

Village Café, Swakopmund

Serious about coffee

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY MARTA JAWA



"Life is much too important to be taken seriously."

Oscar Wilde

When in Swakopmund and looking for an alternative spot where you won't be given any strange looks, can hide away in a hermit's corner, share some good news with a loved one, or cry over spilt milk (or coffee), the *Village Café* is perfect. Here feelings can be shared and life won't be taken too seriously.

The *Village Café* is all about the most popular beverage in the world: coffee. Coffee has played an important role in many societies throughout history. In Africa and Yemen, it was used in religious ceremonies. As a result, the Ethiopian Church banned its consumption until 1889. It was also banned in Ottoman Turkey in the 17th century for political reasons, and was associated with rebellious political activities in Europe.

But the history of coffee aside, at the *Village Café* you can indulge in that stimulating caffeine drink by choosing between a Longdrop (bottomless), Village Mug (*blikbeker*) or even a decaf (if you insist). Order some sweet or savoury treats to go with your coffee, such as *beskuit* (rusks), a decent slice of home-made cake, pancakes, scones, muffins, waffles, flapjacks or fresh fruit salad. And, if all else fails, the *Village Café* offers oversized home-baked bread (not called 'Ma se brood' for nothing), toasted sandwiches, brötchens, breakfasts, omelettes, savoury pancakes and salads. Salads such as tuna mayo, chicken mayo, Greek salad, smoked chicken, warm steak strips salad and Adam & Eve are all served with Ma's bread and home-made dressing. Or try one of the breakfast sandwiches; a 10-centimetre stack consisting of Ma's bread covered with perfectly fried eggs, bacon, mushrooms and cheese – it will keep you going until the next morning, when you will definitely go back for portion number two! While all the waiters are friendly and more than happy to cater for your every need, Ringo is definitely one of the stars (no pun intended)!

First-class coffee and massive pieces of bread aside, *Village Café* is worth a visit just to spend time admiring the décor and exploring all the nooks and crannies. From the broken porcelain patterns on the bathroom walls, to the colourful blankets in the outside bathtub, interesting art works by local artist, Irene Strydom, and quirky signs decorating the walls, the place is an Alice in Wonderland playground for young and old alike.

Then there's the Village Music Saloon at the back; a place with an interesting history in itself. It used to be the house and shop of Rosa Vogt, an unusual German character with an interesting history. She used to sell fresh vegetables and herbs from her little shop, and was well known in the surroundings. Because of its historical value, no children or smokers are allowed in this area, but smooching and cuddling is negotiable and well-behaved adults are welcome. The small stage in a hidden corner was also the exact space where Andra (one of the partners and also the person behind the eccentric menus) started her debut as singer.

The *Village Café* is a joint partnership and family business between Johan Cilliers, his wife, Leana, two daughters Andra and Landi, and niece, Ananda. It celebrated its 5th birthday on 7 December 2009. Says Johan, "Life is all about coffee, music and fun," which is indeed what you'll find at the *Village Café*. This is a place where famous people feel like locals and locals feel famous.

FACT FILE

Village Café, Swakopmund

23 Sam Nujoma Avenue

Tel: 064 40 4723

Fax: 064 40 3049

www.villagecafenamibia.com

Opening times: The Cilliers' open when they get there (usually right in time for breakfast) and close when they leave (just after an early afternoon drink).

