

SR Afrique du Sud

South Africa's First Super Randonnée, celebrating our French Heritage.



Original image courtesy of https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Huguenot_Monument.jpg



Introduction

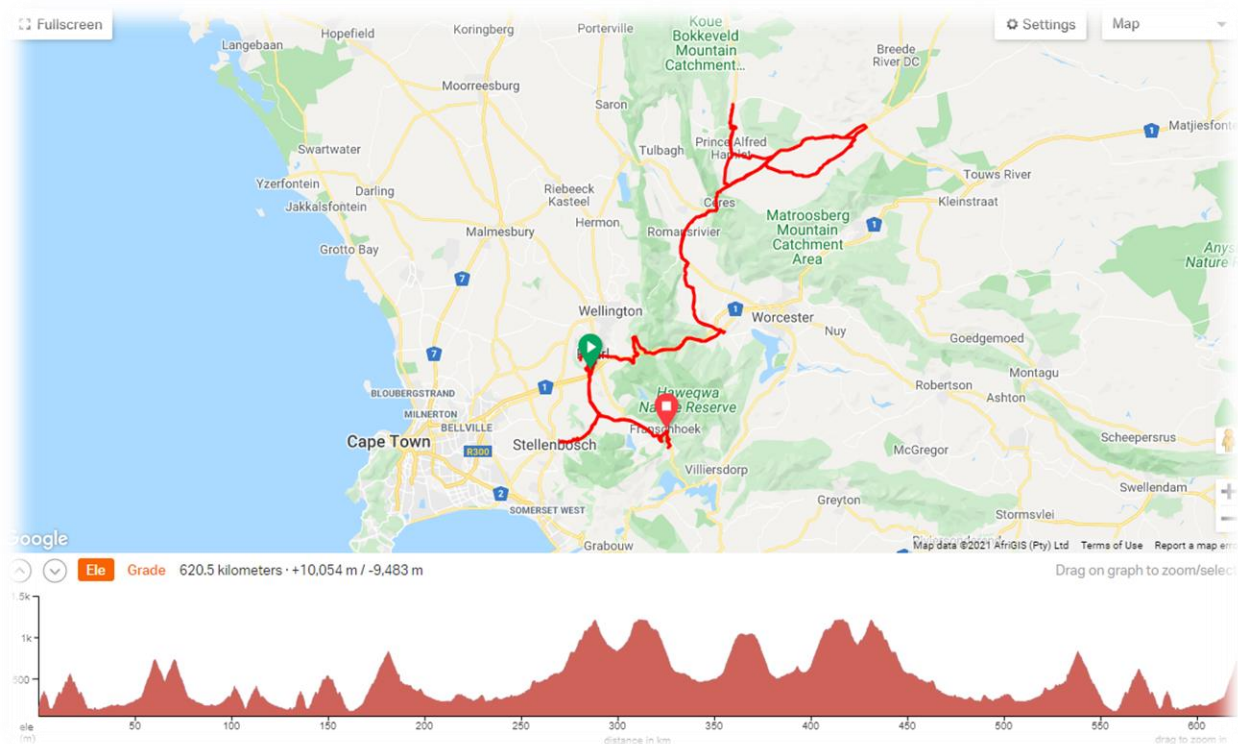
“the spirit of the Super Randonnée is based on freedom and maturity of the rider”. It is important to note that a Super Randonnée is not a brevet, even though there are many similarities. Some notes below and more info on <https://www.audax-club-parisien.com/en/our-organizations/super-randonnees-en/>

1. Not a Brevet – but an SR is also verified and validated by ACP
2. Permanent – ridden at any time of the year, provided the roads are open
3. Distance – 600km with 10000 meters of climbing
4. Location – mountainous areas (ours include 10 mountain passes)
5. Time limit – 60hrs for Randonneurs or 75km/day in the Tourist category
6. Controls – are not timed, just the above overall time limit applies
7. Passage – photo of bicycle at each control, plus time of passage, personally completed
8. Note – cannot be held in conjunction with another 600 BRM
9. Self-sufficient – no support vehicles allowed

Route

You can view and download a GPX file for your GPS from either platform below. There are minor differences between RWGPS and Openrunner (620/619km & 10050/10600m respectively), but it remains the exact same route to pedal – and Strava might show more optimistic elevations.

1. RWGPS – <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/35909642>
2. Openrunner – <https://www.openrunner.com/r/12994076>



Passes and climbs

South Africa is a vast and mostly flat country, but we do have some spectacular mountain passes and this Super Randonnée aims to celebrate these. You will be traversing the following Ten mountain passes in total (and get to experience all of them in both directions) – in no specific order:

1. [Franschhoek pass](#)
2. [Helshoogte pass](#)
3. [Old Du Toitskloof pass](#)
4. [Taalmonument pass](#)
5. [Michell's pass](#)
6. [Gydo pass](#)
7. [Swaarmoed pass](#)
8. [Bo-swaarmoed pass](#)
9. [Theronsberg pass](#)
10. [Hottentotskloof pass](#)

There is one important omission, probably one of the most famous passes in the country: [Bainskloof](#), just outside of Wellington, which is under construction and will be so for the foreseeable future. Hence, we have substituted its vertical meters and distance with a few visits to iconic climbs up the Paarl mountainside, notably:

1. [Jan Phillips](#) mountain road, including the
2. Gordon's rock climb,
3. Krismiskamp climb and
4. Paarl radio tower climb.

Last but not least, you will be treated to the stunning [Slanghoek valley road](#) – which is a truly magical experience during sunset on a summer's evening.

Note: Finding a route that adheres to all the requirements of a Super Randonnée was a daunting task (specifically finding 10k vertical meters within just 600km, while staying predominantly on tarmac) – and I hope you enjoy cycling this adventurous route as much as we did planning it.

Controls and validation

The control points are located to ensure that the whole route is covered in the correct order and without any shortcuts. Hence, they are not necessarily at or close to convenience stores or refueling points. There are 20 controls for the 619km course, on average about 30kms apart (the furthest being 90kms apart).

You are required to take a photo of your bicycle (with or without yourself in the picture) at each of these control points. The majority are far from shops so you will not be able to get a card signed or use a till or ATM receipt of proof of purchase as proof of passage. You may also be required to submit your GPS ride log afterwards and there may be secret controls along the way.

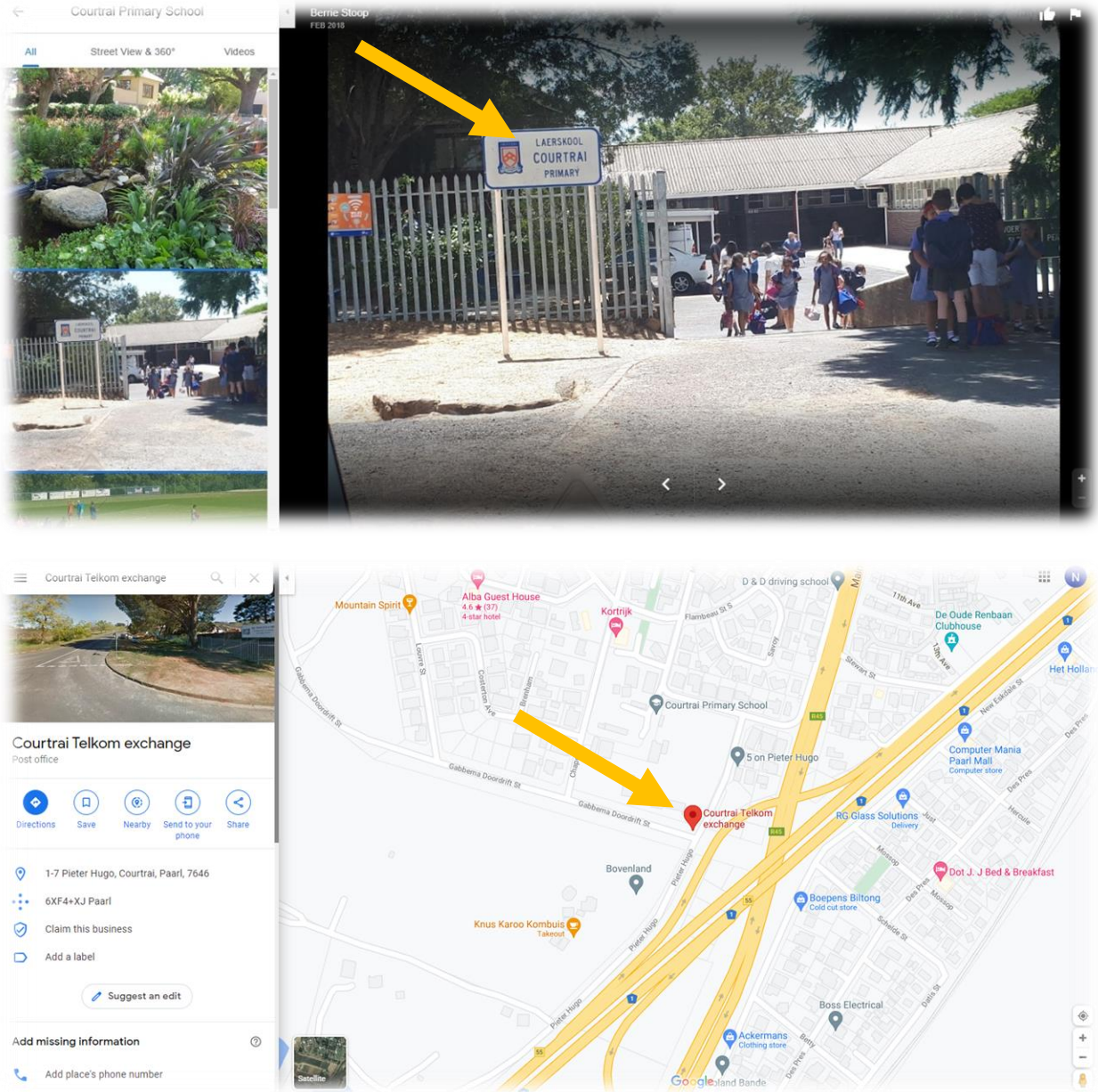
Nr	Control	Link	At kms	To next	Coordinates	Refuel?	Climbed
1	Courtrai School Start	https://gc	0	3	-33.7735644,18.9537908	no	0
2	Taalmonument	https://gc	3	13	-33.7663581,18.9438951	no	200
3	Bretagne/Gordon Rock Parking	https://gc	16	50	-33.7425609,18.9441344	no	675
4	Du Toits Bridge (after Joubertsgat)	https://gc	66	41	-33.9479734,19.1686032	no	1400
5	Stellenbosch Total Simonsrust	https://gc	107	28	-33.925698,18.8781112	yes	2000
6	Taalmonument	https://gc	135	15	-33.7663581,18.9438951	no	2500
7	Krismiskamp	https://gc	150	36	-33.7486435,18.9292502	no	3000
8	Du Toitskloof Old Tunnel	https://gc	186	23	-33.730796,19.1051592	no	3750
9	Rawsonville Total	https://gc	209	90	-33.925698,18.8781112	yes	3850
10	R46 T-Junction	https://gc	299	14	-33.231354,19.6768711	no	5200
11	Klondyke Cherry Farm	https://gc	313	30	-33.3132773,19.5793421	no	5600
12	Ceres Spur	https://gc	343	23	-33.3669412,19.3164727	yes	5666
13	Baviaanshoek Sign	https://gc	366	48	-33.1846424,19.3310767	no	6250
14	Klondyke Cherry Farm	https://gc	414	13	-33.3132773,19.5793421	no	7125
15	Bo-Swaarmoed/Matjiesrivier Sign	https://gc	427	83	-33.2593913,19.6212127	no	7200
16	Rawsonville Total	https://gc	510	23	-33.925698,18.8781112	yes	7825
17	Du Toitskloof Old Tunnel	https://gc	533	37	-33.730796,19.1051592	no	8250
18	Paarl Rock Radio Tower	https://gc	570	15	-33.714456,18.9372651	no	9100
19	Taalmonument	https://gc	585	34	-33.7663581,18.9438951	no	9350
20	Franschoek Pass Lookout	https://gc	619	0	-33.9051448,19.1563833	no	10050

More detail on each control below.

CP1: Courtrai school

GPS -33.7735644,18.9537908

The start at [Courtrai primary school](#) is conveniently opposite [Specialized Paarl](#) in case you forgot something or need a last coffee before the start. From here you immediately start with your first climb up to the Afrikaanse Taalmonument, less than 3kms to the top.

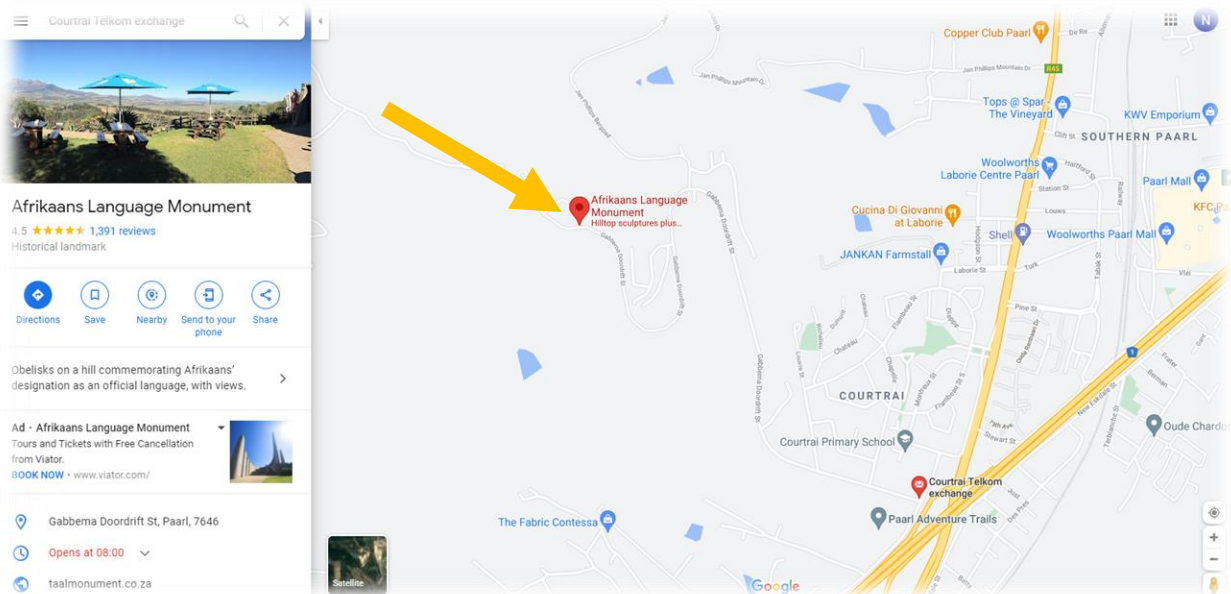


<https://goo.gl/maps/kX858nNNZsALJ1DG9>

CP2: Taalmonument

GPS -33.7663581,18.9438951

The [Taalmonument](#) officially opened on 10 October 1975 and it commemorates the semicentenary of Afrikaans being declared an official language of South Africa separate from Dutch. After the descent from here, your next landmark (not a control point) is the [KWV](#) (the leading wine and spirits producer in South Africa) head office in Paarl main road.

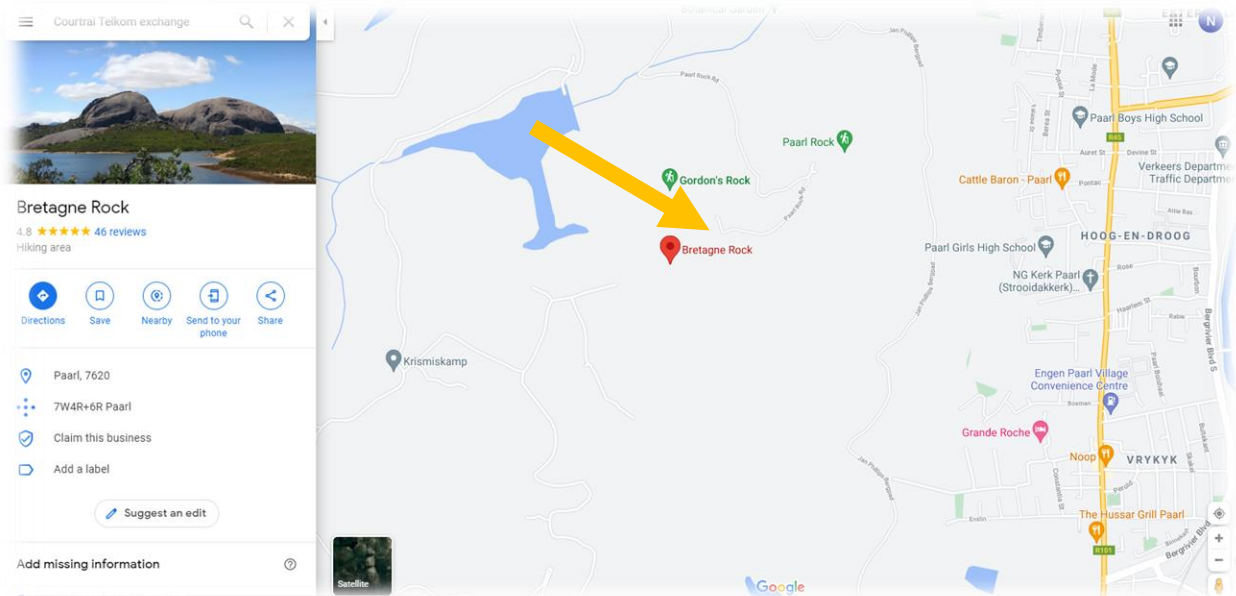
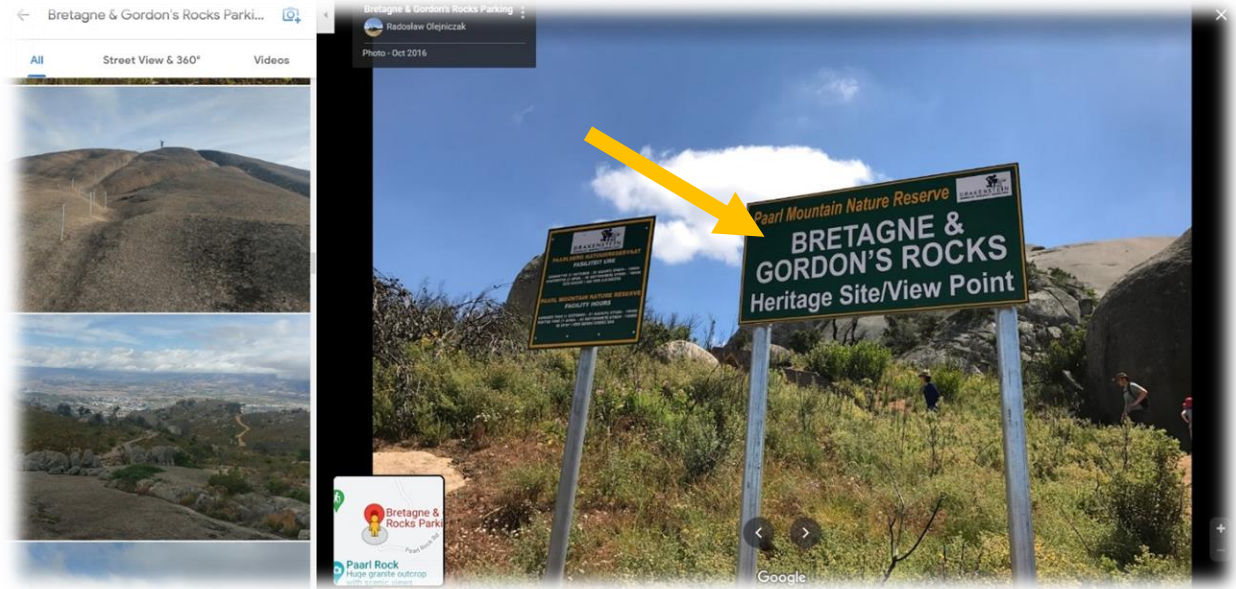


<https://goo.gl/maps/EJTijagzjUXVkg37>

CP3: Bretagne & Gordon's Rock Parking

GPS -33.7425609,18.9441344

After climbing the [Jan Phillips](#) mountain drive, head to where the gravel road ends at the Bretagne & Gordon's Rock parking area. The prominent granite domes of Paarl Rock consist of three rounded outcrops and has been compared in majesty to Uluru (formerly known as Ayers Rock) in Australia. Next stop is over [Franschhoek pass](#).

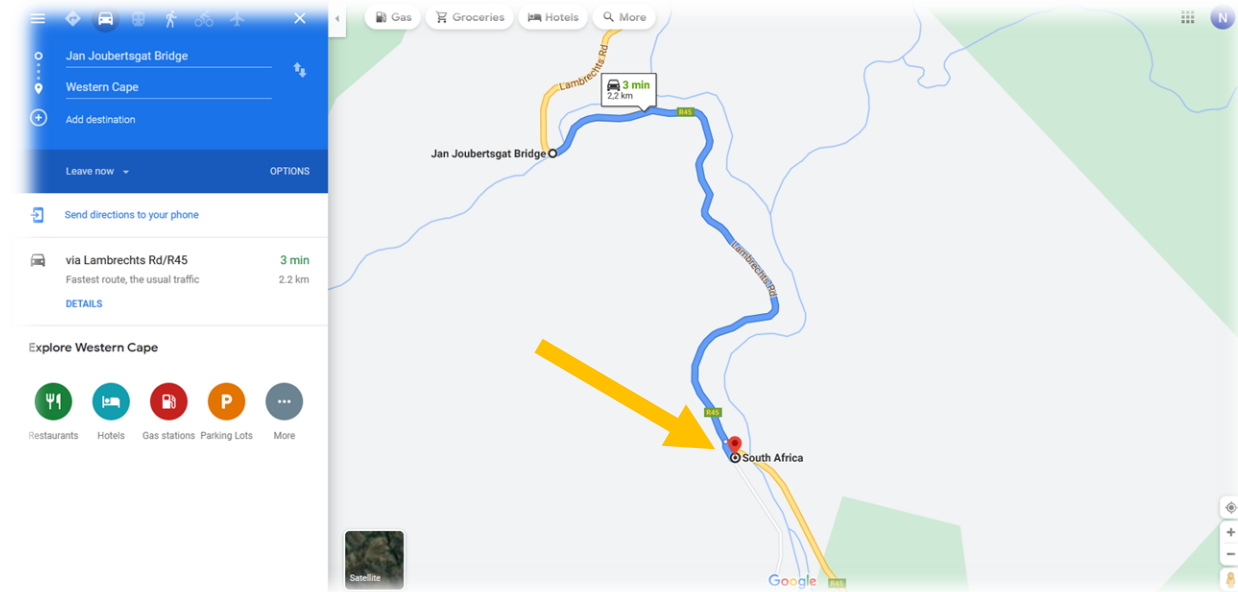


<https://goo.gl/maps/9muTeexqjBCZrUN7>

CP4: Du Toits bridge (after Jan Joubertsgat)

GPS -33.9479734,19.1686032

On the outskirts of Franschhoek, just before ascending the pass, you will see the [Huguenot Memorial Museum](#), which portrays the history of the French Huguenots who came to South Africa at the end of the seventeenth century. The control point is over the pass, after Jan Joubertsgat, at the second bridge that crosses the Du Toit river, marked 1958. Next stop, Stellenbosch.

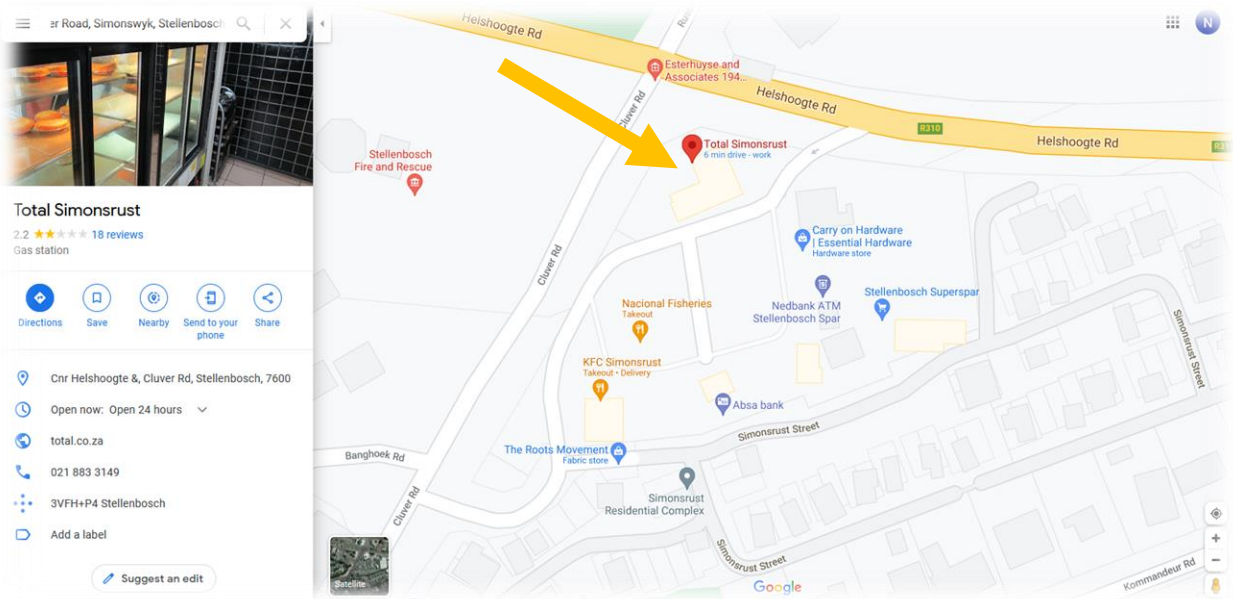


<https://goo.gl/maps/G7LvDsFMgSDCdTHy5>

CP5: Simonsrust Total

GPS -33.925698,18.8781112

You will pass [Boschendal](#) (one of the oldest wine estates in the country), Pniel and go over [Helshoogte](#) (with a last ramp up to [Cloud's End](#) right at the top of the pass), before reaching Stellenbosch. This control at a convenience store and the scenery will be even more spectacular on your return over Helshoogte – one of the most loved and travelled roads in the Western Cape. Now, back to Paarl.

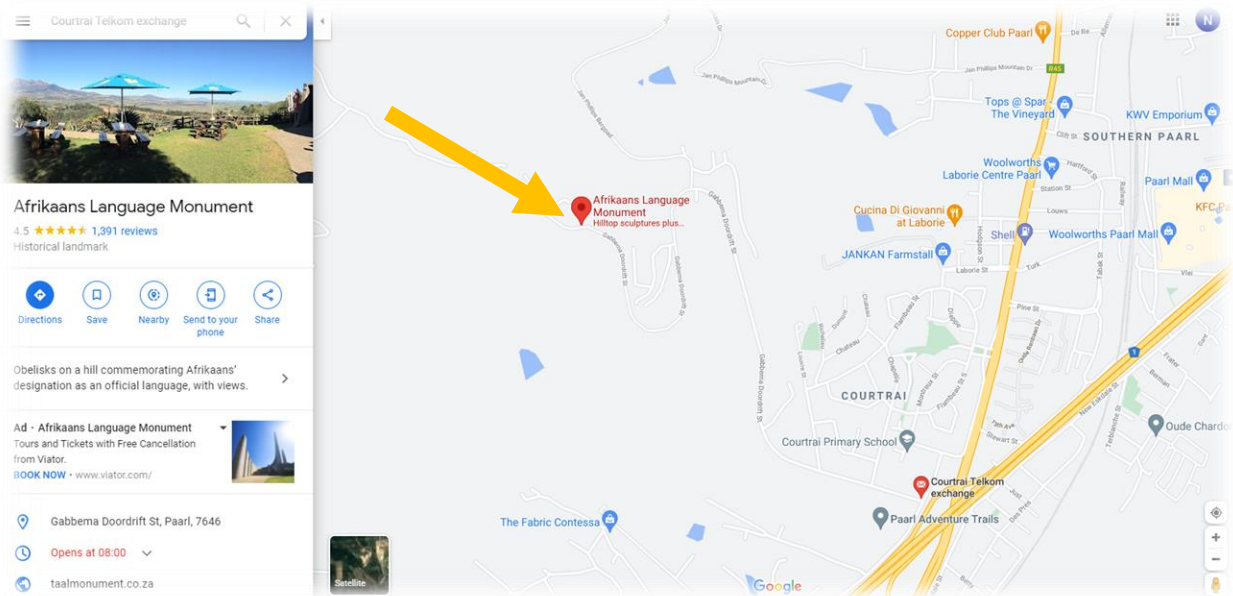


<https://goo.gl/maps/WAysrYy9FagcSNNp7>

CP6: Taalmonument

GPS -33.7663581,18.9438951

The reason for our second visit up here is that [Bainskloof pass](#) is closed for all traffic while being resurfaced. However, the Taalmonument is a fitting replacement, and you have an opportunity to refuel at the many convenience stores in Paarl Main Road – which is the longest of any town in South Africa.

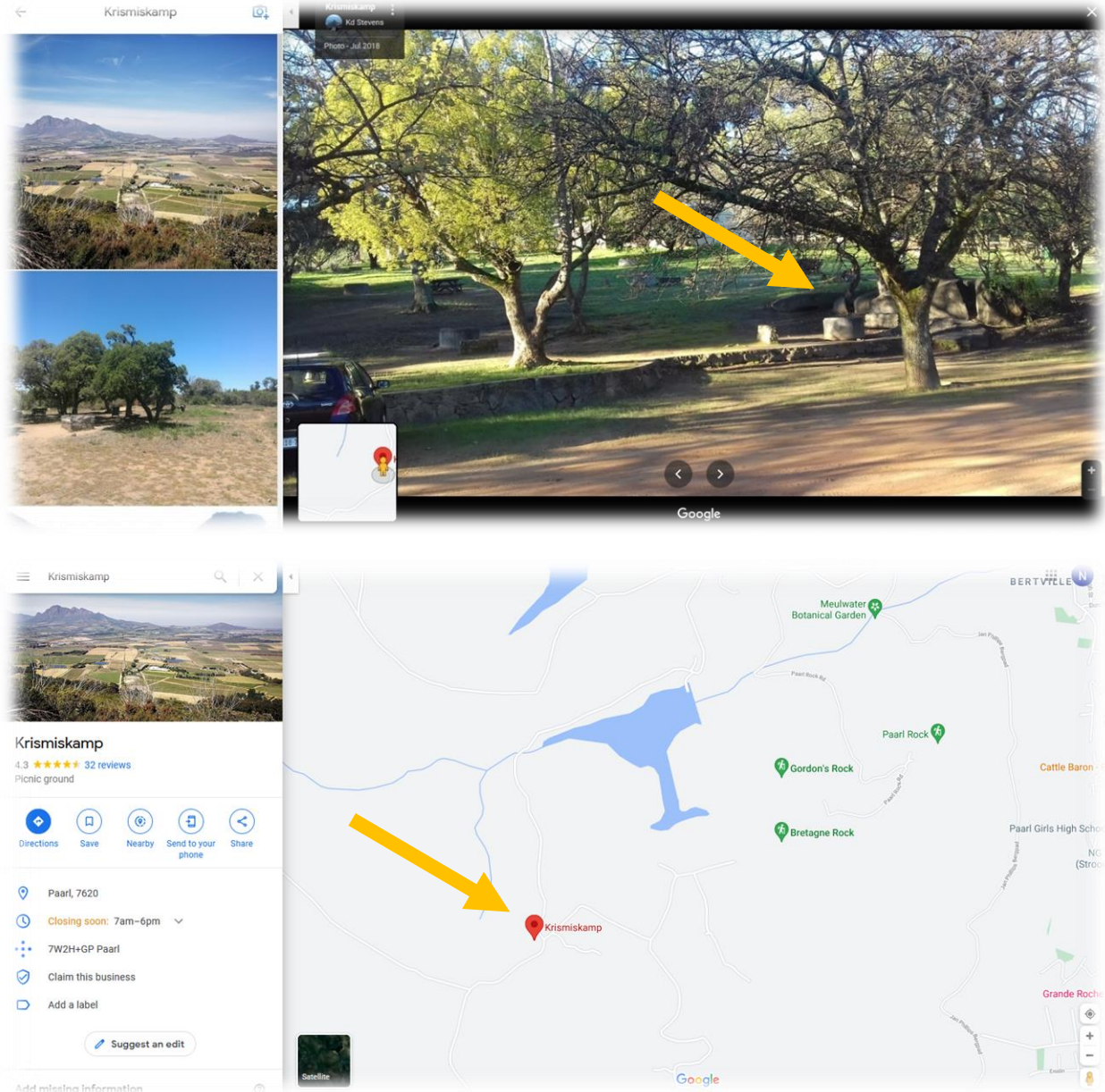


<https://goo.gl/maps/EJTijagzjUXVkg37>

CP7: Krismiskamp

GPS -33.7486435,18.9292502

This control point leads up a gravel parcours on Paarl Rock, where you will find the humble Krismiskamp camp site nestled away at the top of the mountainside. Aim for a photo at the sign at the entrance to the camp site. And as you descend back down towards Paarl the next obstacle will be clearly visible in the distance: the old [Du Toits kloof](#) pass.

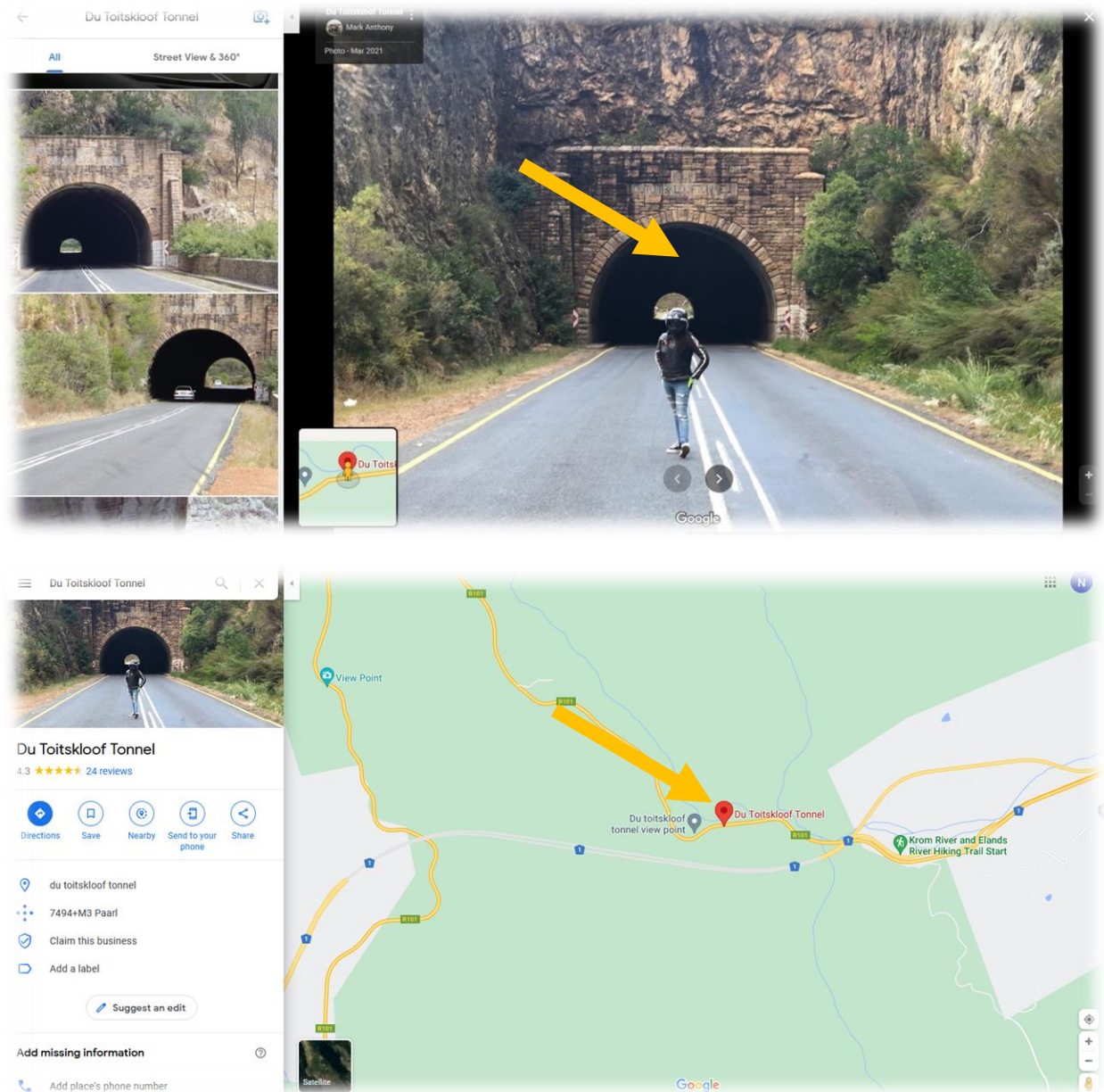


<https://goo.gl/maps/2bj5PbPRaYyRgYL18>

CP8: Old Du Toits Kloof Tunnel

GPS -33.730796,19.1051592

The [old pass](#) (officially designated as the R101) is 11km longer than the [newer N1](#) route and is certainly worth choosing over the new route if you are not in a hurry! On the way up, you will cross over the N1 with its high-altitude Miaspoort Viaduct (first of its kind in SA). Stop for a photo at the old tunnel, enjoy the mountain fynbos, and spare a thought for modern engineering and the new 3.7km tunnel below.

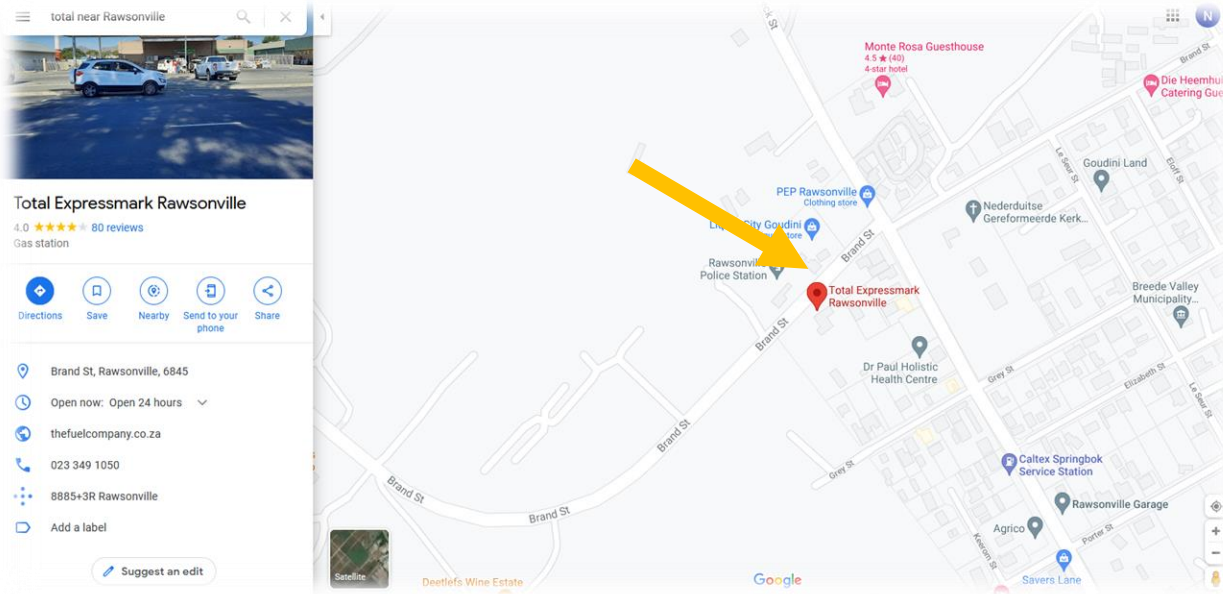
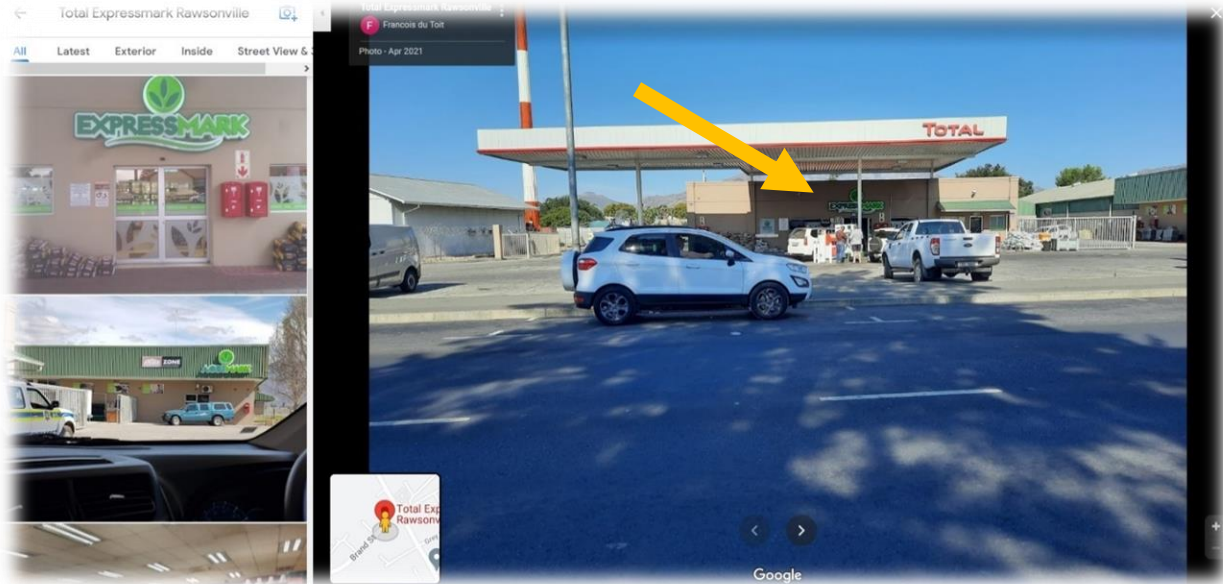


<https://goo.gl/maps/jnosqrnEpwEgSsKn8>

CP9: Rawsonville Total

GPS -33.925698,18.8781112

This 24hr convenience store at the local garage (opposite the police station) has been a popular feature on almost every local Audax routes passing through this area. Refuel and prepare for the next stretch, starting with the [Slanghoek Valley road](#) and then the climb up [Michell's pass](#) into Ceres.

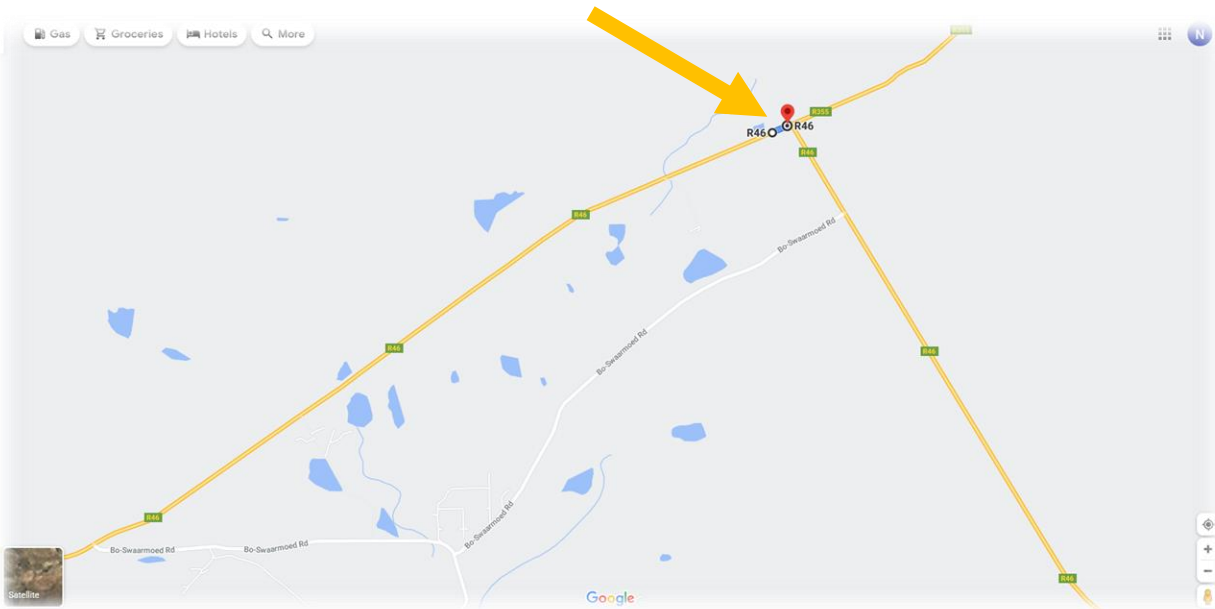


<https://goo.gl/maps/NtbrAqKUHkgwKPE7>

CP10: R46 T-junction

GPS -33.231354,19.6768711

Note that even though Ceres is not a control, it will be your last chance to refuel before taking on the desolate roads over [Theronsberg pass](#) and back over the [Matroosberg](#) mountains. The control point is roughly half-way on the loop from Ceres and back – and depending on the time of year you can expect either strong winds, scorching heat or often the first snow during winter.

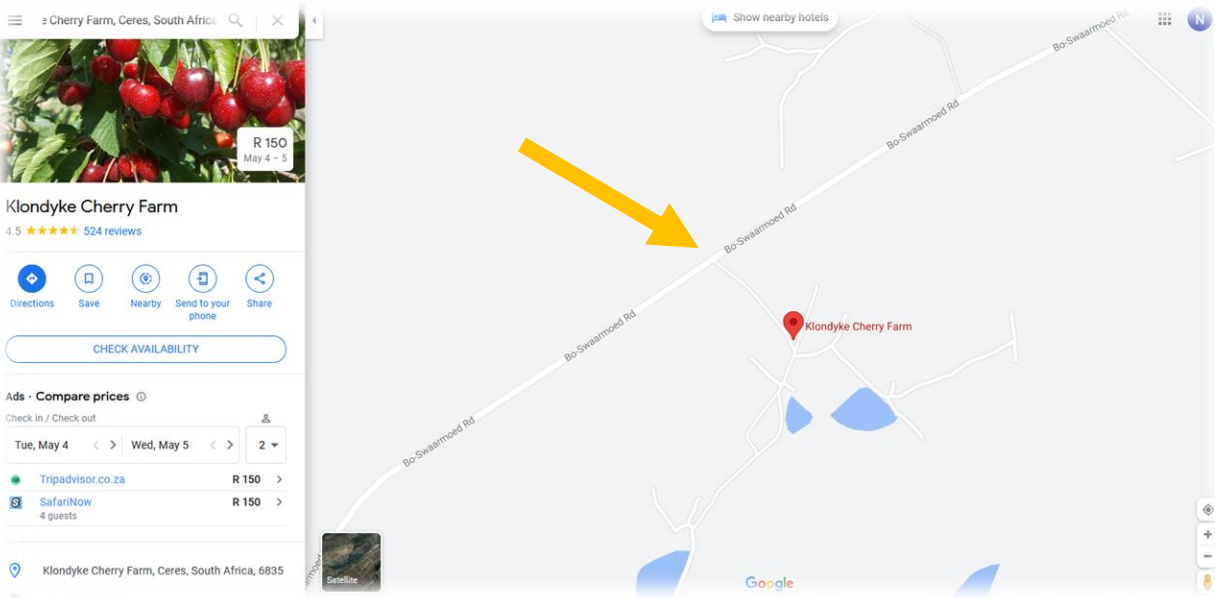


<https://goo.gl/maps/9XxTcUUw3PDT6xFq6>

CP11: Klondyke

GPS -33.3132773,19.5793421

This popular [cherry farm](#) and camp site is found under the trees on top of Bo-Swaarmoed pass, which is also called the Uitkomst or Bloubank Pass by locals. Matjiesrivier is a very old farm with old buildings, dry packed stone walls and a unique and completely intact slave bell dating back to the early 1700's.

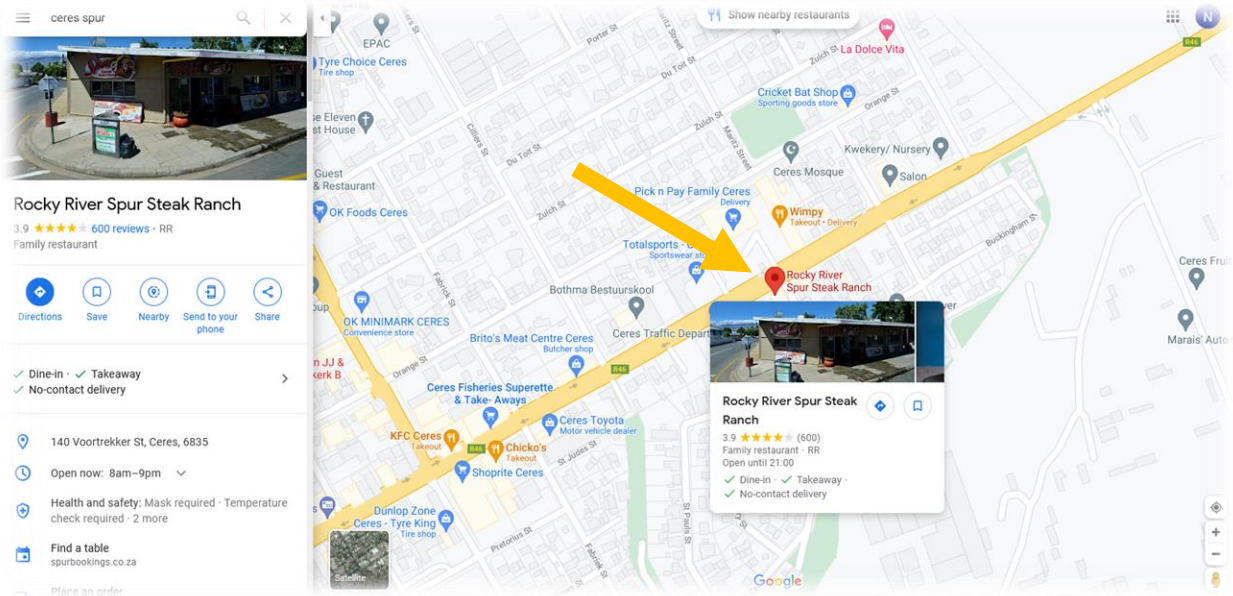
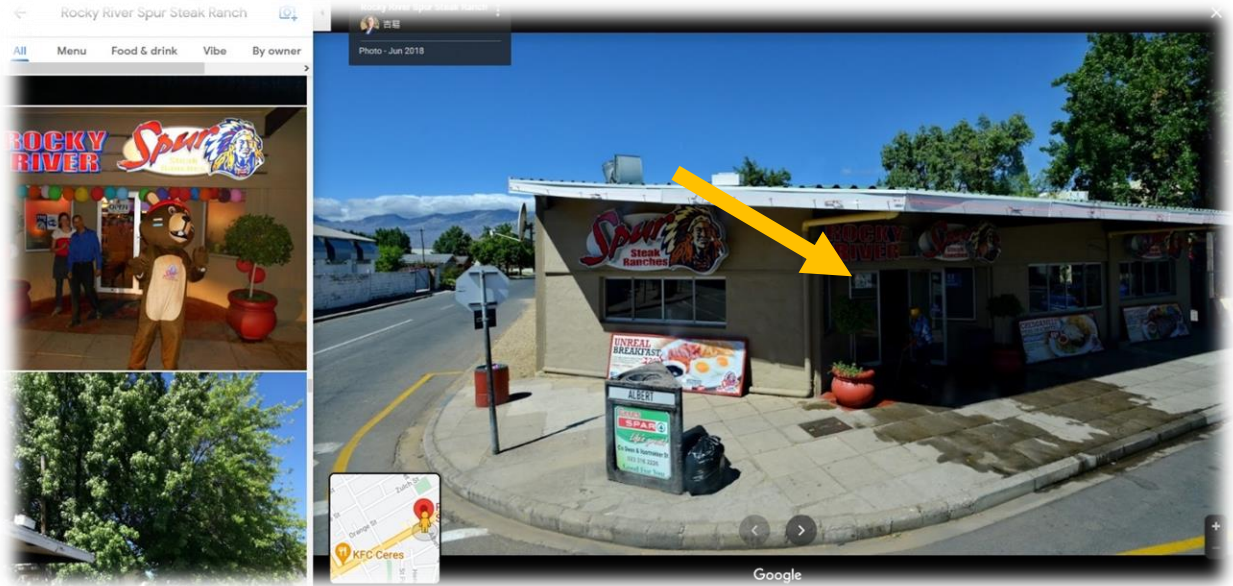


<https://goo.gl/maps/vhri9icvgo6f4vKu9>

CP12: Ceres Spur

GPS -33.3669412,19.3164727

[Spur](#) family restaurants remains a South African classic and it may serve you well before the next stretch that includes [Gydo](#) pass and thereafter the most climbing of any on this route before getting back to a refueling point. If you arrive here after hours, stock up at the 24hr stores at Engen and Shell garages just down the road.

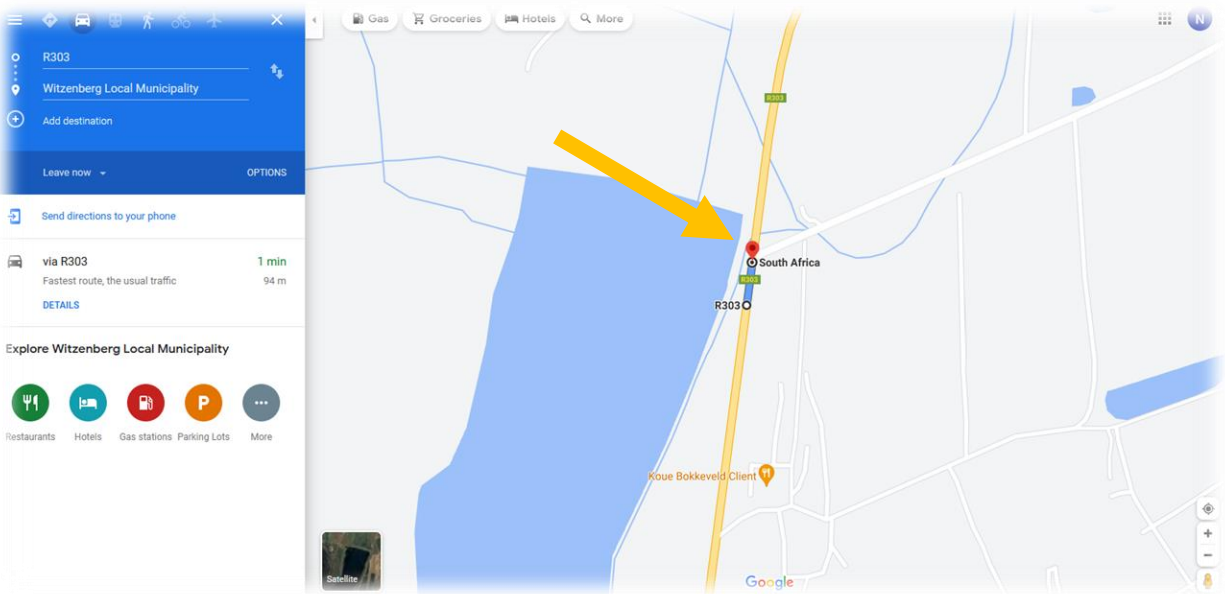


<https://g.page/rockyriverceres?share>

CP13: Baviaanshoek Sign

GPS -33.1846424,19.3310767

This control is the Northernmost point of the route and we turn at the Baviaanshoek sign, before Op-die-berg and the Kouebokkeveld. Go back down Gydo pass and cut across the gravel road after Prince Alfred Hamlet (where nothing may be open after hours) to the R46 before climbing [Swaarmoed pass](#).

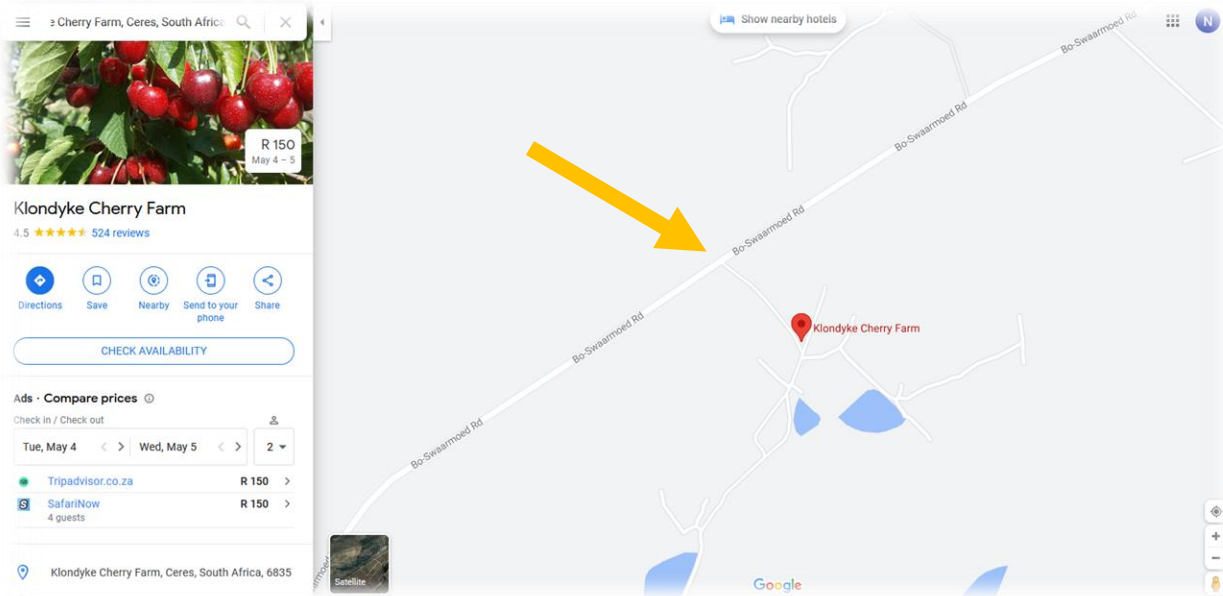


<https://goo.gl/maps/FmdjMdPBs85Dqdkp6>

CP14: Klondyke

GPS -33.3132773,19.5793421

Welcome back to the cherry farm – before descending [Bo-Swaarmoed](#) pass (a gravel road that connects the summit of the *Swaarmoed* Pass with the farm *Uitkomst*/*Matjiesrivier* in the valley below. Be alert for two reasons: It is safer to ascend this pass than descend it. And after the descent as the road splits and if you fail to keep left the penalty will be a rather unnecessary 10km detour.

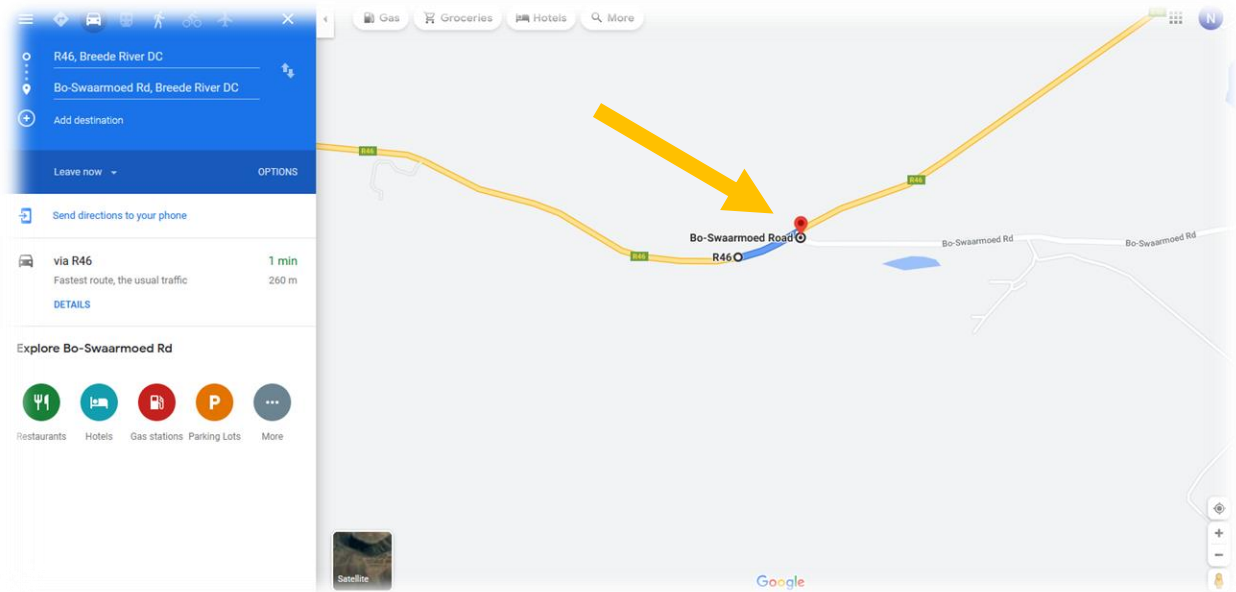


<https://goo.gl/maps/vhri9icvgo6f4vKu9>

CP15: Bo-Swaarmoed/Matjiesrivier

GPS -33.2593913,19.6212127

Leave the gravel behind and return to Ceres by first climbing [Hottentotskloof](#) pass and then descending Theronsberg (where great speeds are achievable, especially in the absence of a headwind). Next stop is down Slanghoek and back to Rawsonville.

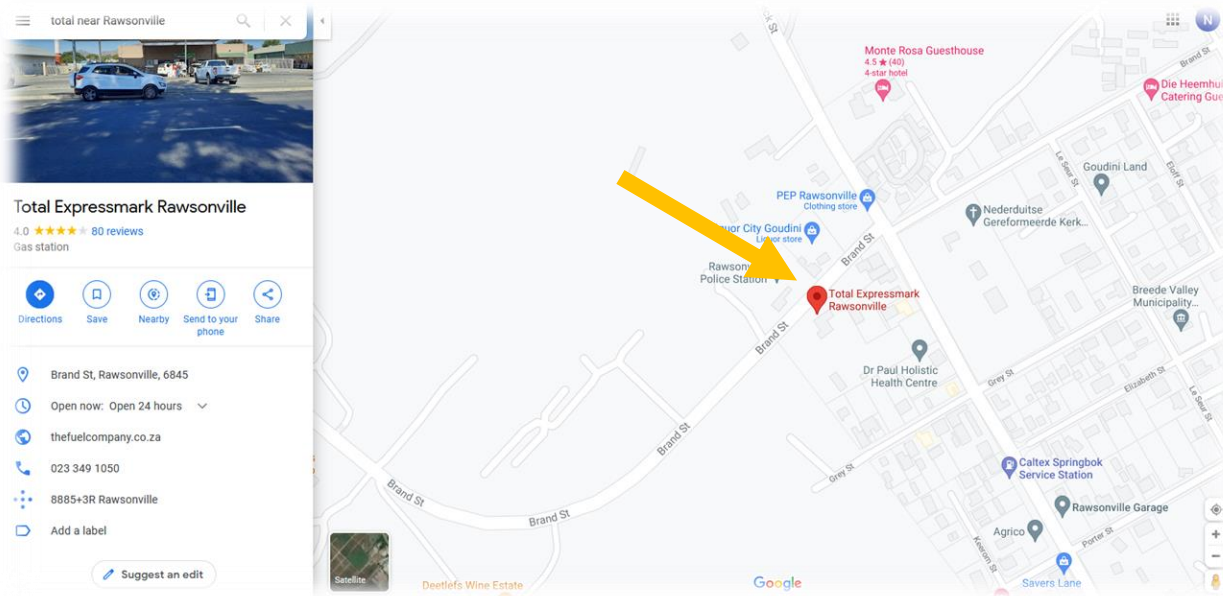
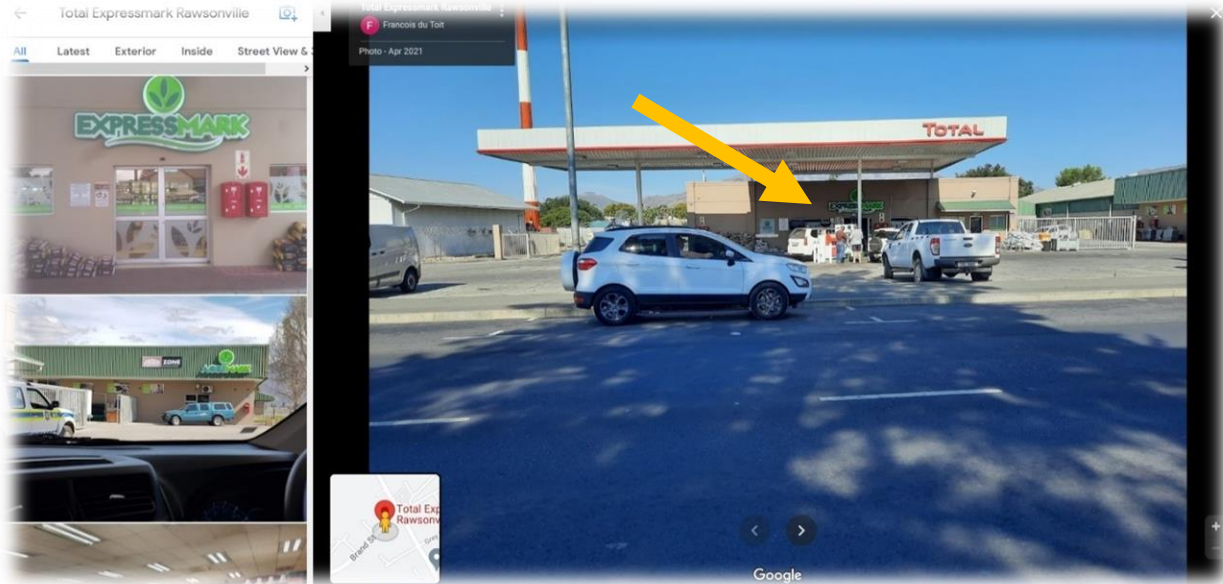


<https://goo.gl/maps/FJk5YBK65mnvHX9A6>

CP16: Rawsonville Total

GPS -33.925698,18.8781112

Welcome back to Rawsonville and over 500kms done. All that remains is hopping over to Paarl for a last stint up the rock and then for the victory lap to Franschhoek. Enjoy the last 100 odd-kms. And note that a gradual climb starts as soon as you leave Rawsonville, all the way to the top of Du Toitskloof.

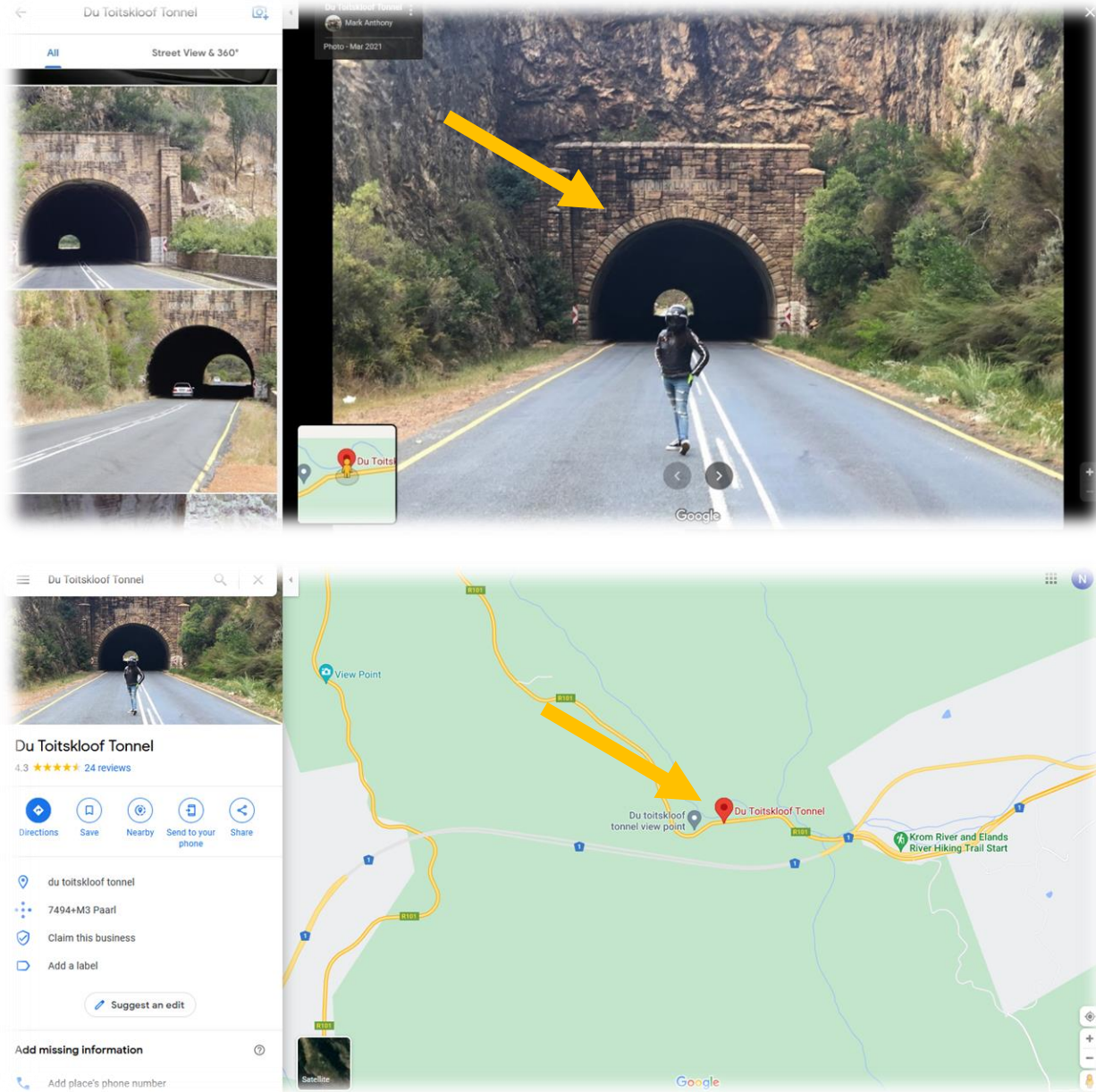


<https://goo.gl/maps/NtbrAqKUHkgwKPEn7>

CP17: Old Du Toitskloof tunnel

GPS -33.730796,19.1051592

Welcome back to the old Du Toits Kloof Pass, this time from the other direction. Its grand, dramatic mountain views and elegantly constructed, tunnel whisks one back in time to an older, almost forgotten era – when World War 2 impactfully changed the world with its bombs, genocide and bittersweet victories.

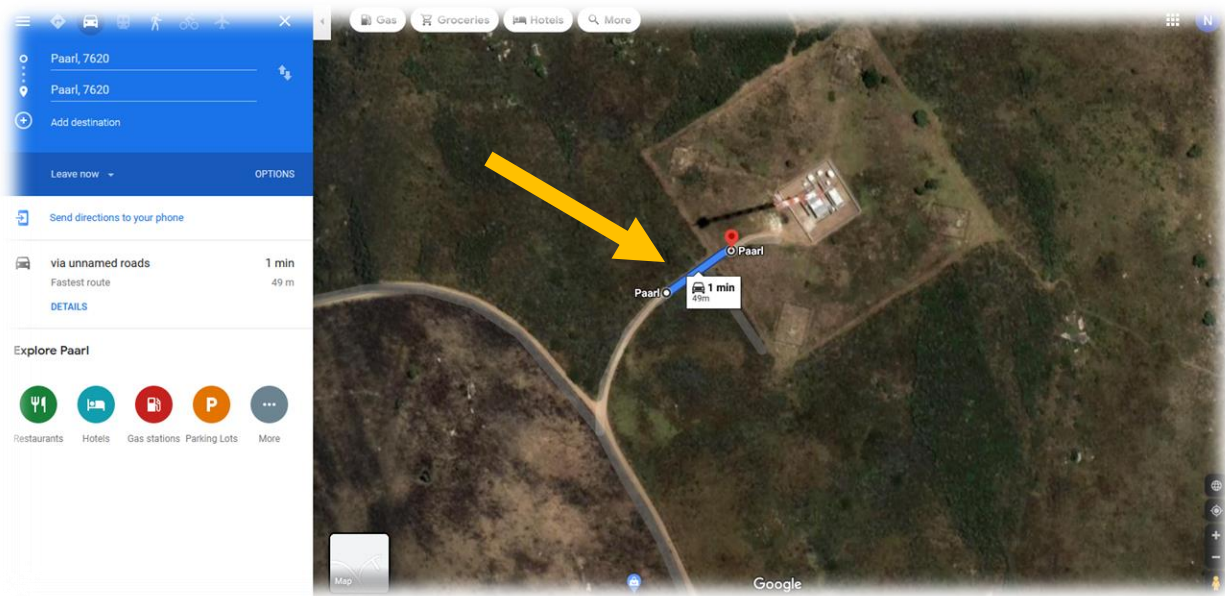


<https://goo.gl/maps/jnosqrnEpwEgSsKn8>

CP18: Paarl Rock Radio Tower

GPS -33.714456,18.9372651

This is a gravel climb up the now familiar [Jan Phillips](#) mountain drive (Jan was a respected wagon maker in the town in the 1800's) and on to the highest point on the Paarl Rock for a photo at the radio tower. This is also the last gravel section on this ride.

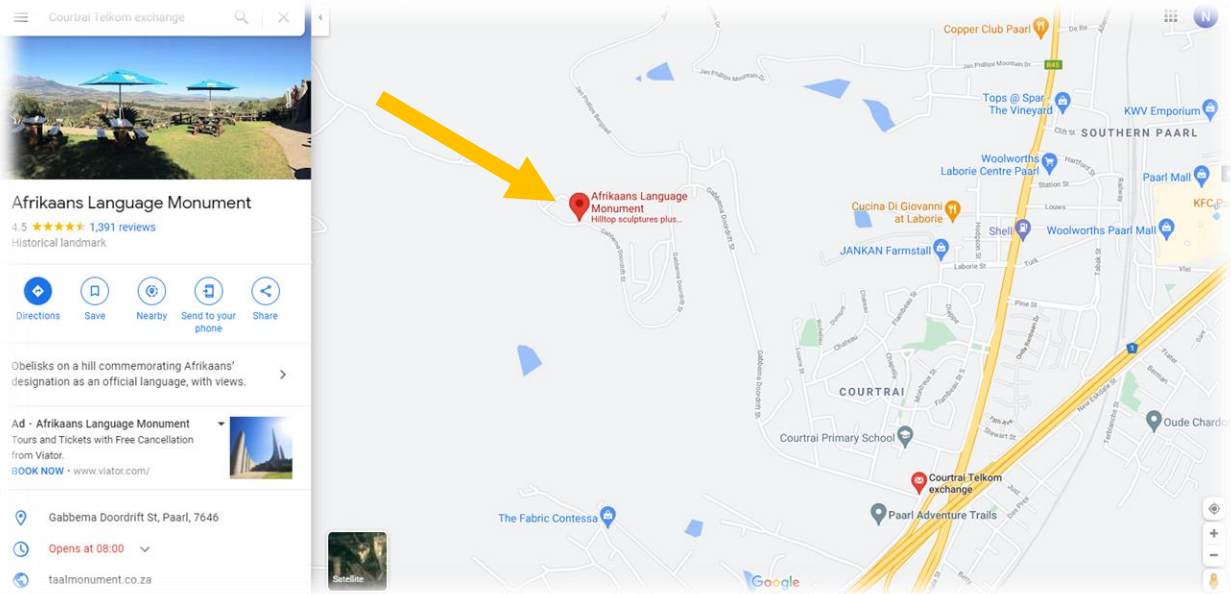


<https://goo.gl/maps/NRidJzs6jC4V4Pd66>

CP19: Taalmonument

GPS -33.7663581,18.9438951

Regardless of whether you are Afrikaans or not, a visit to this holy grail of the young language of South Africa's Dutch pioneers, is a must if you are in the Paarl area. One last climb up this stunning drive to bid farewell to the Taalmonument. Next stop: the finish above Franschhoek.



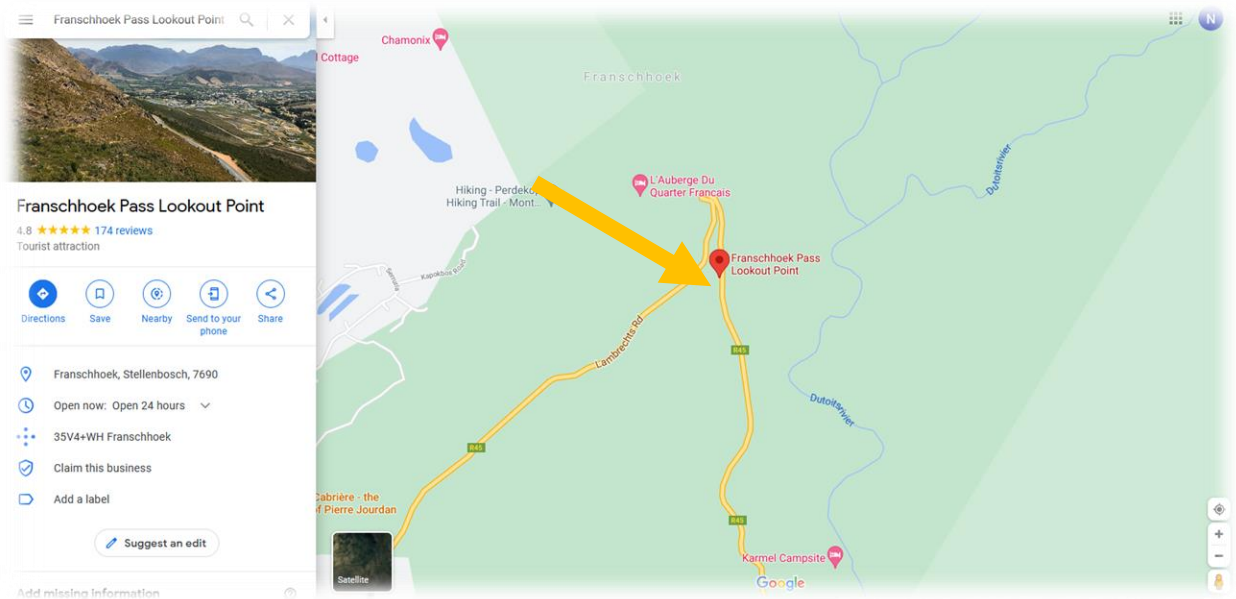
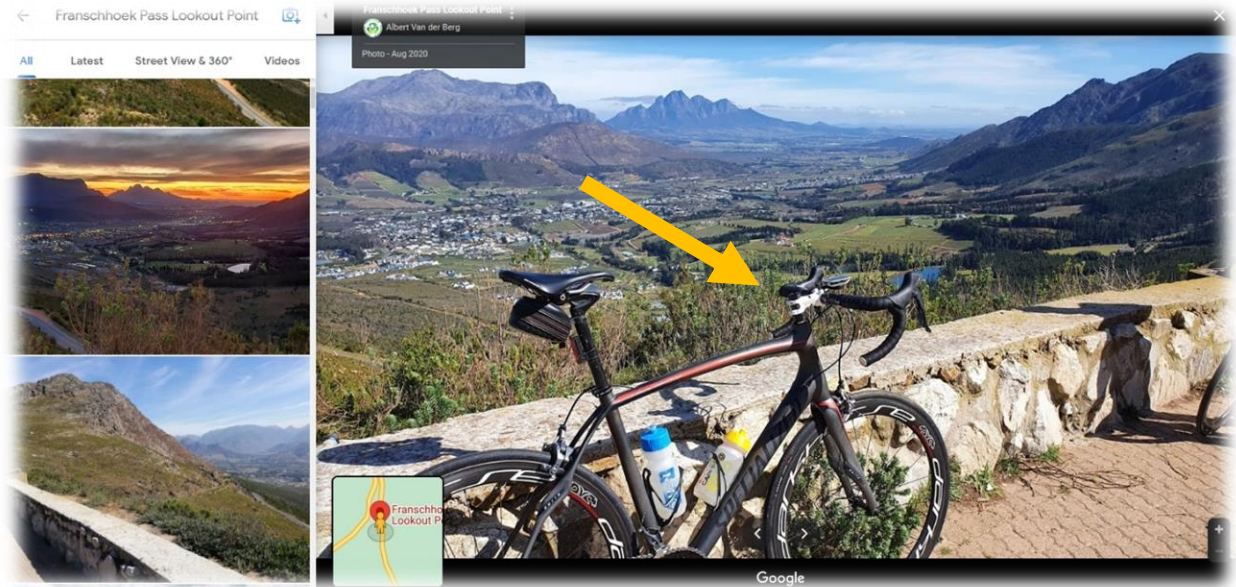
<https://goo.gl/maps/EJTijagzxiUXVkg37>

CP20: Franschoek pass lookout

GPS -33.9051448,19.1563833

Franschoek Pass is also called Lambrechts Road, though - more poetically - a hundred and fifty years ago it was known as Olifantshoek ("Elephants Corner") after the now mythical herds of elephant which once roamed these valleys and mountains. This long, steep and dramatic pass with its variety of scenery was South Africa's first properly engineered road. A fitting finish for our [French heritage](#).

Congratulations on finishing the SR600. Ten passes in both directions.



<https://goo.gl/maps/rnYdgVRAyNVSJL946>