

## FEATURE

Story by Nicky Furniss  
Pix © Pumba Private Game Reserve,  
Zuluwaters Game Reserve,  
Dinokeng Game Reserve, Inverdoorn Game Lodge

# QUICK GAME RESERVE GETAWAYS

*We may not have ski hills, or outdoor ice rinks, but when it comes to winter activities, South Africans 'do' have the opportunity to enjoy some of the world's best game viewing. Plus, city dwellers need no longer travel for days to get to the nearest reserve, since many are right on our doorsteps. HERE IS OUR PICK OF THE BEST OF SOUTH AFRICA'S QUICK GETAWAY GAME RESERVES.*





### **ZuluWaters Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Midlands**

Nestled in the foothills of the Drakensberg Mountains, ZuluWaters Game Reserve offers visitors the opportunity to see a wide variety of game – including Cape Buffalo and wildebeest – and to enjoy the reserve’s picturesque surroundings in a far more hands-on manner.

The Bushman’s River and its dams are ideal for fly-fishing, and thanks to the absence of any large predators, guests can also opt for guided walks around the reserve. Undoubtedly the best way to truly experience ZuluWaters, however, is on the back of a horse. The reserve boasts a number of beautiful Appaloosa horses which are suitable for both experienced and novice riders.

The reserve offers two and three hour rides in the early mornings and late afternoons, when the light is at its softest and the animals in their abundance. Being on horseback allows riders to get far closer to the reserve’s inhabitants than a vehicle ever could, and comes with the added bonus of time to reflect and a feeling of truly getting back to nature.

For an equally tranquil game viewing experience, ZuluWaters can organise hot-air balloon rides, as well as trips to see some of the reserve’s original Bushmen cave paintings.

Guests have a choice of staying at Lake Cottage, Nandi House or in

the architectural wonder of Shaka Lodge. The lodge was originally built as a personal residence by the reserve’s owner, and as a result it is a home away from home, albeit a very stylish one. It is available for single party bookings only and can accommodate three couples in separate and lavishly appointed bedrooms. It also boasts balconies from which to enjoy the view, a comfortable communal lounge and a well equipped kitchen.

Perhaps the best thing about staying at Shaka Lodge (other than the exclusivity of having the reserve almost entirely to yourself) is that it comes with a resident chef, Mbongiseni, who is a veritable wizard at whipping up tantalising meals worthy of any five-star establishment. Mbongiseni insists on being hands-on in all aspects of the food preparation, and even smokes his own trout and venison.

Adjacent Nandi House can be used to accommodate additional guests in the same party, or can be hired out separately on a self-catering basis. Couples in search of a romantic hideaway need look no further than quaint Lake Cottage. It is perfectly placed for a spot of fishing at nearby Lake Murray or just as a quiet retreat.

ZuluWaters Game Reserve is located near Mooi River and is a one hour drive from Pietermaritzburg.

*For more information, contact +27 36 352 0100, email [info@zuluwaters.com](mailto:info@zuluwaters.com) or visit [www.zuluwatersgamereserve.com](http://www.zuluwatersgamereserve.com).*





### Inverdoorn Game Lodge, Western Cape

Within a two-and-a-half hour drive from Cape Town, Inverdoorn Game Reserve in the Karoo offers both day and overnight visitors the chance to get up close and personal with the 1,200 or so animals that call this 10,000 hectare reserve home. These include Bat-eared foxes, jackals, giraffe and leopard.

The reserve also runs a specialised cheetah rehabilitation programme. Overnight guests can interact with Inverdoorn's tame cheetahs, and have the possibility of spotting wild ones on one of the reserve's three-hour game drives. Guests who like to experience the beauty of their natural surroundings under their own steam can also sign up for a guided walk through the reserve with an expert tracker.

Inverdoorn offers a range of accommodation options for overnight

guests, from four-star bungalows and guest houses for larger groups, to five-star luxury chalets and the ultimate opulent getaway, the Ambassador Suite. Guests can also look forward to delicious French and South African fusion cuisine made from only the freshest ingredients, most of which comes from the reserve's resident organic farms.

*For more information, contact +27 214 344 639, email [info@inverdoorn.com](mailto:info@inverdoorn.com) or visit [www.inverdoorn.com](http://www.inverdoorn.com).*



### Dinokeng Game Reserve, Gauteng

When it finally opened last year, Dinokeng Game Reserve made history by becoming Gauteng's first free-roaming game reserve. Situated just 90 km from Johannesburg and a mere 40 km from Pretoria, Dinokeng was designed not only to be a tourism destination, but also a source of employment for the surrounding community, which is one of Gauteng's poorest.

Unlike many traditional game reserves, Dinokeng's 18,500 hectares of land is owned by a number of different owners, which means that visitors are spoilt for choice when it comes to the range of activities that is offered in the reserve.

Apart from the traditional games drives offered, visitors can also opt for clay pigeon shooting, boat cruises and even microlight flights. When buffalo are introduced later this year, Dinokeng will be home to all of the Big Five.

Dinokeng's accommodation options are equally varied, and range from self-catering chalets and intimate guesthouses to luxury five-star lodges. Day visitors also have the opportunity to complete the perfect bush-inspired day out with a delicious meal at one of the reserve's restaurants, or even a spot of wine tasting in the middle of the bush.

*For more information, visit [www.dinokengbig5.com](http://www.dinokengbig5.com).*







### **Pumba Private Game Reserve, Eastern Cape**

Unlike many of the game reserves in the north of the country, the Eastern Cape is a malaria free area, making it the ideal bush break getaway destination for the whole family. Pumba Private Game Reserve offers its guests the full Big Five experience, with the added convenience of being less than a 90 minute drive from Port Elizabeth.

This 6,500 hectare game reserve may be named after a lovable cartoon warthog – and indeed Pumba is teeming with these charming creatures – but it currently boasts far more famous residents in the form of a number of rare white lions. The highlight of any game drive here is undoubtedly to come across the impressive dominant male, his magnificent white mane resplendent in the afternoon sun.

Guests can also look forward to a host of other animal encounters, from herds of elephant and gently nibbling giraffes to over 300 species of birds. Thanks to large swathes of open grassland, it is also possible to watch three adolescent cheetahs honing their hunting skills, while opportunistic jackals constantly shadow them.

When not enjoying Pumba's rich animal diversity, guests have the opportunity to enjoy its unrivalled hospitality. With a choice of two equally luxurious but distinctive camps, guests can choose the tone

of their getaway, or indeed stay at a different camp each time for a completely new experience.

Msenge Bush Lodge offers the quintessential *Out of Africa* feel, complete with four poster beds, sweet smelling thatched roofs and roaring evening bonfires. Msenge's 11 luxury suites are glass walled, so guests can truly appreciate being surrounded on all sides by African bushveld. Viewing decks and private plunge pools provide the perfect spot from which to watch antelope grazing on the plain below.

Pumba Water Lodge is perfectly positioned overlooking the tranquil waters of Lake Cariega. The lodge's main communal areas and all 12 of its stone chalets enjoy this magnificent view. Guests may spot a swooping Fish Eagle as they luxuriate in their own private outdoor showers, and are guaranteed to be serenaded by grunting hippos as they enjoy a sundowner on Water Lodge's floating pier.

The cuisine at both lodges is superb, the wine list extensive, and Pumba's friendly and professional staff go out of their way to make guests feel at home.

*For reservations and more information, contact +27 46 603 2000, email [respumba@pehotels.co.za](mailto:respumba@pehotels.co.za) or visit [www.pumbagamereserve.co.za](http://www.pumbagamereserve.co.za).* 

