

# Gowrie Farm

NOTTINGHAM ROAD

From the Pastures & Fairways of Gowrie Farm

## Gowrie Farm: A classic Midlands environment



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Dave Cook is Environmental Officer for Gowrie Farm, and he has this to say about the environment of the new golfing and fly-fishing estate:

'We're told that first impressions count for a great deal, and this applies not only to human beings but equally to how a person beholds a landscape vista for the first time. For those of us who live and work in Nottingham Road, however, Gowrie Farm has this past year evolved too slowly to render first impressions valid, but a more analytical approach reveals

transformation of a most pleasing kind on a major scale. Gone is the bland image of a well-run, functional agricultural enterprise with its open, almost treeless lands, and in its place exists a medley of different land-uses, including an emerging golf course with its clusters of residential layouts, and cultivated fields under a hilly backdrop of natural grassland linked to fingers of wetland, adding to a much more diverse scenery.

Throughout the whole process of developmental approval and leading up to the

present time, the Developer has placed great emphasis upon maintaining the unspoilt natural characteristics of Gowrie Farm, the grasslands and wetland systems, blending with the areas to be developed. Road networks servicing the latter now feature avenues of trees (many of them European deciduous species such as Pin Oaks and Planes, which have graced the Midlands' landscape for years in areas which regrettably do not favour our indigenous cool forest species). Interspersed with the wetlands are four large trout dams that help break the landscape into separate but compatible components.

In terms of biodiversity values - rather than pure aesthetics - it is the grasslands of the reserved area to the north of the property and the drainage catchments coming off these hills to form wetland systems, which need to be highlighted. Categorized as Moist Highlands Sourveld, and supporting a high percentage of spectacular flowering plantlife, bird species (a pair of Grey Crowned Cranes have attended the development from the outset in spite of construction activity), and well known Midlands' icons such as the Oribi antelope and Common Reedbuck, this component of Gowrie is an extremely valuable asset representing a

class of vegetation that is in decline throughout South Africa. To extend and restore the extent of the Gowrie grasslands, the Developer has adopted a policy of using grassland plugs propagated from seed collected in the locality, to create the semi-rough and rough margins to the golf course fairways: an ambitious and costly exercise. Coupled with this is the intention to create botanical "hotspots" in and around the playing areas to round off what will emerge in time as an indigenous plant spectacle.

Similarly, the unsightly mounds of soil currently dominating the skyline on the summits of the hills to the north are to be re-landscaped to emulate the rocky knolls that characterise the natural elevations of Nottingham Road (anyone traveling from Mount West to Nottingham Road will have been struck by the visual splendour of the colonies of Watsonias in the rock formations east of the route).

Gowrie Farm has thus evolved into a sustainable example of multiple land-use, and with more to come in the form of residential layouts with their formal gardens, the stage is set for a classic Midlands landscape combining both the historical and developed characteristics that makes the area so attractive'.

## Meet the farmer

The original owner of the Gowrie Farm property, I.M. "Jubs" Greene, has leased all the farmland and retained the original farmhouse as his home. Jubs has been farming in the Midlands area for some twenty-five years, and on Gowrie for sixteen years. He is one of the most prominent dairy farmers in the Midlands, and has relocated his dairy herd to The Kamberg, where he and a partner now milk over 900 cows. He will retain his herd of about 300 heifers on Gowrie Farm.

When asked why he decided to stay on the farm, Jubs said, 'We didn't want to move from

our home, even though we've moved the dairy herd. This house was built at the turn of the last century, and has the low roof and veranda of the old farmhouses. It's a typical old Midlands family home, and we've lived here for twenty years.'

Jubs forms part of the Greene family dynasty who have lived in the area for three generations, and the first president of the Gowrie Farm estate golf club will be Lal Greene, who was also the first resident at Gowrie Village. His family has farmed in the area for over a hundred years.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ABOVE: The old homestead on Gowrie Farm, which will remain the family home of farmer Jubs Greene.

## LANDSCAPING



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Gowrie Farm estate has employed Andrew James, owner of the Botanical Gardens Nursery at the Botanical Gardens in Pietermaritzburg, to work on landscaping the estate for the next 12-months. It will be his task to rehabilitate any damaged areas on the farm. His first task is to develop the stream, which runs alongside the seventeenth hole. He

will also be in charge of the re-establishment of the rough areas of the golf course, where it is intended to plant indigenous grasses. Here, Top Crop has assisted with the propagating of seeds, which were taken from the estate and the neighbouring Crane Foundation last year. Andrew will then look at rehabilitating areas that were previously under pine and the old quarry.

### Agents for Gowrie Farm

Peter Greene and Rob Dickson of Meander Real Estates are the Midlands agents for Gowrie and Gowrie Farm. Their main sales office is located inside the Junction, adjacent to Gowrie. They can be contacted for sales queries and brochures, and are also the best people to ask about site placements, the Gowrie architectural code etc.

Peter Greene: 082 556 3674  
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Mike Whiting of Winchester Marketing is marketing Gowrie Farm in Johannesburg. He can be reached on 011 327-7620.

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