

Gastro Foundation Weekend for Fellows



The second Annual Gastro Foundation Weekend for Fellows took place from the 4th to 6th February 2011 at the sumptuous settings of the Spier Conference Centre outside Stellenbosch in the beautiful Winelands of the Western Cape.

Approximately 30 fellows and 15 faculty in medical and surgical gastroenterology were invited to share knowledge, teach skills and nurture interest in gastroenterology.

Upon arrival into Cape Town airport we were taken to the beautiful Spier Conference Facility just outside Stellenbosch in the Fairest Cape. After a delectable lunch Friday afternoon was spent learning the process of teaching a technical skill by Prof Damon Bizos, followed by a lecture presented by Prof Chris Mulder from the VU University Medical Centre Amsterdam who spoke at length with regard to training of gastroenterology in Europe and South Africa.

The Faculty versus Fellow quiz was then commenced chaired by the intrepid Prof Krige and Prof Thomson. After much banter and favouritism the outcome was a much disputed win to the faculty.

The evening was spent with a riverside braai and socialising amongst the delegates: the quality of the cuisine and conversation was splendid.

Saturday began with an early morning start at 6:30 am with a refreshing run and swim. The format of the day consisted of fellows being divided into 5 groups of 6 fellows rotating through sequential stations in the management and diagnoses of selected problematic cases in gastroenterology. These sessions were interactive, entertaining and exceptionally well received by all the fellows with the quality of cases and discussion being of a high standard. Groups were marked on knowledge and skills with special marks given for moments of inspiration

and genius by members of faculty.

After the customary croquet game on the lawn we were treated to Dr Ian McCallum, Springbok rugby player, psychiatrist and wildlife enthusiast extraordinaire who spoke about "The Human Animal – an evolutionary safari". His lecture was exceptionally well received and provided all present with much to ponder regarding the meaning of life. Saturday evening was spent at the wonderful Moyo restaurant with good times over a fantastic meal. Much laughter, story swapping and fun was enjoyed by all.





Sunday started bright an early with the final interactive session followed by Prof Sandie Thomson on research methodology. This was very useful and gave concrete ideas in the process of writing an abstract and preparing a paper for publication.

We all departed thereafter after an amazing weekend. The fellows weekend was indeed a unique opportunity to learn new skills, refine thinking skills and network amongst peers. I am grateful to have been invited to such a special occasion. Special thanks must be made to Karin Fenton and Dr Chris Kassianides from SAGES and the Gastro Foundation for all their hard work, Bini Seale from Cornucopia Communications for the event management, the management of Spier and the Sponsors, Astra Zeneca, without whom this fantastic event could not have occurred. Congratulations to the individual and group prize winners for the fantastic prize of a medical textbook and book vouchers.

Overall the 2nd annual Gastro Foundation Weekend for Fellows was an unqualified success helping to foster knowledge, interest and enthusiasm in both medical and surgical gastroenterology. I look forward to the next one with anticipation and hope to further build on the success of this year's event.

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