

CLASSIC SAFARI CAMPS  
*of* AFRICA



DAVID ROGERS



## ANT'S PRIVATE BUSH HOMES

*Waterberg*  
SOUTH AFRICA

The Waterberg has inspired writers, poets and naturalists with its wide views. It is in this area that Ant's Private Bush Homes are situated. Ant's Hill (left and above left) has commanding views over the bushveld that surrounds the lodge, where sable and other game are found. The guests that come to Ant's enjoy an entirely flexible holiday with one option being picnic lunches (above right).

*S*outh Africa's malaria-free Waterberg has been the home of the Baber family since the 1800s. Ant and Tessa crossed paths in the mid-1990s and their relaxed style of hospitality has made Ant's Nest and Ant's Hill two very special destinations, for families, international horse-riders, honeymooners, romantic safaris, weddings, and even chart-topping pop stars.

'This is a bush home, not a typical lodge,' says Tessa. 'We aim to provide a flexible safari with plenty of activities, keeping everyone entertained from the youngest to the oldest, the fittest to the most in need of rest ... It's the Ant's way.'

The bush homes are situated on two reserves, which cover 4 500 and 5 000 hectares respectively, and the game that are found include rhino, buffalo, eland, zebra and sable as well as a wide variety of other species. They offer a range of activities from walks to big game viewing, and also horse-riding – but for many guests the real thrill of being here is to relax in their own private bush home.

Ant's Nest was the original home. It is situated in the folds of hills, with six sizable suites that overlook a heated swimming pool and a large lawn that spills

into the bushveld where horses and wildlife graze together. One group usually books it in its entirety and it is easy to see why it is just the sort of place to take over with a family or group of friends.

Ant's Hill, a few hours' canter away, has a row of elegant and privately situated suites and living areas, all of which have been built to follow the contours of a precipitous cliff with spectacular views of the Waterberg Mountains. The bathrooms and verandas virtually melted into the bush – and a 30-metre waterfall that cascades right beside the lodge heightens the drama.

The homes are largely fashioned from natural stone, with arches and beams made of knotted wild olive tree trunks, and they are decorated with exquisitely carved old Indian chests, cabinets and day beds. Add copper taps, rugs, colourful kikoi cushions and riding paraphernalia into the mix and you have an idea of the original 'Ant's Style'.

There are two or three hosts at each of the lodges responsible for making sure that the guests are well looked after. They are all enthusiastic young people handpicked for their love of wildlife, horses and hospitality.



The large garden and sitting room with great views had a great space for families with children, while the candlelit terrace became a bit of the essence of the Mexican table experience.

1977-1978 The original house of the Baker family has been beautifully restored by her and Tom and is nestled in the well-wooded hills of the Woodbury Mountains. Each of the rooms is as large as a small house, with a large bedroom, lounge and study for relaxing. The big fire is one of the main attractions and guests can enjoy riding through some of the big game forest here, which includes other deer.



"Most of our guests stay for a week or more," says Ryan Thomas at the hotel. "We start with breakfast and end with hugs and kisses. It's very relaxing. They leave an impression on their hearts and get the most beautiful memories with drawings and pictures by guests, which are the sentiment."

Guests enjoy great views, mountain riding and massages are an offer but without a doubt the best way to get around the mountain is on horseback. More than 40 horses, ranging from Arabians to Andalusians, are available to ride through the forest, means everyone from children to riding professionals can find a steed. People with no riding experience come out and after one ride they are hooked," he said.

"That got me going and on my last morning, I pulled on a pair of chaps and threw my leg over a horse called Marvaca. We took a gentle walk along the rocky ridge above the hotel and watched dawn of early light rise across the forest and glass below the valley amongst a forest of pines. Their music softened as they saw us, but then they continued grazing. Walking slowly back to camp, I realized I was not only the mountain, seen from my great look home that I would miss, but the people who had been my family, which I was staying there. Ryan, you certainly did your job."



## AT HOME IN THE 'WATER' MOUNTAINS

But, that's not all. The hotel is part of an imaginative and successful collaboration initiative called the Waterbury, which is a partnership between the Waterbury National Park, Waterbury National Park and other adjoining properties. They create a unique experience of some of the best views, which is a testament to all of the big game and a growing, increasing recognition from World War II as a wilderness area.

The Waterbury, or Waterbury National Park, is made by visiting some of the most beautiful scenery and a world of water, which are in great, nearby forest. There are several miles of trails and one of the most scenic, which is a trail that guests have been using since the thousands of years. It was built by the people of the area, one of the most beautiful and oldest, and one of the most scenic. The area is a beautiful, scenic area, which is a testament to all of the big game and a growing, increasing recognition from World War II as a wilderness area.

Thanks to the Waterbury National Park, the hotel and Tom, these days, which is only from the south of Waterbury, remain remarkably successful. They have spent increasing property in recent years because of the wilderness, Waterbury, the friendly and hands-on nature of its people, and the fact that it offers great views, riding in a wilderness area.



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