

Good Expectations

the (good) tale of Maniesa
a slave



Goedverwacht is scenically situated in folds of the Piketberg

The church and mill placed across the road from each other at the centre of the village



The mission village of **Goedverwacht**, previously known as *De Goede Verwachting*, snuggles deeply into a valley, surrounded by the spectacular majesty of the Piketberg range.

In what was then the valley of *Rietkloof, Burgershoek* was established by Hendrik Schalk Burger as a cattle farm. When he was widowed his children chose to remain in Cape Town so he asked **Maniesa**, a slave in his employ from Bengal in India, to remain on the farm and take care of him. Her five children, who were also slaves, and son-in-law were permitted to stay with them. There they lived harmoniously together in the isolated environment.

When Burger died, and as a reward, Burgershoek was left to Maniesa, and his will stipulated that when her direct descendants had passed away, the property should be sold and the resulting capital divided amongst the remaining offspring. Naturally Burger's own children were not at all happy with this outcome and challenged the will in court – twice – but in a wonderful and fair result it was upheld. The family could remain.

And so they did, staying on in peace until the last of the offspring, **Hester**, died. She is buried in the local graveyard, as is her mother.

Moravian Missionaries at Mamre were at this junction looking to establish a new station and Maniesa's descendants decided to sell to them for £750. Because of uncertainty regarding the property rights of people living there Goedverwacht developed slowly. As this was the mid-19th century a large number of slaves who had been granted their freedom and did not want to remain in the employ of their masters, were in need of places to settle. Here one existed in and although it

only became a formally established mission station in 1889 it had become well settled by this time.

As the village grew dwellings were established along the contours, with allotments running down to the floor of the valley. A parsonage was built some five years before the stone church, a majestic construction rising above the valley, utilising local stone. Around this core a mill was constructed and a school established, leaving for the future a scenically situated group.

Today the church still remains the centre of the community, hosting activities and a festival.

The annual **Snoek en Patat Fees** has its origins in a fascinating ritual. The seasonal workers on the farms found that during winter food was scarce, so they would load up their carts and travel to the coastal villages with the abundant *patat* (sweet potato) crop and make exchanges with fishermen for snoek, thus establishing a tradition that is now celebrated with this event.

Beginning at the graveyard where Maniesa rests is a hiking route – **Die Peerboom** (Pear Tree) which winds up above Goedverwacht granting stunning views and eventually leading to a vantage point above Wittewater, an adjacent mission station. Another route leads to **Piket-bo-Berg** via a jeep track, an easy hike to take in the wonderful situation of the village.

As many locals find employment outside the area, it is quiet during weekdays and it is a wonderful time to savour the peace of this rural island, enveloped in the folds of the mountains.



A graveyard next to the village contains the remains of Maniesa



The trail leading to Piket-bo-Berg