

Safari STYLE

Walk on the wild side by day, relax in splendour by night. Africa is calling and it's luring us to a newly reopened luxury homestead. By Anna McCooe



AFRICA AT HOME

Inspired? Bring a bit of Phinda Homestead bliss into everyday life with raw and woven details.



1 Oz Design **PRINT**, \$469, ozdesignfurniture.com.au. 2 Balthazar **BASKET**, \$255, at globewest.com.au. 3 Oz Design **CABINET**, \$1049, ozdesignfurniture.com.au. 4 The Design Edit **TUB POT**, \$49.50, thedesignedit.com.au. 5 Tshaj **CUSHION**, \$115, at store.luskela.com.au. 6 Domayne **OUTDOOR SETTING**, \$999, domayne.com.au. 7 HK Living **HANGING CHAIR**, \$899, at norsu.com.au. 8 Robert Plumb **FIRE PIT**, \$1199, at zanui.com.au. 9 Tigri Trading **LAMP**, \$455, tigritrading.com.

ANDBEYOND PHINDA HOMESTEAD KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE SOUTH AFRICA

Shrouded by a curtain of raw timber tassels, the bath at Phinda overlooks bush and, at times, baby elephants. On one occasion, the view from the king-sized bed reveals impala hanging out by the window. There are warthogs and baboons in plain sight of the pool and surprise cocktails at every turn – bath-side, bedside and around the sunken fire pit.

On safari, we encounter cheetahs, giraffes, rhinos and baby zebras en masse. Later, back at the homestead, we reach melting point in the massage room, where it's all about relaxation.

After a fire in December 2016, andBeyond Phinda Homestead is back in the business of mixing pinch-me experiences with unadulterated luxury. From the library to all four bedrooms, interior design company Fox Browne Creative nailed the contemporary-bush-home brief with its refined application of raw textures and organic tones. Nguni hides and basketwork, pottery and carvings feature throughout and it's little details such as these that bring the local Zulu culture into the homestead's heart.

The forest-side lodge is one of six on the 28,555-hectare private game reserve. Flying in from Johannesburg or Cape Town to Phinda's private airstrip on an Airlink daily scheduled flight feels



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE
A bath with a view; wildlife abounds in the surrounding reserve; the villa's inviting pool and outdoor area.

incredibly decadent. Especially when it's followed by a warm welcome from the entire staff and a gin and tonic on arrival. However, it's the kind of luxury you can happily give yourself over to thanks to the genuine commitment to conservation – including a covert anti-poacher operation – and community engagement. Our group, for instance, visited the Khulani Special School, which is funded by andBeyond and educates children and young adults living with disabilities, as well as Mduku Clinic, set up by andBeyond and the Africa Foundation to provide healthcare for women and children.

The all-inclusive, solo-use villa caters to up to eight guests with private chefs, butlers, rangers and homestead managers at the ready. There's also a private open 4x4 vehicle at your beck and call for bespoke safaris as well as beach adventures.

On the food front, expect delicious multi-course meals, theatrically prepared in the open kitchen by the skilled chef using herbs from the hanging garden and more cheese platters than a series of *The Bachelor*. Fresh bread and cakes are cooked daily and, impressively, there's no plastic. Even the water comes in glass bottles. Phinda is heavenly and utterly immersive. It's the kind of place you won't want to leave, but souveniring its style is also a good option.

GET THERE Fly to Johannesburg and from there fly direct to Phinda Reserve on Airlink. *marie claire* travelled with andBeyond and Virtuoso Travel Associates and stayed at Fairlawns Boutique Hotel & Spa in Johannesburg in transit. Visit travel-associates.com.au/virtuoso and fairlawns.co.za.

SUITCASE ESSENTIALS

From breathable fabrics to relaxed silhouettes and understated accessories, high-end homestead dressing is all about cool comfort.



1 Albus Lumen **EARRINGS**, \$175, at matchefashion.com. 2 Le Specs **SUNGLASSES**, \$129, lespecs.com. 3 Sleeper **DRESS**, \$346, the-sleeper.com. 4 Albus Lumen **SWIMSUIT**, \$300, at theundone.com. 5 Apiece Apart **SKIRT**, \$472, at net-a-porter.com. 6 Maison Bengal **BAG**, \$80, at mychameleon.com.au.

