



PARADISE **FOUND**

The Secrets of Perivoli Lagoon House Uncovered

In a pocket of the Overberg secreted away within its own nature reserve, Perivoli Lagoon House is precisely the sanctuary we need right now – stylish digs overlooking a shimmering estuary, enfolded by looming mountains. And just down the road, a huge stretch of unblemished beach sheltered by tall dunes and washed by the Atlantic.



Rugged mountains, hardy fynbos, and clouds as thick as cream – some were gigantic bruise-coloured cotton balls dangling in the sky, others charcoal-black and ominous, reminders that in this beautiful wedge of land near the tip of the continent, the elements are mercurial, the weather prone to fierce mood swings.

But, yes, right on cue, there it was... Just as we turned into Stanford, a gap in those menacing clouds that ripped the sky apart, flooding the world with broad beams of sunlight.

Head through town and down the back-country farm road known as Wortelgat, and you're soon lost in a time-warp wormhole, the dirt track delivering you ever deeper into bucolic backwaters. It's only when you arrive at Perivoli's entrance – via a maze of tangled trees – that you're transported back to the 21st century.

Although set within its own 140-hectare fynbos reserve, overlooking the Hermanus Estuary, and steeped in panoramic views of the Klein River Mountains, Perivoli's immediate reckoning is of something architecturally novel – you're struck by the undulating, wave-like roof, the solidity of the

structure, and the expansiveness of its floor-to-ceiling glass walls.

Its contemporary design is marked not so much by excess but by having been built to grapple with the environment, to fend off the elements while harmoniously fitting in and drawing your focus back to the astonishing nature scenes all around.

It is designed to help you soak up the tranquillity, absorb the views, commune with what's outside. Stepping into this house is like a gigantic sigh, a loosening of the belt, a relaxing of your shoulders, an inhale breath delivering clean oxygen to the brain.

MORE THAN STYLISH

With just four suites and a huge open-plan living area comprising kitchen, dining area and a lovely kick-back-and-relax lounge, Perivoli is kitted out for every imaginable need and convenience. You will want for nothing, and yet if it's nothing you're after – quiet, stillness, calm – you'll find that here in abundance.

Simoné Henckert, who manages the property with her Namibian husband, Marcelino, doesn't only oversee the day-to-day running of the villa, but is also the creative hand behind the décor. From textured wallpapers and towels you

won't find at any hotel, iconic portraits of Nguni cattle, and a variety of armchairs, sofas and nooks decked out with plump cushions and comforting throws, she also went to great lengths to hand-pick artefacts, artisan-crafted knickknacks, and artworks with meaning (like the vintage Africa maps and the charcoal drawing of the mountains beyond the estuary).

There are cowhide rugs on the pale timber floors, fabrics with patterns borrowed from nature, terracotta bowls bulging with succulents, trunks of wood carved into elegant totems, and woven baskets set against the walls. She's put it all together with a museum curator's eye: Her goal, evidently, is to create an aesthetic that's simultaneously African and contemporary; thus achieved, the handsome house evokes a mood that's sensual and homely, sensuous without feeling cold.

You discover, though, that while the entire house is a work of harmonious theatre, it's all been put together to help bring your attention to the natural elements outside. As much as there is to admire inside, you're drawn again and again towards the vast wooden deck out front. Once there, you're powerless to resist the reach of infinity, concentrated on that jewel-like estuary and the

mountains marching across the horizon.

That connection with the outdoors continues in the suites, where the in-room entertainment comes from folding open the enormous glass stackable doors that grant instant access to your own stretch of paradise. While these rooms have everything you need – large wardrobe areas, wonderful bathrooms (with fabulous kikois by Mungo, all-natural Wild Olive bathroom products, wooden hooks, and bamboo towel racks), and one of the most comfortable beds you'll ever find yourself in – it is also what they don't have that speaks volumes. There are no TVs (there's one in the lounge should a big game beckon), for example, because you'd be mad to spend your time channel-surfing when there's so much beauty to behold out there, just beyond your toes.

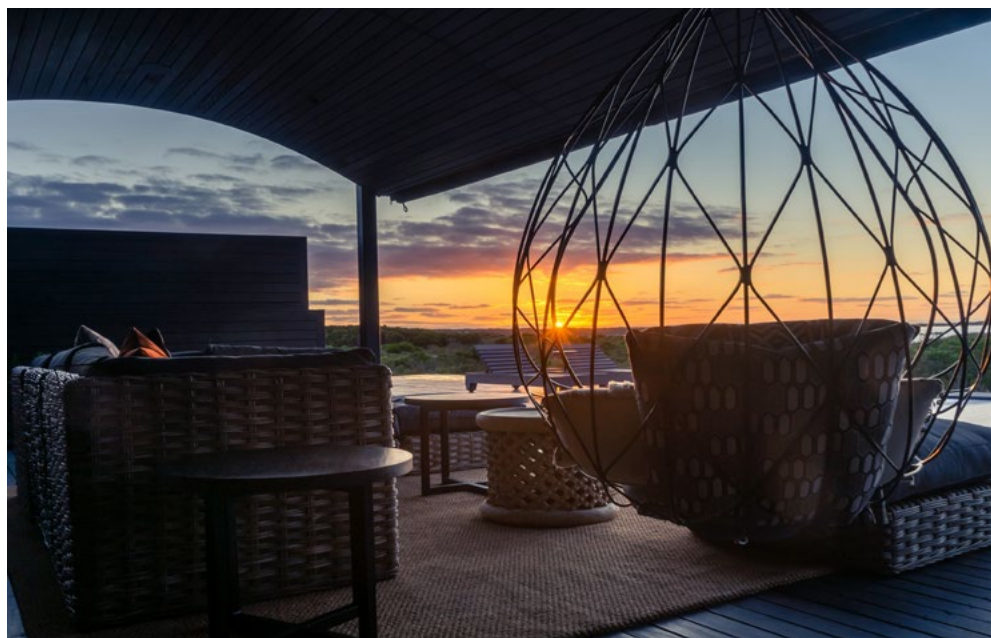
EXPLORE A WORLD BEYOND

You would be forgiven for being tempted to simply remain housebound in this stylish sanctuary, draped across a sun lounger or curled up in the swinging nest on the deck with its heated rim flow pool. When you are moved to move, however, there is plenty to do and see. Marcelino, an experienced bush ranger with great sensitivity and an infectious love of the outdoors, is also a deft hand at mixing gins and tonic on the beach just before the sun goes down. He'll happily bundle you into the 4x4 for an outing to the dunes or lead you on hikes through the reserve to pick out animal tracks, spot birds flitting between the blooms, and learn about weird and wonderful fynbos adaptations.

He's also adept at putting together adventures for children, and will make even the most ardent screen-addict fall in love with the world outside – boating, fishing, and canoeing on the estuary are all possibilities. Also possible are long beach walks, dips in the ocean, or contemplative hikes through Walker Bay Nature Reserve that culminate in a picnic in a private spot with an incredible view.

What's more, Stanford – with its well-preserved Cape Victorian and Edwardian





buildings – is just minutes away; while decidedly intimate and charmingly unspoiled, its main road is full of places that embrace quirkiness and manage to merge the best of countryside charm with funky ideas. It has a good range of delis, restaurants and vintage shops, and a creative buzz. Its three weekend markets are a good source of artisanal food, fresh produce, and – if you hit Saturday morning’s Stanford Junktique – curiosities and collectibles.

Or tuck in for a wider exploration of the Overberg. You could venture to the relative bustle of Hermanus, or sign up for full-blown ocean-going activities in Gansbaai.

RELAX, YOU DESERVE IT

Back at the villa, there’s enchantment to be had simply by exploring Perivoli’s immediate environment. Staring at that estuary from the heated rim flow pool as the golden-hour sunlight glints off the lagoon and sets the entire valley ashimmer, is like witnessing a miracle. Naturally, the kind staff will feed you,

anticipate your caffeine needs, and generally go to all lengths to quietly provide you with VIP treatment – service (should you enlist a full staff complement) is attentive and thoughtful, always ahead of the game.

In every respect, this is not a hotel. There is nothing by-the-book or forced – instead, everyone who works here seems to be motivated by genuine passion and kindness. That, in itself, is a genuine treat, and yet, as much as every whim and expectation is attended to, what ultimately makes this such a soul-restoring sanctuary is the way it carves out space for you to spend quality time with those nearest and dearest to you.

Everything about Perivoli helps you hit the reset button, helps you reconnect with yourself and with those closest to you. Friends will cherish time spent here, and family will relish the special memories, made together. And isn’t that what we’re all looking for right now? Time and space to savour the ones we love. 📍

check in, change the world

From R20,000 / night, self-catering, Perivoli’s four bedrooms are yours to share between friends or for your family to take over for the ultimate retreat. Alternatively, opt to include the services of a top-notch chef – your kitchen will be stocked with exquisite produce and local wines that ensure your experience is always next-level. It’s worth knowing that your stay will help benefit youngsters in need – and the environment. The house was established exclusively to help fund the philanthropic Perivoli Trust, which is dedicated to conserving natural habitats and improving the quality of education particularly of nursery school children in sub-Saharan Africa. All profits go to these causes.

www.perivoliafrica.com