



Hermanus Photographic Society founders Dinkie Marais (left) with his wife Lettie, and Kees van de Coolwijk, with his wife Marleen, are still Honorary Life members.

Hermanus Photographic Society

Where competitions are informal

In 1996 **Dinkie Marais**, a photographic club veteran and PSSA director of more than 20 years, retired to his hometown, Hermanus, with his wife, Lettie. He had worked in towns in the old Transvaal, now Northern Gauteng and Mpumalanga, for nearly four decades. There was no photographic club in Hermanus and former PSSA president Roy Johannesson invited him to join his club, the Cape Town Photographic Society. After attending a few meetings in Cape Town, Dinkie found the travelling across the mountain and late hours too tiresome and expensive.

The owner of the Hermanus Fotofirst photographic business, **Kees van de Coolwijk**, said that a few people in Hermanus might be interested in forming a photographic club and suggested that Dinkie, with his experience, should set the ball rolling. Following Kees' suggestion, Dinkie contacted **John Annandale**, a prominent Hermanus resident, and another photographer, **Beryl Larkman**, who were indeed keen to start a club.

Following an article Dinkie wrote for the *Hermanus Times*, a meeting was held in the old library hall on 23 April 1997. The 19 people present agreed to form a club and elected Dinkie, John and Beryl to form a club committee. Not all of the members present at the first meeting joined the club, but by the end of the year the club had 21 members. Dinkie and Kees and his wife Marleen are still Honorary Life members of the club.

At the first meeting those present decided the name for the club should be Walker Bay Photographic Society, as some members also came from surrounding towns like from Gansbaai, Stanford and Bot River. They held their first competition meeting in May 1997 and in October 1997, the first visiting judge, Wikus Leeuwner, was invited to judge the monthly competition. Eventually, the outlying members drifted away and at the 1998 AGM the name Hermanus Photographic Society was officially adopted.

Dinkie Marais was president for the first four years and under his leadership Hermanus hosted the National Wildlife Photography Congress. **Max Leipoldt** was president when Hermanus hosted their first Interclub competition – in those years the hosting club was responsible for the competition as well as awards evening. In 2009, when **Ronnie Hazel** was president, the society hosted a successful PSSA National Congress.

Hermanus Photographic Society presidents

April 1997 - February 2001	Dinkie Marais	June 2010 - February 2015	Mike Sander
February 2001-February 2004	Max Leipoldt	February 2015 - February 2017	Thea Erasmus
February 2004 - February 2006	Roy Marriott	February 2017- February 2019	Charles Naude
February 2006 - February 2008	Faith Botha	February 2019 - February 2021	Elizma Fourie
February 2008 - February 2010	Ronnie Hazel	February 2021 - February 2023	David Wilson
February 2010 - June 2010	Ian Meyer	February 2023 to date	Carina de Klerk



Dinkie Marais (left) had been actively involved in photographic clubs in what was then the Transvaal province since 1962, until he retired to Hermanus, in 1996. He was a president and member of clubs in Rustenburg, Nelspruit and Middelburg for 34 years and two of these clubs, Rustenburg and Middelburg, awarded him Honorary Life Membership. Among his contributions were the hosting of the PSSA National Congresses by Rustenburg Photographic Society in 1978 and in Middelburg in 1986. For many years Dinkie's hat, adorned with the badges of numerous clubs he collected over time, was a feature of the congress photos.

Dinkie joined PSSA in 1970 and was elected a PSSA director in 1976. He remained a Board member until the early 2020's, even after he retired to Hermanus. He was awarded PSSA Honorary Life Membership, SPSSA (APSSA for Service) and a President's Award for his services to the society. In 1986 he was presented with the *Louis Marais Memorial Plaque for the PSSA Friendship Award*. His photographic prowess in colour slides earned him APSSA Honours. It is therefore understandable that Dinkie was so keen to start a photographic club when he realised there was no club in Hermanus after retiring there in January 1996.



Elizma Fourie, who served as Hermanus club president from 2019 to 2021, sadly passed away after a brief illness in 2022. She is mourned by many club members across the Western Cape region, who enjoyed her energy and humour when she was co-opted to serve on the Western Cape Photographic Forum (WCPF) as webmaster and Facebook administrator. Elizma was also a valuable member of the committee that organised the successful 2022 PSSA Greyton Congress. She became ill during congress in August and passed away the day before the accreditation ceremony for the Western Cape JAP group. Despite completing the final exam from her hospital bed, she received the highest score in the class from the adjudicators. Elizma was awarded LPSSA Honours for a colour panel in 2021. ***Click here*** to read the tributes to Elizma after she passed away.



Over the years Hermanus was able to boast with stand-out photographers as members – for example, **Treurnicht du Toit** (left), who earned EPSSA(Mille) with more than 1 000 acceptances in PSSA recognised salons and DPSSA(Vers) in 2019. He regularly wins medals in international salons.

In 2021 **Phil Sturgess FPSSA** (below left, with his wife, Carina) was ranked 16th on the national PDI Impala Log — the best achievement of a Western Cape club member in a number of years. In 2022 he was again among the Top 20 in the 18th position. His wife, **Carina de Klerk**, was among the Top 50 entrants on the Impala log that year.

Former Hermanus president **David Wilson** and newsletter editor **Charles Naude** are also regular salon entrants. David regularly wins medals in international salons. ***Click here*** to see his international medal-winning images.



From left: Phil Sturgess and Carina de Klerk at the Hermanus Kalfiefees. David Wilson (middle) and Charles and his wife, Colleen, at the club's exhibition during the FynArts Festival.



Left: Elizma Fourie at the Oscar-themed Hermanus Interclub. Right above: Daniel Reddy exhibiting at the Art in the Park.

Growing and branching out

Like most clubs, Hermanus membership fluctuated — by the end of the first year the club had 21 paid up members, which grew to 31 in 1998. By 2000 there were 45 members, in 2006 there were 94, and in 2007 membership numbers peaked at 107, before it gradually declined to stabilise around 35-40 in the early 2020s. Recently, several new members joined, including enthusiastic young people and some excellent photographers.

Even though it is considered to be one of the smaller clubs in the region, Hermanus regularly came amongst the top 5 in the region's Interclub competition – and often in the top 3, notably in 2020 when Hermanus shared second place with the much bigger Cape Town Photographic Society.

The Hermanus AV group was formed in **2017/18** by eight volunteers led by **Deon Kühn**, who later discontinued the group due to ill health. The late club president, **Elizma Fourie**, gained third place on the Impala Trophy log for AVs – with the first AV she made, *A smile to remember*, after attending one of these workshops. She had no idea what AVs were, nor did she know what salons were, but nonetheless entered her AV in the PECC International Salon, where it was accepted. The following year this AV won the runner-up medal in the CTPS National AV Salon.

At the end of **2019**, **Elizma** and her team hosted an exceptional Western Cape Interclub Awards evening. This Oscar-themed evening of style and glamour is still considered to be the most successful and enjoyable Interclub awards evening ever ... and sadly, it was the last such event to be hosted in the Western Cape. The following three years Covid regulations dictated that the Interclub awards had to be awarded in online ceremonies attended by small audiences and in 2023 clubs in the region voted to discontinue the Interclub competition.

The club had been an active participant in the Hermanus FynArts Festival held annually in **June since 2017**. Since 2020 Hermanus Photographic Society also participated in the town's First Fridays Art Walk (FFAW), and more recently, also became involved in the Hermanus Art in the Park with regular exhibitions of some members' prints at a stall. The latter events were instigated by former president David Wilson to promote the premise that photography is a form of art.



The Hermies School Club joined the 2024 Kalfiefee's exhibition. Right: The Hermanus club's 2023 Fynarts exhibition.



In February 2023 the Hermies Photo Club based at Hermanus High School was formed under leadership of a teacher, Klaradyn Stemmet. Hermanus club members have been assisting the scholars with a basic course and workshops to improve their photography. Some of the scholars' work subsequently won awards and seven of their prints were included in the Hermanus club's print exhibition during FynArts in 2023 and more were exhibited in 2024. Hermanus also requested that the school club be included in the 2023 Celebration of Photography, where work by members from 21 Western Cape clubs (including Hermanus) was exhibited at Groot Constantia wine estate for nearly three months over the festive season.

Hermanus has also been active on the international scene and has been one of the 25 international photographic clubs invited by the Welsh club Cwm Rhondha to participate in their annual November international competition, due to their contacts with former Hermanus president David Wilson. Apart from Wales and South Africa, other countries represented in 2022 were Canada, Malta, Ireland, the US, and UK.

In 2022 the club celebrated its 25th anniversary with a very successful exhibition during the FynArts Festival in the Hermanus Station Mall, showcasing nearly 50 print entries from club members. Founder Dinkie Marais was invited to attend the opening of the exhibition, which attracted some 500 visitors over four days. They encouraged visitor participation by requesting visitors to select their favourite three images.

More information

[Click here to visit the Hermanus Photographic Society website.](#)

[Click here to read more about the society in their newsletter archive.](#)