



Rocking the woods

Escape to the indigenous forests of Karkloof Nature Reserve and enjoy an action-packed weekend at Rockwood Lodges

WORDS: MICHELLE SNADDON • IMAGES: MICHELLE SNADDON & SUPPLIED



It is late afternoon when we finally reach Rockwood, having sung our way loudly along the route in rapidly fading light to a catchy track from The Tallest Man on Earth. Music has an uncanny way of reconnecting our memories like nothing else: pinky gold grasses swaying on either side of the Curry's Post road changing swiftly to the fresh-smelling undergrowth of indigenous forest surrounding the secluded Karkloof Forest Lodge. Overhanging the Godwini River, completely shaded by sneezewood, Cape chestnut and parsley trees, it's an unlikely choice for a winter's night, yet its tucked-away location is all the more charming because of it.

Before long, massive logs are roaring in the fireplace, the Scrabble set is out and the Big Green Egg braai is fired up on the deck (note to self: stock the 4x4 fridge with a leg of lamb next time). At dawn, it isn't the coffee that wakes us, but the rare sighting of a jackal casually heading towards the waterfall, completely oblivious to his sleepy onlookers. Mountain biking, forest walks and an afternoon spent fishing beckon, but first, we're in for an adrenaline-charged morning of ziplining through the leafy canopy of the Karkloof forest. For those who, like me, are prone to vertigo, my advice is to breathe deeply and you'll soon relish the feeling of whooshing through these magnificent treetops.



Need to know

You need a 4x4 and good clearance to reach Rockwood Forest Lodge and Mountain Lodge. Mountain Lodge has exceptional views, although Forest Lodge offers more privacy, and the contemporary Farm House and Cottage overlook a dam. A 4x4 also allows for a direct route to the Karkloof Canopy Tour via pristine forest (guests have exclusive access, but remember to get the key for the gate the night before). If you book an early canopy tour, however, rather take the road around the farm to get there and enjoy the off-road forest route on the way back. No 4x4? Avis's Safari Rental has luxury, fully kitted Ford Rangers for hire. And, if you've done a quick shop at the airport or Howick (a 30-minute

drive away), but arrived without a few essentials for your stay, you'll find all the basics and even a bottle of wine available at Rockwood, not to mention choccies on your pillow and electric blankets.

Don't miss

The Karkloof Canopy Tour is a two-hour tour with experienced guides through the second largest indigenous forest in southern Africa, on eight 40-180m long "foefie" slides. Two awesome new routes, one an exhilarating ride over the river, will be launched soon.

While in the Midlands, be sure to visit the Nelson Mandela Capture Site near Lions River, where a modern, R45m visitor centre is expected

to be completed by the end of the year. In the meantime, you'll be moved by the striking sculpture of Nelson Mandela, best photographed late afternoon, at this historic site commemorating his arrest in 1962.

EXPERIENCE FOR YOURSELF:

- Rockwood Lodges rockwood.co.za
- Karkloof Canopy Tour karkloofcanopytour.co.za
- Avis Safari Rental avisvanrental.co.za
- The Capture Site thecapturesite.co.za



Pinotage on Tap

Recognised as "the best wine event" in the country, Pinotage on Tap is making a stop at The Litchi Orchard in Salt Rock on 19 September, with help of Diemersfontein Wines. The festival looks to serve nothing but great food and a memorable wine experience. Watch out for musical appearances from singing sensation Majozi as well as the ever-popular CrashCarBurn. Aiming to make this the ultimate wine festival, Diemersfontein Wines will make sure that you're taken care of. The event starts at 12.30pm. No under 18s.



LOCAL What's on LOWDOWN in Durbs this week?

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All Directions

Did the kids miss out on their favourite band visiting the country? The Barnyard Theatre is offering a sort-of solution for that heartbreak. On 19, 24 and 26 September, be sure to catch All Directions – a tribute performance for One Direction as well as songs from many more kid-friendly artists who soar on the charts on a regular basis. They may not be Niall, Liam, Harry Styles and Louis, but the performers will definitely have you on your feet.

Shall We Dance

One of Durbs's most popular dance showcases celebrates its 23rd season this year and is on at the Playhouse Opera until 19 September. Considered by most to be the longest standing production in Durban, this comprehensive dance extravaganza features about 100 of the region's most promising dancers, from 13 year olds to award-winning industry professionals. Shall We Dance delivers an exciting modern twist in its variety of music and esteemed dancers.

EXPERIENCE IT FOR YOURSELF:

- Pinotage on Tap diemersfontein.co.za
Purchase your tickets on Computicket computicket.com/web/event/pinotage_on_tap_durban/912886806
- Shall We Dance
Purchase your tickets computicket.com/web/event/shall_we_dance/931307177
- All Directions barnyardtheatre.co.za

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