

THE good life

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GQ  Guys' getaways, from Kruger Park to Cape Town  Eat like a local in South Africa  Five great SA wines you can buy in India



Get away to South Africa

GQ
SOUTH
AFRICA
SPECIAL

With the 2010 FIFA World Cup just a month away, GQ luxury travel writer **Brian Berkman** puts together the ultimate guys' playbook to South Africa, whatever your fancy

ROOM WITH A VIEW

Rock Lodge at Ulusaba, Richard Branson's private game reserve, has amazing views and GQ's seal of approval



Chalkley Treehouse at Lion Sands Ivory Lodge



Soaking in the view at Lion Sands Ivory Lodge

FOR THE NATURE LOVER

Your trip to South Africa isn't complete if it doesn't include a jaunt to Kruger Park and its environs, to take in South Africa's greatest natural wonders: the Big Five. Established in 1898, the park now includes two million hectares filled with 336 tree species, 49 fish, 34 amphibians, 114 reptiles, 507 birds and 147 mammals.

Don't be surprised if you're joined by Elton John or Bono at the breakfast table at Royal Malewane (0027-15-793 0150; royalmalewane.com), in the Thornybush Reserve. Not only do they offer the ultimate in bespoke luxury, with six private suites decorated in a grand colonial flourish – and luxurious details right down to the Ralph Lauren linens – but they also have the best-qualified guides

to lead you into the bush for three-hour game drives at dawn and dusk. And you can expect to be greeted with fresh pea soup, kingklip fish with tiger prawns and minted peas, and a garden salad on your return.

South of Kruger is Lion Sands Ivory Lodge (0027-11-484 9911; www.lionsands.com). With possibly the largest suites in the bush, the six butler-served, double-volume rooms have all-glass walls overlooking the Sabi River. The Chalkley Treehouse is a mosquito-net-festooned bed and port-a-loo set high in

Kruger Park is home to the Big Five



a tree. Inclusive game walks bring you up close – keep an eye out for banded mongooses or a large troupe of vervet monkeys.

The Rock Lodge at Ulusaba (0027-11-325 4405; ulusaba.virgin.com), Sir Richard Branson's private game reserve, is set on a hill 800 metres above the Lowveld for an eagle's view over the western boundary of Kruger's Sabi Sands reserve. Visit during the summer rainy season for a carpet of lush green below. The best rooms at the riverside Safari Lodge overlook a dam teeming with fish eagles, hippos and elephants. Lunch on a venison burger with roasted onions and mature cheddar. Unwind at the Aroma Boma Spa at Rock Lodge, the highest point of the complex, right by the fully equipped gym; or stretch your legs with a game or two on the flood-lit tennis courts.

FOR THE WINE CONNOISSEUR

The Western Cape winelands tour for award-winning wines is best accessed from Cape Town. With cooling offshore winds, hot summers and wet winters, the Cape provides fertile *terroir*. While Pinotage is the only South African cultivar, the Cape is also known for fruity yet mineralic Sauvignon Blancs and rich, buttery Chardonnays.

Stay at Klein Oliphants Hoek (0027-21-876 2566; kleinoliphantshoek.co.za) in Franschhoek for warm, Italian-style hospitality. Be sure to ask for Room Six, which comes with its own plunge pool. Serious foodies will want to book at Le Quartier Français' Tasting Room (0027-21-876 2151; www.lqf.co.za), widely considered one of the finest restaurants, for a superb albeit costly evening. Expect duck breast served

with confit leg tortellini, pea parfait, nectarine and juniper. Petrol-heads will love the Franschhoek Motor Museum (0027-21-874 9000; www.fmm.co.za) on L'Ormarins wine estate, and while you're there, the Syrah (Shiraz) is well worth tasting.

In Stellenbosch, visit Delaire Graff Estate (0027-21-885 8160; www.delaire.co.za) for amazing mountain and valley views and five-star Sauvignon Blanc. Eat right across the road at the fine-dining Tokara Restaurant, or at Tokara Deli for family-style feasting. Be sure to sample their Elgin Sauvignon Blanc (www.tokara.co.za; 0027-21-808 5959).

The first place wine was grown in South Africa was the Constantia Valley, in 1685, and Napoleon wrote lovingly of the region's sweet grapes. While there, stay in Steenberg Hotel's (0027-21-713 2222; www.steenberghotel.com) magnificent Heritage Suites. The Khoi Khoi Suite is a double-storey fantasy of what luxury "Bushman" life could be like. Grab a case of Magna Carta (Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon blend) before leaving to dine at the Constantia Uitsig wine estate's (0027-21-794 2390; constantia-uitsig.com) La Colombe for award-winning chef Luke Dale-Roberts' truly excellent French Provençal-style cuisine

The Tasting Room at Le Quartier Français



with Asian accents. Bonus: You might even see a game of cricket at Constantia Uitsig's private oval.

FOR THE SPORTSMAN

The Garden Route, about five hours' drive from Cape Town, or three hours from Port Elizabeth, is so family-friendly you can take your home team along. With its temperate climate and breathtaking mountain and sea views, it should be enjoyed slowly. Give yourself at least three days for this trip.

Stay, dine and golf at Pezula, Knysna (0027-44-302 3311; pezulaprivatecastle.com). If there's an award to win, these guys have it in their trophy room. When only the best will do, book yourself into one of their castles (yes, you read that right) on Noetzie Beach. You may even catch a glimpse of the French World Cup team, who are training and staying there. Don't miss dinner at Zachary's restaurant (0027-44-302 3410) for unrivalled organic greens grown right on the estate. While in Knysna, be sure to eat oysters at the Knysna Heads or the waterfront development at Knysna Quays, and sign up for a Tsitsikamma Forest Canopy Tour (canopytour.co.za) to whizz across the tree-tops, harnessed to taut cables suspended over lush natural surroundings. For a spicy dinner of curries from around the globe, Firefly Eating House (0027-44-382 1490; fireflyeatinghouse.co.za) can't be beat.

If you prefer equestrian sports, Kurland, Plettenberg Bay, is South Africa's polo capital. Kurland International Day, in December, is considered one of the top 10 polo matches in the world. It's only fitting for the sport of kings that dining and accommodation



View from Khoi Khoi Suite at Steenberg



Tsitsikamma Forest Canopy Tour



Grape-crushing at L'Ormarins wine estate



Polo in play at the pavilion in Kurland

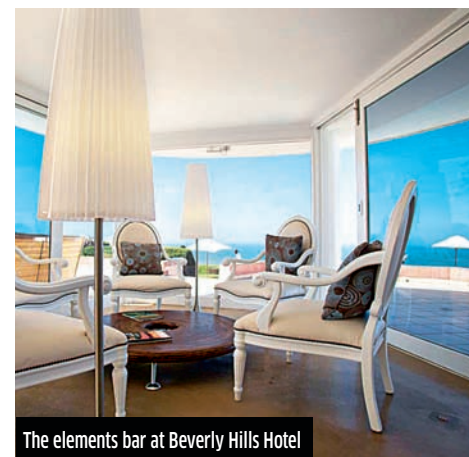
at five-star Kurland hotel are also top notch (0027-44-534 8082; kurland.co.za). The Grand Café & Rooms in Plettenberg Bay is perfect for lovebirds – book the suite with two baths side by side (0027-44-533 3301; thegrand.co.za). Pack a picnic lunch – don't forget the BBQ meat – and hire a boat at the nearby Keurbooms River Ferries (0027-44-532 7876; ferry.co.za).

FOR THE BEACH BUM

Along with one of the largest Indian populations outside

of India, tropical Durban has some of the best beaches. In the summer, there's surf almost every day. Onlookers come for the bronzed bodies and golden sand, while surfers head to North Beach for massive swells, or to nearby Umhlanga for upmarket beach cafés and good surf.

At North Beach, steep yourself in Seventies glam at the three-star Blue Waters Hotel. (0027-31-327 7000; www.bluewatershotel.co.za). Ask for a room high-up for endless sea views, and



The elements bar at Beverly Hills Hotel



Surf at Umhlanga beach, Durban

be sure to order a breakfast of *kedgerie* (smoked had-dock with yellow rice) for a throwback to the British Raj. For sophisticated luxury, the newly revamped Oyster Box (0027-31-514 5000; oysterboxhotel.com) is a winner. Don't be surprised if it tops Durban's best hotel list this year with its nautical-meets-colonial decor. The elements café bar at the adjacent Beverly Hills Hotel (0027-31-561 2211; southernsun.com) is considered one of the hot spots to see and be seen. Order their bunny chow (hollowed out →



Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg

bread filled with curry) for a twist on local street food. End your night at Clapham Grand (claphamgrand.co.za), sipping a cocktail while overlooking the packed dance floor.

Take a day trip to uShaka Marine World (0027-31-328 8000; ushakamarineworld.co.za) and Beach to ogle at the giant sharks before heading into a protected bay for a swim. While all beaches in South Africa are



Skye Bar at the Holiday Inn Sandton

open to the public, the beaches here are accessed from privately owned land and are extremely clean, comfortable and well-maintained, with life-guards on duty.

For a dose of shared history, the Mahatma Gandhi tour to the Phoenix Settlement outside of Durban (the site of his first *ashram*) and the Talana Museum (0027-34-212 2654; www.talana.co.za) in Dundee, are both

worth the visit. The Jumma Mosque, on Grey Street, in Durban is considered the largest and most beautiful in the southern hemisphere, while the nearby Victoria Street Market is one of the town's oldest and is modelled on markets in India.

FOR THE URBAN DUDE

Head to Johannesburg – Jozie or Jo’burg to the locals – to experience South Africa’s most “Afropolitan” city. You’ll find people from neighbouring Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique here. From the slums of Hillbrow, to the mega-million-rand mansions in Sandton just 30 minutes away, Jozie is a city of vast contrasts in poverty and privilege. The crime rate is high, but so is the energy, which creates a seductive cocktail.

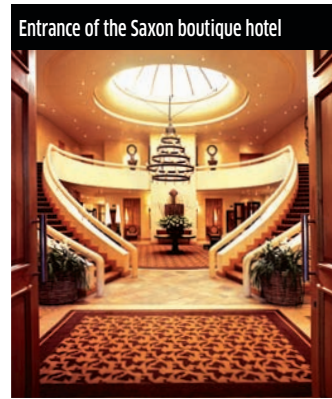
Check in to Orient-Express Hotels’ elegant The Westcliff (0027-11-481 6000; westcliff.co.za), just outside the city, for a luxurious stay and a grand view of the zoological gardens and the war memorial designed by British architect Edwin Lutyens (of Lutyens’ Delhi fame). Sample excellent tapas and cocktails at the Polo Lounge.

In Sandton, stay at the high-tech, newly opened Radisson

Blu (0027-11-245 8000; radissonblu.com), in the heart of the shopping and business district. Or, for a bespoke boutique luxury experience, the exclusive Saxon hotel (0027-11-292 6000; thesaxon.com) is where Nelson Mandela wrote his biography, *Long Walk To Freedom*.

Lekgotla (0027-11-884 9555; www.lekgotla.com) in Nelson Mandela Square, in Sandton, is great for African tribal cuisine. Or hit the Butcher Shop & Grill (0027-11-784 8676) for the best steaks in the city. Late-night glamour action continues at Skye Bar, atop the Holiday Inn Sandton (0027-11-282 0000; hisandton.co.za). Or head to the FashionTV lounge, which is always easy on the eye (ftvsandton.co.za), and the Manhattan Club, Rivonia (www.manhattanclub.co.za) for a spin on the dance floor.

Visit the Apartheid Museum (0027-11-309 4700; www.apartheidmuseum.org) and Constitution Hill (0027-11-381 3100; www.constitutionhill.org.za) in the city, or drive three hours to the Sterkfontein Valley to see the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site (0027-14-577 9000; maropeng.co.za), where the first human bones were discovered. Or dive back in time at Gold Reef City (0027-11-248 6800; www.goldreefcity.co.za). The hotel, casino and theme park are a fun ride back into the mining history that put the city on the map when gold was first discovered there in 1886. ☺



Entrance of the Saxon boutique hotel

NEW: TAJ CAPE TOWN



You’re a *GQ* man: you love travelling, discovering new places. But sometimes a slice of familiarity goes a long way to help you acclimatize. Unveiled in March, Taj Cape Town is the group’s first foray into South Africa. The new property, situated in the beating heart of culture, dining and entertainment in a historic part of Cape Town, promises the Taj brand of luxury you expect, with the novelty of being in a whole New World. Modern Tower Rooms, old-world Heritage Rooms and a two-level Presidential Suite (complete with an open deck for parties) are on offer. Londoners will recognize the Bombay Brasserie, while champagne lovers can indulge at Twankey Bar. So go on: we can all use a little bit of home on the road.

0027-21-819 2000; tajhotels.com



HOW TO GET THERE:

Jet Airways flies daily from Mumbai to Johannesburg. Roundtrip tickets start at Rs 36,744 for Economy, and at Rs 1,45,798 for Business