

Down by the River

Text: Editorial Desk | Images © Seeff Properties

Let me take you to François and Mercedes Labuschagne's farm, La Ferme.

Near the big dam on the Berg River we leave the R45 from Franschhoek and head towards Paarl on the R301. Look out for the turnoff to La Ferme just after the Wemmershoek river bridge. Don't worry we're not heading for the bundu. See there are the power lines along the gravel road and it has been recently graded.

The mountains to our immediate left are the Wemmershoek Mountains that form part of the Limietberg Nature Reserve. No, we can't stop to pick fruit from the orchards on our right. They're not ours and we're not like the local baboons that do not respect private property.

Ah, here are the gates to La Ferme. Press the intercom button and ask Mercedes to open. You were asking about the flyfishing. The four dams you see on either side of the path to the house are well stocked: brown and rainbow trout in one, carp in another

and large-mouth and small-mouth bass in the others. François and Mercedes organise flyfishing competitions from time to time and seem to love it as much as the competitors. Rumour has it that it poured at the last competition, yet everyone stayed to the end! Competitions are a matter of catch-and-release with barbless hooks. But never mind, when you spend a weekend escape in one of their cottages you may buy and eat your fish.

You have a choice of three cottages that have four-star grading, but knowing you, you would rather stay in the treetop tent. Of

course it has its own toilet! All right, you can fly in by helicopter, but remember the bigger cottages sleep 6 people only. Remind them to bring their cozzies – no skinny-dipping in the guest pool!

The box painted like a zebra? It's the back up generator!

Stop there under the blue gum trees, beyond the double garage. Nice house – reed-covered veranda on two sides, big glass doors, sash windows and shutters. You can't see it, but there is state-of-the-art security. Let's go in. François is waiting at the door. Don't you love the big screed countertop

between the kitchen and dining room? A well-equipped kitchen like this would make entertaining a breeze. Talking of which, I bet gatherings that start at the dining table just spill out onto the veranda.

The 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms are down the short passage and have those wild mountain views you marvelled at earlier. The 2 lounges are on the other side of the house where the avo trees grow just off the northeast veranda. You have never tasted better avos in your life. Promise! There are also plums, figs, naartjies and almonds on the farm that amply supply the household and guest cottages. Feel free to pick.

I know you love animals. The animals here love the farm as they are allowed to roam freely. Springbok, fallow deer and ostriches are at home enough to breed. The fish eagles are a real treat and the ducks make pretty pictures on the dams. You'll find the horses and stables on the other side of the river.

Let's go to the river while there's plenty of daylight left. Can't you just see yourself having a good time down by the riverside with your best friends? Imagine swimming in the river and working up an appetite while the braai gets going on the bank - you'll never want to leave. The Wemmershoek River that runs through the farm has its source just beyond the boundary in the nature reserve. The water is pristine. Hikers and mountainbikers are welcome in the nature reserve, but remember to pre-arrange your permits.

The structures that you asked about are the farm shed, which also houses staff, and the farm office from where fishing tackle is available for rent. If this were my place I would probably be tempted to put up a conference centre, convalescent clinic or some such thing.

Have I mentioned that it is a great place for stargazing and dancing in the moonlight?

And they want to sell this place?? ■



Price: R1 3 950 000 • Agent: Melina Visser • Cell: 082 419 9928 • Office: 021 876 4592 • Email: melina@seeff.com • Web ref: 226168