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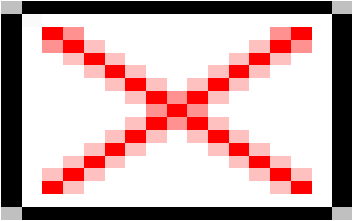
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Heritage



The name Blair Atholl comes from Scotland

Blair Atholl (from the Scottish Gaelic: Blàr Athall) is a small town in Perthshire, Scotland, built about the confluence of the Rivers Tilt and Garry in one of the few areas of flat land in the midst of the Grampian Mountains. The imposing white-harled Blair Castle dates from the 13th century and has long been the seat of the Murray Dukes of Atholl in Scotland.

Established in 1798, the Blair Atholl Distillery is one of the oldest working distilleries in Scotland. Located near the town of Pitlochry and 12 miles south of Blair Atholl in Perth and Kinross, the distillery produces a 12 Year Old Single Malt Whisky, with a mellow deep-toned aroma, a strong fruity flavour and a smooth finish. Regarded as a Highland Malt, the peat used in the distilling process actually comes from the Orkney Islands.

Today, the Duke of Atholl has the distinction of having the only remaining private army in Europe, the Atholl Highlanders, which still have parades from time to time on the castle grounds. The origins of this army stem from a visit by Queen Victoria in 1844. So captivated was she by the 200 Athollmen who formed the royal bodyguard that she presented them with regimental colours.

The Blair Atholl Heritage in South Africa

Paul Kruger

The eighteenth century in South Africa was characterised by the immigration of Europeans to the interior - a movement of people which became known as the Great Trek. Paul Kruger, who later became State President of the South African Republic (Transvaal), joined the migration of the Great Trek at the age of 10.

During his presidency he allocated the farm Vlakfontein (east of the Blair Atholl Estate) to one of his relatives and allocated the rights of the irrigation furrow that still spans the Blair Atholl Estate to Vlakfontein personally. Measuring over 5 kilometres, it is a wonderful feature of a bygone era, reminiscent of the irrigation canals found in Stellenbosch and Swellendam in the Western Cape.

Ornstein

In the nineteenth century the Ornstein dynasty bought the farm from Anna Elizabeth Zirkia Jacoba Erasmus. Over many years the Ornsteins planted fauna transported by ox wagon from the Government forestry at Hartebeespoort to Vlakfontein. Legend has it that one could ride for a whole day in the shade provided by the trees planted by the Ornsteins.

Sir Rod Douglas:

In 1946 Annie Dorothy Douglas (born Tweedy) bought the farm and the property was christened Blair Atholl by her husband, Rod Douglas, a decorated army Colonel who fought in World War I.

The title "Sir" was bestowed on Colonel Rod Douglas after he was knighted by King George VI of England.

In 1947, the King paid a visit to the farm and, as a gesture of goodwill to Sir Rod Douglas and to continue his tradition of planting oak trees during his travels, he planted an English oak tree at Blair Atholl. The tree was accepted as a national heritage site by the Simon van der Stel foundation.

At Blair Atholl, Sir Rod Douglas developed a penchant for breeding Jersey cows. Over the years he cultivated his expertise in the breeding of Derrylin Jersey cows and was handsomely rewarded with many prizes for breeding the best Jersey cows in the country.

Incidentally, Sir Rod Douglas's Blair Atholl Jersey cows, won every competition he entered them into.

The Goodmans:

The Goodmans acquired the farm in the mid 1960's.

Together, the Albu and Goodman families shared a great love for horses and gave rise to the Equestrian element which has become an integral part of the Blair Atholl legacy.

Georgina bred show and race horses and set up two polo fields at Blair Atholl for her family. When Allan started to play polo she also tended to his polo ponies. Allan Goodman and his brother Derek were both Springbok polo players who played for South Africa in 1968.

Georgina loved Blair Atholl. This was aptly demonstrated in the early 1970's when Georgina made headlines after she flung herself in front of graders to stop them from building Lanseria Airport. She did not succeed, but did manage to get the airport to change their flight patterns, preventing aircrafts from flying directly over Blair Atholl to this day.

Blair Atholl's most famous equine resident was Peralta, who retired here as a stud stallion. Peralta was one of the best sprinters of the time in South Africa and was bred by Derek Goodman, who owned the Summer Hills stud in Mooi River.

Another piece of history still present on the estate today is the Pushkin House Memorial (more commonly called the dollhouse) which was built by Georgina Albu's father, in memory of his late father Sir Paul Albu.

Gary & Vivienne Player:

When it comes to talking about Blair Atholl in the fuller sense of the word, Gary's heart remains in Africa, at Blair Atholl.

In the early 1960's Gary and Vivienne had viewed the property and loved it. However, they decided not to acquire the property at that time. As fate would have it, the Players would get a second chance to purchase Blair Atholl on auction from Christies in the early 80's. And this time, they wasted no time acquiring the property.

Marc, the oldest son, was charged with building the homes and restoring the farm to its former glory. By the end of the 80's he had transformed Blair Atholl into one of the most beautiful farms in South Africa. Over the 20 years that the Player family lived at Blair Atholl, they retained the beauty of the property and also further enhanced the stables and paddocks, which both now form a focal part of Blair Atholl today.

Blair Atholl's Vision

The vision and development of Blair Atholl is by developer Wraypex, headed up by Robby Wray and a management team with a combined experience of over 100 years of development and construction expertise. Wraypex