



seeing the best of Sabi Sabi and Kruger combined," he explains.

The 75,000-hectare Madikwe is home to more than 60 species of mammals and 350 species of birds; my favourite is the African grey woodpecker that never stops tapping on trees.

Wildlife from every angle

The eco-friendly Makanyane, named after the Tswana tribal word for the rare wild dog, is located on 1800 hectares of privately owned property. It has a main lodge and eight stand-alone suites made from local stone and indigenous timbers with a thatched roof.

My suite is an oasis from the heat and harshness of the landscape with floorto-ceiling windows. African-style decor stars and there's an open fireplace,

"IT'S TRUF WHAT THEY SAY - EVERYTHING IN AFRICA BITES - BUT THE SAFARI BUG IS WORST OF ALL."

outdoor lounge area and deck. A deep claw-foot bath is positioned so you can watch the wildlife and, as I soak in the bubbles, a cheeky vervet monkey swings from one tree to the next.

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At the main lodge there is an infinity pool with great views, bar, dining area, lounge room and upstairs 'chill out'

Untamed Africa

My day starts at 5am with fresh fruit, coffee and pastries before setting off on a game drive, a hot water bottle combating the morning chill. The beauty of such a small lodge is the personalised service and there are often only four in a

nouns for the animals, and before too long we see a 'parade' of elephants and a 'dazzle' of zebras drinking at a waterhole. As for the 'parliament' of baboons - no such luck.

off in another direction. Darryn warns us we may witness a kill and, although not for the faint-hearted, it is wild Africa unfolding in front of you. All eyes are on a lioness circling her prey, an injured wildebeest, and before long she pounces, claiming a bloody victory. She's joined by two inquisitive cubs and another lioness that starts tucking in.

a swim in the infinity pool, a relaxing Soul of Africa massage and a safari walk. A night in a bush hide can be arranged.

room perfect for reading and relaxing.

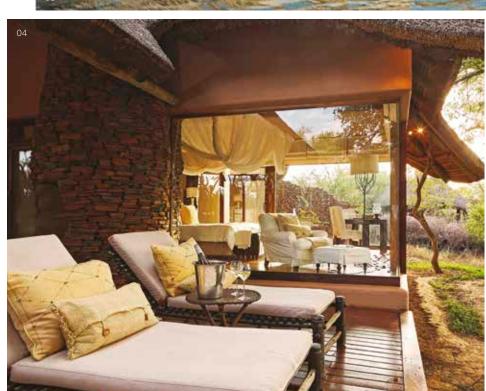
vehicle with prime viewing assured.

Darryn amuses us with the collective

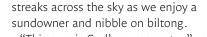
A call on a two-way radio sends us

We return to the lodge for lunch, then

In the late afternoon we head across the open bushveld plains to a mountain outlook where a blood-red sunset



- 02 Suites of safari chic
- 03 A dazzle of zebras
- 04 Prime viewing on deck
- 05 A night under the stars All images © Sanctuary Retreats



"This sure is God's own country," says we all agree - G&Ts in hand.

Heading home in darkness, Darryn finds creatures great and small with the help of a shielded spotlight. A leopard lounges high in a tree guarding his dinner and a pack of wild dogs run by, followed by elephants that leave a path of destruction behind them.

We share our adventures over drinks then enjoy a dinner of garden pea soup, kingklip fillets and sticky date pudding accompanied by South African wines. Lantern in hand, I relate my elephant tale to the night guide as he escorts me back to my suite.

"Ah, that's Pepper. She always makes a Information beeline for the lodge, but there's a wire www.southafrica.net

fence near the suites so she wouldn't have dropped in," he says.

That night under a mosquito net, I the honeymoon couple from the US, and dream of Pepper, the blood-red sunset, the cubs and unfortunate wildebeest, as lions roar in the not-so-far distance.

> It's true what they say - everything in Africa bites - but the safari bug is worst of all. •

Travel file

www.sanctuaryretreats.com

Getting there

South African Airways flies from Perth to Johannesburg, with connections to Australian capitals operated by Virgin Airways. There are daily shuttle flights between Johannesburg and Madikwe Game Reserve. www.flysaa.com



