



CORBELLED HOUSES **OF THE KAROO**

A Visual Celebration of South Africa's Ancient Corbelled Houses



Stuurmansfontein, Carnarvon – the most well-preserved corbelled house in South Africa

Purchasing diamonds or a ring for your beloved involves both an emotional and financial investment. In the 21st century, it also comes with countless choices, custom styles and available designs. We decided the best starting point would be to consult someone in the know. Enter Cape Diamonds.

One of the lesser known facts of the Karoo, is that scattered over its

vast landscape you will find about 40 beautifully preserved or renovated corbelled houses, often exquisitely restored as guest accommodation.

These marvels, with their strange architecture, were built in the late 1700s and early 1800s by *Trekboere*. As the landscapes offered little in the way of building materials such as timber, they made use of an ancient method of construction known as corbelling to build their shelters.

This technique was implemented by placing successive layers of flat stone, each one extending a little further inward than the layer beneath, until the walls almost met at the apex. The remaining hole over the roof could then be closed with a single slab. These thick stone walls were excellent insulators against the extreme heat of summer or the winter cold.

The style is not unique to South Africa. Megalithic builders in Mediterranean countries used this building technique from as long ago as 4000 years. This style of architecture found in Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Italy. Within South Africa, many of the corbelled houses of the Karoo and Northern Cape enjoy heritage status. ①

Sunset over Klein Korbeel







LEFT

Droogeputs Korbeel

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Klein Korbeel

Dubbel Korbeel



