their rig, where the boys sucked on a few cold beers and the girls got stuck into a few glasses (ok, more than a few glasses) of some really nice Pink Gin, which Martin was happy to pour in large quantities whilst announcing that he only paid Ninety Ront a bottle on a Black Friday special!

Shortly thereafter saw the arrival of Michelle, with her children Chloe and Michael. This, much to the joy of Martin, who was about to head up a search-party to find her. In the words of Michelle .... "Would you like to hear the long story or the short story?" ..... but after 26 left turns, 11 right turns, 10kms of gravel, 3 U-turns, a map, 2 pin drops, 15 whatsapp messages and 'is there a shop near the campsite' ..... Michelle, we glad you made it! ☺

Greg and Glynn arrived next and started setting up. Michelle had invested in a new rip-stop dome tent and the guys went over to help her set up for the first time, knowing that it could be another 'long story' if we left her alone with the instructions! (Only teasing Michelle! ☺)

We were just waiting for Helen to arrive, when I received another message from Sandy V to say that Helen also had flu and would be missing camp. December camp was initially going to be a small one with only 12 people, and suddenly we were down to 9.



With the farmer leaving for Bonnievale with his family to stay with relatives for the weekend, he left me in charge of the campsite. (True story!)

Oh dear .... No Chairman, no Vice, no Committee ..... it suddenly dawned on me that I was alone with the 3 newest families of the Club.

We stacked the evening fires and all gathered round for more drinks and chin wagging. I abused my position of power and cranked up a couple of songs from the car stereo, which saw Martin and his now 'Ingrid' doing a 'lang arm' dance around the braai barrels. Hazard!

The wind picked up a bit and after a long day and finishing some left over 'melktertjies' out of the bottle and minus the shot glasses, we all retired around 11pm.





Saturday saw less flies and more wind. Martin and Annette headed off early to visit family in Rawsonville and then were stopping off for lunch. After a light breakfast, Michelle and her crew went to the pool area to catch a few rays whilst the Pratts & Nieuwstads set up in the kitchen area for a Champagne breakfast, with everything you could possibly put on your plate, and which I now commonly refer to as the 'Full Monty!'



Michelle and kids then left for Rawsonville for some lunch (Turn left at the gate Michelle! ☺) and on their return a few hours later, the breakfast gang were still sitting in the kitchen after their scrumptious brekkie, and had now lined up a good few empty beer bottles and a couple of Champers bottles for good measure.

We then all went up to the pool area where a few of the brave ones enjoyed a swim, followed later by the Colmans on their return.

The wind picked up quite bad on Saturday afternoon and Michelle's gazebo had to be rescued from an untimely ending. We sat pondering where to set up the braai's for the evening and wondered whether having flies wouldn't have been the better option.

It was finally decided to seek shelter behind the barn and with Greg N's car later moved to the side of us, we managed a relatively wind free braai. Just as we were about to get started, Eskom pulled the plug for the third night in a row and the scramble was on again for torches and solar lanterns. It was a bit of a lottery not knowing the schedule for the area.



It was at this stage that I felt a bit obligated as the 'senior club member' to play the part of Chairman in welcoming the campers, and directly afterwards changing persona to the Fines master and dishing out a few fines, which brought with it some laughter. The fines will unfortunately not be published as it appears that the 'legality of my authority' was in question by the new members and they all did a runner without paying. Hahaha ... 😊

With most feeling the cold and the wind pumping, it was a quick cup of coffee (well not so quick as boiling a kettle on gas took ages!) and then off to bed at about 10.30pm.

The wind kept up throughout Saturday night and Sunday morning was pretty miserable. With new campers supposedly arriving at 11am it was also best decided to pack up and leave early. Martin and Ingrid (AKA Annette) hit the road early at 8am as they also had things to do, people to meet and places to go.

Both Michelle's children were not feeling well, with Chloe throwing up most of the night, and they left shortly afterwards. (Left at the gate Michelle! 😊)

The Pratts and Nieuwstads were the last to leave around 9.30am after a quick brekkie of toast and coffee.

All in all a reasonable campsite given that we had to endure wind, flies and load shedding. Thank you to the new members who stuck it out with me and for the laughs and fun time had. Hopefully at the time of going to press, Chloe and Michael are feeling better, as well as the Van Rooyens and Helen who had to cancel. (Thank you Helen for your bag of wood! 😊)

As the last camp and Campers Chatter for 2019, and on behalf of Jenni, I'd like to take this opportunity to once again thank the committee for their work, and to wish each and every club member a safe and peaceful Festive Season and good health and happiness for 2020.

Cheers and Happy Camping!  
Greg P