

# Amid heat, Calvinia's an oasis of calm

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The museum's kitchen is enough to make the modern woman break into a cold sweat thinking of the effort it must have taken to prepare the evening meal using a coal-fired oven.

You can also shop for curios there, stay overnight or tuck into a traditional *boerekos* meal, although the prices aren't cheap.

We are on a mission, however, to find my grandparents' house, which we locate thanks to my mother's hand-drawn map, and look around to take some photos.

The house hasn't changed much, as I remember it, although the huge fig tree is gone. I like the sign outside which says, "Op hierdie werf word kleinkinders bederf" (On this plot grandchildren are spoiled).

The owner comes out to chat and suggests we visit Wallace Olivier, who runs a general dealer shop in the main road.

He has plenty to say about my grandparents, that they were decent folk who were careful with money and that I can be proud of them.

With Wallace's words still ringing in my ears, we go to my grandparents' gravesite to pay our respects and lay some flowers. There are two cemeteries - one for coloureds and one for whites -



In Calvinia, the windmill's clack-clack-clack brings back good memories.

clearly a hangover from the apartheid years.

Even in death, it seems, separate

development was the order of the day. After a phone call to my mother's other sister, Rida, we

manage to pinpoint the exact spot where the couple are buried. The backdrop to their granite

tombstone is the imposing Hantam mountains, which are a coppery red. My grandmother's epitaph reads: "In stilte het sy gedien" (She served in silence). I'm sure Gavin can't say the same about me.

Sadly, there are no daisies on show. It's towards the end of spring and the rainfall has been somewhat erratic this year. Still, we're keen to visit the Hantam National Botanical Garden and wander around. Samuel is delighted when he spots a tortoise for the first time.

That night back in Nieuwoudtville we have a braai and eat under the *afdak* in the garden. The children amuse themselves throwing around the loose dirt and hiding in the toolshed. When the sun goes down, we're hushed by the huge expanse of space, the throbbing mass of stars, the magnificence of God's handiwork.

"It's a long way to drive, but it's worth it," Gavin says on the return journey home. I couldn't agree with him more.

For more information on Calvinia, visit [www.calvinia.co.za](http://www.calvinia.co.za)

For more info on Bokmakierie, phone Margie Tromp on 078 161 9369 or e-mail [margie.tromp@gmail.com](mailto:margie.tromp@gmail.com). The self-catering accommodation can sleep six people at a cost of R170 per person per night.

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