



## **De Hoop Collection and CapeNature transform the De Hoop Nature Reserve**



The De Hoop Collection this month announced its plans to establish a collection of new and improved accommodation types in the De Hoop Nature Reserve. De Hoop Collection will still work in partnership with CapeNature who will continue to manage the conservation side of the reserve as well as the Whale Trail and Lekkerwater. This project is the result of a successful Public Private Partnership and will involve many members of the surrounding communities and aid in their upliftment and development.

Situated just three hours' drive from Cape Town, the 36, 000 hectares of De Hoop conservation area forms part of a World Heritage Site characterised by rich biodiversity and rare species of fynbos that lead down to an unspoiled coastline. A 19km vlei, which is a Ramsar site, stretches across the reserve and is home to rich birdlife, including pelicans, that breed on its waters each year. The three nautical miles of De Hoop Marine Reserve beyond the shoreline offer some of the best whale-viewing in the world, with some 40% of the global Southern Right Whale population coming to the bay each year to breed.

The aim of the De Hoop Collection is to enhance and expand on the existing accommodation and activities offered in the reserve, and to work hand in hand with CapeNature to bring the South African public and overseas guests a range of unique eco-tourism experiences.

There will be an emphasis on things to do and the De Hoop Collection is planning to introduce a large range of varied activities to cater for all of De Hoop's visitors. These will include interpretive fynbos and rock pool walks, birding excursions, extensive hiking and mountain biking trails as well as beach based whale watching with a guide, and many more to come on line.

From camping and caravanning sites, affordable self-catering rondawels to more luxurious self-catering cottages and five-star fully catered lodges, the De Hoop

Collection will have something to offer families travelling on a limited budget; couples seeking a comfortable but affordable breakaway; right through to international guests looking for a top-end luxury experience – and all of this in one of the most beautiful places the South Africa's coastline has to offer.

The accommodation types fall within a number of areas:

### The Opstal area



Forming the heart of the De Hoop Collection, the **Opstal** area offers the biggest range of accommodation types and is situated amidst the splendour of rich fynbos plains. It will be close to the central office, restaurant, deli and shop all of which will be completed in October.

Already open to the public are the 9 **De Hoop Village** self-catering cottages that all have three-bedrooms, one bathroom and an open-plan kitchen-lounge and dining area, while two Opstal Houses each offer self-catering accommodation for six people in three spacious bedrooms, and come complete with a fully equipped kitchen and bathroom. Both the De Hoop Village and the **Opstal Houses** have outdoor braai and dining area.

Renovations are currently underway on the three **Opstal Vlei Cottages**, each of which contains two bedrooms and one bathroom and can accommodate four people. As their name suggests, these cottages overlook the vlei and offer a prime spot for bird-lovers. Also overlooking the vlei are two single-bedroom **Vlei Rondawels**, which offer comfortable and affordable accommodation for two. These share a communal bathroom but come equipped with a toaster, bar fridge, kettle and outside braai area. Five **Campsite Rondawels** are similarly appointed and will share a communal kitchen with the five caravan and ten camping sites, set under the Milkwood trees.

The **Opstal Manor House** (previously the Ou Huis), **Shearing Studio** and **Stable Suite** will form the luxury component of the Opstal area.

Currently being lovingly restored to its former glory and complete with yellowwood floors and ceilings, the Manor House will offer fully catered accommodation in three en-suite bedrooms, each of which can be booked separately. The single-bed roomed Shearing Studio and Stable Suite are ideal for honeymooners and couples looking for a romantic luxury getaway. Guests staying at any of these three units will also have the option of dining in the nearby restaurant.

## The Melkkamer



Situated on the far side of the vlei, the Melkkamer buildings are characterised by their rich sandstone and old-world farm architectural style. The majestic gabled **Melkkamer Manor House**, which has stood empty and derelict for the past five years, is soon to be renovated and its four en-suite bedrooms will offer fully catered five-star luxury and service.

The **Melkkamer Vlei Cottage** and **Foreman's Cottage** are already open for bookings and offer a similar level of style and luxury. Overlooking the vlei, the Melkkamer Vlei Cottage offers accommodation for 8 guests in four bedrooms, with two bathrooms, a kitchen/dining area, lounge and outdoor braai facility. The Melkkamer Foreman's Cottage is tucked away behind the Manor House under ancient Milkwoods and has three bedrooms, a lounge/kitchen/dining area and an outdoor braai area. Guests in both the Vlei Cottage and the Foreman's Cottage can choose to self-cater or to enjoy catered dining in the stately Melkkamer Manor House.

In the same area **The Stables** are also being renovated and will be transformed into a magnificent wedding venue.

## Koppie Alleen



Set in a remote part of the reserve, half an hour's drive from the Opstal in the direction of the beach, **Koppie Alleen** offers the ideal getaway for families or small groups seeking peace and solitude. Built in the white-washed fisherman-cottage style so synonymous with the area, this unit has four bedrooms, two bathrooms and a large kitchen, lounge and dining room area. Here guests can look forward to the romance of firelight and paraffin lanterns, as the De Hoop Collection has elected to keep Koppie Alleen electricity-free. However a modern gas stove in the kitchen and gas and regular braai equipment outdoors ensure convenience and ease of catering.

## De Mond

The **De Mond** area contains a three bed roomed house and one bed roomed cottage, positioned at the end of the vlei. These are currently being restored and once complete, will boast new kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms and living areas.

### Still to come ...



A restaurant, deli, shop as well as a conferencing venue are currently being developed and the De Hoop Collection is thrilled to once again have the world-renowned expertise of chef, Judi Dyason, in helping to train the catering staff. Dyason, who is best-known for establishing the world-famous Prue Leith School of Cooking in South Africa, trained the catering staff at all of The Madikwe Collection's lodges. There are also plans to open a cooking school at De Hoop to train and develop talented youngsters in the area.

The De Hoop Nature Reserve has long been a choice destination for people looking to get away to a remote place of rugged beauty and the De Hoop Collection development hopes to offer both overnight and day visitors a chance to enjoy all the reserve has to offer.

As with the Madikwe Collection, in all developments at De Hoop, the De Hoop Collection seeks to partner with local communities to create jobs and sustainable upliftment. This, coupled with its recognised status as an unspoiled gem on the coast of South Africa, looks set to make the De Hoop Collection and Nature Reserve a much-loved destination for visitors from all over the world.

