

**SPICY THAI NOODLE SALAD**

I first made this a couple of weeks ago as I'd bought some freshly made egg noodles and really didn't feel like making stir fry, so I consulted Dr Google! As I cook quite a bit of Asian inspired food I had all the ingredients at hand, but if your dry goods cupboard is a bit bare, all of the ingredients are available in Vredenburg at all three of the large department stores. I've since made it three times and each time there's been nothing left! It makes enough for 6-8 people.

**Ingredients**

- 500g fresh egg noodles (you can use dry, but try to get the Chinese nest noodles)
- 3 tablespoons sesame oil - the oil is strong so don't add more
- 4 tablespoons sunflower oil - olive oil is too strong
- 6 tablespoons honey
- 6 tablespoons soy sauce
- 4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (or more if you like it a bit fiery!)
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger
- 2 red peppers, sliced thin and long
- 250g oyster mushrooms (button mushrooms are fine as well)
- 1 bunch of spring onions sliced
- 1 ½ cups fresh coriander (dhanian) chopped
- 2 limes, cut in wedges for garnish



**Directions**

Cook noodles in a large pot of salted water. Check the cooking instructions as they can cook literally in minutes. Drain noodles well and let it dry. Whisk sesame and sunflower oil, honey, soy sauce, vinegars, ginger and cayenne in a small bowl. Heat a few tablespoons of dressing in a frying pan over a medium heat, add peppers and mushrooms to lightly soften, peppers should still be a bit crunchy.

Add all the other ingredients to the noodles along with the remaining dressing. Mix salad well, best to do with your hands. Serve right away or chill as long as overnight. I left out the peas and peanuts that the original recipe called for.

*Niki Anderson*

**November /  
December  
2018  
Edition**

**NEWSLETTER  
THE ISLANDER**



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**EDITORIAL COMMENT**

Well, the people have spoken! We probably had the most response from any communication sent out by Excom when we asked whether the property owners wanted The Islander to continue. We had a total of 85 responses with 58 wanting to still receive the magazine and 27 not. There was some concern about the cost and we are now printing with a different company at quite a saving.

Once again, if anyone has anything of interest they'd like to see in The Islander, please communicate with us and we'll do our best to oblige.

This is the last issue of 2018 and the festive season is almost upon us, so David & I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful festive season, drive safely - whether on land or water - and see you all next year!

**The new Excom consists of the following members**

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Stan Chisholm	Maintenance	stanleyjchisholm@gmail.com
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Oh, and then of course, the cheesery also makes the most delicious double cream yoghurt. Making cheese is exciting; making good cheese is hard. Having tasted a few I can attest to the fact that David is making superb cheese!

To arrange a tasting, to purchase or to order a cheese platter, contact David and Carolyn on 082 572 1822 / 082 563 4640; [kokerboomkaas@gmail.com](mailto:kokerboomkaas@gmail.com). Cheese sales and tastings by appointment only – cheese needs constant care!



*Now this is an artisanal cheese selection designed to have you salivating!*

**Niki Anderson**

**LOTS OF BABIES AROUND THE ISLAND**



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made, then comes the process of *affinage*. In French, the word *affinage* simply means “to mature”, whether it is inoculating, washing, piercing and turning, making sure they are not too dry, not too wet, have enough air and not too much air. It really is an art, and it all depends on the style of the cheese.



*The cheese cave*

Cheese is like a living thing and should be treated as such. In most countries, the cheese maker sends his cheese to a specialist *Affineur* who then does the refining. You need a fridge that keeps the temperature constant between 10-12°C – a wine fridge can do this. David

bought a wine fridge that is now called a ‘cheese cave’ for the maturation and loving care that goes into make great cheese. Carolyn documents and logs the changes daily and the cheese is checked every three days and wiped with vinegar to ensure that no unwanted bacteria creep in.

Now, for a truly great cheese, the most important factor is the quality of the milk. All of Kokerboom Kaas’ milk is single-sourced locally from Langrietvlei Golden Guernsey cows – their milk has a perfect fat content.

At the moment, David has experimented with 18 different cheeses and is busy paring down to the most popular. The cheese names are inspired by the nature that surrounds us, so the Stilton style became Black Winged Stilt and the smaller Stilton style cheese became Stilt Chicks! A few of the others are the White Steenbras Camembert, Velddrif Feta, Malachite Mozzarella, Reedbank Ricotta, and more, all delicious. Then there is the Bokkomlaan Bleu – just sublime!



*A Stilt Chick in the making*

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**ADMIRAL ISLAND & PELICAN BAY HOME OWNERS  
ASSOCIATION**

**NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2018**

Dear property owners,

This news letter will have a different format to what you are used to as your chairman is temporarily residing in the northern hemisphere and is slightly out of touch with all the details of our estate.

Fortunately, we are living in 2018 and with all the available electronic means of communication I have been able to follow the developments from a distance. In this part of the world internet speeds of 35Mb per second are more or less standard so sending and receiving electronic information becomes a pleasure!

When I read the e-mails and Whatsapp messages that are flying around between the members of the new elected Excom team and our estate manager it is evident that the team is performing very well and that the atmosphere is excellent. There are lots of new initiatives, Kevin is still trying to limit the outward flow of money and David is co-ordinating and managing everything so I could easily stay away for a few more months!!!

Right, let me try and fill you in on the current state of affairs.

**THE NEW EXCOM**

The new Excom consists of the following members:

Jan van Dijk - Chairman and Communications; Kevin Munnik - Finance; David de Bruyn - Security; Marisha Gouws - Gardens; Linda Stoffberg - Building Matters; Stan Chisholm - General Maintenance; Ted Waters - Jetties.

**AGM 2018**

I would like to thank our members that attended our AGM on 15 September for their presence and input. Excom cannot function properly without your input and feedback.

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The main issue that was discussed during the AGM was the building of new office space. Excom presented the draft designs of the building and a healthy discussion ensued. The meeting decided that the new structures should only be utilised as office space and staff facilities and not as a clubhouse. There were a couple of suggestions regarding the layout but the meeting mandated Excom to proceed with the project.

Jacky van Rensburg, who was co-opted on to the POMA board during last year's AGM gave us feedback on POMA and on the investigations he performed.

Captain Ackeer, the station commander of Laaiplek SAPS, gave a very interesting presentation about the state of affairs about the crime statistics in our area.

After the AGM we had our yearly braai for the first time at the Riviera Hotel and this was definitely successful. By the time your chairman left the venue there was some serious *kuiering* still going on inside and, no, I will not mention names...

## SECURITY

Our estate still proves itself as a very safe place to live. Although we hear about burglaries in the rest of our area we are fortunately still not part of the crime statistics as we heard from Captain Ackeer from the SAPS during our AGM.

Excellerate Services, our new security company, is now fully operational and Excom is happy with the service and support we receive. Excellerate is here for security and access control and does not allow their staff to receive packages or hold keys on behalf of the residents. We know that our guards were allowed to provide these services in the past but that will not be possible anymore and we therefore ask our members to make alternative arrangements.

The security equipment in the guard house has all been upgraded during the past months and our system is ready for the future. As you may have noticed Excom has introduced an electronic way of registering visitors and this makes the operation at the guard house a lot more efficient.

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## SUPPORT LOCAL ENTERPRISE – KOKERBOOM KAAS

David Malan has always followed his dreams. In his words, “he has no regrets and has lived life to the max”! Having moved from Durban to Cape Town 19 years ago, he and his wife, Carolyn holidayed each year at Kuifkopvisvanger and dreamt of owning their own home in the area. They fell in love with a derelict fisherman's cottage in Waterkant Street, Velddrif in 2011 and started renovating. As an avid chef who has cooked at a five star restaurant in Sweden for many celebrity names, the kitchen was to be the central part of the house with a view over the beautiful Berg River. Their home was completed in April of this year and although David still travels to Cape Town once a week, they are now firmly ensconced in our beautiful town.



*David, Carolyn and Sonica (assistant)*

The couple have travelled widely, and with their keen interest in food – David's recipe book collection is enviable – they set about deciding how they were going to spend their days. After a couple of glasses of the fruit of the vine, snacking on some Cheddar which tasted like soap, a light bulb moment came out of the blue, they would make cheese! He was determined not to make your common or garden Cheddar or Gouda, he wanted to make the cheeses they'd tasted in France, England, Switzerland and Italy, but with a local flavour.



*Cutting the curd*

He signed up for a cheese making course at Stellenbosch University with Leon & Elaine van der Westhuizen who have become his mentors and supply the cheese cultures. The garage was converted into a dedicated cheese room and his new venture began on the 02 August.

Making cheese is a precise art! It is messy and the making is the easy part, the recipes are more difficult because of the local conditions. Once the curds and whey have been separated and the different cheese

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Laaiplek SAPS reports on this monthly to the Cluster office: there are ten police stations forming the Vredenburg Cluster, which reports up to the Provincial offices. The Community Police Forum launched a project to mobilise the community to convey their concerns. Petitions with 2,134 signatures, plus 9 letters of complaint, were handed to the Cluster Commander on 14 November.

Many people have expressed concern about the recent civil unrest in Vredenburg and Saldanha. The CPF assures the public that the police have a sophisticated intelligence network so are informed well in advance about such events, and have structured plans in place to deal with them. Our local police station is supported by other resources, so even though the local station is understaffed, we need not feel unsafe.

People who move to Velddrif from other provinces comment on how safe it is to live here. We must be aware that criminals see us as a soft target, so we need to preserve our safe environment to avoid becoming crime victims. Please join the police reservists if you qualify, or join a NHW, and support your local police force to empower them to carry out their jobs.

*From the desk of:*

**Captain P. L. Ackeer**  
**Station Commander**  
**SAPS LAAIPLEK**



### Quotable Quotes

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.

*Douglas Adams*

There cannot be a crisis next week. My schedule is already full.

*Henry Kissinger*

They say marriages are made in Heaven. But so is thunder and lightning.

*Clint Eastwood*

A two-year-old is like having a blender, but you don't have a top for it.

*Jerry Seinfeld*

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### **DESIGN GUIDELINES AND BUILDING**

There still is a healthy level of activity as far as the construction of new houses is concerned. New building plans are issued on a regular basis so we expect this to continue. Our new colleague, Linda Stoffberg, has taken control of the building portfolio and you can direct any building issues for her attention.

### **GARDENS AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE**

When I left for overseas towards the end of September the gardens were in a decent condition after the good winter rains but the dry season has started and it will probably look a lot different by the time this report is published. I have been informed that the water restrictions have been eased to level 4 but that will not give us permission to irrigate as we did in the past, so keeping the gardens in a good state will remain a challenge.

The construction of the public toilet facility at the doggy park has been completed and I want to thank all people involved for the hard work. Towards the end of the project, our builder Johannes Klaaste sadly passed away and we want to wish his family and friends strength during the difficult time ahead. As we have mentioned before in our newsletters, we welcome input from our members with regard to our gardens. Please contact Lisa van Zyl with any ideas.

### **POMA**

The planned dredging operation has been put on hold due to problems with the dredging licenses. POMA is informing us through their newsletters and Excom will forward any news as we receive it.

The installation of the dredging pipe underneath Admiral Island Boulevard is in progress during the time of writing of this Chairman's Report and should be finished shortly so that the dredging can start without any delays from our side when POMA receives the permit.

Well, there you have it! This is the last issue of the year and the Festive Season is just around the corner. I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new 2019. Enjoy your holiday and please return home safely!!!

**Jan van Dijk - Chairman**

AGM BRAAI

For the first time since the inaugural 'after AGM braai' it was decided to hold the braai at the same venue as the AGM, namely the Riviera Hotel. The facilities were fantastic, everyone was able to sit and eat comfortably, no-one had to clear and wash up afterwards, and the food prepared was delicious! Thank you Lisa for the organisation.

Here are a few 'candid camera' photographs...



Gary threatening the photographer, but this intrepid photographer is not easily intimidated!

*l to r: Gary Keet, Cheryl Odell, Peter Odell, Treasure Keet*



Happy smiles all round!

*l to r: Clarice Ferreira, Lourens Ferreira, Marius & Zeld Louw*

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POLICING UPDATE

The crime rate for the whole community policed by the Laaiplek police station, over the past six months, compared with the same period last year, has shown a marked decrease. The only statistics which have increased are those for fraud: several people in Port Owen have lost money to scammers, as was reported in the last update.

In particular, there has been a remarkable drop in housebreakings in Velddrif itself since the Velddrif Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) has become fully operational. The police acknowledge that it is clear that regular visible crime deterrence is successful. This NHW is also now patrolling in Laaiplek and Port Owen, so it is hoped that the petty crime rates in those areas will also drop.

The crime hot spot is Noordhoek. The NHW there needs a great deal more support and enrolment from the local community. The Velddrif NHW is also starting to patrol in Noordhoek.

What is positive is that the Laaiplek SAPS and the Community Police Forum meet monthly to review crime and crime deterrence. All the NHWs are invited (the Velddrif NHW is accredited not with the Department of Community Safety, but with Afriforum) and the Municipal Law Enforcement staff also attend most meetings. We discuss matters of common concern and how we can address them. After all, crime prevention is a matter for the whole community, and we all need to cooperate in this.

At the November EXCO meeting, the mayor attended together with a local Traffic Control Officer, to discuss safety concerns in which we are all involved. This was a fruitful meeting. Also present were organisations involved in outreach to the youth so as to promote healthier lifestyle choices, as drug abuse amongst our young people is rife and a major impetus to commit petty crime.

The great worry is the diminishing number of police personnel at the Laaiplek SAPS. There are currently too few police personnel in every shift to staff the Community Service Centre (which used to be called the Charge Office) and have two people available to man the vehicle that provides visible policing and investigates complaints. This leaves the whole community vulnerable to crime.

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Carmiën Tea's story started in 1998 in an old farm shop on the historic Brakfontein Estate near the small town of Citrusdal. Located on the foothills of the Western Cape's splendid Cederberg Mountains, the farm falls within the Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor. It is now a thriving business secures the best quality organic and conventional Rooibos from prime growing areas such as Piekenierskloof, Nieuwoudville, Wupperthal and Gifberg. The Carmiën Rooibos range is available in organic (bio) and/or regular (conventional) products and is produced on Fairtrade principles.



Their partnership with Bergendal Worker Trust as well as with the Mouton Workers Trust, Emgro ensure that 626 workers with about 5000 dependants have shareholding in any Carmiën Tea product.

They offer crop to cup farm tours, tea, food and wine pairings, and you can create your own tea blend! They have beautiful gift packs and for those who don't drink tea, they have an array of Fynbos Gin! You need to phone beforehand to organise a tour or tasting, so go ahead and enjoy your day out!

Tel: +27 (0)22 921 8900

Tel: +27 (0)22 921 8901

Coordinates:

32°33'48.64 S

18°54'55.61 E



***FIVE DEADLY TERMS USED BY A WOMAN***

1. **FINE:** This is the word women use to end an argument, when she knows she is right and you need to shut-up.
2. **NOTHING:** means something & you need to be worried.
3. **GO AHEAD:** this is a dare, not permission, do not do it.
4. **WHATEVER:** A woman's way of saying screw you.
5. **THAT'S OKAY:** She is thinking long and hard on how and when you will pay for your mistake.

**BONUS WORD: WOW!** This is not a compliment. She's amazed that one person could be so stupid.

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Alette Holtzhausen & Jacky Burger



Lisa van Zyl



Clarice Ferreira and Zelda Louw

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Tony & Nicoletta di Leva

The hooligans sitting outside to keep the smokers company!



**Limerick time!**

Although *fry plaice* and *braaivleis* are rhymes,  
 In South Africa's summery climes,  
 You will not see much fish  
 On a barbecue dish —  
 Meatless braais are regarded as crimes.



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It wasn't until the late 1960s that rooibos tea history took an incredible turn. In 1968, Annique Theron (a South African mother) published a book on rooibos tea's amazing health benefits. After the book's release, hundreds of studies found more and more about rooibos tea's antioxidants and other health advantages. With this new medical understanding of rooibos, the tea's popularity exploded.

In 1994, Burke International registered the name "Rooibos" with the US Patent and Trademark Office, thus establishing a monopoly on the name in the United States at a time when it was virtually unknown there. When the plant later entered more widespread use, Burke demanded that companies either pay fees for use of the name, or cease its use. In 2005, the American Herbal Products Association and a number of import companies succeeded in defeating the trademark through petitions and lawsuits; after losing one of the cases, Burke surrendered the name to the public domain.



The narrow 60 000 hectare belt along the West Coast of South Africa is the only place in the world where Rooibos tea can be grown. This area is also one of the world's six Plant Kingdoms. The typical Mediterranean climate, ideal temperatures, rainfall and sunshine, offers the natural terroir needed for Rooibos to be cultivated in harmony with nature. The sandy slopes and undulating valleys of the rugged Cedarberg Mountain Range provide the perfect habitat for Rooibos. The broom-like bush is a herb rather than a true tea, and is member of the legume family.



But, back to our day trip. The official Rooibos Route is mainly centred around Clanwilliam which is 135km from Velddrif, but there is a 'one stop shop' just outside Citrusdal, 112km from here— Carmiën Tea.

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### DAY TRIPS

In our last issue we took you on a wine adventure, this issue we're going to be more sedate, we're off to taste some tea!

Rooibos tea has an impressive, and chequered, history. Rooibos tea's history is rooted in the Cederberg region of beautiful South Africa. Khoisans, the indigenous Bushmen of the region, harvested the leaves from the *Aspalathus Linearis* plant for centuries. The leaves were used as herbal remedies for many ailments, and loved for their delicious taste. Rooibos tea history nearly ended with the dwindling of the Khoisan tribes, but thankfully a Swedish botanist named Carl Thunberg rediscovered the leaves in 1772. He noted that 'Traditionally, the local people would climb the mountains and cut the fine, needle-like leaves from wild rooibos plants. They then rolled the bunches of leaves into hessian bags and brought them down the steep slopes using donkeys. The leaves were then chopped with axes and bruised with hammers, before being left to dry in the sun.

In 1930 District Surgeon and botanist Dr Pieter Le Fras Nortier began conducting experiments with the cultivation of the rooibos plant. Dr Nortier also saw the vast commercial potential the tea held for the region, but the tiny seeds were very difficult to come by. Dr Nortier paid the local villagers £5 per matchbox of seeds collected. An aged Khoi woman found an unusual seed source: having chanced upon ants dragging seed, she followed them back to their nest and, on breaking it open, found a granary. Dr. Nortier's research was ultimately successful and he subsequently showed all the local farmers how to germinate their own seeds. The secret lay in scarifying the seed pods. Dr Nortier placed a layer of seeds between two mill stones and ground away some of the seed pod wall. Thereafter the seeds were easily propagated. Over the next decade the price of seeds soared to an astounding £80 a pound, the most expensive vegetable seed in the world, as farmers rushed to plant rooibos.



Today, the seed is gathered by special sifting processes. Dr Nortier is today accepted as the father of the rooibos tea industry. Thanks to his research, rooibos tea became an iconic national beverage and then a globalised commodity.

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### BUILDING COSTS

Building costs are often stated when comparing or evaluating the costs of constructing a residential property, and frequently used as a means of measuring one building contractors quote against another.

We have so often heard potential buyers of plot and plan type homes asking "What are the building costs per square metre?". In talking to builders we have come across a wide range of numbers – from R5,000/m<sup>2</sup> to R12,000/m<sup>2</sup> (and more). Why such a massive differential ?

Building costs are primarily effected by the current costs of building materials, and the cost of labour, and the profit margin being sought by the builder. However, there are a number of other factors that will drive the cost per square metre of any particular house to be constructed.

One obvious question is "Are we comparing apples with apples?" especially when it comes to the level of quality and number of fittings and finishes to be included (or excluded) in the house to be constructed. Naturally, the more expensive are, for example, the sanitary ware, or the bath and shower fittings, door and window frames, tiles or carpeting, light fittings (and the number of them), counter tops in the kitchen, balustrading (wood /stainless steel), or the number of electrical plugs, taps, and so on, will make a difference to the costing of the house. Again the size of the house to be constructed, the number of bathrooms, and number of cupboards in the bedrooms or in the kitchen area, and the paved area in front, all make a difference to the overall cost of construction.



In addition to the obvious elements mentioned above, there is also the issue of whether the professional fees are included, such as, architectural design, engineering or land surveying fees, or whether you are just considering the basic cost of building, i.e. the bricks and mortar, roofing, windows and doors, and labour elements alone.

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STATS SA provides some interesting data on building costs for freestanding houses:

- In July 2016 the overall average costs R/m<sup>2</sup> were stated at R5,932/m<sup>2</sup>.
- In the Western Cape they were R6,136/m<sup>2</sup>. (The range was from R4,152/m<sup>2</sup> in the Free State, to R8,580/m<sup>2</sup> in Kwa-Zulu Natal).

The latest stats available in August 2018 show that the overall average cost has risen to R6,541/m<sup>2</sup> (10% increase). In the Western Cape they are R6,580/m<sup>2</sup>. (The National range is R4,930/m<sup>2</sup> in the Northern Cape to R9,660/m<sup>2</sup> in Gauteng). An ABSA building costs report in May 2018 reflects an average building cost (for houses greater than 80m<sup>2</sup>) of R7,360/m<sup>2</sup>.



The above house on the Island, built in 2010, is 350m<sup>2</sup> with three bedrooms, all en-suite, cost R3,624/m<sup>2</sup>.

A better understanding, also, of so-called ‘PC’ items further helps evaluate a building quote. ‘Provisional Cost’ items such as tiling, sanitary ware, taps, cupboards, carpets, etc., are included in a quote at a certain rate, or base cost, and any change by the owner – normally to a better quality and therefore higher cost item – will be a variation to the contract and cause an additional cost to the owner.

So, the official statistics indicate a building cost rate of around R6,600/m<sup>2</sup> in the Western Cape, and a financial institution report indicates a figure of R7,400. These rates will, of course, be negatively impacted by lower cost housing, which is not the nature of homes being built in Langebaan and the surrounding towns. A rates spread indicated by the local builders suggest a range of R7,500/m<sup>2</sup> to as much as R11,500/m<sup>2</sup>, with an average of around R9,000/m<sup>2</sup>.

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alone over 340 000 are unintentionally caught a year! Longline, gill nets and mid-water trawls are all hazards to sunfish, commonly making up more 20-50% of all bycatch in industries such as swordfish, tuna and Cape horse mackerel (maasbanker).

Littered plastic, particularly plastic shopping bags, are another major risk facing ocean sunfish. In the water column, these bags drift just like Mola Mola's favourite snack - a tasty jelly. A sunfish could choke to death immediately, or starve slowly from intestinal blockages. This is a threat facing many pelagic species. Sunfish have a critical conservation question to ask us: "How is it possible that an animal that nobody eats, and which has no commercial value, is being fished to extinction?"

Reproduced with kind permission from the Two Oceans Aquarium  
www.aquarium.co.za

**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

Police	022 783 8020	Ewald van Wyk	
Ambulance (Vredenburg)	022 713 4590	(Cape Nature)	082 414 3160
Hospital Private (V'burg)	022 719 1030	NSRI Port Control	022 714 1726
Hospital Provincial	022 709 7200	NSRI Direct Emergency	082 990 5966
Dr N Vermeulen	022 783 0027	Municipality Velddrif	022 783 1112
	Mobile	083 658 4056	Municipality Piketberg 022 913 6000
Dr S Annandale	022 783 0040	Municipality Electricity	083 272 4117
	Mobile	083 233 1098	Municipality Water 083 272 4136
Dr Raubenheimer (dentist)	022 783 0289	Municipality Sewage	083 272 4135

**To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone, a backbone and a funny bone.**

Reba McEntire

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Interestingly, sunfish are able to warm their bodies so effectively that scientists suspect there are underlying adaptations we have yet to discover. This is further supported by the fact that large sunfish lose heat slower than small ones.

#### ***What do sunfish eat?***

All sunfish are active predators, swimming many kilometres a day to find their prey. Until recently, it was believed that sunfish preyed only on jellyfish, but recent research has shown that their prey is much more diverse. Notably, sunfish have been found to spend a great deal of time in waters up to 200m deep hunting for animals that travel in colonies, like blue bottles.



*Ocean sunfish (Mola mola). Photo: Lisa van Zyl*

#### ***What eats them?***

Remember that layer of jelly under their skin? It makes sunfish taste absolutely terrible. Fortunately for sunfish, and the thousands of parasites they host, their gooey flesh and awkward size and shape are all reasons that humans throughout history couldn't be bothered to eat sunfish except in a few rare occurrences. Sunfish are predated on by orcas, great white sharks and seals. When young, sunfish are preyed on by bluefin tuna and dorado.

#### ***Ocean wanderers at risk***

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recognises Mola Mola as Vulnerable to extinction. To put this in perspective, other animals such as the polar bear, giant panda and cheetah are also Vulnerable - but have you heard of the plight of the sunfish before? This truly highlights the need for ocean ambassadors to bring to light the plight of pelagic species.

The greatest risk facing sunfish is being caught as bycatch - in fact in some industries, more ocean sunfish are caught than the actual target species! In South Africa

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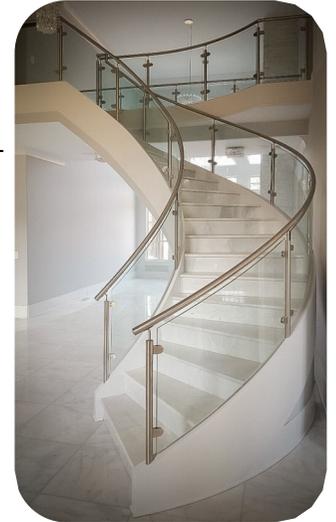
So, as an example, a 200m<sup>2</sup> house being built on a plot that cost R500,000, at the average rate of R9,000/m<sup>2</sup>, will cost about R 2,3 million. There will additionally be the professional fees and connection charges, and possibly landscaping – let's conservatively add another R100,000. So this new home will be in at around R2,4 million. The obvious question that arises is why would a buyer in the market, who is not pressed for time, purchase an existing sized and located home for more than this amount if he/she can get their own design, and move into a brand new house, for about the same price?

The other side of that coin, one could argue, is that for about the same amount, you could buy an existing house, which is possibly larger and has an established garden, albeit a few years old and maybe needing a bit of work.

And this is exactly where the market finds itself right now. Sellers of existing houses need to understand that buyers can obtain new homes for much the sort of prices that they are hoping to sell their property for, and that with a choice of a wide range of locations, and competitive builder contractors, they need to be realistic about pricing their properties in order to make them attractive to buyers.

(NOTE : The National Home Builders Registration Council ( NHBRC ) is the regulatory body formed by The Housing Consumers Protection Measures Act, 95/1998. All home builders are required to join the NHBRC, which then provides for inspections of all new houses during the building process, and warrants against poor workmanship causing structural and/or safety issues. As an aside, most financial institutions will not approve a bond on a property built without an NHBRC certificate). These certificates are valid for 5 years after construction is completed.

***Isabella Hart***



## GENTLE GIANTS

Lisa van Zyl, our Estate Manager, was at St Helena harbour a short while ago and she and her family were spellbound by four beautiful, weird-looking fish—they were Mola Mola or Ocean Sunfish. She took a couple of photos and thought that the Islanders might be interested in learning more about these creatures.

They may look awkward in our world, but let's see what the world of a sunfish is really like.

### *What is a sunfish?*

Sunfish are indeed strange. They have no true tail, and instead look like a fish that has been cut in half. Their elongated dorsal and anal fins flop about in sync, appearing as though a stingray has been turned on its side. When they do breach the surface, their fins might trick you into thinking that they are sharks, or their wide eyes might lead you to believe they are scared or confused. What is really happening here?



*Ocean Sunfish (Mola Mola). Photo: LAsTaRS*

Sunfish comprise a group of five unique species that roam the deep waters of the world. Though they are fast-growing and cumbersome, don't be fooled into thinking that sunfish can't fend for themselves! Sunfish are voracious predators and one of the ocean's greatest eaters. Sunfish are also endless record breakers. They are the largest bony fish - the biggest one ever weighed being over 2.7 tons, growing to over 3m long and 4m from fin to fin!

### *A creature of legend*

The oldest written description of ocean sunfish was by ancient Roman philosopher Pliny the Younger - initially called *porcus* (pigfish), they were said to be the largest fish and would grunt at fishermen when caught. Pliny the Younger also

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noted that sunfish made loud noises when caught - eluding to the "croak" that they use to communicate when in distress, made by grinding their teeth together.

In 1600s Japan, the shōgun would accept a sunfish in lieu of taxes. In modern Japan, sunfish are beloved and swimming with the Mola is a popular pastime. The "sunfish Pokemon", Alomomola, is even heart-shaped as a sign of the love that Japan has for them.



*A 300-year-old text describing the anatomy of the ocean*

In British legend, St Piran, a famous healer, was kidnapped by pagans. He was tied to a millstone and thrown off the cliffs into the ocean. As he was pulled underwater, the millstone suddenly began to rush to the surface and he was able to grab onto it and be transported to a nearby beach. Was his millstone saviour really a sunfish? We'll never know. Ancient Californian indigenous people were the first people known to have encountered Mola Mola, the ocean sunfish, almost 5000 years ago.

### *Strong swimmers, keen sunbathers*

Sunfish are the ultimate sunbathers - they can spend a lot of time on their sides on the water's surface soaking up the sun's rays. They do this to regulate their body temperature - after a deep dive into icy waters, they spend time on the surface to warm up. By using the sun and warm surface waters to regulate and raise their body temperature, sunfish are able to spend more time foraging in the cold depths. The low nutrient content of their prey means that they must eat huge quantities - there isn't time for rest if you are a sunfish.

Unlike most other fish, sunfish do not have a swim bladder - the organ used by fish to adjust their buoyancy. Instead, sunfish have a layer of jelly under their skin that makes them neutrally buoyant, meaning they neither sink nor float in the water (much like a scuba diver).

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