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Wild about

Luxurious Nambiti Hills Private Game Lodge outside Ladysmith tasked M&M Designs with polishing and freshening up its five stars ... and the consensus is, everybody's wild about the decor.

the beauty

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Photographs **Clinton Friedman**

Game lodges, tented camps and wild experiences are all on the up and up as our stress levels head in the same direction and our desperation for something simpler escalates. And with the increase in demand for a wild escape, so too, the bar for luxurious getaways keeps rising, which means a Big 5 experience can now be wrapped in five big stars. The combination is intoxicating: it's Africa, distilled.

Nambiti Hills Private Game Lodge is set in a Big 5 conservancy a comfortable three hours' drive from Durban, yet light years away from the harshness of the city. It's always astonishing how, within a gentle afternoon's drive, the world can be transformed, and just as with Mark Twain's comment, 'Nothing helps scenery like ham and eggs,' nothing helps your view of the world like the sight of an African sunset, a magnificent, haughty cheetah, and an icy G&T.

Nambiti Hills is five star in every respect and, aside from the level of service that implies, the contemporary design captures the shifting nuances of the environment, from daybreak through to nightfall. Whether you're huddling around a roaring fire, perched on top of the world, or enjoying an intimate dinner in a romantic spot, a five-star thread runs through the experience.

Recently refurbished by M&M Designs, every corner is a snapshot of the good life, while the lodge's clever spatial allocation ensures a perfect balance between the breathe-easy freedom of wide-open spaces and the curled-up privacy of intimate places.

The decor and finishes in each of the eight luxury suites (and one honeymoon suite) draw inspiration from the surrounding wilderness, and lean towards a contemporary mix of local African design. It's of the earth, yet sophisticated and stylish. The link between inside and out is both literal and implied – even the en-suite bathroom with its oversized stone bath connects guests with the outdoors. Each suite has a private viewing deck and enclave overlooking the game reserve, a sensational setting for uninterrupted quiet time or a private dinner.

Up on high, the glass-enclosed dining and lounge areas are at one with the rolling hills and savannah by day and the vast field of stars by night. A deep veranda and bar connects via a waterfall with a rock pool, where guests can float around, socialise and sip cocktails.

Four indoor wood fires and two outdoor boma fires colour in the perfect picture of a five-star boutique lodge experience, where warmth, intimacy, fine cuisine, and tales from far and wide are shared between different nationalities. For that Big 5 feeling in a glorious setting, treat yourself to the endless pleasures of Nambiti Hills Private Game Lodge. 📍

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