



SWANNIEBRAAI

TESTIMONY

6 July 1995 was the second most important date in my life. It was the day I was "awakened," so to speak, to the unconditional love of Jesus Christ for every human being, ever and forever to be created. I realized He loved us, and me, since before time began and will do so forever.

Late in 1995, at Petroport Filling Station north of Pretoria, South Africa, while many of us were on our way to a marriage seminar in Mabula:

"Coeza, what are you doing, my friend? We don't have time now; we have to go!" I said to my friend while he was busy unpacking this metal contraption, rolling some newspaper balls, and putting them into it.

"Willem, this is a Swanniebraai, my friend, and in 5 minutes you are going to eat some succulent boerewors (sausage)."

That day, I first saw the Swanniebraai, and from that day, I tried to find it at numerous shops but with no luck. Many people knew of it but said it had just disappeared from the scene.

Life went on, and sometimes I thought about it, but I got so busy with life and making a living that it was mostly gone from my mind... until every time my farm and business went through tough times, my mind would wander in that direction again.

In 1997, I sold the farm to get out of debt, but I was still declared insolvent in 1998. The debt was just too heavy to service.

For three years, a very good friend and mentor of mine, Albert Ferreira, took me under his wing, and we started a used implement business together. He taught me all I know today, mentored me spiritually, and looked after me and my family.

In 2001, I met my next mentor and awesome friend, Johan Nel, and we started VOORSPOED IMPLEMENTE, a company that also buys and sells agricultural equipment.



+27 83 505 7200



willie@swanniebraai.com



www.swanniebraai.com

One time, when the business was slow again, I gave the Swannie some thought and visited a few companies to pursue its manufacturing, but each time I came up against a shut door, with this one giving that excuse and that one not wanting to help, and so on.

It demotivated me, and many times I just forgot about it. It seemed so difficult, with so many obstacles to overcome—it really looked impossible.

10 October 2006... what a dreadful and dark day for me and many others. My dear friend, Johan, died in a plane crash. I was left with his share to buy out, and I was suddenly in huge debt because we failed to put insurance in place.

Life went on, and at the beginning of 2009, the business went through tough times again. My accounts went unpaid, and debt accumulated due to the recession and the subsequent low maize price and other factors.

It was then that God, whom I had come to know better and better over the past 14 years, directed my mind back to the Swanniebraai, and I knew I had to do something else to try and save my business and support our lives.

At that time, my father-in-law, a skilled metal worker, came to live in my town, Ventersburg. I asked him, "Pa, can you make the Swanniebraai?" "Yes, I can!" he replied, and we gathered some tools to start this thing. I got a price for the metal locally, but upon receiving the price, I was once more struck by another obstacle—the cost of local metal was so high that it made the end product too expensive, minimizing the potential profit. But my God was still in control, as He always is!

That same night, I woke up around 2:00 a.m., strolled over to my laptop, and, like so many times before, started to browse the internet for something about the Swanniebraai. I typed the word "bbq," and then it all began. I was shown a lot of sites, mainly of Chinese companies manufacturing BBQs of all shapes and sizes. There was also an agent of a specific company online. I introduced myself, and we began to chat on the internet. She spoke and typed in good English. I asked her about the Swanniebraai, mailed her some pictures, and within an hour, she emailed me back with a potential price.

I was astonished! The whole package—grill, bag, griddle, and box—was going to cost me the same as only the metal locally! I was excited. God had opened a door, and things were beginning to take shape, slowly but surely. Eventually, I decided that, come what may, it would be good for me to go to China and explore everything, even though the company looked very solid and trustworthy as far as the internet was concerned. I did not have the money for a plane ticket, so I asked God to provide for me, as He usually does! Within a few weeks, I sold many parts and small items that were lying around in my warehouse, enough to pay for a ticket.

As I was planning the trip, a good friend of mine, Koos Slabbert, came into the shop one day and asked me what I was doing. “What???” he said. “I want to go with you.” And from there, our trip together to China was birthed. Within a few weeks, all was planned—visas, tickets, etc.

A week before the trip, I met a very special man, Wynand Kruger. He came to my business to buy some implements, and as we started talking, I told him about our upcoming trip to China. He said he wanted to meet with me before we left. The Friday before the Sunday that we would depart, he came to my house and told me that we would get to China and find that God was already there, organizing things in our favor.

When we arrived at the company in China, we met the people, and although only the agent could speak broken English, we understood each other using a lot of sign language and sketches. When I was still in South Africa, she had told me that the tooling for the braai would cost me \$7,600, roughly R58,000 at the time, which I did not have.

The CEO of the company spoke something in Chinese and disappeared, returning a few minutes later with the bottom part of the Swanniebraai. The agent’s face lit up, and she told me that I was lucky because they already had a mold for that bottom part, which would reduce the price for the mold. She emailed me later and told me the good news—it would only cost me \$1,100 for the whole mold, a massive saving of nearly R50,000. Then the word of Uncle Wynand hit me: “We will see that God was already there and that His favor was upon us!” So it happened, exactly as he said, and this further confirmed my faith in my loving Father, who always has a plan ready for us, His children!

On that first day, all negotiations were settled. The price was exactly the same as I was quoted online by the agent a few weeks earlier, and we were finished with our business for then.

Just to add, my friend Koos had severe back pain when we left South Africa, so bad that he could hardly walk. We decided that since we had much time left before our return flight, we would go to Beijing to explore things there. We went to the Great Wall, and Koos struggled with his back to reach the high places. Once on top of the wall, he missed his step and fell to the ground, flattening about five or more Chinese people. What a sight! Once Koos got up, he was ecstatic, saying, “My back pain is totally gone!”

Can you believe it? What looked like an embarrassment turned out to be a blessing in disguise!

Back home, it was time to get the ball rolling. I had the \$1,100 for the mold, but when the deposit was due, I did not have the R30,000 needed. I tried knocking on all doors; the bank couldn’t help, friends were stuck, and I was looking for investors who could go 50/50 with me, but to no avail.



Another friend of mine advised me to stick it out and keep this a “family business.” Meanwhile, the suppliers were on my case for the deposit before they would begin manufacturing. One day, out of desperation, I felt God urging me to place an ad on the adventure biking forum I belonged to, namely www.wilddog.za.net. I did so, but still nothing happened. I asked the forum members what they thought were the chances of a member helping me, to which most replied that the chances were very slim. One evening, I was sitting under "Hometree," a very big old tree outside my house, just praying and talking to God about this whole matter. I stood up, went to my laptop, and what did I see? Yes, one of the forum members, whom I did not even know, replied and said that he would lend me the money, even without security!

This took my breath away, and I knew that it was only possible by God, who laid it in the heart of the person to do that. So now I had the money needed for the deposit, and the suppliers got onto the job.

When it was time to pay the rest of the money, I once more did not have it, but again my Father God made a way and supplied the money needed. Sometimes His ways seem so funny and “out of the ordinary,” but anyway, He did it once more. Like I would find out later, He supplied all my needs every time in this whole Swanniebraai process!

I also had a fair amount of worries and troubles. There was a delay in the manufacturing process, and then the suppliers and I had some arguments and harsh communications back and forth, but in the end, everything got sorted out, and we were better friends and business partners than before.

So, the first shipment was on its way, and in June 2010, the shipment landed on my doorstep. I was ecstatic to see a 15-year dream come true!

One day, during that time, I was just sitting and having a conversation with God, and I asked Him this: “Dad, tell me, please, how is it possible that in 15 years since I first saw the Swanniebraai, that someone else, some rich entrepreneur, did not pursue it? Why?”... there was silence... and then I heard the soft but present voice of my Father, speaking inside of me, in my consciousness, saying the following sweet words: “...because I reserved the Swanniebraai for YOU, My son, just for you!!”

That brought tears to my eyes, knowing that God so loved me that for 15 years, He preserved and kept this great dream for me, yes, just me! Afterwards, there were many people who I talked with who told me that they also wanted to manufacture the Swanniebraai. I even took a sample to a man in Mpumalanga way back when I was still trying to have it made locally. He then let me know after a few weeks that he could not make it and sent my sample back to me... only to find out in May 2010 that he had actually copied the Swanniebraai and was selling it under a different name.



I was so furious at the time, but again God told me to keep calm and not be distracted by that, as God Himself was the one keeping the Swanniebraai concept for me all these years and that He is the One who provides for every one of His children's needs. Then I relaxed and blessed that person to be also successful in his own business.

Just to rewind a few years: In 1997, I visited the Western Cape for the first time in my life, also with Albert, his wife Dalena, and some fellow Christians; we were on an outreach then to many places in the Cape. The Cape got under my skin, I believe. In 2008, I had this longing to visit the Cape again, and we found a great place to stay at a friend of mine's house on the beach in Melkbosstrand. That December holiday, while I was walking on the beach, I said to myself that this is the place where one day I would like to come and stay, but it looked so impossible, so distant, so unachievable... but what I didn't know was that the "seed" I sowed with my mouth was again germinating and growing, just like the Swannie seed was growing from 1995...

So, in January 2010, even before the Swanniebraai arrived, we got this word from Uncle Wynand that he believed God was giving us the opportunity to go anywhere we choose... My lovely wife, Riana, and I were stunned but at the same time very excited because it was a confirmation of what had already been put in our hearts many years before. I think the 1997 visit planted the first seeds, and then in 2008, that seed was watered again, and now we were standing, overlooking the fruition of that harvest!

We made plans, came to explore a few times, and went through many obstacles like negative friends and family, lack of faith, lack of vision, and lack of money. We wanted to just let go of this "simple idea" many a time, but as God is always faithful, He led and guided us all the way, supplying every need, not long before the need arose, but as it arose, He provided everything. And so, in January 2011, we moved to the most beautiful place on the West Coast of the Cape, Grotto Bay, from where we are currently operating in distributing the Swanniebraai worldwide.

One day, God also told me these words, just before we moved here. He said: "My son, the Swanniebraai will take you places!" And we have seen it many times and are seeing more every day that the Swanniebraai is not only providing for our income but is also responsible for opening doors to many people and places, just like God told us.

So, in looking back, 15 years, and then seeing every little step developing and how He led us through the good and also through the tough times, I can only bring honor and glory to God, our Father, for giving us the Swanniebraai He "resurrected" after almost 20 years of "death" and disappearance from the market. That still amazes me and always will, but not only that — more so the fact that He is using the Swanniebraai to open doors to people's hearts and lives, where through it, He can touch, heal, restore, and bless them... and all of that through a little thing like... the Incredible Swanniebraai!



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“Lord Jesus Christ, our God, we thank You for all You did for us, for all You are doing for us, and for all that still needs to happen in and through our lives! If You did not sacrifice Yourself for us and for the world, we would not have experienced Your love, Your provision, Your goodness, and so much more like we are doing today! Thank You, Father, for the Swanniebraai. May many nations and peoples be blessed through it and so also discover Your unconditional LOVE and GRACE! Amen.”



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