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June 2021

South Africa's Exciting Wedding Magazine

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# Top Wedding Venues



# Top Wedding Venues

One of the most important decisions you will have to make when planning your wedding is to choose your venue.

Your choice of venue will help you determine a multitude of important factors such as a theme, number of guests, décor, food and drink and accommodation requirements.

Doing your research and looking for the right place to host your wedding is time-consuming and can be a difficult task because here are literally hundreds of venues to choose from countrywide.

To help you with your planning, Real Brides has launched a new series named TOP WEDDING VENUES.

In this edition we feature and highlight a number of top wedding venues that are rated as some of the top wedding venues in South Africa.

TOP WEDDING VENUES provides:

- A full overview of the venue
- Great photos of the venue
- A link to a virtual tour of the venue or to their website

Top venues featured in this issue of Real Brides will be branded with the TOP WEDDING VENUE emblem.

Visit www.realbrides.co.za



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**On the cover:** Bride: Savannaha Schwan

#### Photo: Elri Photography

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#### Share The Best Day Of Your Life

Would you like to share the best day of your life with the readers of Real Brides?

Did you manage to navigate your way through the Covid-19 restrictions and get married in the past 6 months or so? If you would like your wedding to be considered for a feature in Real Brides then email us at robbyn@topicpublishing.co.za . Include a sample wedding photo, the name of your venue and a list of your service providers and we could make your dream come true.

Real Brides features dozens of "real" weddings every year – brides just like you, me and the girl next door ... real people that we can all relate to.

For more info visit our website www.realbrides.co.za or find Real Brides on Facebook.

# SAVANNAHA & KYLE SCHWAN

This couple matched up online and, wanting to be different, they chose Mistico Equestrian Estate, the new home of the famous Lipizzaner stallions, as their venue with a difference.

#### Surprise proposal?

We went away for a weekend with Kyle's parents and while taking a slow cruise up the river, Kyle suggested we jump off the cliff together so his parents could record us. I was excited and eagerly climbed up the cliff, with absolutely no idea of what was about to happen. As we got to the edge, Kyle told me to stand back, got down on one knee and proposed. Unique and special.

#### The most difficult part of planning your wedding?

I would say the most difficult part was finding the TIME to do everything that needed to be done/ arranged. You think you have lots of time, but when you look again, it's a month before the big day and you still have so much to do!

## You are an ICU nurse, which pretty much dictated your wedding date?

My busy shifts impacted on our original set date, so we decided to rather change the date for a time where we felt it would be safer/wiser to have our celebration with loved ones. The health and safety of a few 'older generation' guests, was our main concern.

#### Were you good at delegating jobs?

I am blessed to have a wonderful mother, who acted as my assistant planner and 'on-the-day', coordinator. Everything was done by either myself or my mother. I am quite the control freak, so I wanted to be involved with every aspect!

#### Your wedding venue?

We had our wedding at a gorgeous venue called Mistico Equestrian Centre, situated between Paarl and Stellenbosch. The venue offers the most picturesque scenery and tons of 'locations' for photographs, let's also not forget the fact that there are so many gorgeous horses to be seen happily grazing in their grassy paddocks.



# "Mistico is a well thought out and beautifully put together venue."

Venue: Mistico Equestrian Estate, Paarl - www.mistico.co.za Wedding gown: Calegra Bridal House, CT, Anna Georgina collection Hair & Make up: Anuschka Strydom Flowers: Floral Theory Décor: Function Hiring 4 U & self-made DIY Photography: Elri Photography

## Would you recommend Mistico as a wedding venue?

I would highly recommend Mistico as a wedding venue. The owner, Gail, was so accommodating and offered help/advice whenever needed. It is a well thought out and beautifully put together venue.

#### Unusual "transport" to your wedding?

I was blessed to fulfil my dream of including my very special horse, Rey, by riding him to the ceremony, with my father at our side. Very special to me and definitely a highlight.

#### Morning wedding?

Kyle and I decided on a morning wedding as again we wanted to do something different. We loved the idea of a large harvest table and finger foods catering for every person's taste. Our wedding was very relaxed, with open seating for everyone. Our cake/dessert table was incredible, with a custom "mock cake" for decoration, a mini cake for cutting, a variety of custom cupcakes and plenty of Kyle's favourite - donuts!

#### Easy to find your dress?

Really easy and I loved every minute. As I slipped into this one dress, I just "knew" that it was the perfect one.

#### More guys than girls in your entourage?

Kyle is blessed with very close friends and we wanted them to be up in the front with us. Even though there were more guys, it suited our feelings of going against the norm.

#### Your photographer?

I met Elri at a baby shower where she was the photographer. I was so impressed by her professionalism, warmth, enthusiasm and amazing portfolio, that I couldn't imagine a better photographer for our special day.

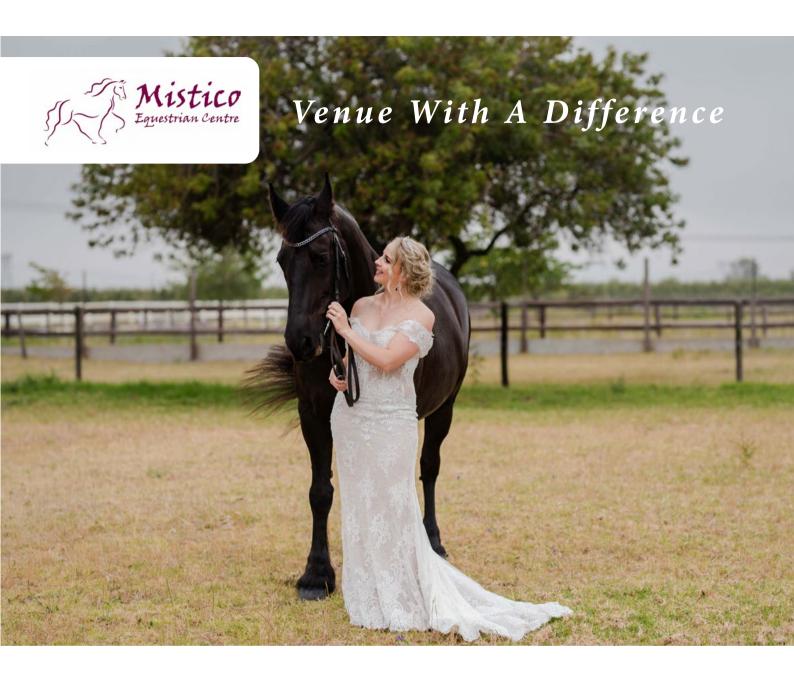
#### How did your budget fare?

Though we tried our best, we ended up going over the original amount. But, it was so worth it. Some advice - always keep a bit of extra money saved up on the side for things that you may have overlooked when planning your budget, you will be surprised at how the small things add up.

#### Honeymoon?

Due to the pandemic and travel bans we couldn't travel at the end of 2020. Kyle however booked us a "minimoon" at a lovely little place called Bronze Grove, in the Klein Karoo. ♥





*Mistico Equestrian Centre extends itself as a versatile venue for weddings, indoor exhibitions, conferences, music concerts, private and corporate functions.* 

Situated just a short distance from Cape Town CBD, the Mistico Equestrian Centre is ideal for a country wedding with the Stellenbosch mountains as a spectacular backdrop and horses grazing away happily in their paddocks.

The venue, cosy and unpretentious, compromises of a hall (The Venue), which caters for up to 300 guests with a dancefloor, which opens up onto a quadrant with lawns, umbrellas, tables & benches. Warm white colours, high ceiling and crystal chandeliers creates a blank canvas for your décor dreams.

*The Clubhouse that can cater for 80 guests with a small dancefloor space and a spacious patio with umbrellas and benches, opens up on shaded lawns.* 

For more info call Gail on 0827890688 R312 | Lichtenburg Road, Durbanville 7630, South Africa PO Box 4038, Durbanville, 7551 • events@misticoequestrian.co.za www.misticoequestrian.co.za

# NATASHA & SETEN NAIDOO

Traditional Hindu weddings are always a feast for the senses and this beautiful wedding, with a twist in the colours, was no exception.

#### How did you and Seten meet?

Seten and I met by chance a few years ago through mutual friends – we just happened to have the same surname too! I was studying at the University of Cape Town at the time and he was working in Johannesburg. We clicked instantly and have been together ever since.

#### Share your proposal story with us.

Seten is incredibly romantic. He surprised me with a trip to France where he had hired a private chateau close to the Swiss border. He proposed to me in the most beautiful setting on the lawns of the chateau, underneath a 400 year-old weeping willow tree.

#### How long did it take to plan your wedding?

Our wedding took approximately 1 year to plan. Unfortunately due to the COVID pandemic and lockdown restrictions our wedding had to be postponed for 6 months. Although not ideal, this at least gave us an additional 6 months to plan and perfect our special day.

#### How did you distribute your invitations?

We distributed some of our invitations personally to our family and friends – as is customary. However, due to the national lockdown, the rest of our invitations where distributed digitally via email or WhatsApp.

## Tell us about your bridal outfits and where you found them.

I had two different outfits for my wedding day. Both were traditional hand-embroidered lehenga's imported from India and sourced from a local Eastern bridal store. My accessories were sourced from a number of Eastern bridal stores across Gauteng and KZN.

#### Did you have a wedding planner?

Yes, we did. We used Zavion Kotze Events Company (ZKEC) who ensured that we had the most magical day.





#### Venue: Inimitable Wedding outfits: Enens Hair: Fatima Ally, Urban Chic Artistry Make up: Beauty by Benazir Flowers: Zavion Kotze Events Company Photography: Mighty Fine Photography

## Yours was a traditional Hindu marriage celebration?

Traditional Indian weddings usually consist of several celebrations spread over a few days with lots of food and family. Our wedding celebration started off with a Mehndi night, a colourful fun event where the bride and all female guests have their hands and feet adorned with henna. This was followed by a Nelengu - a pre-wedding ritual where the families of the bride and groom cleanse and bless them prior to their wedding. The wedding and reception are usually held the day after the Nelengu.

#### Pink was your main wedding colour?

Pink is my favourite colour and definitely had to be included in our wedding décor. We opted to break away from tradition with our choice of colours. Pink was included in the décor for both our ceremony and reception. We chose bright pink for the ceremony as we wanted the colours to be vibrant and fun, opting for a more subdued pastel pink for our reception décor.

## Which of the Hindu marriage traditions was the most significant for you?

Tying of the Thali - the Thali is a symbolic chain presented from a husband to his wife. It consists of a coin on a woven gold thread. It is tied with 3 knots during the wedding ceremony and is a sign of love, respect and dignity.

#### How did you choose your photographers?

We used Mighty Fine Photography who were recommended to us by our wedding planners.

#### **Traditional Indian cuisine?**

Food is the most important part of every Indian wedding so we provided guests with a variety of options, while ensuring we did not repeat any special dishes from the pre-wedding events. We opted for traditional Indian cuisine for our reception dinner including different types of breyani's and curries. For dessert we served an assortment of sweets, wedding cake and of course the traditional Eastern Soji.

#### How many guests?

We had 250 guests celebrate our special day and ensured all COVID protocols were followed.

#### Honeymoon?

We are still hoping to travel to our dream honeymoon destination in the Philippines - once travel restrictions are lifted. After our wedding we opted for a quick getaway to the Kruger National Park where we stayed at a beautiful hotel.  $\blacklozenge$ 





# TOP WEDDING VENUES





A DREAM WEDDING VENUE

Vredenburg Manor House is a top four-Star Guest House, set in the heart of the Cape Winelands – the perfect setting for your dream wedding.

At Vredenburg you can have a true Cape-Dutch styled wedding on a spectacular 17th century estate, in the heart of the Winelands, surrounded by lush gardens and breathtakingly beautiful mountains. This beautiful, tranquil location is bound to turn any wedding into what dreams are made of. The carefully manicured gardens are big enough to cater for an intimate gathering or a large party up to 250 people. Carefully manicured gardens, flowing lawns and massive oak trees provide the perfect back drop for a picturesque garden wedding and stunning photo sessions. Our refurbished original rustic barn with high exposed wooden beams can be transformed into a fabulous air-conditioned dinner hall or a dance floor. The massive wooden barn doors add to the nostalgic feel and can be closed for a cosier winter function or swung wide open for those balmy summer nights.

We offer a full in-house service. Set-up and Break-Down, Waiter and Bar Staff, Catering, Décor, Flowers and On-the-day coordination. We are more than willing to assist with providing preferred suppliers for music, photography, hair & makeup, guest entertainment etc. Book an appointment to meet our creative team, and will tailor make a package for you, should one of our standard packages not suit your exact needs. This venue is a designer's dream because the style is eclectic and lends itself to any theme or direction, wherever your mind may wonder.

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#### TOP CLASS ACCOMMODATION

At Vredenburg we have high quality upmarket accommodation available. This Cape Dutch style guest house offers five spacious rooms and two cottages. Offering seven exquisitely decorated rooms with all the creature comforts of modern day living, the guest house gives you the feel of old world charm.

All 3 Deluxe Double Rooms are spacious suites with living room areas. Two are situated on the top floor with spectacular mountain / garden views. One of the rooms are situated on the Ground floor with its own entrance onto the verandah, overlooking the pool. The in-room amenities include satellite TV, courtesy-bar, a safe, a tea / coffee station with selection of teas and an Espresso machine. Each room offers a modern ensuite bathroom equipped with hairdryer, international razor plugs and exquisite bath amenities.

The two Classic Rooms enjoy mountain and / or garden views. Inroom amenities include satellite TV, underfloor heating and a safe, a tea / coffee station with selection of teas and an Espresso machine. Each room has an ensuite bathroom with a hairdryer, international razor plug and an array of exclusive bath amenities. The two, open-plan one-bedroom cottages are stylishly decorated, each with a fully equipped kitchen, private garden with barbeque facilities, ensuite with bath and shower facilities, DStv and are pet friendly, by management approval only! They are secure and totally private, separately situated away from the main house. Both cottages are fully equipped with a fully fitted modern kitchen, thus giving you the opportunity to book the cottages as self-catering or bed and breakfast.

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#### SPECTACULAR SURROUNDINGS

In addition, Vredenburg Manor House features an exotic garden, watered by borehole and greywater, and an outdoor swimming pool with lots of space to soak up the sun and enjoy a view of the Hottentot's Holland Mountain Range.

Situated between Stellenbosch and Somerset West, the historic property is close to a variety of restaurants and bars. Dinner, packed lunches and special diet menus are available on request and can be served in beautiful surroundings or next to a cosy fire place.

Other activities to be enjoyed includes hiking, wine tasting, mountain biking, and diving in the nearby surrounding areas. A bicycle rental service and free secure parking is available. Shuttle services are available at an extra surcharge.

Nominated by two leading booking portals, as the second-best establishment in Somerset West and Stellenbosch, Vredenburg Manor House is located on Winery Road, Somerset West, just 30 kilometres from the Cape Town International airport.

Contact us and come and see Vredenburg Manor House in all its splendour for yourself.

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MANOR • HOUSE

GUESTHOUSE, CONFERENCE AND FUNCTION VENUE

Contact us - Vredenburg Manor House, Winery Road, Somerset West

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### www.vredenburgmanor.co.za

# WIKA & FERNI BEZUIDENHOUT

This friendship began when this couple first met during extra maths classes at High School.

## Tell us about your proposal and how long you were engaged?

We got engaged on the beach at Aston Bay in the Eastern Cape. We had a "Food Pairing" day with family and friends. Ferni organised with our best friends to do sundowner cocktails on the beach - the weather did not play along; it was very windy! Our friends played nice music and Ferni put a "message in a bottle" on the beach without me noticing. He later told me about the bottle with a letter in it, and said I should go read it. While I was reading it, he went on his knee and proposed. It was a big surprise - except for our friends who helped organise the occasion!

#### You had to postpone your wedding date?

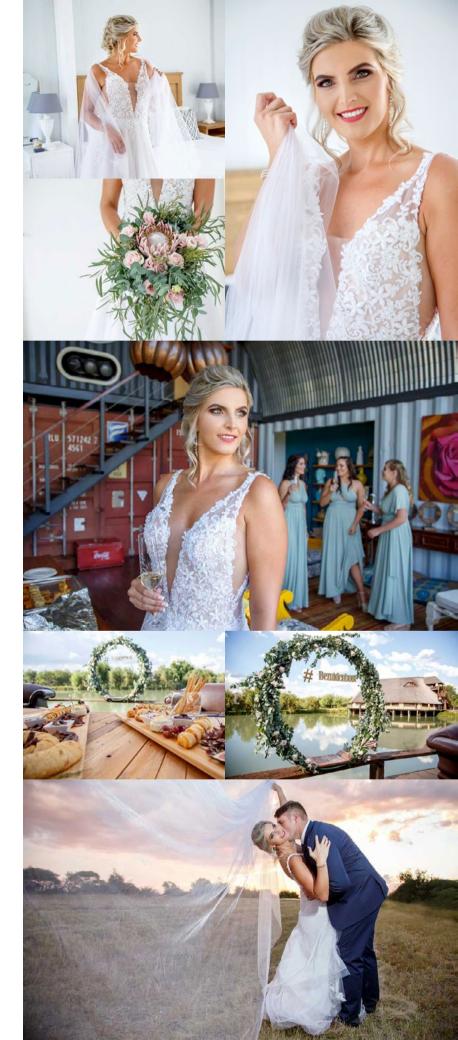
We were supposed to get married 8 months after our engagement but, because of the Covid-19 restrictions, we had to postpone it from September 2020 to March 2021. We were very lucky to have chosen a venue like Tsekama. They kept all the arrangements as is. The only changes we had to make was that some of our "older" guests decided not to attend, and unfortunately my brother could not attend either as he was in London. We had to adhere to all the Covid-19 safety measures.

## What were you looking for when it came to a wedding venue?

We both love the Bushveld so it had to be in the Bushveld with a boma. We also wanted an "allinclusive" venue, so that you do not have to organise different things with different suppliers.

## What did Tsekama have that the other venues didn't?

The Bushveld and farm atmosphere with game roaming around. Accommodation and a place for the bride and bridesmaids to sleep over and get dressed away from all the other guests is a big plus. Tsekama's



"Tsekama's friendliness and hospitality stood out from the very first phone call."

Venue: Tsekama, Modimolle – www.tsekama.co.za Wedding gown: Christine Designs Hair & make-up: UniQ Make-up Décor: Tsekama Photography: Zoom Pro Photo friendliness and hospitality stood out from the very first phone call. The wedding was cost effective, if you take into consideration that it is all-inclusive. I had heard from other brides it is a problem with all the little "add-ons" if your package is not all-inclusive.

#### Would you recommend Tsekama?

Yes, definitely! I was not stressed about my wedding day at all as Tsekama went out of their way to make our big day special; nothing was ever too much trouble for them. Tsekama do everything with so much love and passion. The flowers were absolutely beautiful, the food outstanding and everything was perfect. I could not have asked for a better venue. I'd highly recommend Tsekama for a stress-free wedding day.

#### Hunting for your dress?

Fun at first and then frustrating. The first time going out to try on dresses was fun, until I realised that most of the dresses are for smaller/petite brides! And, the ones that did fit were miles too short - I am not a bigger size but tall. I just could not get the bigger picture, which is very important when choosing your perfect wedding dress. My godmother Christine Botma then offered to design and make my dress. She drew a picture of all the elements I liked and then made it. I am so grateful to her for offering to make my dream dress. She also made my veil.

#### How did you choose your bridesmaids?

They are all people close to my heart. The one is a friend from primary school, the other is my brother's fiancé and my maid-of-honour is my best friend and colleague.

#### **Colour scheme?**

Protea colours - sage, green and pink.

How many guests? 95.

#### Most useful wedding gifts?

AMC classic pots and an Air-fryer.

#### The highlights of your big day?

The fact that we could eventually get married! After having to postpone due to Covid-19, it was so good to see our family and friends again after lockdown.

#### Any handy tips for brides-to-be?

Find a venue that is all inclusive. It takes all the stress off you as a bride.

#### Honeymoon?

As we couldn't go on our planned honeymoon due to the travel restrictions, we went on a road trip to the Western Cape, visiting wine farms.♥





Bekama Lodge

Wedding and conference venue



Relax while our team take care of every small detail to contribute to the *perfect* day in your life. We understand the dreams and wishes of every bride and groom, and will go the extra mile to make sure that all requirements are met. Tsekama is the perfect venue for adding a touch of magic and style to your wedding day.

Tranquil, serene and picturesque, providing a natural but very romantic atmosphere.

The Lodge is a mere 130 km north of Pretoria near the Kranskop Toll plaza and offers the ideal location for a wedding with a difference.

Imagine your ceremony in the natural splendor of the African bush with buffalo, giraffe, zebra and a wide variety of antelope partaking in your wedding celebration. Please note we have a 80 guest minimum and a 300 guest maximum.

> Contact Marinda: 082 416 2363 or Ilze: 084 497 8388 e-mail: info@tsekama.co.za

# TOP WEDDING VENUES



## MELROSE ESTATE'S MOST SOUGHT AFTER UP-MARKET EVENTS VENUE

Our luxury, modern, blank canvas venue is the ultimate setting for all types of Functions from Weddings & Engagements to Special Events and Corporate, supported by our associated services to ensure that your event runs seamlessly taking away the pressure of planning and organising.

The venue is easily accessible to all the main highways and can accommodate up to 300 guests seated and 400 cinema style. It is beautifully set with crystal chandeliers, chic black and white marble floors and built-in state of the art sound and vision. You won't be disappointed by our dynamic Event Coordinators/ Decorators who will design, at very affordable prices, your special day which include the following services:

- Dream décor design & flower arrangements
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- Bar services & signature cocktails
- Entertainment including dancers/photobooths/comedians
- Staffing
- Assorted travel packages

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> Instagram: @estiavenue Facebook: Estia Venue LinkedIn: Estia Events Venue



#### THE ART OF DISTINCTIVE WEDDINGS

The venue is covered in glittering fairy lights and can be draped in linens to create the perfect enchanting scene for your special day. The black and white marble tiled floors and octagonal skylight are the perfect backdrops for a show-stopping reception or intimate celebration. The choices for decor are endless. Let us plan your special day by offering the following services:

- Conceptualisation & design
- Personalized Wedding Coordination
- Tailored menu's & refreshments
- All the extras (décor/flower arrangements/entertainment/ Honeymoon Travel)

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#### Facilities:

WEDDINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS	
Hall for reception/celebration	<ul> <li>Seats up to 350 without dance floor/stage and 300 with</li> <li>Mood lights and fairy lights</li> <li>Projector for pictures/videos</li> </ul>
Spit Braai Area	Suitable for day Weddings/Celebrations
Garden for ceremony	Garden area for up to 150 pax for a ceremony
Hellenic Orthodox Church	For Orthodox clients

CORPORATE EVENTS		
Hall for conference/workshop/product launch/team building/virtual	Seats up to 400 pax cinema style or cocktail style	
conferences	<ul> <li>Projector and sound system for presentations including</li> </ul>	
	microphones	
Spit Braai Area	<ul> <li>For less formal events such as team building</li> </ul>	
Parking	Ample parking for attendees	
	Centrally located	



#### CURRENT PROMOTIONS/SPECIAL RATES

 JUNE/JULY 2021 RATES: Up to R10,000 off Venue Hire!
 2021 promotion: Book with us now & stand a chance to win or be entitled to a Luxurious Honeymoon /Getaway of your choice out of a number of 5-star destinations including top of the range Game Reserves.

Subject to your package you may well qualify for a FREE Getaway which will include:

- All meals
- Transport (flights + to and from transfers)
- Daily Game drives with sunset stops for snacks and refreshments

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# JESSICA & RODERICK Mac INTOSH

Meet one of the many couples who were forced to postpone their original wedding date due to the Covid-19 pandemic and all its restrictions.

#### How did you two meet?

Roderick and I met through mutual friends in 2015 and we have been inseparable ever since.

## Tell us about your proposal and how long you were engaged?

Roderick proposed to me in my favourite place in the world, Jeffreys Bay. He took me up to the top of a sand dune to watch the sunset over the ocean and he popped the big question. It all sounds like smooth sailing however the Eastern Cape wind really made it an eventful moment with everything flying around – just adding to Roderick's nerves. It was perfectly imperfect. We were engaged for 2 and a half years, which was longer than we had anticipated, as we were forced to postpone our wedding due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We were originally supposed to get married in May last year.

Did you get to choose your own engagement ring? Roderick knew exactly what I liked. Simple is key for me.

#### Oxbow Country Estate was your choice of venue?

Oxbow Country Estate is the most breath taking venue. It's situated near Bronkhorstspruit, a town 50 km east of Pretoria. The entire place is so beautiful. From the moment you arrive you see the greenery of their gardens and they have such an elegant hall. They also have two chapels but the outdoor chapel was the one that caught my eye. The food at the venue is also delicious, it's something our guests still talk about to this very day. Oxbow also have accommodation on the premises for guests staying over, which includes breakfast the next day.

#### What set Oxbow Country Estate apart?

We had actually booked to view a few other venues after our visit to Oxbow Country Estate, however the experience we had when we went to see Oxbow and its facilities made it very clear that it would be the



"Simple is key for me

Venue: Oxbow Country Estate, Bronkhorstspruit, Gauteng - www.oxbowestate.co.za Dress: Olivelli Bridal Boutique, Northcliff Bridesmaid dresses: Gelique Hair: Jessica Smith, Junes Place Make-up: Shannon Spies, Eyespies Make up Flowers: Oopsie Daisy Flowers Photography: ChilliPix Photography

perfect venue for us. The venue was just different in all aspects and is so elegant! So much so that we did not even bother to go and look at any of the other venues and cancelled all our other viewings. The cherry on top for us was the Oxbow staff; they are so friendly, so professional and they really create an amazing experience.

#### Your dream dress?

The dress that I chose was a simple princess style dress with some shimmer. I bought my dress from Olivelli Bridal Boutique with the help of Yvonne who works there.

#### Bridesmaid's dresses?

The girls decided on the style! I wanted them to feel beautiful and comfortable. Their dresses were blush pink with rose gold sequined tops from Gelique.

#### You carried some special lockets in your bouquet?

I did - to represent the most important people in my life- my Gran and my two grandfathers. They are my world!

#### How did you choose your photographer?

I had previously worked with ChilliPix at events and knew them so for me it was a no brainer! They are the best in the business.

#### How many guests?

We had 93 guests - it was the Covid-19 version of my big fat Portuguese wedding!

#### Any tips for sticking to the wedding budget?

My advice would be to keep it intimate and only invite the people closest to you and... have a cash bar!

#### The best moment of your big day?

It would have to be absolutely everything - the whole day! But most importantly the best moment was when I saw Roderick watching me as I walked down the aisle towards him. And ... having our friends and family around us - especially as it was the first big event we'd had since the Covid crisis hit the world.



26 • REAL BRIDES • June 2021





## Oxbow Country Estate

A chic country wedding venue set on the banks of the Osspruit River near Bronkhorstspruit Dam. 40 minutes from Pretoria, Witbank, and Benoni.

www.oxbowestate.co.za • Tel: (013) 932-8000 • Cell: 083-302-0575 • Email: info@oxbowestate.co.za

# TOP WEDDING VENUES





Inkwenkwezi Game Reserve's prime location in the malaria-free Eastern Cape offers many unique opportunities, as it encompasses five different regional ecosystems and a tidal estuary.

This rich diversity of landscape offers unparalleled wildlife viewing. Inkwenkwezi Game Reserve is just five minutes from magnificent beaches and a short, convenient drive from the East London airport.

Weddings at Inkwenkwezi Private Game Reserve are as romantic and unique as the Wild Coast itself; as unforgettable as the love that brought you together.

Contemporary and yet, authentically African, the perfectly-appointed venue is the ideal mix of wild beauty and modern comfort.

Inkwenkwezi Game Reserve's has a charming open-air chapel with

its red carpet laid out for the bridal couple to walk down to say "I do". The chapel is situated at Emthombeni (under the old wild fig tree) and paradise garden settings with water features incorporating waterfalls and small ponds.

Walking down the red carpet to take your vows in Inkwenkwezi's charming open-air chapel, nestled in the gardens amongst the trees, is the beginning of your happily ever after dreams. To capture this beauty way into the night, strategically placed lights light up the garden.

After the service the couple may wonder into our paradise garden for their photo session. The variety of breathtaking scenes and interesting features will give you the opportunity to have a range of unique photographs to keep as mementoes of your special day. During the photo session your guests are invited to have prearranged welcoming drink and snacks or cocktails and canapés – depending on what you have chosen for them – provided by Inkwenkwezi.





Inkwenkwezi focuses on attention to detail so that your wedding is everything you ever dreamed of. Prior to your big day you are invited to meet with to discuss, in detail, the various options available to you.

Once you have taken your vows and are ready to celebrate, you and your guests will enjoy a banquet of a lifetime – made from the freshest, hand-picked ingredients, accompanied by a selection of the finest wines.

You will dance your way into a new life together as music and laughter echo into the starry skies.

On walking into the thatched Emthombeni, you are welcomed and become one with the enchanting gardens when the big sliding glass doors are opened.

Your unique table décor and artistic displays will ensure that your special occasion is not short of being exclusively to your needs. The most magical setting with fairy lights- Tiffany chairs-and soft flowers and fabrics to create the elegance and charm of a romantic fairy tale wedding.

The beautiful, well-designed and equipped bar is operated as per your instructions. You are offered a Cash Bar or a Tab Bar. You are required you to hand in your Tab Bar requirements prior to your special day.

The kitchen will cater according to your requirements and only the finest and freshest ingredients are used. On the buffet, more than generous portions are served.







Inkwenkwezi Game Reserve is a world-class game reserve with an emphasis on luxury and thoughtful details.

Inkwenkwezi has three types of accommodation to offer you and your guests:

- Bush camp tented accommodation: Situated in the reserve.
- Bush Camp offers accommodation for 12 guests (sharing).

All tents have electric lights and twin beds with comfortable Cloud 9 mattresses. From the hilltop site the camp overlooks a valley and each safari tent is positioned on a raised timber deck offering you your own private viewing. Each tent has its own private bathroom resembling a cave.

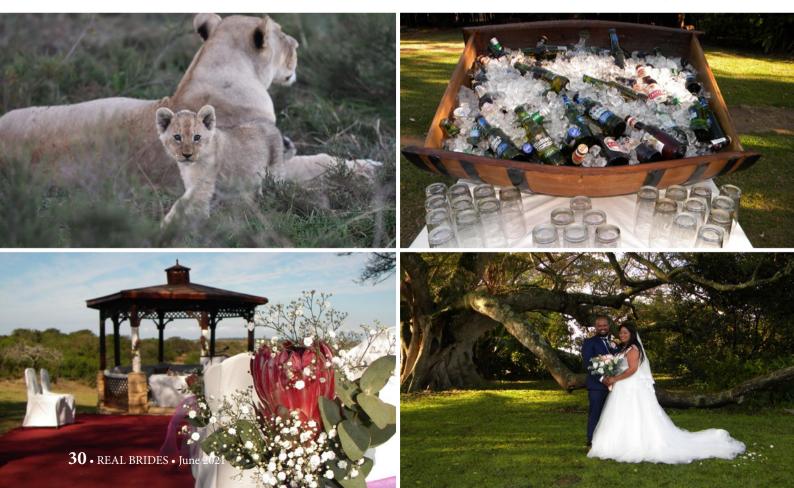
- Valley Camp Tented Accommodation: Also situated in the reserve
- Valley Camp offers 12 guests accommodation in 6 custom designed luxury tents, the bathrooms are ensuite with a slipper bath and shower.

Tents are furnished with twin three quarter beds. (The Honeymoon suite has a queen size bed). This tent is situated within the reserve. Guests are welcome to contact Inkwenkwezi if accommodation

is needed for out-of-town guests. We will gladly assist you and arrange special accommodation rates at the 3\* Bush Lodge, 4\* Valley Lodge, 3\* Chintsa Sands Guesthouse and 3\*Umnenga Lodge.

Bookings must be made in advance in order to avoid disappointment, and all accommodation is subject to availability To take a Virtual Tour of Inkwenkwezi – Click on this link https://realbrides.co.za/inkwenkwezi-game-reserve/





# Inkwenkwezi

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Weddings at Inkwenkwezi Private Game Reserve are as romantic and unique as the Wild Coast itself; as unforgettable as the love that brings you together.

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Please watch our latest video on You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zXO6P6ssOE Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/inkwenkwezi.reserveec/

# MARISKA & STEFAN STRYDOM

This couple met through mutual friends when they were both studying in Potch.

# Was your proposal a surprise or did you see it coming?

I mostly saw it coming, I didn't know exactly how or when or where Stefan was going to propose, but I knew when it was getting closer. About two months before our engagement, we went to a jeweller together so I could design my dream ring and wedding band and she said it would take about a month to complete. I basically counted off the days from our consultation.

#### How long did it take you to plan your wedding?

We were engaged for exactly three months but Covid interrupted lots of the planning. In the end we sat down with our parents and together made the decision not to postpone but rather to plan around the restrictions.

#### How many venues did you consider?

Only one, Chez Charlene. We originally wanted to do a whole weekend away destination wedding in the bushveld, but again, due to Covid, that unfortunately did not work out.

## What was it about Chez Charlene that made you book the venue?

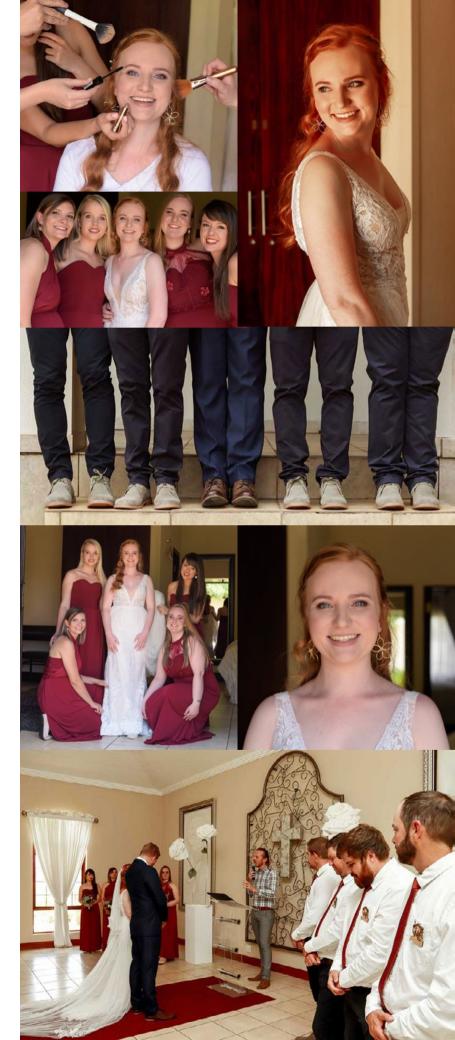
It is a very beautiful venue and the way the owner and coordinator treat you and go out their way to accommodate you is unbelievable. Each time I thought everything was about to flop, Deone would just take up the reins and amazed me with all her talent and knowledge. They know just how to treat their brides.

#### Did you source your own service providers?

Not really, I left everything in Chez Charlene's hands. They organised the décor, flowers, DJ and photographer and I was vey happy to have had them handle all the service providers on my behalf.

#### Your wedding theme/colour scheme?

Burgundy and navy blue. I liked a clean more modern look and was quite adamant not to have anything rustic as part of the theme.



"We decided not to postpone but rather to plan around the restrictions."

Venue: Chez Charlene, Pretoria. www.chezcharlene.co.za Wedding gown: Enzoani Hair & makeup: My bridesmaid, Lizé-Mari Flowers: Caar'i Flora Décor: Chez Charlene Photography: Tamzen Georgiades

#### Your dress?

My dress was hired, I did not see the need to keep it in my closet for years to come and never wearing it again. My mother and sister, who was also my maidof-honour, went with me the day I picked out my perfect dress. I only had one appointment for fittings and on that day I tried on maybe six or seven dresses. I knew what type of dress I wanted beforehand so it was rather an easy choice when I put it on and looked at myself in the mirror.

#### How many guests?

We had about 55 guests attending our wedding. The numbers were originally just below the 100 mark, but due to the Covid restrictions we decided to downscale and keep it small and intimate.

#### Who won the "shoe" game?

I think we were both winners! My sister and I sat the night before the wedding and brainstormed the questions that should be asked. We turned to Pinterest for ideas and then deliberately decided on questions that would have both 'he' and 'she' answers.

#### The most touching moment?

The most touching moment for me was during the speeches. Whilst we were busy toasting my grandparents, my grandpa stood up, took the microphone from our MC and started reciting a poem, which made everybody laugh. It was very special to me.

## If you could have your big day all over again, is there anything that you would change?

Shift the curfew by a few hours, as everyone had to leave at 8pm, which was just when the dancing started to be fun!

#### How did your wedding budget fare?

Quite well, I'm very much into budgets and planning. Searching for deals is a hobby of mine. Every cent that we saved went into our house-savings, so it was absolutely worth sticking to the budget.

#### Any good advice for brides-to-be?

Be open to advice. Don't take everything too seriously, but stick to your gut feeling. Remember, you are allowed to make the final call as it is your big day!

#### Honeymoon?

Our ideal honeymoon would've been Zanzibar. We basically planned the whole trip there and when we heard the news of the lockdown levels getting stricter, we cancelled and settled for a smaller getaway in our beautiful country. ♥





Chez Charlene Wedding Venue Taluar 2. 20



www.chezcharlene.co.za | info@chezcharlene.co.za 012 802 0791 | 082 447 6080

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# TOP WEDDING VENUES





#### AN INCOMPARABLE EXPERIENCE

When it comes to treating guests to new adventures and an unforgettable wedding celebration, nothing quite compares to Dunkeld Country & Equestrian Estate.

From saying your I Do's in the magical forest setting, to bespoke canapés in the Jazz Bar, and even being transported in a horse drawn carriage, not only is a wedding at Dunkeld truly what fairytales are made of but a wedding here offers a sensory overload that will hold place in your guests' memories for years to come.

We believe that there are few milestones as momentous as the union of two partners through matrimony, and it is this belief that drives us to make ours the ideal location to bring your dream wedding to life, whether your vision is a lavish formal affair or a relaxed rustic celebration.

Just a short 2,5-hour drive from Johannesburg and Pretoria, Dullstroom offers all of the charm of a destination wedding without the costly or timely travel for the experience. Not to mention a breathtaking setting for wedding photographs that you will truly treasure forever.



For more info: 0800 008 710, Option 1 Email: reservations@touchdown-africa.com

#### DIVERSE, YET DREAMY SCENERY

Dunkeld Country & Equestrian Estate is surrounded by breathtaking views. Highlights include the skyscraping forest, with trees so grand it's our most popular wedding ceremony setting. What better backdrop to make your lifetime commitment of love than beneath the bustling evergreen trees?

An estate in Dullstroom wouldn't be true to charm without pristine fly-fishing lakes, of which we have 23 meticulously cared for, our fly-fishing dams are stocked year-round with rainbow trout and conveniently located within walking distance from your accommodation.

Dullstroom provides an opportunity to record, amidst its beautiful hills and marshy valleys, some of the more difficult and elusive Highveld bird species, all of which can be spotted throughout our manicured gardens. While soothing sounds of horse hooves fill the air, thanks to our Warmblood Stud and Equestrian Centre, which is positioned in the heart of the Estate and is home to 20 gorgeous warmbloods.

Aside from your ceremony we offer a multitude of activities for your guests, from MTB trails, to horse riding, and even quad biking to name a few. All of our activities may be arranged for private groups. Highlands Gate, one of South Africa's top 10 golf courses is a mere 15-minute drive from the Estate, and always proves popular with the Groom and his Groomsmen.

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### ACCOMMODATION & FACILITIES

When it comes to wedding venues in South Africa, we recognise that you're spoilt for choice. But Dunkeld Country & Equestrian Estate offers not only a picturesque destination but also an experienced team whose main concern is that your perfect day runs seamlessly from start to finish. To give you the attention to detail you deserve, we are able to fully customise each of our venues for you. This ensures you have your dream setting either in the forest, the chapel, the hall, and our Jazz Bar. We can comfortably host up to 120 guests in these locations, however we are able to quote on marquee tents for larger weddings.

Our wedding package is fully customisable and includes decor details to bring your reception vision to life. It also includes waitering staff, and touches for the bride and groom such as spa treatments and a champagne breakfast in our 1883 Restaurant, to make the occasion as memorable as possible. Welcome drinks and light snacks for your guests whilst the bridal party has photos taken, as well as reception meals for all of your guests are also included, and we pride ourselves on adapting to whatever your needs for the special day might be. We have a variety of on-site luxurious accommodation options and are pleased to offer all of your wedding guests a 20% discount on our seasonal rates. Please note that standard terms and conditions apply here, and should you have questions, our helpful team will gladly take you through them.

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### CATERING

When it comes to catering on your wedding day, we know that you'll already have enough on your plate, which is why we take care of it all for you. We have a wide variety of delicious options available for you to select and build your own bespoke menu to ensure that your guests can feast and be merry.

All of our dishes are made with love with as many locally-sourced ingredients as possible. We pride ourselves on giving you a wide variety of options to meet your tastebuds. Choose between preselected plated starters, designed with seasonal ingredients in mind.

For the main course we are able to assist with either a farm-to-tablebuffet or prepared dish options. Both of which will cater to any of your guests' specific dietary requirements. Again, we are proud to use local produce and ingredients on our menu.

And for that final sweet tooth, we encourage you to choose a couple of our crowd-pleasing preselected dessert options.

Food is an integral part of sparking joy and bringing people together. Our aim is to do just that, and to have your guests feeling delighted, satisfied, and ready to hit the dancefloor!

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## CHANDRA & MATTHEW LOMBARD

This couple first met as 12 year-olds when they attended the same church and their friendship eventually turned into love.

## Romantic proposal?

Matthew surprised me with a picnic at his house in a spot where we often spent time together. He told me he'd planned it because we didn't do anything for Valentine's Day. I started opening the champagne. He kept telling me to take the bottle opener from him and I kept telling him I didn't need it! I didn't realise he was only saying that so I could look at him on his knee with a ring in his hand! It was amazing and I shall never forget it.

## How long were you engaged and how did you choose your wedding date?

We were engaged for 2 years. We were supposed to get married on 30 April 2020, but Covid got in the way! We wanted to get married this April this year because that's the original month we wanted. We both like the cooler weather so April was a good time for us.

## Were you any good at delegating during planning?

I would say I was! My family told me I wasn't allowed to help set up because it was my day and I needed to enjoy it and relax so I was pretty relaxed until I got bored and helped out anyway. It kept me busy and helped calm my nerves!

### Your dress - bought or specially made?

I bought my dress at Cinderella's Closet. It was the first dress I tried on and I fell in love with it from the minute I put it on.

## **Unusual entourage?**

I had my sister Rachelle as my Matron of Honour, she's my best friend, and then I also had my brother Deano as what I called my "Bridesman". I have such a great relationship with both my siblings so I really wanted both of them by my side on my wedding day. It might not be the usual thing to have your brother as a 'bridesmaid' but he's that special to me. I love them both. Matthew and I had just family in our bridal party,



"I fell in love with my dress from the minute I put it on."

Venue: Dunkelder Dress: Cinderella's Closet Hair: Luisa Da Costa (my mom), ZenBali Hair Studio Make-up: Shannyn Ferreira Photography: ChilliPix he had both his brothers as his groomsmen and then we had our nephew Micah as our ring bearer.

## How many guests?

We originally planned to have 120 guests but had to drop it down to 40 to comply with the Covid restrictions and regulations. We wouldn't have had it any other way, just our family and closest friends. Intimate, warm and cosy.

## Your Guest Book?

We wanted to do a Polaroid guest book because I love photos and I loved the idea of having Polaroids because they remind me of the days where they had cameras like that. I love the vintage style of how the photos look. It's also special because we get to look back at our family and friends and the special messages they left us.

## What did you do about gifts?

We asked our guests for money as we were building a house. Planning a wedding and building a house at the same time was very crazy, so the money we were gifted helped us to get a few more things that we needed for the house.

## Cake and donuts?

We had a carrot cake because it's Matthews favourite. But, I'm not a big cake eater; I love Krispy Kreme donuts so we got those too! They went down well.

### Did anything go wrong on your big day?

We had an issue with the sound system, which made me a little late to walk down the aisle, but other than that all went perfectly.

## If you had your big day all over again, what would you not bother with?

I don't think there's anything specific that I wouldn't bother with, I was very happy with how everything turned out, especially because my family did the décor set up on the day. They did an amazing job. We were both very happy with our whole day and would do it all over again in a heartbeat.

## Honeymoon?

We were gifted with a week away at a lodge in Mpumalanga by Matthew's grandparents. We are hoping to go on a second honeymoon to maybe Thailand or somewhere tropical if and when COVID allows. ♥













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# TOP WEDDING VENUES



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It is a journey such as this that in 1774 the Clifton Estate was established, and throughout the centuries this special relationship grew and prospered to become the Buccara Wildlife Reserve Karoo. While the Buccara brand name is relatively new, it's derived from centuries-old journal notes of Marco Polo the Adventurer, as well as the traditional indigenous African name for a "gentleman".

At Buccara Wildlife Reserve Karoo, we're proud to honour this tradition as we do in all of our exclusive destinations throughout the world.

Situated near Graaff-Reinet, 31 km from Valley of Desolation, Buccara Wildlife Reserve Karoo features accommodation with a bar, free private parking, a shared lounge and a garden.



For more info: www.buccara-africa.com Office: +27 (0) 40 5550 023 Buccara Wildlife Nature Reserve offers accommodation in a peaceful coexistence with the land and indigenous culture, wildlife conservation and ecological awareness.

Buccara Wildlife Reserve features two guest houses (Clifton Manor House and Clifton Main House) on this lovely estate with a bar, free private parking, guest lounges with a TV and DStv and a garden with a swimming pool.

Both houses have communal kitchens and dining areas for guests who prefer to self-cater. There is also a restaurant on site where guest can order delicious meals.

The Clifton Manor House is a lovely homestead with large, spacious rooms looking out onto the majestic lawns surrounding the estate and gardens.

This house has five en-suite guest rooms, each overlooking the beautiful gardens. Each room is equipped with air-conditioning, a safe for valuable items, a sitting area, a bar fridge, and tea- and coffee-making facilities. Each en-suite bathroom has a shower and a bath.

The Clifton Main House is slightly more modern than its historical neighbour, the manor. This house has an entertainment area with a full-size snooker table, dating back to 1911 and also offers a swimming pool, an adjoining spa and braai facilities

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The comfortable guest rooms are equipped with air-conditioning, a TV with selected DStv channels, a sitting area, tea / coffee-making facilities, a bar fridge and Wi-Fi. Two of the guest rooms each have an en-suite bathroom with a bath and a shower, and the other two guest rooms have access to a shared bathroom with a bath and a shower.

Dining at the onsite restaurant, Buccara is a culinary experience likened to an event, with homegrown produce and cured fresh meats prepared and grilled to perfection by our resident Chefs.

Winding down with hand-picked wines, spirits and cigars, reliving the stories of a beautiful day under the stars in our Monkey Bar.

Buccara Wildlife Reserve offers self-catering accommodation in two units, the Karoo Manor House and the Karoo Main House just outside Graaff-Reinet in the Karoo.

The Karoo Manor House has spacious rooms with sweeping views of the lawns and gardens.

The Manor House offers comfortable accommodation in five en-suite guest rooms. Each room has air conditioning, a safe, a seating area, a bar fridge and tea- and coffee-making facilities. Each en-suite bathroom has a shower and bath.

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The Karoo Manor House has common lounge areas, one with a TV with selected DStv channels and the other with a fireplace. There is also a communal dining area and a kitchen. The kitchen is equipped with a fridge, oven, stove and microwave. There is a lovely pool perfect for those hot summer days.

The Karoo Main House is more modern than the Manor House. The house has open living areas that create a tranquil atmosphere and a 1911 snooker table. There is a swimming pool, an adjacent spa and braai facilities. Each of our four guest rooms are uniquely decorated.

Each room has air conditioning, a TV with selected DStv channels, a seating area, tea- and coffee-making facilities, a bar fridge and Wi-Fi. Two of the guest rooms have en-suite bathrooms with baths and showers.

The other two rooms share a bathroom with a bath and shower. There is also a communal kitchen with a dining table, chairs and comfortable seating areas. The kitchen is equipped with a fridge, oven, stove and microwave. The Buccara Wildlife Reserve is 20 kilometres from Graaf-Reinet where there are shops and restaurants and is 14.9 kilometres from the Camdeboo National Park.

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