



# NATURAL WONDER

## *Mhondoro Safari Lodge & Villa*

**Stellar experiences, superb design, fabulous food, service and pampering, and the Big Five under a big sky. Mhondoro Safari Lodge and Villa is an outstanding immersion into inspiration, relaxation and the thrill of being eye to eye with Mother Nature.**



“You know you are truly alive when you're living among lions,” wrote Karen Blixen, and I can't help but think of the Danish author's legendary passion for Africa when our small group of travellers enters the gates of the Welgevonden Game Reserve, boards the waiting game-viewing Landcruiser, and leaves Johannesburg's a three-hour drive — and a universe — behind.

Because this is undoubtedly the experience of being truly alive: the deep and transporting smell of sun-soaked earth and wild botanicals that instantly evokes the bush, the touch of fresh, pure air, and the sweeping vista of dense thickets, broad valleys, and blue mountains and hills. And just to add a layer of Karen Blixen-level magic to the experience, we're heading for a five-star

Safari Lodge and Villa whose name — Mhondoro — means 'spirit of the lion'.

It's not only lions either, thrilling though lions surely are. Here, in the exclusive and malaria-free sanctuary of Welgevonden, right in the heart of the UNESCO-accredited Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, we are in Big Five, as well as big-sky country. Along with being home to over 50 mammal species and over 250 species of birds, the region's links to human history date to the Middle Stone Age.



Rhino, elephant, impala, zebra, giraffe ... by the 60 minutes it takes to get to Mhondoro Safari Lodge and Villa, we've unexpectedly had our first game drive, and a sensational one at that.

#### **WHERE THE HEART IS**

Peaceful and understated at the same time as it's also glamorously luxe, Mhondoro's low-slung architecture blends elegantly into the landscape while its airy interior spaces flow into generous outdoor areas. The decor blends African

and European sensibilities, with earthy colours and naturally luxurious linens and wood. The food is five-star to match the environment — everything, including snacks for drives, is homemade and delicious. A gym, sauna, massage suite, spa and gift shop add to the appeal. And from the warm smiles and cool towels that greet newcomers to expert drive and walking guides and sundowners in the wild, the service is about making guests feel completely at ease, not to mention incredibly indulged.

Accommodation wise, the Lodge sleeps 24, and the choices include Luxury Pool Suites, a two-bedroom Executive Suite, and a two-bedroom Family Deluxe Suite with a private plunge pool and viewing deck.

Then there's the last word in pampered privacy — the exclusive-use Villa. This dreamy option for six guests features a stunning master suite complete with a dressing room, living room and outdoor shower, a private gym and massage room, a heated pool ensconced by an



*good to know*

- Mhondoro Safari Lodge and Villa is just under three hour drive or 50-minute flight from Johannesburg.
- Rates include meals, local drinks, selected wines, and twice-daily game drives.
- The Lodge is child-friendly, with dedicated play areas, games and special activities.
- The area is malaria-free.

expansive deck, and dining and social areas. Plus the services of a personal chef, butler, and housekeeper.

**EARTH, MOON & STARS**

Of course, all of this is sensational in itself. But Mhondoro takes things to a whole new level, thanks to its inventive owners, the Dutch nationals, Frank and Myriam Vogel, whose love of the environment shines through in the decor, food, service, and ecological approach.

On a fundamental level, the Lodge's initiatives in conservation and a reduced carbon footprint include massive solar panel installations, recycling drives, grey-water irrigation, an outstanding greenhouse for fresh produce, and the development of 1 100 hectares of derelict adjoining farmland into a protected wilderness area.

On a hospitality level, Mhondoro offers creative and innovative experiences that are wonderfully inspired by the greatest innovator and creator of all — Mother Nature. Loll about in bed, stretch out on the deck, luxuriate over a meal, hit the gym or float in the pool, and you'll be constantly rewarded with sweeping views

of the distant mountains, surrounding plains and nearby waterhole. And what a watering hole it is, teeming with life, often crowded, and guaranteed to add a special bonus to morning coffee! Alternatively, the delightful 'Elephant Selfie Spot' allows guests to share the photographic spotlight with the pachyderms who regularly amble over for a drink from the heated swimming pool. Just don't cross the 'Elephant Line' that is there to keep you safe.

Come nightfall, and the custom-built open-air Star Deck is pure enchantment, complete with the delights of a super high-quality telescope, a knowledgeable guide and a moonlit sky that is straight out of a grand romance. And that's to say nothing of another stellar experience — Mhondoro's brilliant underground game-viewing hide, which is situated at the end of a 65-metre tunnel and situated so close to the watering hole that you're eye to eye with the animals that gather on its banks.

*To reserve your stay, or for more information, visit [www.mhondoro.com](http://www.mhondoro.com).* ⓘ

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