

Eleventh edition of the annual Voorkamerfest (first weekend of Spring) will take place in Darling

on 5, 6 and 7 September 2014

The people of Darling will open their homes to host professional performances by local and Dutch artists. Drama, mime, comedy and cabaret will take place in the sitting rooms and voorkamers of Darling's residents, in a circuit which will run throughout this West Coast village.

At this year's event, 21 different performances will be showcased in 21 separate venues. From African rhythms to Dutch drama, Afrikaans poetry to razor sharp stand-up comedy, it's all on the bill – and in the lounge. The homes will be equally diverse, ranging from Victorian to township homes.

This concept was brought from Netherlands to the town of Darling by the two well-known Producers, Wim and Inge Bos. It was further developed and conceptualized by them into a workable plan. The fest has been hailed as an exciting mix of community ubuntu spirit and top-notch entertainment. Last year saw hundreds of visitors enjoying this special event.

Part of the appeal is the adventure. Visitors purchase a ticket which will take them on a mystery route through Darling. The ticket price includes transport via taxi and three concerts of 30 min each in three different homes. It is a magical tour with guaranteed professional entertainment.

Because each venue will only take a maximum of around 22 people, intimacy and genuine hospitality on behalf of the homeowners are guaranteed.

Less than an hour's drive from Cape Town, Darling is the perfect setting for the Voorkamerfest. The village is known for its vibrant community – including the fabulous Mrs Evita Bezuidenhout and Pieter-Dirk Uys – and the surrounding hills which are famous for their wild flowers, Duckitt's Nursery Orchids, various wine estates and !Khwattu, San Centre for Learning. Darling has a number of good restaurants.

Don't miss out on the festive atmosphere of the Voorkamer weekend which will be enhanced by entertainment at the **Arts, Crafts and Food Fair** at Evita se Perron. It will offer an array of famous local artisan produce. Amble around, enjoy a local brew or glass of wine, browse through the many stalls and soak up the atmosphere.

Each one of the seven taxi routes will depart from Evita se Perron and the restaurant and bar will be serving light meals and drinks.

Visit www.voorkamerfest.co.za to view the full list of performers. Then, close your eyes and imagine being face-to-face with anyone of these artists in a congenial, intimate setting, a home.

Local taxis will be transporting the audiences to the various voorkamers on Friday at 17h00, Saturday at 12:00 and 17:00 and Sunday at 12:00.

Everyone meets at Evita se Perron at least half an hour before their taxi departs, tickets should be collected from the box office an hour before.

Remember venues and specific artists performing in them remain a surprise until you arrive on the doorstep.

The Voorkamerfest is a truly South African cultural experience and eagerly awaited event. Because seating is limited, advance booking is recommended. **Fest** engages with the broader community, the concept appears to work in a smaller town development context, chiefly because it goes far beyond simply spreading the economic benefits around this festival also engages with community participants on a cultural level.

The punters experience unfamiliar places in safe conditions. They meet “strangers” from their own community. The local taxi offers a mini tour of the town of Darling and the hosts are themselves exposed to what are for many untried experiences – cabaret, mime, classical music, circus arts, modern dance - all performed by professionals right there in their living rooms. Artist’s work hard – performing their thirty-minute pieces twelve times over the three days to audiences not always familiar with the nature of their craft. It’s the honesty and freshness of the response they get – which seems to invigorate the performers and in some cases has turned out to be a life-changing experience. Unlike the usual solitary interval experience of the formal theatre, here audience members and complete strangers find it easy to chat among themselves between shows in the minicab taxis. The choice of work is restricted to what can be performed in a makeshift theatre. Stripped of complicated sets, sound and light effects – pure dramatic styles are encouraged. It’s high in concept.

“It’s not idealistic or simplistic to say that this kind of festival bridges divides in society, enriches communities, and allows even the inhabitants of a rural South African town, to enjoy and have a stake in world culture,” adds producer Wim Visser.

FOR BOOKINGS

Contact Chanda Barrows at 082 321 7542 or
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www.voorkamerfest.co.za