

Hermanus and the Overberg

The Southern Cape is a bountiful area of gentle rolling green pastures, vineyards, forests and unspoiled coastline between the Cape Winelands in the West and the Garden Route to the East. Some visitors hurtle straight through to the Garden Route but we recommend at least two nights here. The southern coast boasts some of the finest land-based whale-watching in the world between July and early December, when the Southern Right Whales come right into the bays to give birth. Enthralling sightings are a daily occurrence with spectacular breaches and whale song.



Hermanus

The cosmopolitan fishing village and resort of Hermanus offers all year round charm and stunning coastal scenery. Secluded sandy beaches are backed by velvety mountains covered with exceptional fynbos vegetation. The wild flowers are particularly enchanting. The coastal walking trail is very popular and offers the ideal opportunity for whale-watching. Alternatively, Fernkloof Nature Reserve has a number of walks of varying lengths. The more adventurous can even experience cage diving amongst the sharks at Gansbaai. More relaxing pursuits would be exploring the numerous arts and craft shops in Hermanus and enjoying the panoramic views of Walker Bay whilst dining alfresco.

One hour to the east lies the quaint fishing village of Arniston, with its warm sandy beaches and turquoise blue seas. Stay at the Arniston Hotel, with its spectacular sea views, and visit the cave at Waenhuiskrans or Cape Agulhas, the southernmost tip of Africa.

Swellendam

Inland lies the picturesque town of Swellendam with its majestic oak trees, lovely gardens and well-preserved early Settler architecture. Two hours from Cape Town, it's ideal for those wishing to break the journey to the Garden Route. Relax among the towering peaks of the Langeberg Mountains with deep wooded valleys, visit the nearby Bontebok National Park or meander through its renowned museum of Settler life.

Route 62 provides a scenic alternative meandering through a lush wine-growing region and past attractive 'dorpe', such as Robertson and Montagu, before heading for the more dramatic landscape of the Little Karoo.



GANSBAAI RURAL LOCATION



GROOTBOS NATURE RESERVE

located amidst the spectacular fynbos and ancient dunes of the Southern Coast, is a multi-award winning gem. Overlooking Walker Bay, it's a nature-lovers paradise – all but the most committed urbanite will enjoy the inclusive activities: guided fynbos 4x4 drives, milkwood forest walks, horse riding, beach visits and guided land-based whale-watching as well as the optional activities of boat-based whale watching and shark cage diving. A dedicated team including marine biologists and conservationists help you to appreciate what makes this area so special. Grootbos consists of two lodges, the family-friendly Garden Lodge with one and two bedroom suites and the new contemporary Forest Lodge. All suites, nestled in the milkwood forest, have a separate lounge, full bathroom, private wooden decks with panoramic sea or mountain views, tea and coffee facilities, minibar, fruit basket, fireplace and underfloor heating. Each lodge has its own swimming pool, telescope for whale-watching, restaurant and environmental centre. Grootbos combines excellent service with supremely comfortable accommodation and delicious food. TGCSA 5 star lodge.

✓✓✓ FAMILY ✓✓ WALKING

RATING: LUXURY ROOMS: 11 & 16



HERMANUS TOWN LOCATION



THE MARINE

is perched on the cliffside overlooking the glorious Walker Bay. A path leads down to the crashing waves below and yet it's an easy two minute walk to the market square. Though a luxurious Relais & Châteaux five star hotel, the Marine has a relaxed contemporary décor and ambience, with much use of light and bright colours in the 43 bedrooms and suites. A sophisticated cocktail bar and lounge offers wonderful sea views and there's a choice of two restaurants: the elegant Pavilion and the vibrant contemporary Seafood at the Marine. Alternatively take a dip in the heated pool or enjoy some pampering at their beauty spa. TGCSA 5 star hotel.

✓ SPA ✓ WALKING

RATING: LUXURY ROOMS: 43

NEAR HERMANUS BEACH LOCATION



SCHULPHOEK SEAFRONT LODGE

is situated in a protected marine sanctuary by the ocean, with spectacular sea views from the sitting/dining room and terrace. A coastal walking trail runs past the lodge and there is a heated salt water pool and jacuzzi. Six spacious bedrooms offer garden views whilst the Scallop suite, on the first floor, offers magnificent sea views. Each room has hand-crafted wooden beds, percale linen, air-conditioning, ceiling fans, TV/Video, complimentary sherry and tea and coffee facilities. Bathrooms are modern with bath and shower, sometimes spa baths. The atmosphere is relaxed with an emphasis on good cuisine; four-course menu du jour and over 7,000 bottles of regional wine. Enjoy body treatments in the summer house. TGCSA 5 star guest house.

✓ FAMILY ✓ WALKING

RATING: PREMIER ROOMS: 7

SWELLENDAM TOWN LOCATION



THE HIDEAWAY

is renowned for its hospitality. Their famous breakfasts with home baking and preserves are exceptional and they ensure guests get the most from their stay in Swellendam. There are four large and thoughtfully furnished air-conditioned rooms in a peaceful garden setting, filled with roses, each furnished with fine handcrafted furniture, and antiques. Teas, coffees, shortbread, beer, port, muscadel and soft drinks are all complimentary. Indoor heated splash pool. TGCSA 5 star guest house.

RATING: COMF/PREMIER ROOMS: 4

NEAR MONTAGU BUSH LOCATION



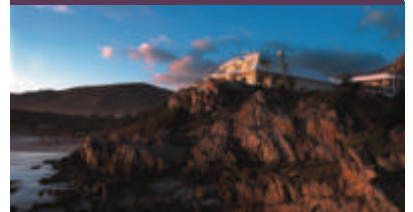
SANBONA WILDLIFE RESERVE

offers 54,000ha. of undulating mountains and plains, indigenous wild flowers and San rock art. Home to the Big Five, including rare white lion, specialist guiding is a key element in providing a memorable and varied experience with bush walks, bird watching for some of the 160 species and archaeological presentations as well as 4x4 drives. Luxurious accommodation is either in historic Tilney Manor (six suites) with its Wellness Centre and Spa or in the contemporary, light and airy Khanni Lodge with four suites, ideal for a party of friends or family with children. TGCSA 5 star lodge.

✓ FAMILY (KHANNI) ✓✓ SPA ✓ WALKING

RATING: LUXURY ROOMS: 6 & 4

HERMANUS TOWN LOCATION



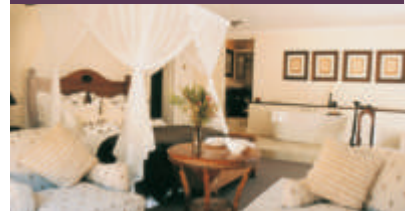
BIRKENHEAD HOUSE

is perched high on the cliffs of Hermanus, overlooking the whale watchers' paradise of Walker Bay. This beautiful coastal retreat is decorated with a relaxed light touch alongside unique and rare antiques. Most of the opulently appointed suites offer sea or mountain views. Other attractions include a gym and treatment centre, and a dual-level swimming pool located in a sheltered courtyard. Not forgetting, of course, Hermanus' two best swimming beaches, below the lodge. All meals and local drinks are included at Birkenhead.

✓✓ ROMANTIC ✓ SPA ✓ WALKING

RATING: LUXURY ROOMS: 11

STANFORD RURAL LOCATION



BLUE GUM COUNTRY HOUSE

lies in a picturesque valley close to Stanford and Hermanus. Here you can relax amid the tranquility of the 130-acre estate, explore the private mountain reserve or stroll through the vineyards. A game of tennis or a refreshing swim in the pool are attractive alternatives. Five mountain-facing suites, decorated in English country style, have a fireplace and private patio whereas five Manor House suites, decorated in Colonial African style, have private verandas looking toward the mountains. The lodge has a lounge, library and veranda and great emphasis placed on the fresh, imaginative cuisine. TGCSA 5 star guest house

✓✓ FAMILY ✓✓ WALKING

RATING: PREMIER ROOMS: 10

Other Recommendations

Western Cape Hotel, Bot River (page 15)

Lagoon Lodge on Mosaic Farm, Hermanus Lagoon

Lavender Manor, Hermanus