



# CLASSIC SAFARI

15 March - 11 April 2027

Namibia - Botswana - Eswatini - South Africa



## HERO-ERA.COM



Authentic Motoring Adventures Forged By Pioneers





Namibia



Botswana







**Eswatini**



**South Africa**



## The Call of the Wild – Back to Africa

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**\*HERO-ERA launches Classic Safari 2027**

**\*Spellbinding driving extravaganza, Namibia – Botswana - South Africa, will captivate crews**

**\*Exclusive rally will major on magical African Experience with limited competition**

HERO-ERA are going back to the magical Continent of Africa for the first time since 2017 in what promises to be an exclusive and spellbinding rally trip from the dry desert of Namibia to Botswana, Eswatini and South Africa. Entrants will be immersed in a total African experience.

With limited competition, the 28-day 6,500-kilometre Classic Safari Rally in March 2027 will offer all the highlights the Continent has to offer. Fantastic driving roads, National Parks, Game Drives, Lions, Elephants, Whale watching, Deserts, Mountains, Waterfalls, Jungles and the Veldt. Teams will stay in Game Lodges and boutique hotels after a day of great driving, including competitive regularities, and at some venues they will take in both sunrise and early evening Game Drives to view the incredible wildlife.

The Continent of Africa produces a special magic that leaves you spellbound. To sip a sundowner as the orange glow over the Veldt fades, giving way to twilight and a chorus of wild animal calls, is guaranteed to send tingles down anyone's spine. After driving some brilliant dirt roads with some competitive regularities, teams will be off again, this time on a Game Drive as the sun rises from some of the wonderful Game Lodges where they have been resting.



Photo: Blue Passion



The 28-day 6,500kms route will encompass many African highlights, but at the same time follow the safest routes possible to enable competitors to share this unique and exclusive African experience as it comes to life. Crews in cars with their hoods down will breathe in the intoxicating mix that is Africa.

The event will start in the dry heat of Namibia, travelling from Swakopmund to the great sand dunes of Sossusvlei, secret Namibia, and then the capital Windhoek which leads to the first game park at Etosha before heading into Botswana and the Popa Falls on day seven.

From Popa Falls, crews will have the chance to drive through the Chobe National Park, which has a huge elephant population before stopping at Kasane. Kasane is the gateway to the amazing game viewing experience of the Okavango Delta, unique even by African standards.

The highlights of Botswana continue with a visit to Nata and the opportunity to experience the African Salt Flats of Makgadikgadi Pans.

Rally crews will have already enjoyed some competition over desert and dirt tracks and there will be more opportunities as the event heads into South Africa.



The South African province of Natal offers more great driving after day 13, but the wonderful private reserves of Sabi Sands and Phinda offer tremendous game viewing and excellent lodges. Umhlanga and its rocks is a renowned coastal location for sights and hospitality, where Indian cuisine is a highlight in the Durban area.

Staying coastal, the now eastern rally route will offer some spectacular roads with the chance to enjoy more fun behind the wheel on a few regularities before heading inland for the final game viewing experience at the beautiful Shamwari Private Game Reserve.

Heading further down the ocean there will be the chance of some whale watching at Hermanus before a visit to the beautiful vineyards of Stellenbosch on the penultimate night of day 27.



The Classic Safari will finish in Cape Town along the V&A Waterfront, simply the best location for a celebratory finish of one of the best rally and topographical life experiences HERO-ERA offers.

Route Master for the rally, Kim Bannister, commented; “Game viewing in Africa is truly an experience that you will never forget. Watching a lioness as she walks past your jeep so close that you can reach out and stroke her, or stopping to watch elephants cross a river, are memories that you will carry forever. Africa gets into your soul.”

The Chairman of HERO-ERA, Tomas de Vargas Machuca expressed his pleasure with the fact that his Historic Motoring Events Company was returning to Africa for the first time in ten years in 2027.

*Tomas said: “This is one of the few motoring opportunities that allows us to explore authentic landscapes with the diversity of regions and geology. Namibia is very different to Botswana, Eswatini and Natal in South Africa, with cultural and geographical changes to enjoy in relatively safe areas of the African continent, which is important. Most of these regions have been aspirational locations for as long as we can remember but are still largely unexplored by the vast majority of people, and certainly not within the backdrop of our classic car passion.”*





**6,500 KM**



Photo: Blue Passion

**28 Days**



Photo: Will Broadhead

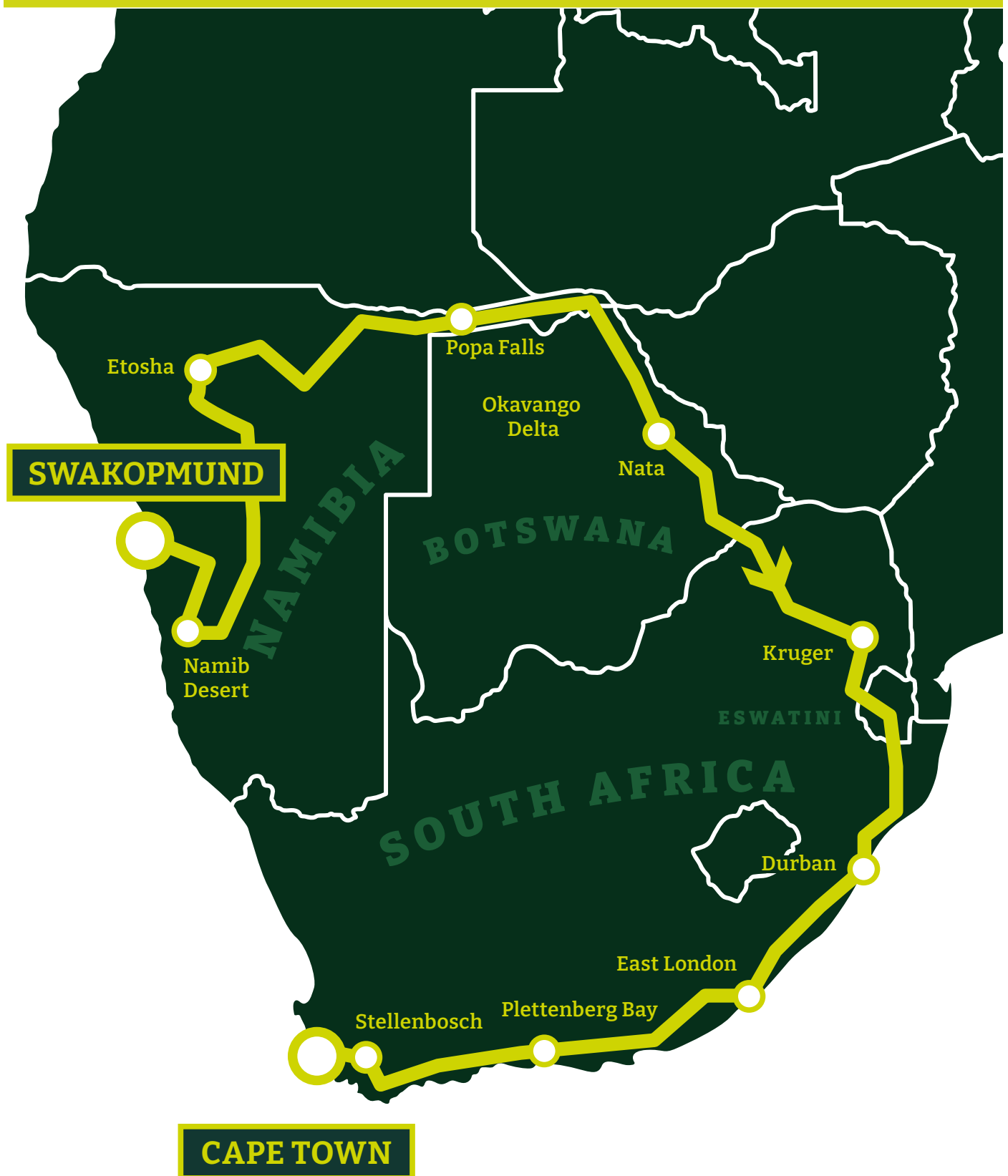
**4 countries**



Photo: Blue Passion



## Provisional Itinerary





## Event Schedule

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### Swakopmund to Sossusvlei

For the first visit in 10 years the plan was always to do something different and that begins with the starting point. Rather than another Cape Town to Cape Town route, the decision was made to start from Swakopmund in Namibia, the gateway to the Skeleton Coast.

Starting in Swakopmund allows the event to get into the action from the start and avoids the often difficult and rough trip up through Namibia which some events have suffered from in the past. If you are unlucky you can spend over 500 Kms driving over corrugations which shake you and the car to bits. From Swakopmund we will head south, stopping at the little village of Solitaire for some home-made cakes and coffee before experiencing the white dirt roads of Namibia to arrive in good time to relax in your lodge before dinner. Many lodges are on the edge of the salt pan and allow the first chance to view some wildlife while waiting for dinner.

An early start on the rest day will reward crews with the chance to see the sunrise over the magnificent sand dunes before breakfast and the rest of the day to explore the reserve around Sossusvlei.

### Sossusvlei to Windhoek

Leaving Sossusvlei we will head north to enjoy one of the few nights spent in a city of any size, as we will end the day in the Namibian capital of Windhoek.

On the way we will pass the Naukluft National Park, originally created as a sanctuary for the rare Hartmann's mountain zebra, before a second chance to re-fuel both people and machine at Solitaire. Then we will enjoy a drive along sandy tracks, you can imagine you are on Paris-Dakar, before arriving at the comfort of our hotel for the night in Windhoek.

Windhoek will give you the chance to stock on up some essential journey items, water is a must, and snacks are a sensible idea, together with anything forgotten in the packing before the trip.

### Windhoek to Etosha Safari Lodge

This could just be an easy run up the main road, but where is the adventure in that? Instead, there will be a chance to buy the first of the many souvenirs you will collect at a wood carvers craft market, coffee at a crocodile farm plus a regularity or two on dirt and sandy tracks in the Namibian countryside.

Our destination will be the Etosha National Park, where we will stay in luxury lodges close to the western entrance to the park ready for your first self-drive experience in the morning.





## **Etosha Safari Lodge to Mokuti Lodge (Etosha self-drive)**

The Etosha National Park is unique in Africa. The park's main characteristic is a salt pan so large it can be seen from space. Yet there is abundant wildlife that congregates around the waterholes, giving you almost guaranteed game sightings. At the same time Etosha National Park is one of the most accessible game reserves in Namibia and Southern Africa, importantly the park is malaria free.

Today will be an opportunity to self-drive through the park, there is an alternative route for anyone who would rather leave the game driving to experts in jeeps, but you will have all day to drive the 180 Kms through the park where there are cafes and restaurants to get lunch and even fuel stations for anyone who needs it. The park information website sums the day up perfectly:

*The abundance of game in Etosha National Park is somewhat unexpected, showcasing some of the most common and rarest wildlife species. The areas with thicker vegetation are home to elephant (some of the largest in Africa due to the vitamins and nutrients found in the ground), the endangered black rhino and even leopard. Lions are camouflaged in the pale- golden colour of the grasslands, while giraffes rise- high above most of the dry vegetation.*

*After good rains the salt pan fills with water attracting a cloud of flamingos. More than 340 bird species have been counted in Etosha National Park. Among the migratory species, the European bee-eater is possibly the most popular sighting. The game reserve is also home to the world's largest bird, the ostrich, and the heaviest flying bird, the kori bustard.*

Our final stopping place is one of the lodges on the eastern side of the park, where you can swap photos of sightings while enjoying a sundowner before dinner.



## **Mokuti Lodge to Popa Falls**

Today will be one of the longest days of the event, in terms of driving distance, as the route needs to head west towards Botswana and the next amazing experience.

Fuel and coffee will be available at Rundu, a town close to the Angolan border, before a run across the Caprivi Strip, Wikipedia describes this as follows:

*The Caprivi Strip, also known simply as Caprivi, is a geographic salient protruding from the northeastern corner of Namibia. It is bordered by Botswana to the south and Angola and Zambia to the north.*

*Although today will be nearly 600 Kms, the roads are fast and smooth enabling good distances to be covered in fairly short time.*



The day ends at Popa Falls. These are a series of cascading rapids in the Okavango River and the area is home to over 400 species of birds, hippos and crocodiles, so swimming is out of the question I'm afraid!



### **Popa Falls to Kasane (Via Chobe Game Park)**

Leaving Popa Falls the route heads east along the last of the Caprivi and enters Botswana at Kutima Mulilo. The border crossing here is generally fairly quick, although it can be busy at times, so patience is a good thing to have.

Having crossed into Botswana, any wait at the border will soon be forgotten as the route enters the Chobe Game Park which is believed to have the highest density of Elephants anywhere in the world, so a sighting is almost guaranteed.

The overnight halt will be in the Kasane area which allows us the chance to travel the next morning into one of the major highlights of the trip, the Okavango Delta.

### **Okavango Delta**

Early morning flights from Kasane will take crews to the various lodges being used in the Okavango Delta arriving in time for lunch before being shown to the accommodation in preparation for the first evening game drive of the trip.

The Okavango Delta is a unique pulsing wetland. More correctly an alluvial fan, the delta covers between 6 and 15 000 square kilometres of Kalahari Desert in northern Botswana and owes its existence to the Okavango (Kavango) River which flows from the Angolan highlands, across Namibia's Caprivi Strip and into the harsh Kalahari Desert.

The wildlife of the Okavango Delta is varied and plentiful thanks to the rich ecosystems and protection. The Okavango Delta supports large concentrations of animals on both a permanent and seasonal basis. Through careful wildlife management, it has become perhaps one of the best places to see wildlife in Africa.

Wildlife of the Okavango Delta includes a myriad of species including African Bush Elephant, African Buffalo, Hippopotamus, Lechwe, Topi, Blue Wildebeest, Giraffe, Nile crocodile, Lion, Cheetah, Leopard, Brown Hyena, Spotted Hyena, Greater Kudu, Sable Antelope, Black Rhinoceros, White Rhinoceros, Plains Zebra, Warthog and Chacma Baboon. Notably the endangered African Wild Dog still survives within the Okavango Delta and exhibits one of the richest pack densities in Africa.



A rest day in your camp will allow you the opportunity to enjoy an early morning drive, breakfast, time to rest and a final evening drive before dinner around the camp fire.



### **Kasane to Nata**

After a final gorgeous breakfast at the camp, crews will return to Kasane on their planes to begin the journey south towards South Africa.

Stopping at the small town of Nata, both breaks up the journey to Francistown, but also gives everyone the opportunity to go out to view the wonderful Makgadikgadi Salt Pans.

The Makgadikgadi Pan, a salt pan situated in the middle of the dry savanna of north-eastern Botswana, is one of the largest salt flats in the world. The pan is all that remains of the formerly enormous Lake Makgadikgadi, which once covered an area larger than Switzerland, but dried up tens of thousands of years ago.

The pan features an amazing array of bird life in addition to its own arid beauty.

### **Nata to Francistown** (via Cave paintings)

The road from Nata to Francistown is straight and uninteresting, so to break the journey the route will go off the main road and visit both some rock paintings and a cultural village on the way to Francistown for the overnight halt.

Francistown is Botswana's second largest city and was the centre of Southern Africa's first gold rush and is still surrounded by old and abandoned mines.

### **Francistown to Mokopane**

The original plan for this day had been to use a small border crossing across the Limpopo from Botswana into South Africa at Zanzibar. Unfortunately, the Botswana authorities have closed the crossing due to repeated flooding so we will have to use the busier Groblersbrug post instead.

Our overnight halt is at the Legends Golf and Safari resort, and early crews may get the chance to play 9 holes before dinner.



## Mokopane to Sabi Sands

Today's drive features some superb roads as the route heads east through the Wolkberg Wilderness Area before a coffee stop at the famous Coach House in Agatha.

The chance to use some of the gravel roads in the Tzaneen area, a popular South African rally territory, will not be missed, followed by a drive overlooking the Blyde River canyon before a visit to God's Window.

*The name "God's Window" was inspired by its seemingly endless vistas, views so breathtaking that they make visitors feel as if they are looking out over creation itself. The cliffs, forests, and dramatic escarpments contribute to its reputation as one of South Africa's most picturesque viewpoints.*

The parking area for God's Window also features a market where the most amazing wooden carvings can be bargained for, something else to add to the luggage returning home.

The final part of the day takes the route through the town of Hazyview and a chance to fuel before the event enters another major highlight, Sabi Sands



## Sabi Sands

The most prestigious game reserve in South Africa, the Sabi Sands Game Reserve is renowned for some of the best Big Five game safaris in the world.

The Sabi Sands Game Reserve is situated in the southwestern corner of the world-renowned Kruger National Park and shares a 50km unfenced border. The reserve offers an exclusive experience with some of the world's most luxurious lodges, great service and fine dining.

The area is divided into individual private game reserves, all offering the ultimate Big Five experience. With no fences between the private game reserves and the Kruger Park, animals wander across vast stretches of grazing land as they did years and years ago.

With one of the richest game populations in the country, the chances of seeing the Big Five (lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant and rhino) are excellent. You are almost guaranteed with sightings of the Big Five and the reserve is famous for incredible leopard sightings.

Crews will arrive in time for the evening game drive followed by a sumptuous dinner on the terrace at your lodge.



The following rest day will give everyone the chance to enjoy both a morning and evening game drive with breakfast in the bush and a sundowner by the Sand River, plus the chance to take part in a walking safari for those who do not want to sit and rest.

### **Sabi Sands to Mbabane**

Following a leisurely breakfast, crews will leave Sabi Sands and enjoy a self-drive adventure through the Kruger before joining the main road at the southern end of the park. There will be an alternative route available for those who do not want to take their own vehicle through the park.

The route will cross in Eswatini, formerly Swaziland, at Jeppes Reef before a lovely drive over the wonderfully named Piggs Peak before dropping down into the capital Mbabane for our overnight halt at the Royal Swazi Spa Hotel



### **Mbabane to Phinda**

The journey across Eswatini will be on dirt roads, giving a chance for some regularity fun, before returning to South Africa, our final border crossing of the trip, at Onverwacht before driving through the Pongola Valley to our home for the next two nights in the Phinda Private Game Reserve.

### **Phinda**

Phinda has seven distinct ecosystems ranging from palm savannah and mountain bush to rare sand forest and dense thornveld giving another very different game viewing experience and a chance to tick off some more of the animals on your “wish to see” list.

Once again, the rest day will afford crews the chance to enjoy morning and evening game drives and time to relax and enjoy the facilities of the camps.

### **Phinda to Umhlanga**

Having enjoyed a number of days heading from the west coast we finally arrive at the east coast of Africa as we leave Phinda and head towards Durban.

The village of Umhlanga lies just north of the Durban city but features one of the absolute gems of this event in the Oyster Box Hotel.

Located on the shores of the Indian Ocean the hotel is a sanctuary of peace in this vibrant area of the country.

Given the large ethnic Indian population in the Durban area, they have had a major influence on the local cuisine so expect to enjoy some of the finest curries available anywhere in the world. Of course, with a hotel of this standard there are always superb alternatives if your taste buds prefer something milder.



## **Umhlanga to Umngazi River Lodge**

Following a relaxing rest day in Umhlanga the route continues to follow the Indian Ocean coast south towards Port St Johns and the Umngazi River

Staying at the Umngazi River Lodge will allow crews to enjoy a relaxing evening overlooking the mouth of the river. You may even see the cows that graze on the other side of the river during the day, being walked across the shallow river back to their fields for the night, a very unusual experience for many.



## **Umngazi River Lodge to Shamwari**

Today's route leaves the east coast behind and travels inland via the Transkei area, birthplace of Nelson Mandela, before arriving at the destination of our final game viewing at the magnificent Shamwari Private Game Reserve

### **Shamwari**

*Shamwari, meaning "my friend" in Shona, is the pinnacle of private game reserves and home to the coveted Big 5. Stretching over a vast, malaria free landscape, it offers an award-winning nature experience and is one of the largest private conservation initiatives in Southern Africa.*

The final chance to tick off the Big 5 on your list, although I am sure many of you will already have done that and will now be looking for the rarer sightings to finish your game viewing experience.

## **Shamwari to Plettenberg Bay**

Leaving Shamwari it was hoped that the route could go over the Zuurberg Pass, but the road conditions have deteriorated over the last few years, and the road is now only passable with a 4x4 vehicle. However, there are now more roads to choose from, and some smooth gravel regularity sections are planned on our journey west towards the overnight halt back on the Indian Ocean coast at Plettenberg Bay.

Dinner will be taken overlooking the ocean and you may spot whales, but don't worry if you have not seen one before you leave, as the next stop is in one of the great whale watching areas of the world.

## **Plettenberg Bay to Hermanus**

The final long driving day of the rally will also feature some gravel road sections as we enter the southern part of the Karoo with spectacular flora and fauna, then some wonderful passes to enjoy.

Having left the coast for the day, we return for the evening as we are staying in Hermanus for two nights so crews can enjoy the wonderful facilities of our luxury hotel but also the chance to go out on a whale-watching trip on the rest day.

Hermanus is one of the leading areas for whale-watching in the world so you will not be disappointed.



## **Hermanus to Stellenbosch**

No visit to this part of Africa would be complete without a visit to the world-famous wine region of Stellenbosch and it is just a short, but very interesting, drive from Hermanus

Stellenbosch is surrounded by the vineyards of the Cape Winelands and the mountainous nature reserves of Jonkershoek and Simonsberg. The town's oak-shaded streets are lined with cafes, boutiques and art galleries. Cape Dutch architecture gives a sense of South Africa's Dutch colonial history, as do the Village Museum's period houses and gardens.

Being surrounded by vineyards, the town produces some of the very best wines South Africa has to offer, and tonight crews will be able to enjoy sampling some at the Lanzerac Hotel.

## **Stellenbosch to Cape Town (V&A Waterfront)**

The final day has arrived, and crews can enjoy a late and leisurely breakfast as there is only a short run into Cape Town to go.

However, having travelled so far and enjoyed so many amazing experiences why not enjoy another one on the way to the finish by driving over Chapmans Peak on our way to the finish.

The drive into the city takes crews past False Bay on the southern side and onto Chapmans Peak, which overlooks the Atlantic Ocean on your left, a truly memorable way to enter Cape Town.

The event will finish on the V&A Waterfront where crews will enjoy a gala prizegiving dinner in one of the superb hotels in the area. It should be a memorable end to a once in a lifetime adventure.





# The Classic Safari 2027

From the beauty and sandy tracks of the Namib Desert, via luxury lodges in the best game parks, whale watching from Hermanus and the wine region, this trip has it all.

There will be some mild competition on a number of days, but the most important thing is for crews to fully enjoy and experience Africa rather than rushing past with their heads in the speed tables.

If you have one, why not bring a soft top car to fully immerse yourself in the countryside, but remember the roof and side screens for the self-drive experiences planned for some reserves. Otherwise bring any classic car that complies, but nothing too fragile as you must remember this is Africa and the terrain can sometimes be rough in places.

The highlights of this trip are too many to fit into words, most need to be experienced in person, but let us try to whet your appetite further with a few notes on each day.

LENGTH OF ROUTE:

**6,500 Km**

LENGTH OF EVENT:

**28 Days**

EVENT LEVEL:

**Intermediate**

VEHICLE ELIGIBILITY:

**Pre 1986**



Photo: Will Broadhead





# About HERO-ERA

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HERO-ERA is the world's foremost global historic motoring events company, running rallies in short, medium and long-form for classic and vintage cars. Its famed Peking to Paris Motor Challenge of 37 days covering 14,800 kms across the world's largest landmass, follows the wheel tracks and echoes the pioneering spirit of the first competitors in 1907.

Its slogan, Authentic Motoring Adventures - Forged by Pioneers, is meshed into the event calendar offering a broad spectrum of rallies from training and short events which include its own championship, the HERO Challenge, to medium-length rallies such as the RAC Rally of the Tests. Longer events over three days include the Classic Marathon series and Badawi Trial over ten days.

HERO-ERA offers a complete historic motoring platform. There is a fleet of Arrive and Drive rally cars available for hire and all the necessary equipment to go rallying in the HERO Store. Tours and tailored events are run by Itineris, which is part of the group, where they also administer new membership packages to help support the growth of new businesses in the industry.

Also part of the group, Hangar 136 Ltd, offers bespoke car sales whilst another associated company, The Classic Valuer Ltd, helps save the industry time and money with their classic car valuations, including their groundbreaking instant image recognition system.

Since commissioning a full economic study of the historic motoring industry which produced astounding results as to the size and value of the industry (CEBR Economic and Environmental Impact Study of Historic and Classic Motoring Industry in the UK\*) HERO-ERA have become a founder member of the Historic Car and Vehicle Alliance (HCVA) to create awareness, lobby and promote sustainable innovation in the business. HERO-ERA are helping to create an ecosystem for classic motoring which preserves, protects and nurtures the business for the future.

As custodians of part of the industry, HERO-ERA prides itself as a leader in sustainable initiatives through their NET-HERO division with a state-of-the-art offset platform. Their Rally for the Ages partnership with Coryton, a leader in advanced biofuels, mean vehicle emissions were meticulously calculated, ensuring transparency and accountability, demonstrating the power of innovation and collective action in the fight against climate change.

HERO-ERA are leading the way in environmentally responsible driving.

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