

Chairman's Report: Western Cape Mazda MX 5 Club Run 3 March 2013.

We all looked forward to Sunday's run to the Mariner's Wharf at Hout Bay and got together at Limnos in Bellville as usual. The weather was typical February/March: hot and windy.

Attending were yours truly, Joanita & guests; Craig Howell; Deon Labuschagne (sporting the latest in footwear that you *don't* want to wear!); Julian & Jenny Seymour (joining *en route*); Alex & Maureen Paterson & guests; Derrill & Barbara Papendorf; Steve & Mari Ashton and guests and Liz Morgan. A special word of welcome to our new members, Nigel & Kay Pepperell of Gordon's Bay and Brian and Avril Roy of Table View: here's hoping that their association with the Club will be a long and happy one!

Apologies were received from Gerald & Jocelyn Poswell; Keith & Christine Clark; Diane Novitzkas; George & Anne-Marie Slade; Sarah Harrop, Mike & Maryann Little and André & Nerine Davis. Stuart Watson was going to join us on the drive only. A big thank you to you all for advising us!

If I left anybody out – humble apologies and please let me know!

The run: Because of the longish drive, we left Limnos slightly earlier than usual with Events Organiser, Deon ("Hoppalong") Labuschagne leading and myself as the sweeper. A rather frustrating hiccup occurred as we approached the Paarden Eiland off-ramp: a huge traffic jam developed as the N1 was gradually reduced to a single lane. Traffic reports on the radio (I was tuned to 567 CapeTalk) did mention the fact that the turn-off into Paarden Eiland was closed: however, only after we had passed thru' did we hear about the lane closures. We all made it thru', though, and were on our way to our re-grouping point atop the Nek.

Approaching the Nek, I noticed Steve Ashton's BMW suddenly reducing speed. Suspecting that the Beemer was perhaps overheated after the traffic jam, I followed until we reached the roundabout where Mari (who was driving) made an about-turn. They motioned us to carry on: we speculated that perhaps they were taking their guests (who are from Wales) on a different route. However, soon after this Steve 'phoned with the news that the Beemer's clutch had cried enough: he was too scared to continue to Hout Bay and reluctantly decided to head for home. (Steve 'phoned Sunday evening to say that they had reached home safely: the Beemer's clutch, however, was cremated.)

Apart from the usual traffic congestion, the rest of the run to the venue was uneventful. A request, however, that Members please stay in the convoy. I realise that, with the congestion and especially the unexpected delays at the Foreshore, it was perhaps not always possible on Sunday but let's try and travel in convoy in future. Our cars, travelling line-astern, really make an impact and I've often noticed the admiring (jealous?!) stares of other motorists!

The venue: The restaurant at Mariner's Wharf has a lot going for it: good food, good ambience, good service, fair pricing, it's all there *plus* a huge Craft Market to browse and buy at. (But beware – pricing is aimed straight at the Tourist!) All of this, plus reserved parking (dankie, Deon!) should lead to a pleasant outing.

However: I personally have two gripes re Sunday: lack of proper ventilation and cramped seating.

I asked our waiter twice re the ventilation: both times he pointed at the ceiling and said something along the lines of "we will switch it on now." Not good enough, I'm afraid: a venue as popular as this will always be filled to the gunnels. On a hot Summer's day, this then becomes stuffy and un-comfortable (as indeed it did yesterday) and I'm of the opinion that the Restaurateur could/should do something about this.

And as to cramped seating: there can simply be no excuse for this. I have had my fill of Restaurateurs packing diners in like sardines: perhaps in future we should make sure that the chosen venue has ample space for *all* the expected guests. Some-one mentioned “elbow room” - I fully concur!

I also heard a few gripes re the R5-00 charged for parking: my feeling is that I’m totally OK with this if it ensures reserved parking for us as a Club. I gather, though, that the gripes were more re the fact that we were not informed about this beforehand – in that regard, I have to agree with the complaint.

General:

1: Through the good offices of Secretary Craig Howell and his employers, M/S Trident Press, we have calling cards available for use when “spreading the word” re our Club. Very professionally designed and printed on quality paper, the cards contain the Club’s logo and contact details and should be placed on the wind-screen of an “unknown” MX5. It invites the owner of that car to contact the Club – this will help us grow our Membership!

2: We are still in negotiations regarding apparel, pricing of accessories and also servicing of cars that are out of service plans. More details later!

Next month: Our March run will take place on the 7th April (blame the staggered times on a short February and some public holidays– normal routine should resume soon after this!) and Deon will be taking us to the Cattle Baron in Paarl. I’ve heard a lot of good reports re this venue! We are planning a route that will hopefully take us on some scenic, rural roads but we will keep distance, time and the (extortionate) price of petrol in mind. More details later!

Report-back: We would love to get comments/feed-back from Members re the Venues visited. This will be valuable in guiding us as to Members’ preferences for future Venues – and in this regard, we will also love to receive any suggestions. Should members wish to have their comments (regarding this and/or any other Club matters) treated confidentially, this will be respected.

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