

Natural HIGH

UNPLUG AND ENJOY AN OVERDOSE
OF NATURE AT THESE STYLISH
ECO-FRIENDLY STAYS





The FamTim dam is stocked with tilapia, which guests can fish with flies or spinners. There's even a log book at the cabin to document your catch



COPIA ECO CABINS

Just 90 minutes' drive from Cape Town, Copia Eco Cabins outside Bot River makes for a convenient couples' getaway. And it's not just the bustle of the city you'll be leaving behind... With limited cellphone reception and no WiFi, it's easy to disconnect and immerse yourself in the serenity of the countryside.

Accommodation is three repurposed shipping containers, while solar electricity and water from a hilltop tank add to the off-the-grid ethos.

Stepping inside the sophisticated space, it's obvious that the focus is on the sprawling views of the surrounding veld, the farm valley below and the distant mountain peaks. Large windows allow these vistas to be appreciated throughout the cabin, even when lazing in the generous bathtub, or sipping your morning coffee in the luxurious king-size bed. Decorated with a tasteful blend of industrial and organic, such as the copper plumbing and wood block bedside pedestals, the minimalist approach allows the spectacular views to take centre stage. Despite this openness, there is a feeling of total privacy, since each cabin is a distance apart, with no neighbours in sight.

Although the limited electricity supply means there's no oven or microwave (as if you needed an excuse to enjoy a braai every night!), the kitchen is well equipped, with a full-size fridge with a freezer, a 2-plate gas stove and thoughtful extras such as filter coffee, rusks and olive oil. You'll also find everything you need to get the braai started, including a grid, tongs, firelighters and an abundant supply of firewood.

An indoor fireplace (ours a quirky invention fashioned from a massive potjie pot) set before a comfy couch makes the living area

cosy regardless of the weather. Folding back the stackable glass doors gives way to the spacious wooden deck – it's here that you'll find the cabin's main attraction: A wood-fired hot tub. Enjoy the silence and let your troubles soak away while watching the clouds drift across the landscape. As darkness falls, light the solar and paraffin lamps provided for a romantic al fresco dinner beside the fire.

Don't forget to stock up on groceries and superb wines from the nearby farms, because once you arrive, you won't want to leave.

copiaecocabins.co.za

FAMTIN AT RIVERSTONE

It's a family affair at this beautifully appointed double container conversion perched on the edge of a dam on a berry and pear farm in Romansrivier. After trundling your way through Bainskloof Pass, settle into this stylish slice of paradise, complete with top-of-the-range appliances and hotel-chic linen. In winter, disappear into a great novel while ensconced in front of the Dovre fireplace, its clean-burning technology offering you peace of mind. The cabin is a true success in eco-friendly design, down to the finishes: Some brass tap and shower fittings, as well as the ball-and-claw bath in one bedroom, were sourced from a cottage on the farm, which was stripped for repurposing.

The cabin is pooch-friendly, with thoughtful touches including a doggie bowl and enclosed paddock behind the cabin to keep four-leggeds near come nightfall. 'I'm bored' is unlikely to cross the little ones' lips – when they're not tiring themselves out playing on the lawn overlooking the dam, they can while away hours immersed in friendly competition thanks to the well-stocked 'Games Box' with classics such as Uno, pick-up sticks and dominoes, among others.

Fishing enthusiasts (and little ones in the making) will be in their element. The FamTin dam – one of three on the property – is stocked with tilapia, which guests can fish with flies or spinners. There's even a log book at the cabin to document your catch, and guide books to help you master the skill too. Not into fishing? Take a refreshing dip in summer.

When you do eventually tear yourself away from the cabin for a day out, you'll be spoilt for choice whether you're looking to sip your way through the valley's wine offering, take a hike through its natural beauty, tuck into a hearty meal or sate your appetite for adventure. Wine lovers can't go wrong with a visit to Mountain Ridge just across the road, and Waverley Hills, which takes pride of place at the foot of the Groot Winterhoek mountain range. theriverstonehouse.co.za

GETAWAY

Faraway cottage lies 4 km away at the far end of the estate, with nothing to disturb its views of the Langeberg and Riviersonderend ranges



FARAWAY COTTAGE AT TANAGRA GUEST FARM

Just before the gravel takes over from the tar road in the bookish village of McGregor, Tanagra stands in splendid isolation opposite the Breede River Valley's beloved donkey sanctuary, Eseltjiesrus. Vrolijkheid Nature Reserve is also next door, with a side entrance from Tanagra, allowing guests to turn a morning ramble through the farm's 78 hectares of fynbos into a day hike.

The drive leads between vineyards and a kitchen garden bursting with oranges, lemons, aubergines, gooseberries and more, arriving at farm buildings shaded by two immense wild fig trees, which inspired Tanagra's name (Khoisan for 'a well-shaded place'). This is the venue for tastings of the enterprising German owners' limited-release, single-vineyard, wild-yeast-fermented wines, including the Heavenly Chaos red blend and unusual colombar, as well as the grappa, organic eau de vie and orange liqueur they distil here.

Faraway cottage lies 4 km away at the far end of the estate, with nothing to disturb its views of the Langeberg and Riviersonderend ranges overlooking this environment on the border of the Robertson winelands and Little Karoo. The two-bedroom, twin-stoep cottage is the purest expression of Tanagra's eco-friendly principles, not to mention the pick of the farm's six cottages, running on wind, gas and solar. Gravity delivers water from a hilltop tank, and the lounge, dining



area, kitchenette and bedrooms are fitted with energy-efficient appliances, including ceiling fans to bolster natural ventilation. Local architect Bruno de Robillard conceived a building at one with its surroundings, for example placing the windows at the right height to catch warmth from the low-lying winter sun and repel the higher summer sun.

The design mixes the traditional features of the Cape *langhuis* with contemporary white cement floors and in-built structures, slatted ceilings and panoramic windows and doors. Guests can begin the day enjoying the views from the freestanding bath in a floor-to-ceiling bay window, and end it on the front stoep with its braai, plunge pool and solar jar lamps. tanagra-wines.co.za @etc