

## VISIT FRIEMERSHEIM ON THE FRAGRANCE ROUTE

Originally a mission station, historic Friemersheim and its inhabitants are closely associated with the NG Sendingkerk (today the Verenigde Gereformeerde Kerk) and with Reverend Johann Kretzen of the Berliner Missionary Society. He arrived from Friemersheim, Germany in 1854 to do mission work for the George NG parish. The church in Friemersheim was built in 1884, and in later years the road that runs past it was named after the Reverend – Kretzen Street.

At the beginning of the 20th century the four Volkwyn brothers Charlie, Hennie, Isak and Aser ensured that Friemersheim (Gonnakraal) became known for the Volkwyn chairs and other furniture manufactured by them. In Matilda Burden's *Old Cape Furniture, Studies In Style* it is mentioned that "The Volkwyn chair is a late variant of the Regency chair that came into being in the Southern Cape. It is named after the Volkwyn family, who lived and worked in the George/Groot Brakrivier area at the beginning of the 20th century and developed this variant of the Regency chair." Visit the church to see a replica of the Friemersheim Volkwyn chair; it was made by Friemersheim resident Ravel Nortjé (now deceased) whose grandmother was a Volkwyn, and family of the four brothers.

In 2012 the Friemersheim Grow A Lavender Project put this historic village back into the spotlight. Initiated by Great Brak River resident Heleen Coertze, this community project originally involved 25 active lavender farmers who grew the flowers on their own plots. Fragrant patches of lavender could be seen everywhere! Today only a few farmers remain, but Petra Jordaan's lavender nursery in Kretzen Street (restarted after it was destroyed by fire on 31 July 2017) is a huge success story, and the garden created by lavender farmer Hester Uithaler has become a popular stop for tourists.

A further boost for local tourism was the start of the Shweshwe Stop project in March 2018. Only iconic locally produced Shweshwe is used and articles are on display at The Friemersheim Sewing Group.

Nowadays the Fragrance Route concept (also Heleen Coertze's brainchild) has been well established. And an annual Fragrance Fest has been introduced as well – on one day each year, when various venues in Friemersheim and elsewhere on the Route open their doors to the public. Since 2016 this has also become the date when members of the extended Volkwyn family return to Friemersheim for their annual reunion, organized by local resident Melvin Volkwyn.

### Friemersheim DIY Walk / Drive

Meet the locals and visit a few stops along the way. The route of 1 km takes you from the church to Geelhout Street (turn right after 200 m), and back to Kretzen Street. From this point it is about 100 m to the Friemersheim Kwekery (right). This walk or drive can be done throughout the year – and contact numbers are provided for additional visits along the way. Please phone to arrange at least 24 hours in advance.

- 1 **Verenigde Gereformeerde Kerk:** View this historic church by arrangement only. Contact Margory Roelfse @ 062 796 9284.
- 2 **Friemersheim Pre-Primary School:** Meet the Friemersheim kids by arrangement only, before 11h30 on school days. Contact principal Christine Terblanche @ 084 701 9176. Donations welcome.
- 3 **Friendly Superette:** Pop in at this local shop and say hallo to the owner, who hails from Bangladesh.
- 4 **Hester Uithaler's garden:** Lavender, flowers and organic vegetables grow in this garden, decorated with statuettes and cool drink bottles filled with coloured water. Various birds are frequent visitors. Home-made ginger beer and soetkoekies on request; order via Petra @ 082 957 7715.
- 5 **Friemersheim Sewing Group:** Pop in to see the Proebag and other products made by Cinty Joubert and other local women at this SHWESHWE STOP venue.
- 6 **Friemersheim Kwekery:** Buy lavender and other plants and walk in the lavender maze (newly planted after the 2017 fire). By arrangement, contact Petra Jordaan @ 082 957 7715.



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