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Through the Eyes of Paul Kruger

Rustenburg – Even if you are not passionate about history, visiting the farm that used to belong to the late President Paul Kruger (the 5th President of the South African Republic) is a very informative experience and an exciting, worthwhile expedition.

Kedar Country Hotel, Conference Centre and Spa – which is located near Phokeng, just before Boshhoek on the Sun City Road – is home to the Paul Kruger Museum. This museum gives educational insights into the life of one of the country's most famous leaders of yesteryear.

Some 20 years ago, Recreation Africa purchased a portion of Boekenhoutfontein, the historical farm of President Paul Kruger.

Historic background: Rustenburg itself was officially founded in 1851 as an administrative centre for the surrounding farming area, which produced citrus, tobacco, peanuts, sunflower seeds, maize, wheat and cattle. It is thought that Andries Hendrik Potgieter was one of the 1st Voortrekkers to settle in the Rustenburg area. Rustenburg was also home to Paul Kruger, who bought a 5 square kilometre farm to the north-west of the town in 1863. The homestead on his farm, Boekenhoutfontein, is now the Paul Kruger Country Museum.

Over the years, adjoining land has been acquired, culminating in the consolidation of an area of some 700 acres which has been game fenced and populated with a variety of game, including Eland, Bleskop, Impala, Bushbuck, Nyala, Kudu, Zebra, Blue wildebeest and Giraffe.

President Paul Kruger's farm and the historical buildings on the land were declared a National Monument in 1971. Kedar acquired the land, in partnership with the President Kruger Trust. Since then, the land around the museum has been incorporated into Kedar's game farm.

The main Kruger House is a museum showcasing a wide variety of Kruger memorabilia and other items of historical interest. "He [Paul Kruger] used to farm the lands including culminating citrus trees," said Mafios Mutambrara, one of the tour guides at Kedar. Mafios and his colleague – Martin Todowa – are very knowledgeable about some historical details relating to the life of the former President. "This is a picture of his late wife. Did you know that they had 16 children together?" asked Martin, as we [Platinum Weekly] entered the living room. Inside the house, we were awe-struck by an antique butter-making machine and a beautiful old piano. A animal hide covers one of the sofas in the room. "That is a lion hide. He shot the lion when he was just 14 years old. Here is the rifle that he used to shoot the lion. He actually injured his thumb in the process," said Mafios.

Inside his study there are two worn bibles. "He was a very religious man. Each morning he would wake up early and go to the top of the hill where he would pray." The main bedroom in the house is painted in blue (legend has it that during those times, people believed that the colour blue chased away mosquitoes). Beautiful...

A must see...

