



Unique Home Stays' Limpopo Safari Lodge threads quintessential colonial atmosphere with the pulse of a truly African bush home.

**Kevin Taylor** spent a weekend in the Waterberg investigating this interesting concept

# Lush Lodging

The crisp air rolls over sun-drenched hills where animals roam free among some of the most beautiful scenery imaginable. The pristine Palala River meanders down a path etched over centuries of flow while crocodiles and hippo bathe in its waters. Impala and warthogs forage nearby as a fish eagle soars majestically high in the sky above, and a pair of rhinos seek out a barky tree against which they rub their bellies to their heart's content.

There is something about our northernmost province and its attachment to an authentic side of Africa that has always intrigued me. Simple living combined with an appreciation for the outdoors has always remained an aspect of Limpopo that I love. Combine this with an incredibly romantic setting in the form of an Anglo-African style family home converted into a five-star private lodge, and you have a luxury retreat set deep in the African bushveld. Owned by a renowned British noble family from a brewing background, the Limpopo Safari Lodge, nestled in the widespread and malaria-free Jembisa Private Game Reserve has been transformed into a home away from home available for exclusive hire. ▶





Approximately four hours from Johannesburg and along a new motorway being built in Limpopo that will speed up the journey once complete, the Limpopo Safari Lodge is a concept brought to South African shores by UK-based company Unique Home Stays, where private luxury homes are made available as first-class accommodation. Unique Home Stays has an impressive portfolio of private homes, including boutique B&B homestays and luxury, self-catering holiday homes across the globe. I found that this concept, although relatively new to our shores will work well, especially with the backdrop of superb scenery, service and hospitality by a team as efficient as the one manning the Limpopo Safari Lodge.

On arrival, the marketing agent and the on-site game ranger were there to greet me warmly and I was ushered through to the front lawns where a fantastic three-course dinner was served by bonfire and starlight. With the winter's chill having already set in, we were kept warm with hot water bottles and a small pile of coals burning crimson under our chairs – attention to detail that comes as a unique and pleasant experience. A strong family aspect runs as a common thread, with the staff's two dogs roaming freely as the game ranger explained to me the way of life led in the reserve and what I was to expect over the next two days.

What impressed me greatly about the Limpopo Safari Lodge was the abundance of activities and locations from which dining and entertainment was served. Ranging from a bush brunch served alongside the Palala River following a two-hour educational hike through the grasslands, to breakfast served on the deck with breathtaking views overlooking the Waterberg's largely untouched valley – all of which came with world-class, African-inspired cuisine and service fit for royalty. Early morning game drives are available as well – once again with the blankets and hot water bottles on hand to take the edge off the crisp air, with a stop at the top of a mountain where hot chocolate and biscotti are served while absorbing both the view and the elegant sunrise. The staff remains highly adaptable – intensifying or reducing their presence to suit the group's specific wishes.

In terms of the lodge itself, it is comprised of five oversized en-suite bedrooms, children's bunkroom, lounge, dining area and games room. The outside patio is entirely covered and comfortably furnished and looks over a rolling manicured lawn onto which kudu often saunter. A gourmet chef, butler and game ranger are present to cater to any requirement and massages by the salt-water rock pool overlooking the valley are available on request. Only one family or small group of about

10 people is booked at a time, allowing for complete exclusivity and with self-catering units newly available for additional use, small wedding parties are welcome too.

The Jembisa Private Game Reserve only houses two of the Big Five – leopard and rhino, and as a result, Unique Home Stays has positioned the Limpopo Safari Lodge quite differently. Functioning as a pre-cursor venue for tourists moving on to a Big Five safari at a later stage, guests are able to walk through the reserve on foot, camp out in the bush and learn a multitude of interesting facts about the animals and the terrain – which they can then take with them and use during their stays elsewhere. Visits to Big Five reserves around the area can also be arranged by the staff on request for those



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families not moving on to Big Five reserves elsewhere in the country. Reserve hikes and mountain biking with a ranger are options not freely available in other reserves and sets the Limpopo Safari Lodge apart as guest-friendly and interactive with nature. A helipad and airstrip are also on site for those flying in from the city with a game drive on the way to the lodge as a mandatory bonus.

Driving out of the gates of the game reserve on the road back to Johannesburg, I realised that the Limpopo Safari Lodge is guilty of stealing a piece of my heart – and with that being the only indiscretion committed against me during the weekend, I would encourage everyone to fall victim to such a crime.

*For more information and bookings at Limpopo Safari Lodge and to see other properties part of the Unique Home Stays portfolio, please visit [www.uniquehomestays.com](http://www.uniquehomestays.com)*

