

GOUKAMMA TRAVERSE - A DESERVING CHALLENGE THROUGH AN UNSPOILT LANDSCAPE



Running past a stretch of cerise pink Ericas in full bloom, well-known road runner Alison Jordaan called out that it was very special to be running through such pristine nature, a profound statement indeed. Competing in the 19Km Spar Goukamma Traverse Trail Run, Alison and 67 other runners were treated to a diverse array of natural abundance in this spectacular Cape Nature Reserve.

Crossing over the Goukamma River on a pontoon to the start line, a few of the more focused runners would have noticed an Osprey flying overhead on its way to its preferred fishing ground close to the river mouth. This would be the first of many natural gems to be seen along the route.

Runners were sent off down the sandy Jeep track with dew-laden spider webs before the race narrowed down to a single track that would take the trail runners up the first of four vegetated dunes while snaking through Fynbos and dune thicket. Along the path the tips of Brunsvigia leaves poked through the sand with their desiccated tumbleweed flower heads lying where the wind last rolled them.

As each dune was summited the views of undeveloped seascapes and beaches stretched out in front of the runners. Between dunes they had to negotiate 'Puffadder Pathway' and 'Dune Mole Alley', though thankfully in the cool morning air the Puffadders had not emerged to sun themselves yet.

The WOW moment was just before the steep descent into the Milkwood Forest along the edge of Groenvlei to Lake Pleasant. Here, on the top of the last dune, runners paused to take a photo of the lake with its reflection of blue sky and small clouds with the Outeniquas in the distance, creating a surreal impression of looking down at the sky.

"In addition to Alison, a number of competitors were road runners venturing into their first trail running experience," said organiser Amanda Dixon "and without a doubt in the Spar Goukamma Traverse Trail Run, they chose a run that challenged their capabilities and endurance while saturating them with unspoilt nature."

Winning lady of the Traverse, Kirsty Weir, who ran a time of 1:55:18 raved about the run and commented "SUCH a beautiful and well organised trail race. It was awesome!"

Amanda and Mark Dixon would like to thank Sedgefield Spar, Vivobarefoot and Cape Nature for making the event the success that it was. A huge thanks too to our marshals and race sweeps- the

Sedgefield Lions- who are such an integral part of this race. Also to Bos tea for their post-race refreshments.

Please see results posted on our website http://www.slowfestival.co.za/event_traverse.html and keep a look out for images going onto our facebook page in the Album '2014 Goukamma Traverse'.

Results:

Overall Men:

- 1) Melikhaya Msize 1:29:34
- 2) Grant Ayton 1:42:17
- 3) Mike Martin 1:47:29

Overall Ladies:

- 1) Kirsty Weir 1:55:18
- 2) Joanne Tanner 2:03:34
- 3) Lizelle Keet 2:04:06

Open men:

- 1) Melikhaya Msize 1:29:34
- 2) Grant Ayton 1:42:17
- 3) Mike Martin 1:47:29

Open ladies:

- 1) Kirsty Weir 1:55:18
- 2) Lizelle Keet 2:04:06
- 3) Helene Muller 2:19:06

Vet Men:

- 1) Henri Meyer 1:50:16
- 2) Stuart Hutcheson 2:01:30
- 3) Juan Botes 2:03:06

Vet ladies:

- 1) Joanne Tanner 2:03:34
- 2) Tanya Templeton 2:05:50
- 3) Renee Moll 2:07:49

Master men:

- 1) Aubrey Springer 2:15:48

- 2) Zach de Beer 2.:17:43
- 3) Shaun Gibson 2:19:59

Master ladies:

- 1) Marie Ayton 2:24:57
- 2) Lizanda Stopforth 2:27:11