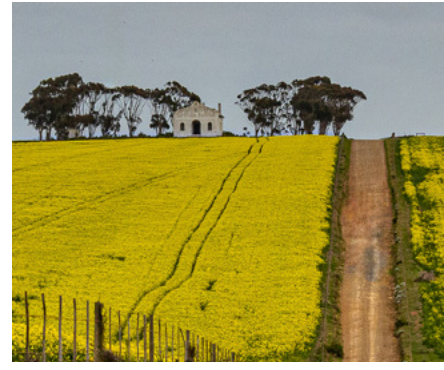


Why Struisbaai? Why August?



Photos by Jacoba van Zyl, Simon Mouton and Nicol du Toit.

There are three very good reasons why the 2025 PSSA National Congress will be held in Struisbaai early in August. They can be summarised as

- Canola
- Ideal land- and seascape weather
- Incredible diverse photo opportunities

Canola

- The time of the year – 11 to 15 August – is a unique photographic period in the Overberg (the district around Struisbaai). The *ruêns* (as the rolling hills are colloquially known), clad in patterns of yellow and green, create breathtaking landscape compositions that are different to anything you'll see in the rest of the country. Or at any other time of the year. You can compare this experience with the lavender bloom season in Tuscany ... and it is right on our doorstep.
- The best time to see lots of canola crops in bloom is in the beginning of August, as the flowers have a very brief flowering season. Because the farmers plant canola crops in different fields every year the scenic scapes differ from year to year – even week to week – and photographers do not capture the same scenes every year *ad nauseam*. What's more, you can photograph them any time of the day and in all weather conditions as the flowers do not need sunlight to open or present at their best.
- The bright yellow canola offers a magnificent foreground display for dark, brooding, stormy clouds, which you are bound to encounter at this time of the year. All the canola scapes on this page had been photographed in August.

Ideal land- and seascape weather

- Winter and dark clouds are a land- and seascape photographer's best friends. Martin Osner, who'll present a talk on landscape photography, conducted his Landscape Masterclass courses in winter because, he says, that is when you find the most interesting skies and beautiful light conditions. Phil Sturgess, who'll talk about photographing sea scapes, also says that bad weather, accompanied by hectic waves, make the best photos.
- In August you are bound to encounter dramatic skies, rainbows and bad weather that will help you to compose stunning images (remember to bring warm and weatherproof clothes).



Photos by Lesley Parolis (left) and Mo Bassa.



Above from left: *The Cauldron* by Kim Stevens; *Struisbaai harbour* by Nicol du Toit; *Bredasdorp museum* by Trudi du Toit.

Incredible diverse photo opportunities

The area offers unique photo opportunities:

- The famous **cauldron at Waenhuiskrans** (according to residents) or Arniston (according to visitors) is a sea scape that most visitors have on their bucket lists.
- The interesting and varied **coastline**, with the unique rocks of Agulhas that look like needles (the Portuguese word for needles is *agulhas*) adjacent to the long white beach of Struisbaai are also drawcards for photographers seeking sea scapes with a difference.
- The colourful boats and resident giant stingray in the **Struisbaai harbour** offer more photo opportunities.
- The iconic **Agulhas lighthouse** is undergoing refurbishment and the visitor centre should be completed at the time of congress – but, on its own, the lighthouse is a photographic landmark. Nearby the wreck of the *Meishu Maru* is slowly but surely disappearing beneath the waves, but still provides dramatic shots.
- This is a reminder that this coastline is – and has always been – one of the most dangerous for ships navigating round the Southern tip of Africa. The artifacts housed in the **shipwreck museum** in Bredasdorp bear testimony to the many ships that stranded along the coast. During the planned museum visits (more information later) personnel will entertain delegates with stories and anecdotes about the famous wrecks that helped shaped the district’s history. The salvaged items (including several figureheads and anchors) and items from the area from yesteryear will provide many images that can be used in composites.



Left: Agulhas Lighthouse by Nicol du Toit.



Right: Hotagterklip Houses by Trudi du Toit.

- Another planned outing that will transport the delegates to another era, is a visit to the **Elim mission town** with its working water mill, well-maintained traditional-style houses and museum, where many of the inter-relationships between prominent landowners and their workers of yore are laid bare (more information about registering for the outing later).
- Closer to the congress venue are the **Hotagterklip houses** that have been declared historical monuments because they are authentic representatives of the architecture of this area. On the other side of the bay (an overland drive between Struisbaai and Waenhuiskrans – is the fishing community of **Kassiesbaai** with picturesque houses and three tea rooms where traditional tea and cakes can be enjoyed and crafts bought.
- Sunset **harders trek** shoots are planned on the vast open Struisbaai beach with an experienced crew who’ll emulate this traditional way of fishing that is now regulated.
- As a way of giving back to the community, photographers will be invited to take **portraits of local community** members under guidance of John Alexander, a portrait photographer experienced in guiding photographers when taking character portraits. Each photographer will have limited time with a select number of community members, who’ll be replaced by new subjects for the next photographer to ensure unique images (more information about how to register will be provided later).