

PRESTIGE

IN THE LAP OF LUXURY



MERCEDES BENZ HYPERCAR – PROJECT ONE, WALTZING DOWN THE DANUBE,
ATLANTIC SEABOARD MAJESTY, SPRING/SUMMER FASHION, SUPERYACHTS IN MONACO

NATURE'S DANCE

LIKE THE INTERWOVEN DIRT ROADS MEANDERING THROUGH THE KAPAMA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE NEAR THE GREATER KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, THE UNDERSTANDING AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONSERVATION HAS MADE ITS WAY INTO THE HEARTS OF BOTH STAFF AND GUESTS AT CAMP JABULANI.

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pictures: CAMP JABULANI



While driving into a gentleman's club of buffalo, peacefully watching the king of the jungle taking his early morning

catnap, and being fascinated by the large amounts of giraffe roaming the reserve, it's inevitable to want to learn more about nature. The Kapama Private Game Reserve, Camp Jabulani and the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (HESC) flaunt ample opportunities for educational tourism, allowing guests to experience nature with an interactive approach.

On arrival at Camp Jabulani, we were instantly ushered to a grandiose dining room where a large set table, overlooking the camp's water tortoise inhabited dam, was waiting. Our weary expressions after a five-hour drive quickly transformed into sheer astonishment as the dinner menu was presented. Chef Dylan's remarkable talent was beautifully presented on specially selected plates and filled the dining room – tastefully decorated with both African and floral designs – with inviting aromas.

There's a very fine line between décor being cultivated or kitsch and Camp Jabulani has definitely found the balance. The attention to detail stunned us from the start. From elephant imprinted leaves, carefully placed on facecloths in the bathroom and bedtime stories about tortoises and vultures to specific and generous gifting, they know how to pamper you properly. Everything about Camp Jabulani is gently woven into a general theme of bush and bliss, providing both local and international guests with a comfortable, relaxing environment from where they can take in what nature has to offer.

Enjoying an early morning coffee on the room's private deck while watching sunbirds come out and play, is but one of the many advantages of coming here. The immediate natural surroundings and the humanised luxury environment have carefully been stitched together, without running the risk of being kitsch. The rooms are stylishly designed with stargazing showers and private decks with heated splash pools. In nature, it's all about details and balance and Camp Jabulani has mastered the art.

This is not the only balance they've found. Interlacing a delicate educational aspect into their guests' experience,

cunningly creates awareness and loyalty towards nature and its magnificent creatures, especially elephants. You leave here with an understanding of the importance of conservation, inspired to become actively involved in their efforts of preserving nature for future generations.

Camp Jabulani's existence is due to twelve elephants which had originally been trained for elephant-back safaris on a commercial farm in Zimbabwe from which they, together with their keepers, were rescued in 2002 and relocated to the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre. With the elephants



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costing an enormous amount of R2 685 per elephant per day, the camp was established, structured as a unique offering around the elephants in order to sustain them and keep them alive. As the elephants were trained for elephant-back safaris, Camp Jabulani continued with this experience and used the profits to care for the herd. Increasing international pressure against these elephant-back safaris prompted the team to remove this offering from its list of experiences and since April 2017 a whole new elephant experience has been implemented – an experience that left us stunned.

The Jabulani herd serves as an educational herd to guests, offering personal orientations with some of the herd's members. Meeting the 21-year old Jabulani, the herd's namesake, is

quite something. He was a tiny calf when he first arrived here and was not only intensively and successfully rehabilitated, but also acted as a key element in the 20-year journey of gaining invaluable experience and developing a model of rescued elephant care, with specific focus on infant rehabilitation. Jabulani came at us in a graceful stride, his groom by his side, swaying his trunk from left to right. His left tusk was shorter than the right, apparently dubbing him as a lefty. We also met our room's namesake, Sebakwe, an even bigger member of the Camp Jabulani herd. Standing in front of these giants makes you feel small and insignificant. The grooms speak of the elephants with nothing but respect, accentuating the fact that they still learn new things about them every day.



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A favourite experience among guests is the elephants' evening walk back to the stalls, which concurrently acts as one of the most beautiful sundowner backdrops you'll ever witness. Coupled with some typical South African indulgences from the kitchen, a selection of drinks to choose from and the elephants gliding past the waterhole while the sun graciously sets behind them, this makes for the perfect African experience.

Elephants' emotional intelligence is astounding and that is one of the reasons why the Camp Jabulani herd cannot be out in the wild completely on their own. Since they've grown accustomed to human care, completely reintroducing the elephants into the wild would be akin to abandonment

and poses danger from other wild elephant herds in the Kapama Private Game Reserve. Therefore, the grooms spend every day in the elephants' company, ensuring that their well-being is always front and centre.

Together, Camp Jabulani and HESC have found a way in which they have made the best of the elephants' unfortunate history with humans. Today, sharing their environment with humans is part of the elephants' survival, which is ultimately the goal to protect them from extinction.

Elephants and their habits have, over time, become an intricate part of Camp Jabulani, just as Camp Jabulani has become an active and involved role player in their survival. It's a carefully woven pattern; a dance between man and nature. 🦏