



Weekend getaways

Eastern Cape The beetle at the riverbank

When they're not welcoming guests and running Dungbeetle River Lodge, owners Etta and Derek Hewitt are busy taking tours to Addo Elephant National Park.

Their safari-style luxury lodge is in Colchester on the banks of the Sundays River, just four kilometres from the southern gate of the park.

There are six en suite bedrooms with elegantly understated African-style decor. The Fish Eagle honeymoon suite is the only room with a view of the river, but other guests won't miss out because a hearty farm breakfast is served on the main deck overlooking the bank.

You can head off by canoe to the Alexandria dune fields opposite the lodge for a hike, or go on a river cruise in the lodge's motorboat – or launch your own boat from their jetty. Packed picnic baskets can be organised.

For those not keen on water activities, there are bicycles, birding opportunities and



At Dungbeetle River Lodge, you can have breakfast on the wooden deck that overlooks the Sundays River.

trips to elephant-back rides. On a rainy day, there's a communal lounge, DSTV, board games and a small library.

Dinner is optional and there are braai and pizza-making facilities for large groups by prior arrangement. At 38 kilometres from Port Elizabeth, Dungbeetle River Lodge is easily accessible and is great as an overnight stop or a weekend getaway.

SSS to SSSS B&B is from R395 to R650 a person sharing. Tel 041-468-0091, e-mail info@dungbeetle.co.za, web www.dungbeetle.co.za.

Fatima Jakoet

Giddy up on an elephant's back

Thump! Thump! Seeing the wilderness from an elephant's back is a memorable experience, but it takes some getting used to. To it, you're as light as a feather and, with each step, your body moves to the rhythm as though you're dancing the salsa.

Thaba, Duma and Mokhwa, the bull elephants at Addo Elephant Back Safari and Lodge, moved slowly through the bushveld, grabbing large helpings of the thorny trees, not caring that the branches might swing back and scratch me. Thanks to my thick pair of jeans and knee-high leather boots, my legs survived. It's fascinating to see how the large creatures follow each other and trust their keepers.



An elephant-back safari gives you a different perspective on the world.

After three hours, all I wanted to do was head back to the lodge and take a long shower. Addo Elephant Back Safari and Lodge has 10 beautiful chalets. Hidden in the thick bush at the bottom of the Zuurberg Mountains, the five-star rooms have comfortable beds, with soft, white down duvets, and magnificent views. Each has an outside shower and spa bath, plus a large en suite bathroom for those who prefer to ablute indoors. Other facilities include a fireplace and private game-viewing deck.

SSSSS A three-hour elephant-back ride is R875 a person (children under 12 ride for half). A stay at the lodge is R2450 a person a night, including accommodation, meals and selected beverages, an elephant-back ride, game drive, game walks and elephant bedtime encounter. Tel 042-235-1400, e-mail res@addoelephantbacksafaris.co.za, web www.addoelephantbacksafaris.co.za.

Nozuko Basson

Western Cape A cottage in the mountains

It's been a good year for the baboons on Bastiaansklouf since they discovered the veggie garden behind Kraal Cottage. Guests at the 2000-hectare estate on the northeastern side of Bain's Kloof Pass near Wolseley now have to make do with what organically grown beans, beetroot and carrots are left after the primates have had their fill.

Not that anyone's complaining. The property adjoining Limietberg Nature Reserve is intended to be a conservancy and the owners have started clearing alien and invasive black wattle on their stretch of the Witte River. Birding is a favourite pastime and hikers may spot one of 34 mammal species found on the property, from a little Cape gerbil to a cheeky spotted genet that will steal food from the kitchen at night if you leave windows open too wide.

The estate stretches from river to mountaintop and offers three short, demarcated trails through the fynbos. After walking,

plunge into a cool river pool then lounge on a tanning deck on the bank, or take a shower in the stream that trickles over a rocky ridge. End your day braaiing and stargazing.

Accommodation is in three renovated, self-catering farm cottages that have been tastefully decorated in natural tones. Fireplaces create a cosy atmosphere in winter and there are plenty of books and board games instead of television. There's also a new luxury lodge that sleeps six and has a large hearth and a private pool.

Activities in the area include trout fishing, hiking in Limietberg Nature Reserve and *langarm* dancing at Calabash Bush Pub.

SS to SSSSS Kraal Cottage (R500 a night, sleeps two) is up a side kloof near the big lodge close to a small stream. The two-bedroom cottages (R650 to R750 a night, each sleeps four) are beside the historic Bain's Kloof Pass near the Witte River pools. The luxury lodge is R5000 a night (sleeps six). Tel 021-424-4001, e-mail caroline@bastiaansklouf.co.za, web www.bastiaansklouf.co.za.

Marion Whitehead



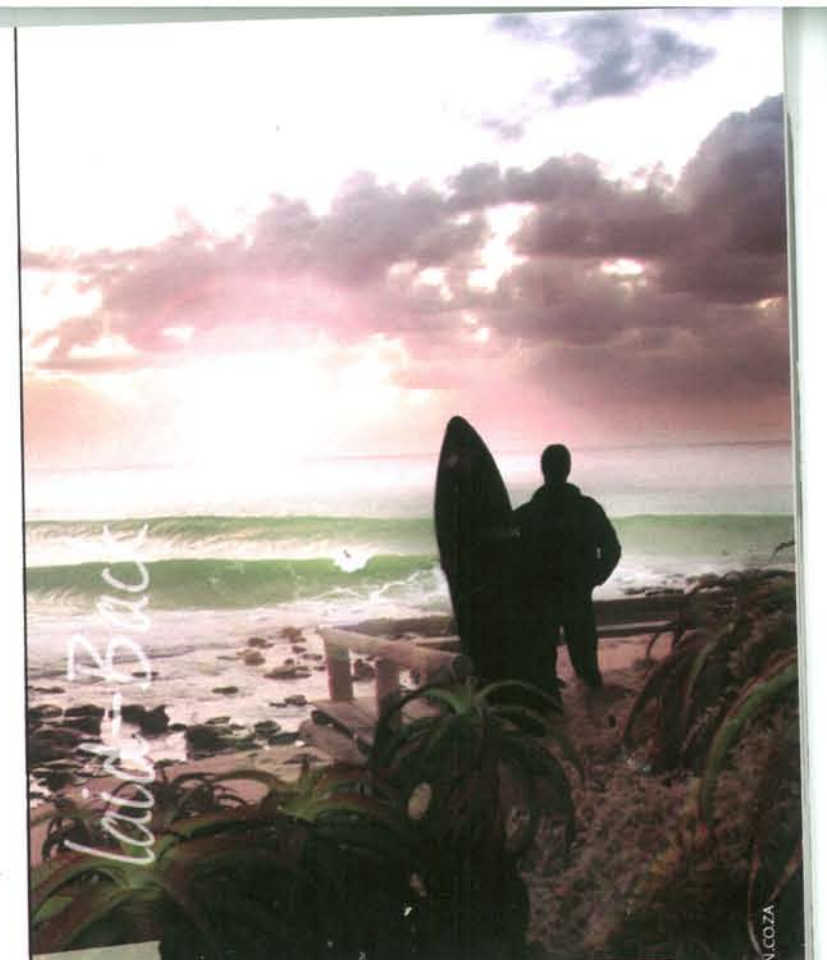
ABOVE LEFT: Cool off in clear pools in the Witte River on Bastiaansklouf estate after a hike. RIGHT: Kraal Cottage is a romantic love nest made for two.



win Q: How many mammal species are found at Bastiaansklouf?

Getaway, in conjunction with Bastiaansklouf, is giving away two nights for two people at Kraal Cottage, worth R1 000. SMS Bastiaansklouf, your name, address and answer to 34419 or enter on-line at www.getaway.co.za/competitions. The closing date is 23 June 2009. See competition rules on page 179.

SMSs cost R2.



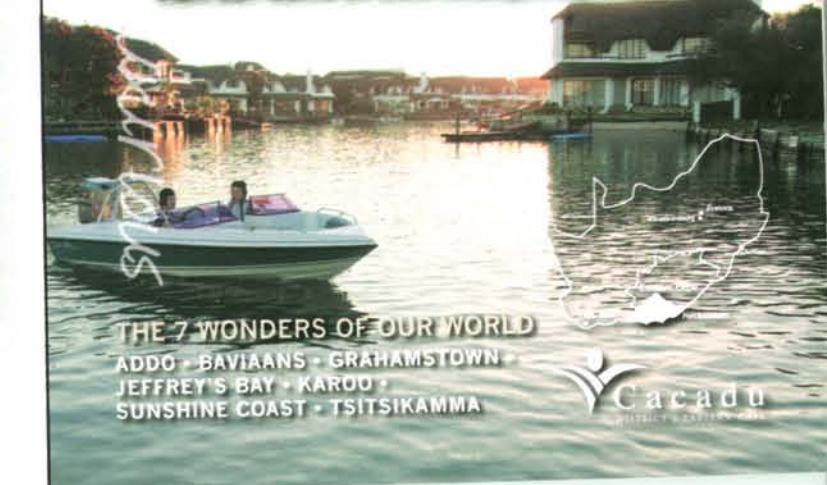
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