

The Krugersdorp Game Reserve Mountain Bike Challenge 2012

Game viewing fest awaits mountain bikers:

Have you ever ridden your mountain bike in an event where you are guaranteed of spotting more than 1000 antelope? If not, you should enter the Krugersdorp Game Reserve Mountain Bike Challenge, presented by ASG on 11 February.

Riders will be treated to a game fest like in no other event in South Africa with loads of buck roaming as close as 20 metres to you on some sections.

The event uses trails that traverse all corners of the reserve, which means riders will see just about all the game on the reserve. There are Gemsbuck, Black Wildebeest, Eland, Kudu, Impala, Springbok, a herd of more than 300 Blesbuck and a herd of more than 120 Red Hartbees. When these large herds start running, it looks like a scene out of the annual migration in the Serengeti. No jokes!

And to top it all off the riding terrain matches the scenery! The Krugersdorp Game Reserve is in the process of receiving a major face-lift and part of it consists of a host of mountain bike bridges that have been purposely built in a forest section traversing a stream that runs through the reserve towards Tarlton's side.

The restaurant, which closed down a few years ago, is now fully functional again and serves great breakfasts. There are ample shower facilities and three large pools for riders to cool off in. Facilities are clean and neat and it's certainly the perfect mountain biking venue.

For details on the venue and lodge bookings, go to www.krugersdorpgamereserve.co.za

The Krugersdorp Game Reserve Mountain Bike Challenge is part of the Vastrap Festival and an initiative of the Mogale City (Krugersdorp) Town Council with Parks manager Rinus Boucher at the helm. Rinus is a keen mountain biker and when he was tasked with re-establishing the reserve he immediately identified mountain biking as one of the key ingredients.

There are two distances on offer – 20km and 40km. The 20km ride is predominantly on the tarred game viewing roads and is suitable for anyone who can stay upright on any form of two wheeled non-motorised transport.

The 40km is a challenge with lots of variety, but tough in the middle section. It starts out with a steep 1km climb which will split the field from the outset. It then climbs up gently further towards the Jack Taylor airfield before turning right and making its way towards the main gate via some twists and turns on fast, although at times rocky, jeep track.

After a wicked jeep track descent riders turn right onto the tarred game viewing road and very soon left again and next to the dam for a smooth section of fast jeep track riding for about 5km. In this area the game is in abundance and you're likely to see the most impressive herd of Blesbuck you've ever seen.

The event turns at the reserve's picnic area (the first spectator point) and then heads down a mangled tar road descent to the North-West corner of the reserve. Riders then track the Western fence until they reach the Predator's enclosure. The chances of spotting a Lion (in the enclosure, of course) are very good.

Riding into the valley at the Predator's enclosure there are some great hand carved single track trails and river crossings over bridges that will keep riders on their toes.

The climb out of the valley is steep, but short, so a good push gets you to the top quickly. After passing another picnic area (the second spectator point), the event then goes into the most scenic section – the Grasslands. This 8km loop is something to behold with the amount of animals once again on offer as well as some smooth riding on groomed, fine grass.

A final descent awaits to the finish line. Job well done! Now you can jump into one of the pools and enjoy a breakfast with loved ones.

While the 40km is a mountain-bike test in the true sense of the word, the 20km is quite literally more of a game drive on two wheels and fit for the entire family.

Event Information:

Start: 8:00

Venue: Krugersdorp Game Reserve (follow MTB signs from the entrance)

Entry Fees:

20km: R100

40km: R150

Timed by Spectrum Sport

Medals to all finishers

Number Collection:

Friday 10 February: West Rand Cycles from 10:00 – 16:00 (www.westrandcycles.co.za, 011 955 4342)

Saturday 11 February: At the start from 6:30

For more information on the Krugersdorp Game Reserve Mountain Bike Classic email events@cyclingnews.co.za or phone the race office on 011 662 2494

For more information on the Vastrap Festival go to www.passport2adventure.co.za, email Jannie Rykhaart on info@passport2adventure.co.za or phone 083 268 0566.