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INDULGE IN A LUXURIOUS BUSHVELD ESCAPE AT MAKWETI SAFARI LODGE IN LIMPOPO

EXPERIENCE THE BEST THAT THE WELGEVONDEN PRIVATE GAME RESERVE HAS TO OFFER AT THIS INTIMATE HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Words: *Matthew McClure*
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Makweti Safari Lodge, main lodge.

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Feeling not quite rested after your December leave? Perhaps experiencing a craving for the beauty of the bushveld? **Makweti Safari Lodge** in the Welgevonden private game reserve is the balm to soothe those new-year anxieties.

Welgevonden was established in 1993 when several farmers in the area sold their properties and combined them into what guests enjoy today: 37,000ha of unspoiled natural flora and fauna. This area of Limpopo is known as the Waterberg biodome, a catchment area where rainwater filters through the soil and into the underlying water table that supplies the surrounding cities and towns. Makweti is one of 22 private lodges that have been sensitively incorporated into the natural surroundings so as not to disrupt the movement of the game and make as little impact as possible on this environmentally important part of the country.

Makweti Safari Lodge was established 25 years ago, and it's not hard to see why it's enjoyed success, and has even thrived during the challenging South African lockdown. There are only five suites in the camp that can accommodate a maximum of 10 guests, ensuring that numbers are kept to a minimum and you're guaranteed individual attention. Helen Wilson, Makweti's operations manager and the gracious hostess during our stay, explained that the lodge has a core group of guests who return time and again, lured by the peaceful surroundings and the fact that the lodge feels like home. Makweti invests in its front-of-house staff, making sure that they are well cared for and happy. You're sure to be greeted by the same friendly smiles each time you return.



Makweti Safari Lodge, bathroom.

Image: Makweti

The lodge's magic undeniably lies in its location. It's nestled between rolling hills with a view of the valley below, where you can enjoy sundowners or a mouthwatering English breakfast when you return from a game drive. A nearby natural waterhole is a drawcard for a large variety of wildlife that move through the unfenced camp, so don't be surprised when you come across a warthog or an elephant on its way for a mid-afternoon drink. Wi-Fi can only be accessed at the reception building so don't expect to do any serious work during your stay, but this small sacrifice is easily overshadowed by the trappings of your private suite. A secluded pool just outside your bedroom is the perfect place to laze away an afternoon in the sun and your king-size bed will beckon you to breezy early evening naps before you head out for dinner.



Makweti Safari Lodge, exterior of a suite. (Photo by: Makweti)

Don't expect your standard big-five game safari at Makweti. Neil Davison, the lodge's dedicated guide, possesses a vast compendium of knowledge and will clue you up on everything from the mating habits of African bullfrogs to the indigenous plant species used by locals for medicinal purposes. Neil's bush knowledge is vast, and his respect for the environment is impressive. He also has a knack for finding the perfect spots for enjoying a glass or two of bubbly when the sun starts dipping below the horizon.



Wildebeest and lions spotted on a game drive.

Image: Makweti

One of the best things about Makweti Safari Lodge is that it's only a few hours by car from Joburg or Pretoria, and easy to fly into from Cape Town via the small town of Vaalwater. No sooner is the hustle and bustle of the city behind you and you're on a game drive, surrounded by the peace and quiet of the bush. Now, isn't that worth taking a few extra days off?

• For reservations, email: reservations@makweti.com

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