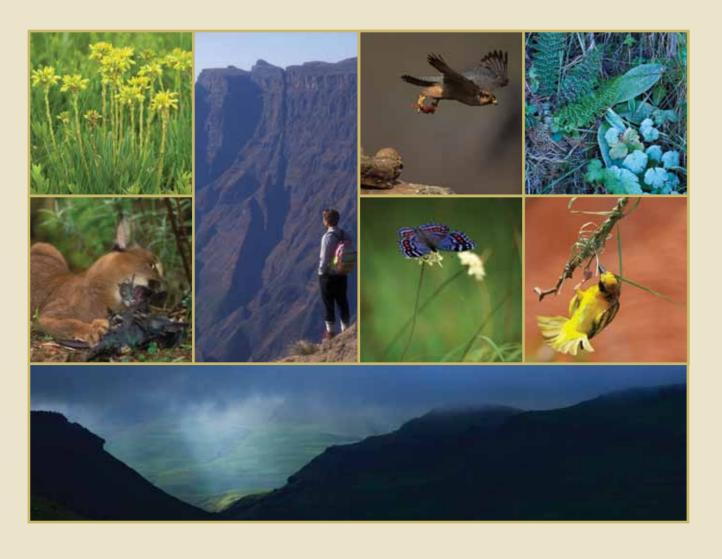
DRAKENSBERG Ukhahlamba

Andrew Attwood • Kerry Pentz • Paul Ross • Roger de la Harpe



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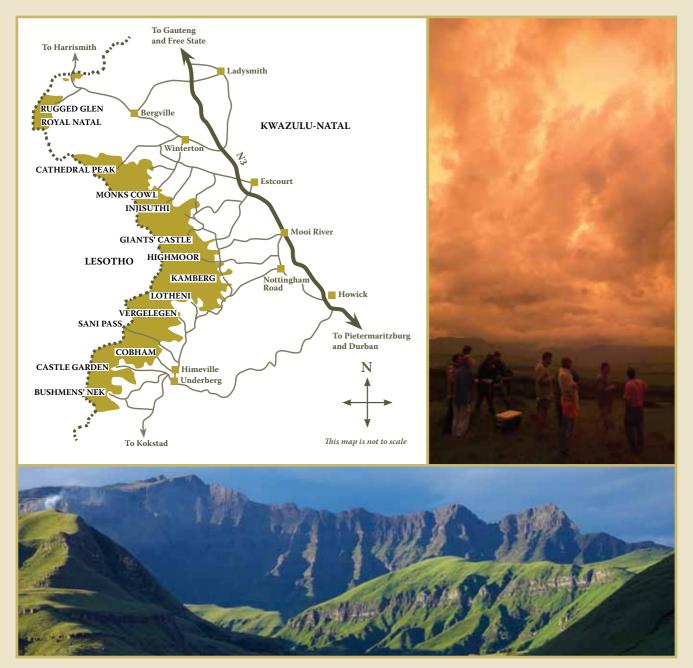
A dedication to all those who love the beauty, glory and splendour of the mountains.

We have been inspired to do this book through our own enjoyment and memories, which continue to entice us back and make us never leave them.

Great things are done when men and mountains meet. William Blake

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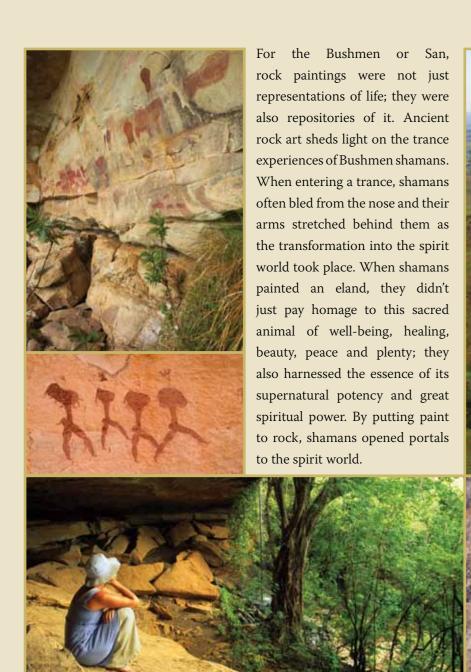


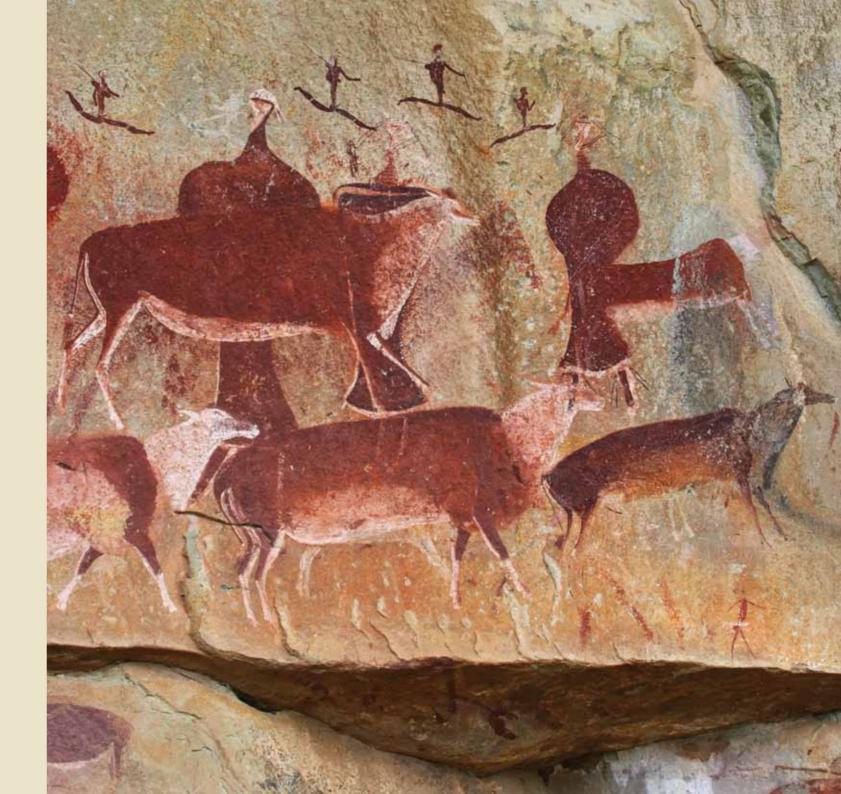


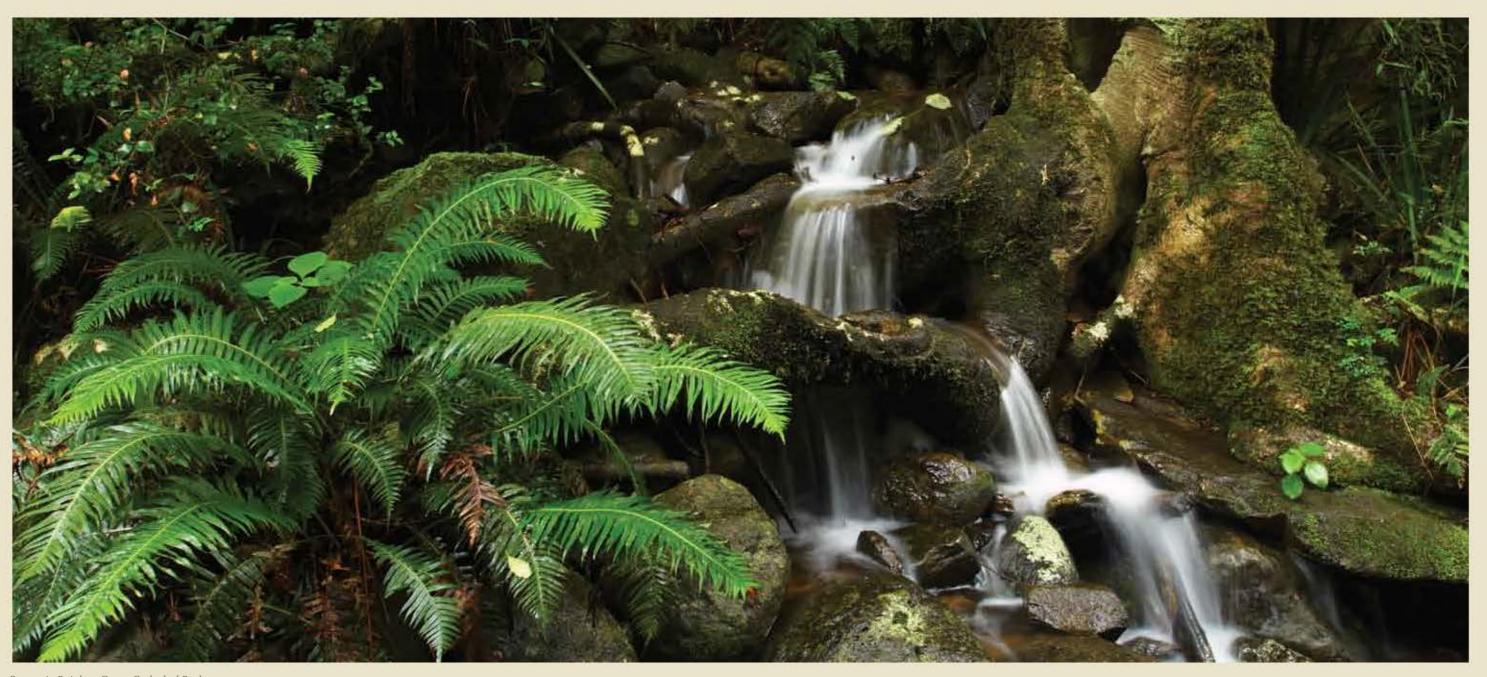
Stretching majestically for 245km, the Drakensberg mountain range forms a natural barrier between the western reaches of KwaZulu-Natal and the Kingdom of Lesotho. This is a mountain range of spectacular natural beauty, where golden sandstone and soaring basalt buttresses rise above pristine steep-sided river valleys, rocky gorges and high rolling grasslands. With an elevation of over 3 000m, these magnificent mountains offer exceptional conditions for walking and hiking. In the summertime, clear morning skies puff up with towering cumuli-nimbus clouds in preparation for the daily afternoon thundershower. In winter the days are warm and dry. But a balmy 20°C afternoon will plummet with nightfall to below zero, and snow regularly illuminates the peaks.



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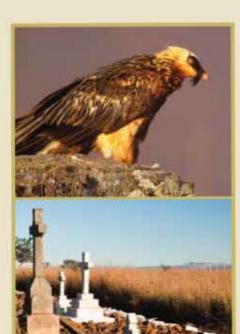
Stream in Rainbow Gorge, Cathedral Peak

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife offers the ultimate freedom of great open spaces in a world of gigantic peaks and buttresses, of towering sandstone cliffs and hidden valleys, virgin forests and crystalline rivers. Recreational opportunities abound, from a gentle amble along a self-guided trail, to a vigorous hike high up in these huge mountains. Accommodation options range from luxury lodges to fully equipped cottages and chalets, to scenic campsites with well appointed picnic and ablution facilities. Rustic mountain huts and over-night caves are also dotted throughout the park.



DRAKENSBERG MOUNTAINS | Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife | page 12



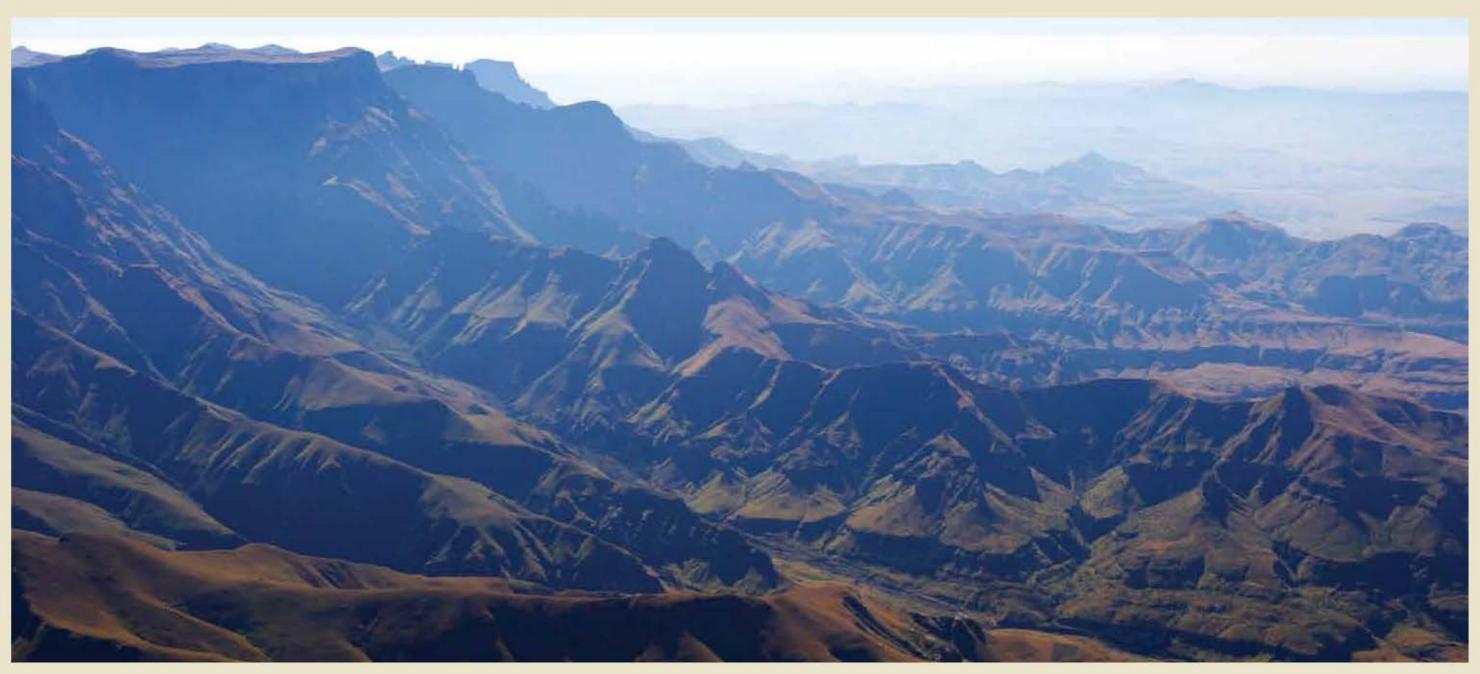
From the earliest days, people have coveted the Drakensberg region. To the Voortrekkers, the mountains resembled a chain of fierce dragons; to the Zulu nation, a 'Barrier of Spears' - Ukhahlamba. The San left evidence of their lifestyle in numerous subtle cave paintings. King Shaka set out to conquer and lay claim to its fertile lands. European immigrants, both Boer and British, locked horns in their bid to possess the territory. The rich soils of its valleys, nestled beneath the natural protection of towering cliffs, have attracted wanderers from far and wide.











View to the north from Cathedral Peak area



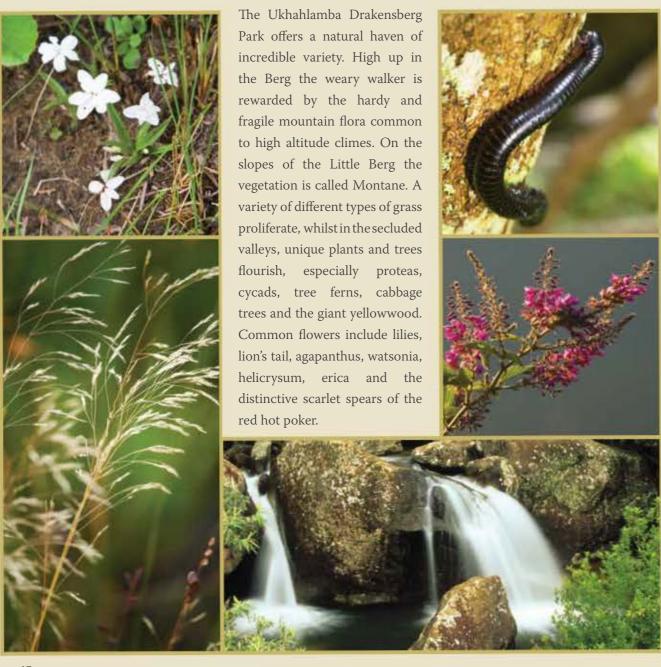
Bushmen paintings can be seen in the countless caves and overhangs of the Drakensberg. In years gone by, these shelters provided dwelling space for the Bushmen or San. Whilst the men were superb hunters, the women gathered plant foods to supplement the family diet. The Bushmen loved storytelling, music and dance, and their rock paintings and engravings offer an intriguing glimpse of their way of life. The Drakensberg has been hailed as the largest openair art gallery in the world. Some rock art sites are easily accessible, the best being at Giant's Castle and Kamberg. The San Rock Art Interpretive Centre at Didima Camp in the Cathedral Peak area and at Kamberg Nature Reserve provides fascinating insights into these gentle people, their art and their culture.



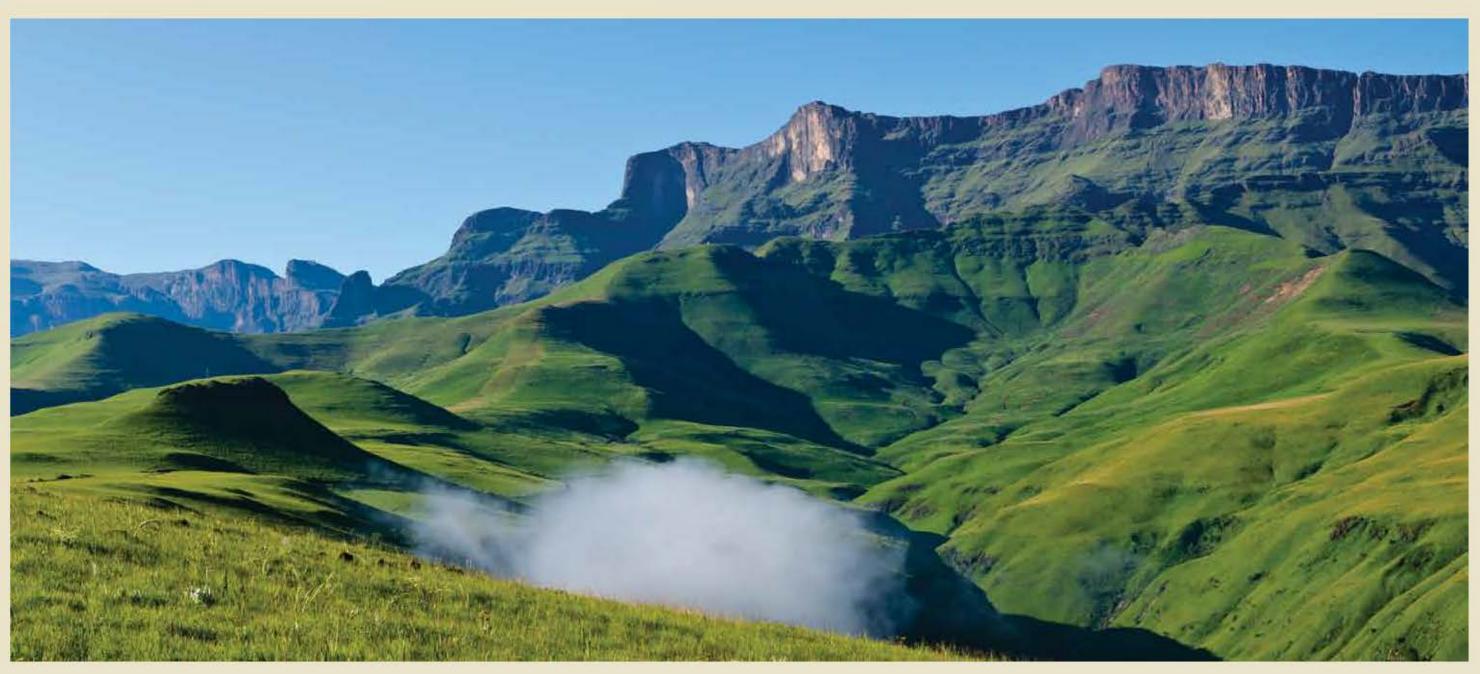
page 15 | Giant's Castle



Mountain Reedbuck







Cathedral Peak area



In its remoteness and height, the Berg offers a magical window open to the fascination of the skies. The sun blazes as an oasis of light, warmth and life. The eager star-gazer is rewarded by a Milky Way that arcs across the night skies in a marvellous mass of stars. The various planets shine forth brightly, unimpaired by buildings or the interference of city lights. The well-known celestial constellations, Orion and Scorpio, are clearly visible and the Southern Cross marks the way with its two pointers. A rising moon in the East, large and glowing, and the setting sun over the Drakensberg peaks, is a wondrous daily experience.





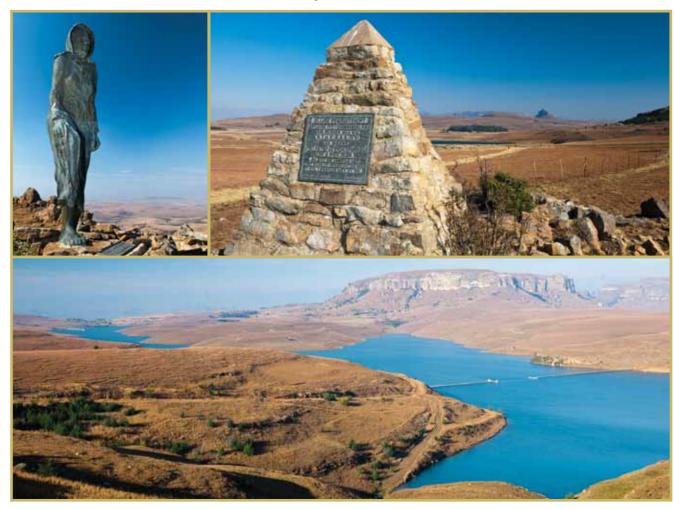








The Voortrekkers were renowned for their free spirit of independence and for their hardy resilience. Retief's Klip (Retief's Stone) is where Piet Retief's party of Voortrekkers descended the Drakensberg and entered Natal on 14th December 1837. They had decided not to proceed with the rest of the Voortrekkers to what was to become the Transvaal Republic. Retief's group consisted of some 66 wagons and these were the first wheeled vehicles to enter Natal. At Voortrekker Pass, near Bergville, stands a monument of a woman walking away from Natal. Known as 'Kaalvoet Vrou' (barefoot woman), this monument is in memory of Susanna Smit, sister of Gert Maritz, who declared that she would rather trek barefoot back over the Berg than live in Natal under British rule.

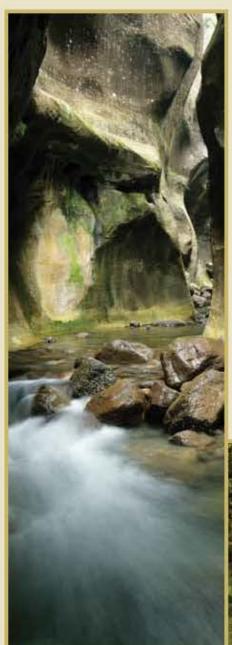


Drakensberg Mountain Retreat

High on a ridge overlooking the northern Berg lies the Drakensberg Mountain Retreat. Here, freshness, wildness and unsurpassed beauty combine to captivate and calm the senses. The homestead's numerous lounges, comfortable furniture, enclosed verandah and tastefully decorated bedrooms provide a cosy and relaxing haven. Delicious cuisine, superb walks, spectacular scenery, crackling fireplaces, interesting board games and pleasant company are the order of the day. At the Retreat, elegant, old-fashioned living merges seamlessly with rustic farmhouse charm.



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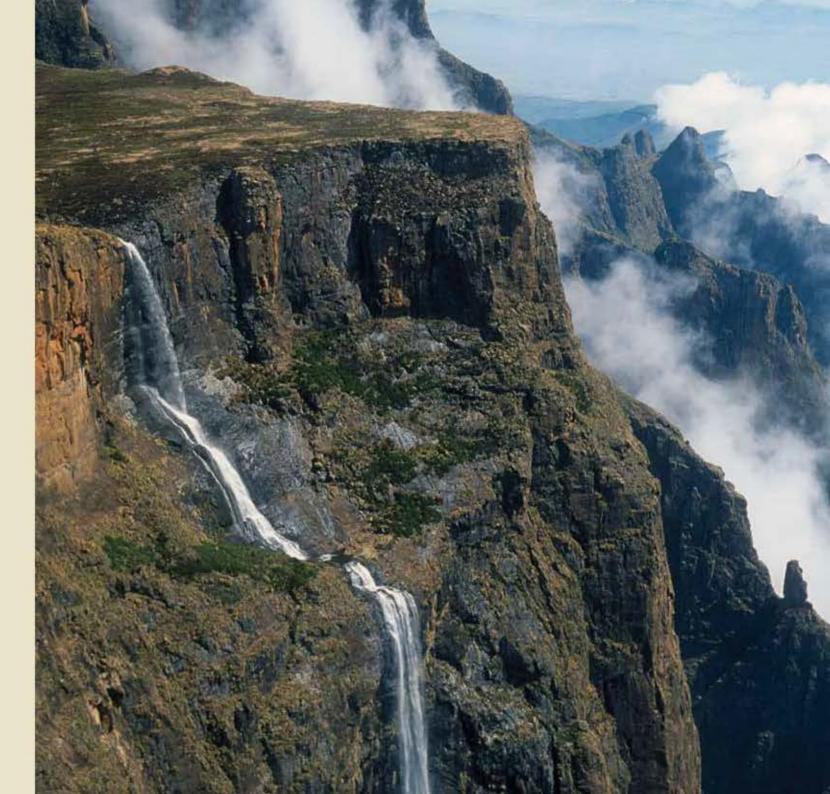


The Amphitheatre, a crescent shaped massif of sheer basalt cliffs, forms the spectacular backdrop to the northern Drakensberg's Royal Natal National Park, so named after the 1947 visit of Britain's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. In 1836, the French missionaries Arbousset and Daumas named the largest of its peaks Mont-aux-Sources, as it is the source of five rivers. The Tugela plummets nearly 947m in five clear leaps, making it the world's second highest waterfall. The Tugela Falls occasionally freeze in winter, creating dazzling columns of











Basotho men

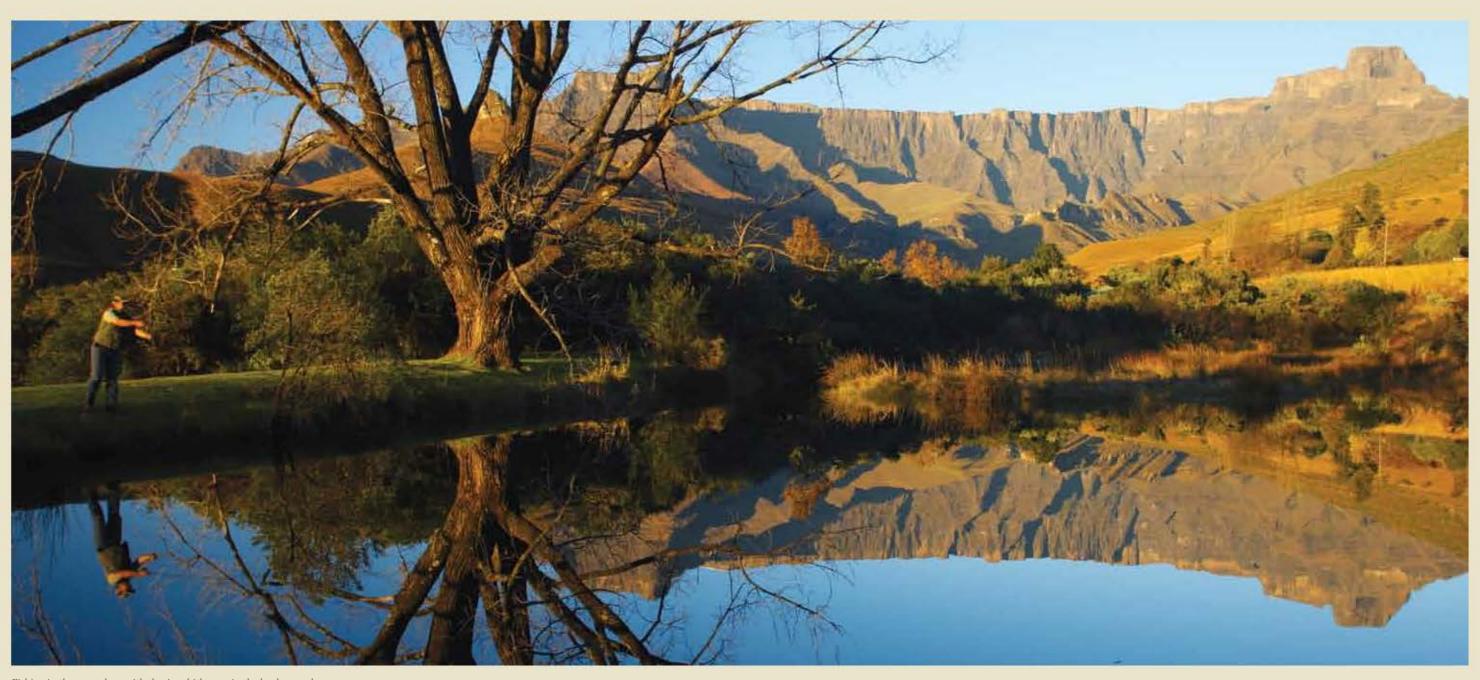


The Cavern Resort and Spa

The Cavern offers a wonderful introduction to mountain holidays. Named after Cannibal Cavern and surrounded by the Little Berg, it nestles in its own private reserve. Spectacular views of sandstone cliffs, indigenous forest and proteas abound. Honeymoon suites come replete with four-poster beds and cosy fireplaces. Set amid evergreen forest is the Spa, where one can unwind and be pampered. For the energetic there are guided walks to famous caves, waterfalls and natural swimming pools, as well as to the Amphitheatre and Tugela Gorge. Other activities include tennis, horse riding and birding.



DRAKENSBERG MOUNTAINS | The Cavern Resort and Spa | page 25



Fishing in the trout dam with the Amphitheatre in the background





Rock dassie or hyrax are found throughout the Drakensberg. These gregarious and territorial animals congregate in colonies of up to 50. They shelter in and around boulders and cliffs and spend much of the day basking in the sun on large rocks to conserve energy. This habit is most noticeable during the morning and later afternoon. In the cold or at night dassies retreat into tightly packed huddles in their dark shelters. Being herbivores they live mostly on grasses, but do vary their diet with shrubs, leaves and other plants. Their main predators are leopard, cape cobra, caracal and black eagles.













The Tugela River near Royal Natal National Park



Montusi Mountain Lodge

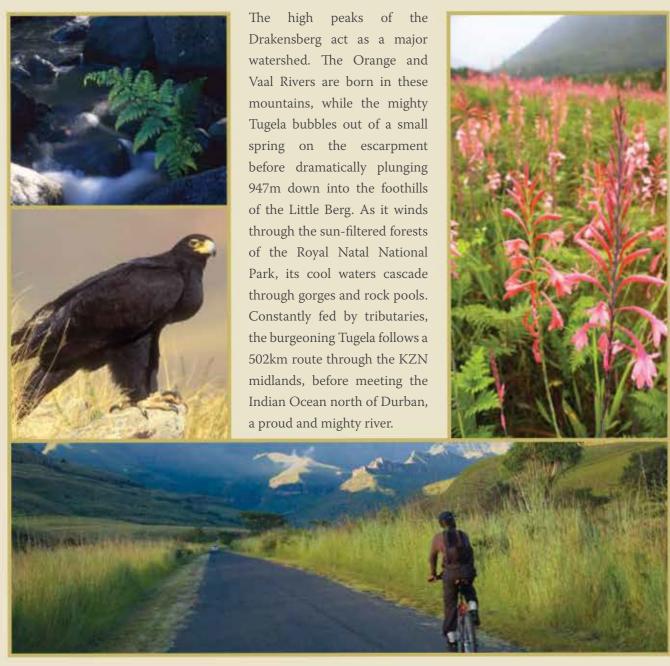
The four star, family owned and run Montusi Mountain Lodge is an exclusive haven of comfort, space and peace. Complimentary welcome drinks, fresh flowers in the free-standing garden suites, turndown service and stunning individually prepared meals, are all evidence of genuine hospitality and that special personal touch. In addition to fly fishing, the 1 000ha estate offers limitless hiking, horse riding and mountain bike trails. At Montusi, romantic ambiance, natural splendour and superb, uninterrupted views of the famous Amphitheatre escarpment combine to create a renowned Drakensberg gem.

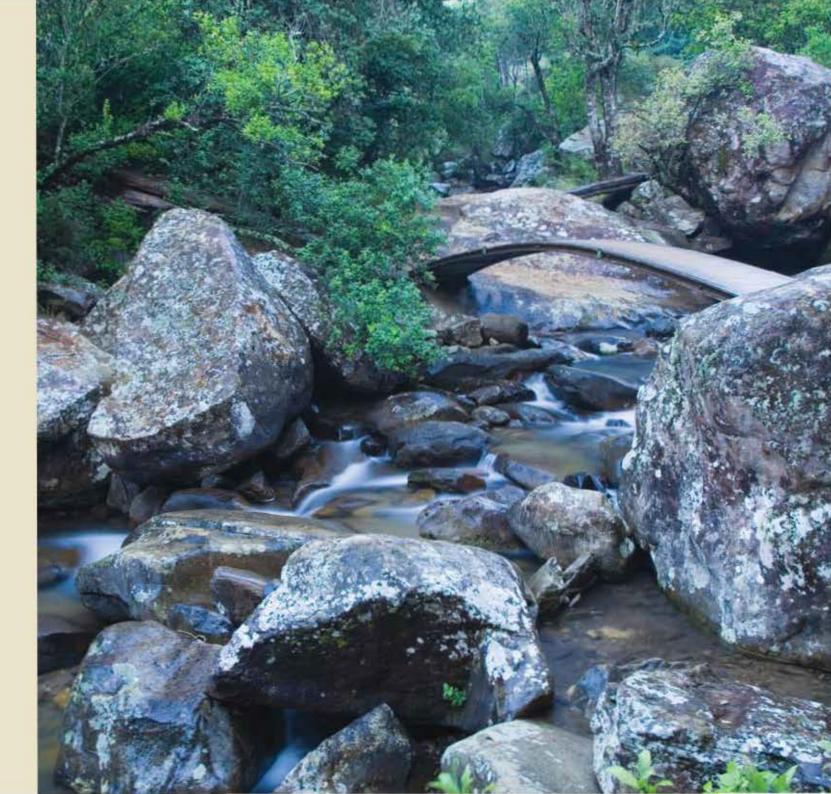


DRAKENSBERG MOUNTAINS | Montusi Mountain Lodge | page 29



Fallen tree along the Gudu Falls trail, Royal Natal National Park









The Battle of Spioenkop, which raged for two long and bloody days from the 23-24 January 1900, was undoubtedly the most futile of the four battles waged to liberate Ladysmith from the Boer siege during the South African War. At the end of the fighting, both sides slipped away, believing they had been defeated. Some 1 250 British soldiers were wounded or captured and fatalities peaked at 243. Many of these unfortunate souls were buried in the trenches where they fell. "There cannot have been many battlefields where there was such an accumulation of horrors within so small a compass," wrote the Boer commander, Denys Reitz. The Boers suffered 335 injuries and buried 68 dead. Today, this battlefield of yore lies silent and serene.

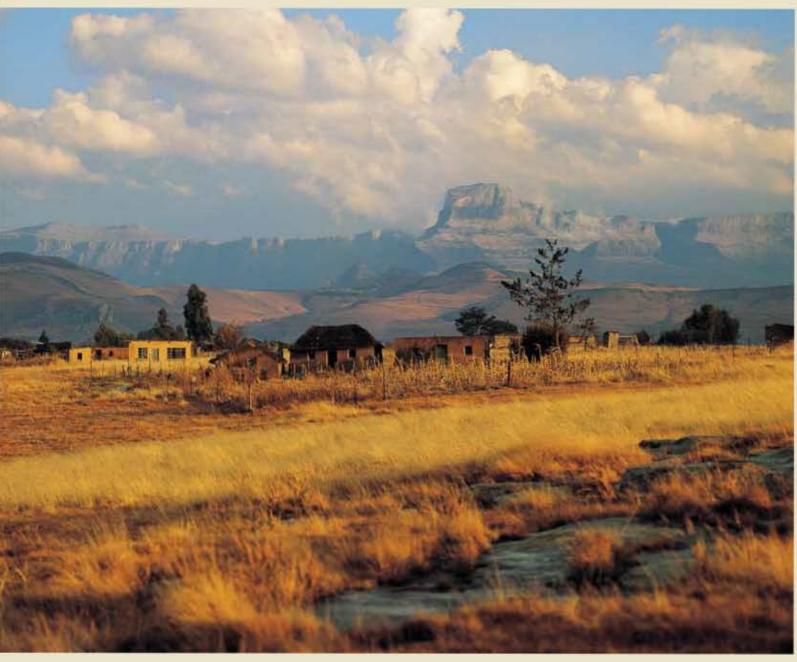


page33 | View of the Drakensberg from Wagon Hill near Ladysmith

DRAKENSBERG MOUNTAINS | page33



Sunset over Cathedral Peak



Local Drakensberg communities have developd a dynamic network of African artists and craftswomen who exhibit their work though local projects. Rural pot makers, beaders, leather workers and wire artists produce an extraordinary range of exquisite handcrafted treasures. Plaited and woven grasses (uhashu) are used to create baskets, bowls and mats in natural colours. All jewellery is authentically African in origin, with subtle messages incorporated into intricate designs that are passed down through the generations from mother to daughter. Cow-skin drums, sculptured wooden animals, figurines and handmade African dolls abound. By these means Zulu women hone their skills and generate an income; thereby nurturing families and developing communities.



page35 | Rural landscape



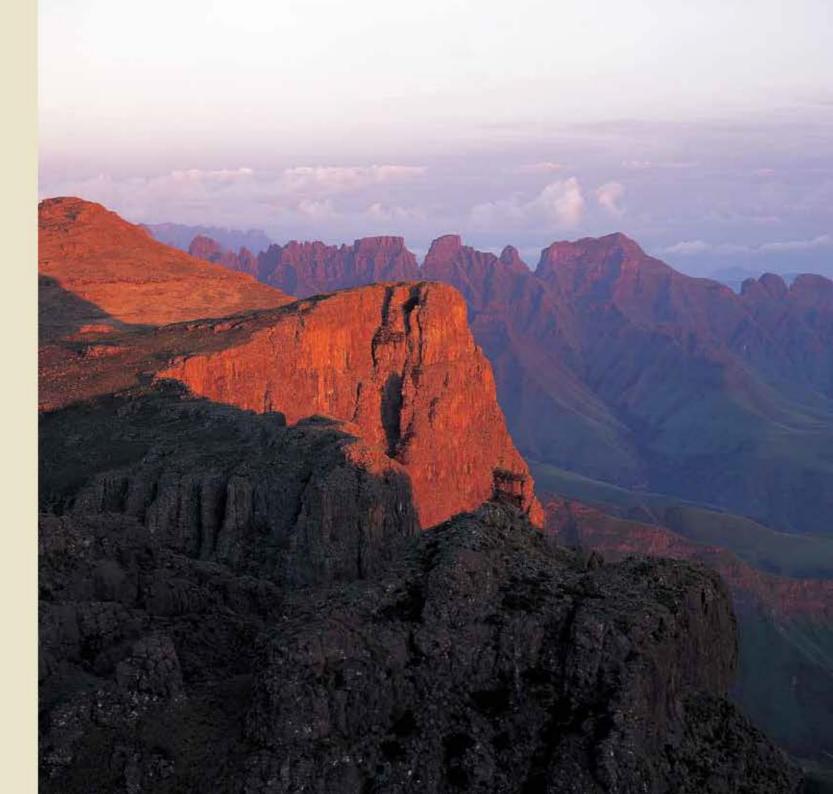
Zulu children swimming in the Cathedral Peak valley



In the Drakensberg, an observant and patient visitor might be rewarded by a fascinating display from Nature's master of disguise, the chameleon. Blending seamlessly into its surroundings, the chameleon changes colour before one's eyes. As it moves forward with slow and stealthy steps, its tiny, bulging eyes swivel independently up and down in search of a tasty morsel, be it spider, moth, grasshopper, caterpillar or fly. With its long tail wrapped around a twig for extra support, it slowly opens its jaws wide as if to yawn, then shoots out a long and sinewy tongue with lightning speed to grab its unsuspecting victim.



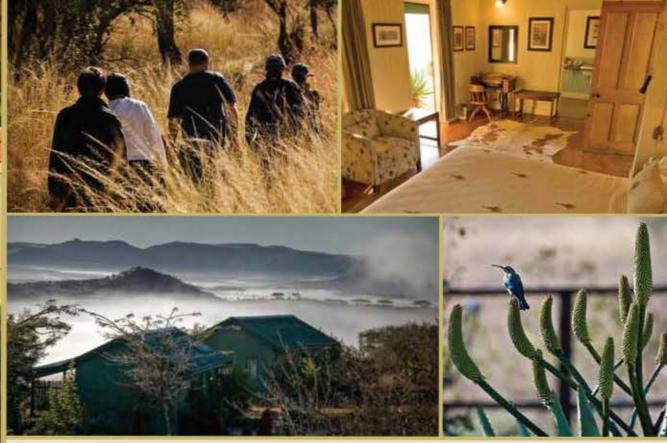






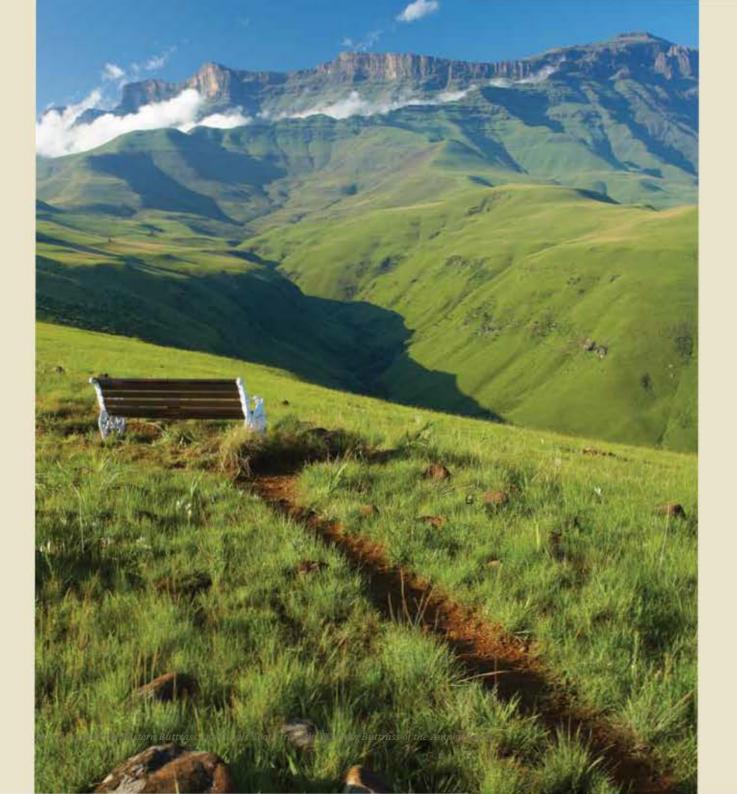
Three Tree Hill Lodge

Overlooking the secluded Mfazimnyama Valley of the Spioenkop Game Reserve and in the lee of the famous hill, Spioenkop, lies the intimate Three Trees Lodge. Spectacular scenery, exquisite farm-style fare, luxurious linen and superb hospitality make this family-run lodge an ideal getaway. An ethos of environmental sustainability and fair trade prevails. Activities include Anglo Boer War battlefield tours, horse trails, hiking, birding, mountain biking and rhino tracking in the game reserve. Or simply soak up the views from the deeply-shaded colonial verandah, relax and enjoy a superb South African wine.





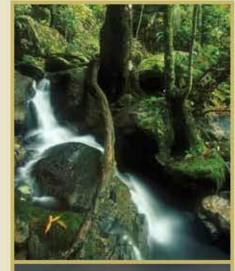
The Bell and Cathedral Peak with Woodstock Dam in the background



Some visitors to the Drakensberg come simply to relax. Others strive to pit their fitness against the challenge of peak and slope. All desire to get away from the cacophony of towns and cities. For the dedicated rambler, a superb network of walks, often including campsites with rustic mountain huts, traverse the unspoilt heights, hills and valleys of Ukhahlamba. Royal Natal National Park, Didima, Injisuthi and Lotheni all offer truly spectacular hiking, whilst gentler paths are found in the vicinity of Cobham and Kamberg. The Drakensberg is home to black eagles, bearded vultures and herds of eland, and boasts a rich heritage of indigenous plants. Long quiet walks in naturally beautiful surroundings - good for the body, good for the soul.



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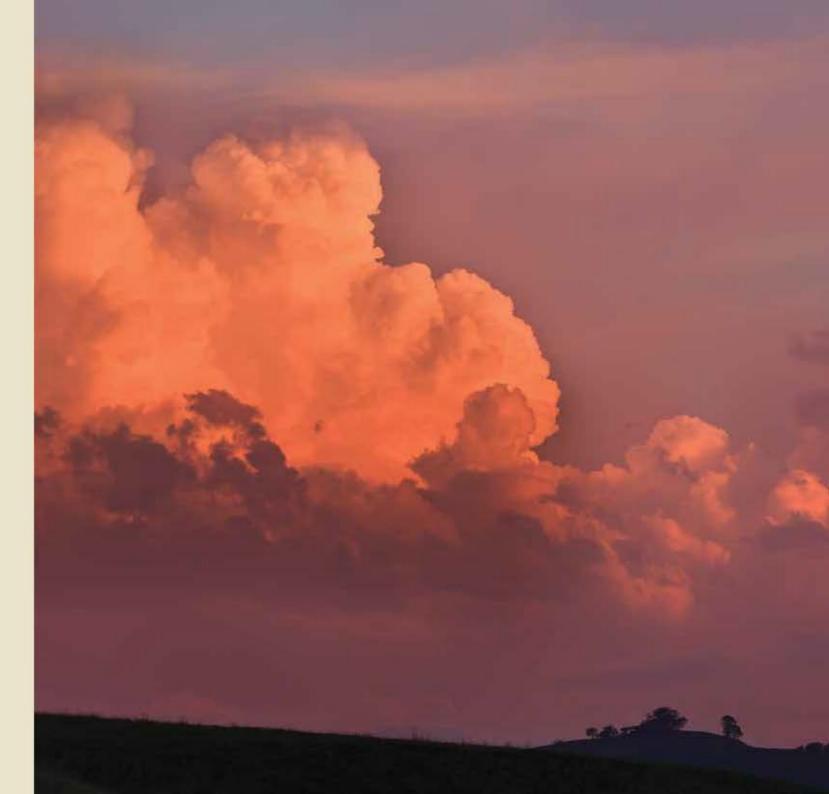




The Chacma baboons of the Drakensberg mountains number in their thousands. Troops average at 22 members. At present the population is in equilibrium even though there are very few leopards to prey on them. Baboons are omnivorous. Their diet consists mostly of berries, fruit, roots and bulbs but they also eat insects and smaller vertebrate animals. They usually remain on the mountains and seldom venture into inhabited areas. Baboons are often seen when out walking or hiking and provided one keeps a distance, especially when there are babies, there should not be a problem.









Basotho woman



When Drakensberg skies shine clear and the breeze whispers gently, the thrill and peaceful serenity of hot air ballooning becomes a reality. Balloons are launched from various sites around the Kamberg Valley within sight of Giant's Castle. The baskets have entry footholds and are designed to ensure safety, comfort and a splendid view. Passengers arrive approximately thirty minutes before sunrise, in time to absorb the pilot's safety brief while their balloon is heated and inflated. Then it's up, up and away into the silence of the Drakensberg thermals. Breathtaking views guarantee customer satisfaction. After an hour of soaring communion with nature, the balloons gently descend to disgorge their satiated occupants.



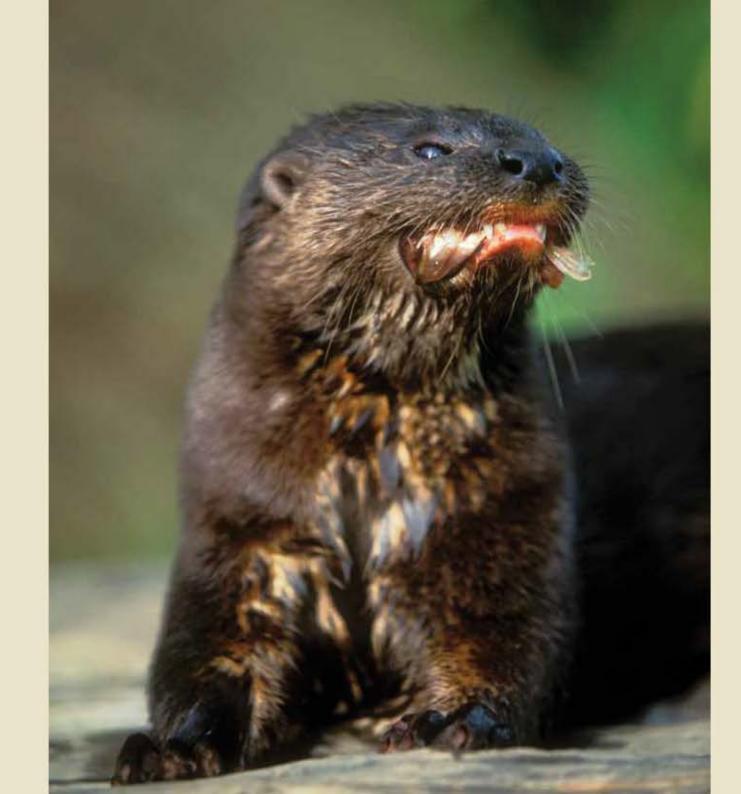
page43 | Cathedral Peak with Cathkin Peak and Monks Cowl in the background



Over 2 300 species of plants, of which 400 are endemic, have been recorded in the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park. Numerous birds are listed as being of global importance, such as the brilliant green cape parrot, the white winged flufftail, corncrake, lesser kestrel and yellow-breasted pipit. Mammal species include leopard, baboon, jackal, black wildebeest, eland, zebra and red hartebeest. The region also boasts the largest population of the shy and charming cape clawless otter, which can be seen singly, in pairs or in family groups of up to five.













The bustling farming town of Winterton forms the gateway to Champagne Valley. 'The Valley' draws those seeking relaxation - be it golfing, bird watching, falconry, photography or fly fishing. For the energetically vigorous, hiking, cycling, rock climbing, abseiling, quad biking, river rafting and horse riding beckon. Splendid waterfalls invigorate; clear mountain air and breathtaking vistas elate; wild flowers, lush farmlands and natural vegetation proliferate. The Valley is home to the worldfamous Drakensberg Boys' Choir School and is known as the tourist centre of the Drakensberg.









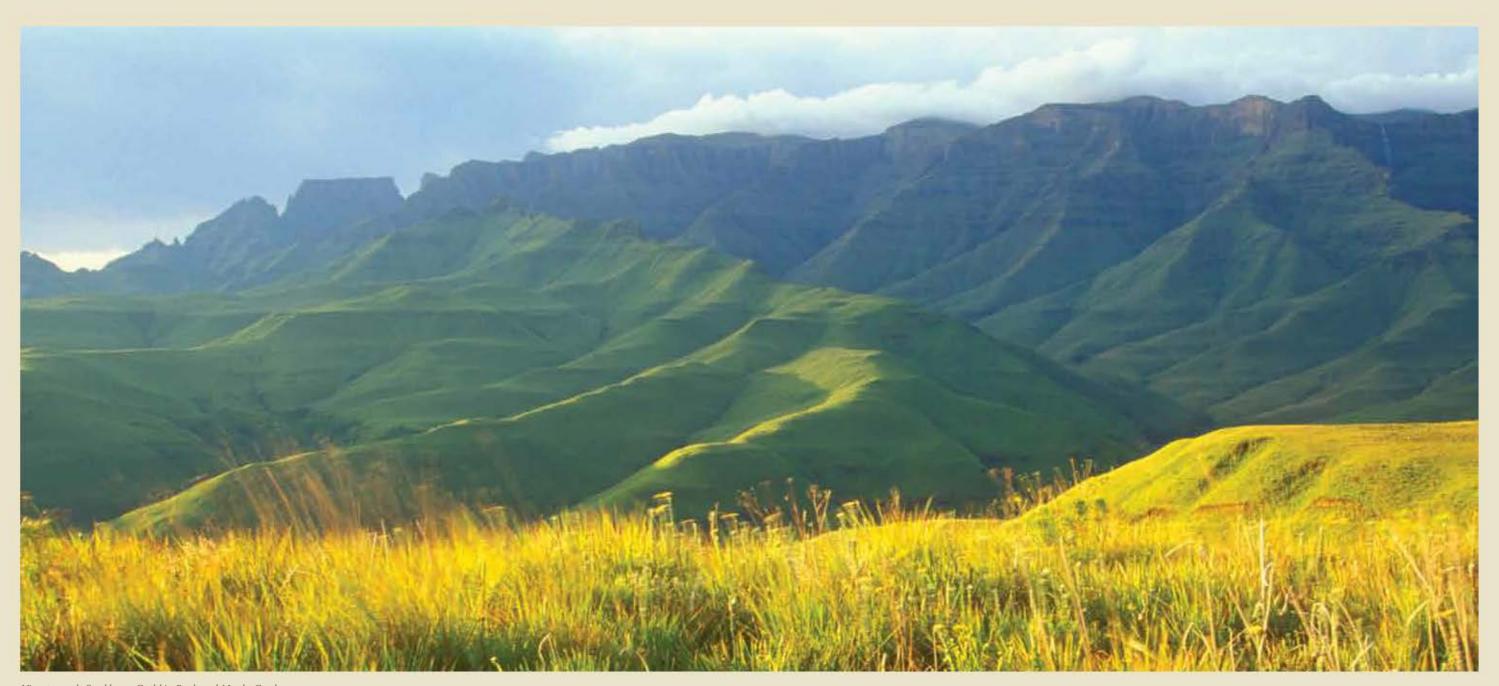


For the avid birder, a visit to the Drakensberg promises tiny gems such as the brilliant-green flash of a malachite sunbird; the chatty cacophony of a flock of masked weavers; to a breathtaking glimpse of the rare black eagle, martial eagle, lammergeyer (bearded vulture) or lanner falcon revelling in its natural habitat. One might even have the pleasure of viewing a cape vulture soaring above the foothills. Falcon Ridge is a bird of prey centre in the Champagne Valley that includes large birds rehabilitated from injury, and provides an excellent opportunity to see these magnificent sky warriors in action. Daily shows include an informative talk and a memorable performance of avian acrobatics, as the resident birds of prey swoop down to seize tasty morsels of meat midair.



page47 | Jackal Buzzard

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View towards Sterkhorn, Cathkin Peak and Monks Cowl

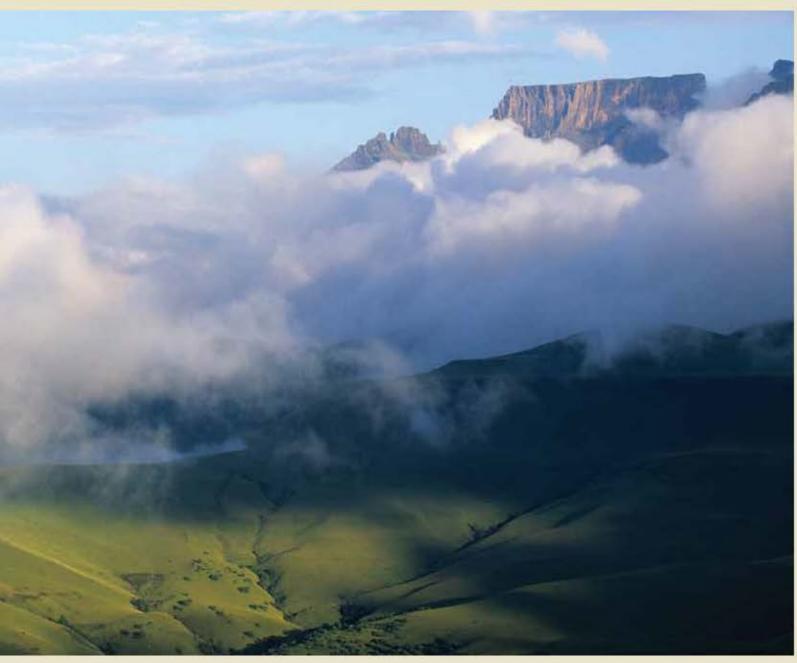


Ardmore Guest Farm

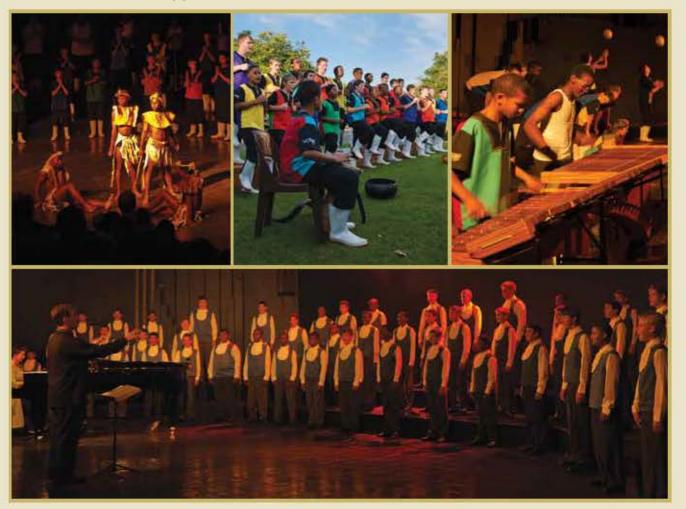
Ardmore Guest Farm is situated in the enchanting Champagne Valley. Nestled below the majestic heights of Injisuthi, Champagne Castle and Mafadi (at 3 450m the highest peak in South Africa), the estate provides personal, farm-style accommodation on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. There is a wonderfully productive organic vegetable garden at Ardmore, which conspires with the warm hospitality, magnificent scenery and tranquil atmosphere to make for a truly memorable experience. Ardmore is also home to the Ardmore Museum and the cotton-weaving business, African Loom.



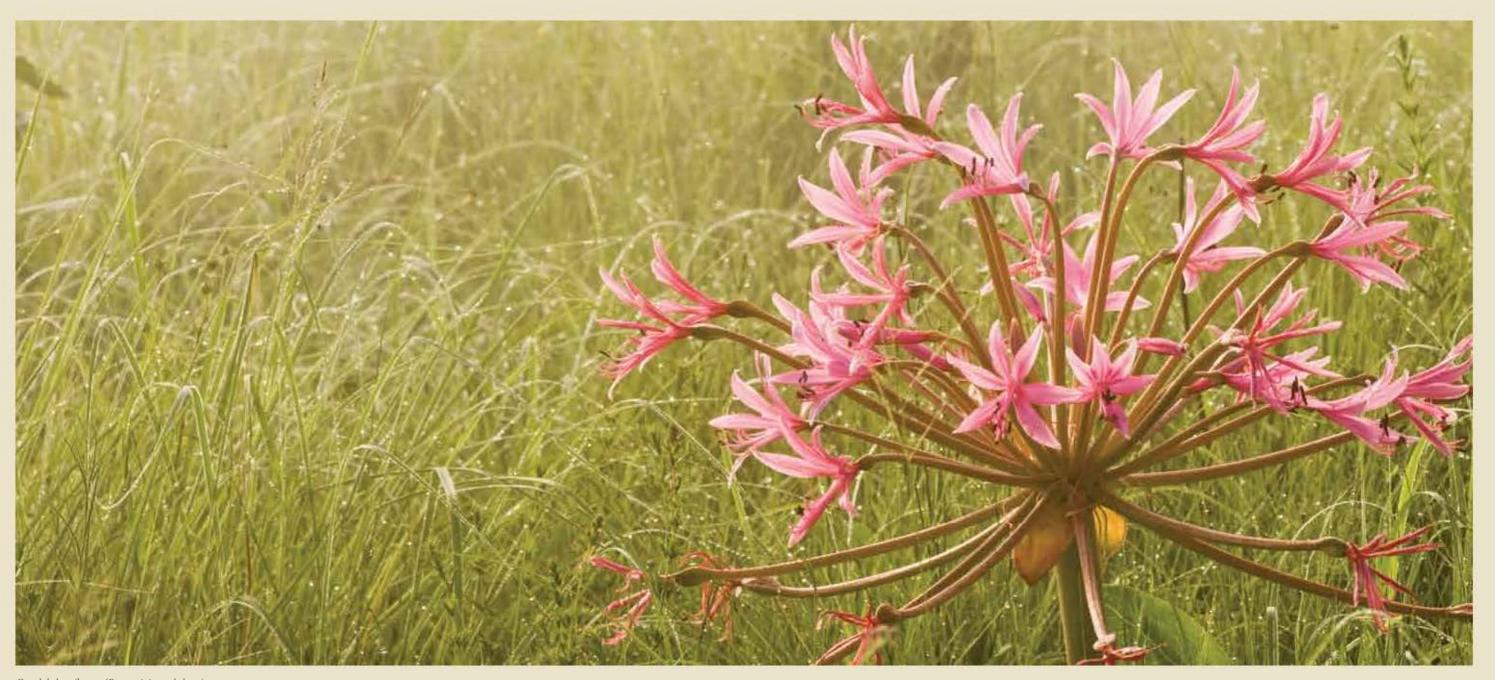
DRAKENSBERG MOUNTAINS | Ardmore Guest Farm | page 49



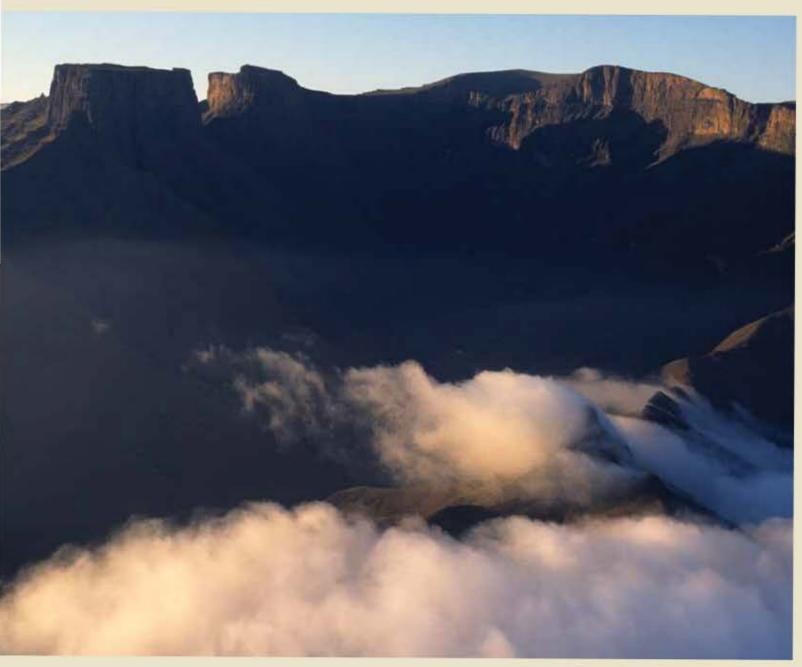
The Drakensberg Boys' Choir School, initiated by the Tungay family in 1967, can be found on a 100 acre estate in the idyllic Champagne Valley. This school offers a unique educational opportunity for musically talented boys between the ages of nine and fifteen; stimulating their sense of adventure in its rural setting, while promoting the development of their minds and innate musical ability. The Choir is representative of South Africa's multi-faceted cultures and every year its diverse genre of musical styles captivates audiences throughout the world. The Drakensberg Boys' Choir is internationally acclaimed for its unique African repertoire; including accompaniment by authentic African instruments and natural body percussion.



page 50 | Sterkhorn and Cathkin Peak



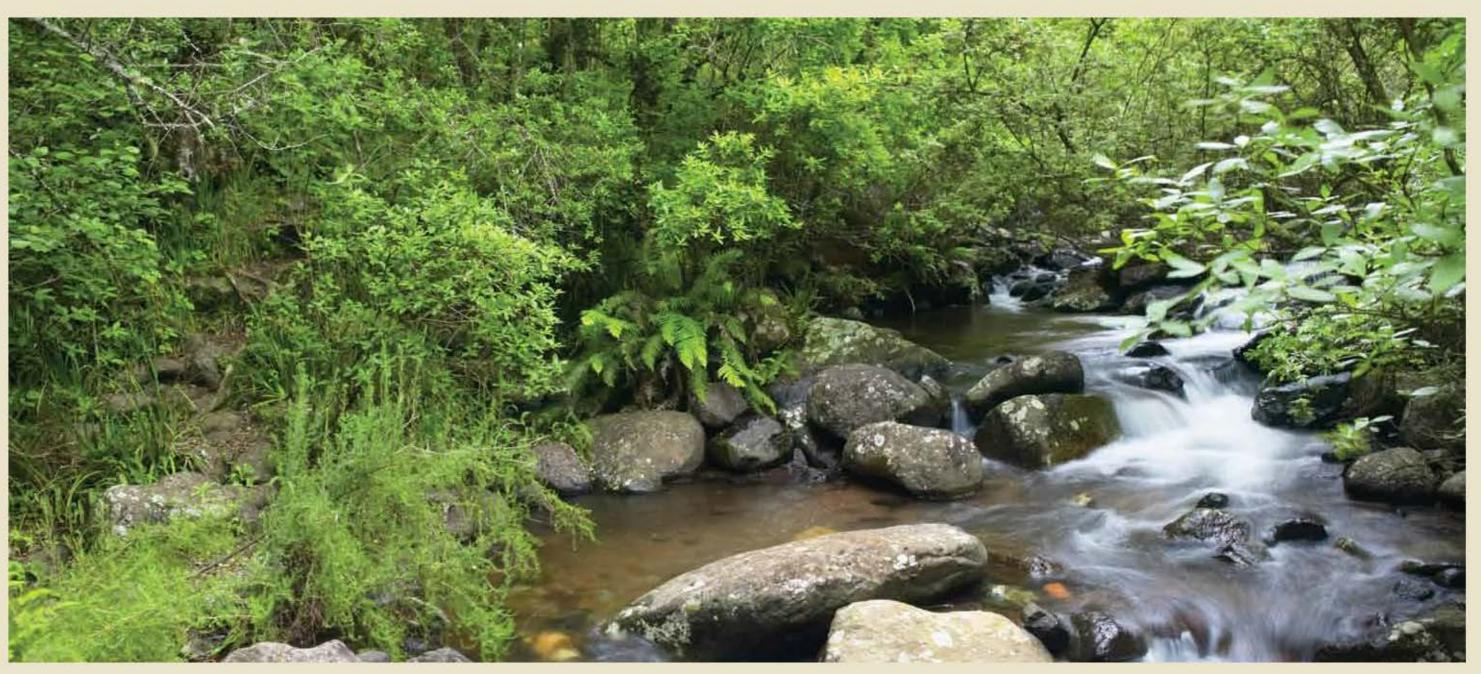
Candelabra flower (Brunsvigia radulosa)



African Loom is based at Ardmore Guest Farm in the Champagne Valley of the central Drakensberg. Raw local cotton is woven on large wooden looms into bright, colourful materials, which are then made into bags, cushions and other useful items. Zulu women from the local community demonstrate their weaving skills on wooden weaving looms, originally made by German missionaries who came to southern Africa in the last century. A bright and vibrant rainbow pattern is the most popular African Loom material produced. The dying, weaving and production of all items is by hand. African Loom, the Ardmore Museum and the Tea Garden remain open seven days a week, ready to refresh the weary traveller with a visual and cultural feast.



page 52 | Cathkin Peak, Champagne Castle and Vulture's Retreat



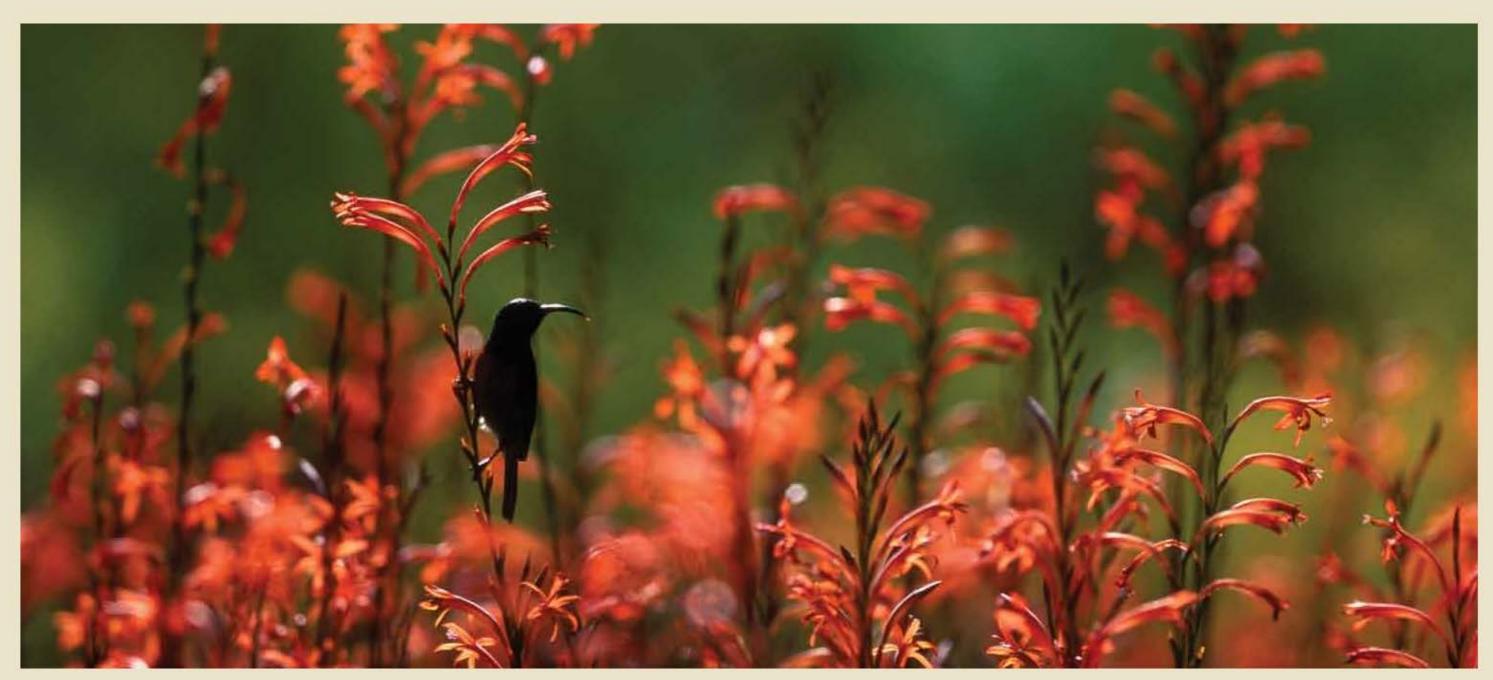
Riverine scene, Monks Cowl



Situated deep within the magnificent Blue Grotto indigenous forest, in the shadow of the towering Cathkin Peak, the Drakensberg Canopy Tour boasts Africa's first elevated rock face walkway. With a good mix of both cliff face and treetop platforms, this is where the brave at heart experience nature like never before. Sliding through and over the forest canopy at heights of up to 60m, one might well imagine oneself soaring like a bird. The forest is home to over 150 avian species, including the rare bush blackcap and the evocative Klaas's cuckoo 'Piet My Vrou'. Views are guaranteed to take one's breath away. As one glides between platforms perched high in trees and on cliff faces, the timeless atmosphere of the forest floods through one's senses.



page54 | Sterkspruit River



Greater double-collared sunbird



The Drakensberg is an area of mild climate and fertile soils, and there are many resident families who have farmed in the area for generations. Villages such as Bergville and Winterton act as bustling centres for a thriving farming community. Maize, wheat and beef farming predominate; although dairy, potatoes, soya beans and sheep are also farmed. The rainfall figures for the Drakensberg are higher nearer the mountains and drop off from about 2 000mm at the foothills, to just 700mm only 25km away in Winterton. Being a summer rainfall area, maize yields of above 10 tons per hectare are not unusual. In the dry wintertime fire is a real risk that threatens every farmer, so firebreaks are burnt in June and July; the straight lines of burnt grass are a familiar sight in the rural areas.



page 56 | Cattle grazing near the Injisuthi Hutted Camp





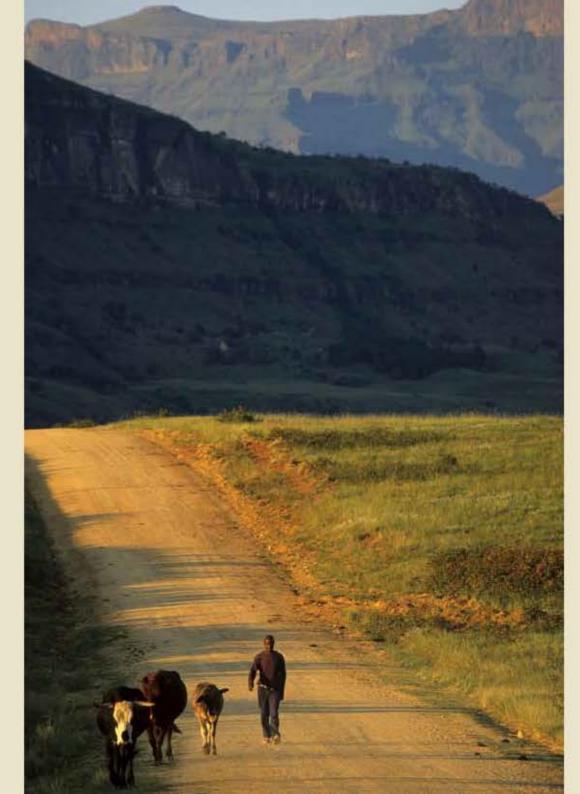


Giant's Castle Nature Reserve derives its name from the outline of escarpment peaks that together resemble the massive motif of a sleeping giant. Nestled on a plateau, high above the deep valleys of the southern end of the central Drakensberg, it is home to the eland and to the bearded vulture, which is also known as the bone eater of the Berg. The terrain consists of clear mountain streams with bushy banks, steep grassy slopes, secluded pools, wetlands, hidden valleys, sandstone cliffs and towering precipices and buttresses. Spectacular San rock art proliferates.











page59 | Horses with Spioenkop Dam in the background

A novel way to explore the Drakensberg is on horseback. Canter over rolling grasslands and bushveld, pass through banks of proud aloes and wild flowers, traverse the cool shadows of rocky crags, pause to survey the mountain vistas. The numerous spectacular bridle paths can be comfortably managed by novice horse riders. For an alternative experience a game ride will bring one into close proximity with giraffe, white rhino and herds of impala that graze against a mountain backdrop. Or step into the past via a battlefield ride. As one fords the Tugela River at Skietsdrift, as did Andries Pretorius and his Voortrekkers before the Battle of Blood River, the whisper of Zulu warriors will echo in one's ears.



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Blue squill (Scilla natalensis)



Antbear Guest House

Antbear Guest House offers an eclectic collection of art, amazing hospitality and total comfort. The food is fantastic, homegrown and freshly picked from the homestead's own organic garden. The buildings are made of straw bales, rammed earth and sun dried bricks, which create an alternative and organic flare. For the more discerning, unique and luxurious accommodation is available in the 'cave', a tastefully decorated hideaway with en-suite bedroom and adjoining lounge and crackling fireplace. Glass doors open on to a sundeck and an uninterrupted panorama of the Drakensberg.



DRAKENSBERG MOUNTAINS | Antbear Guest House | page61



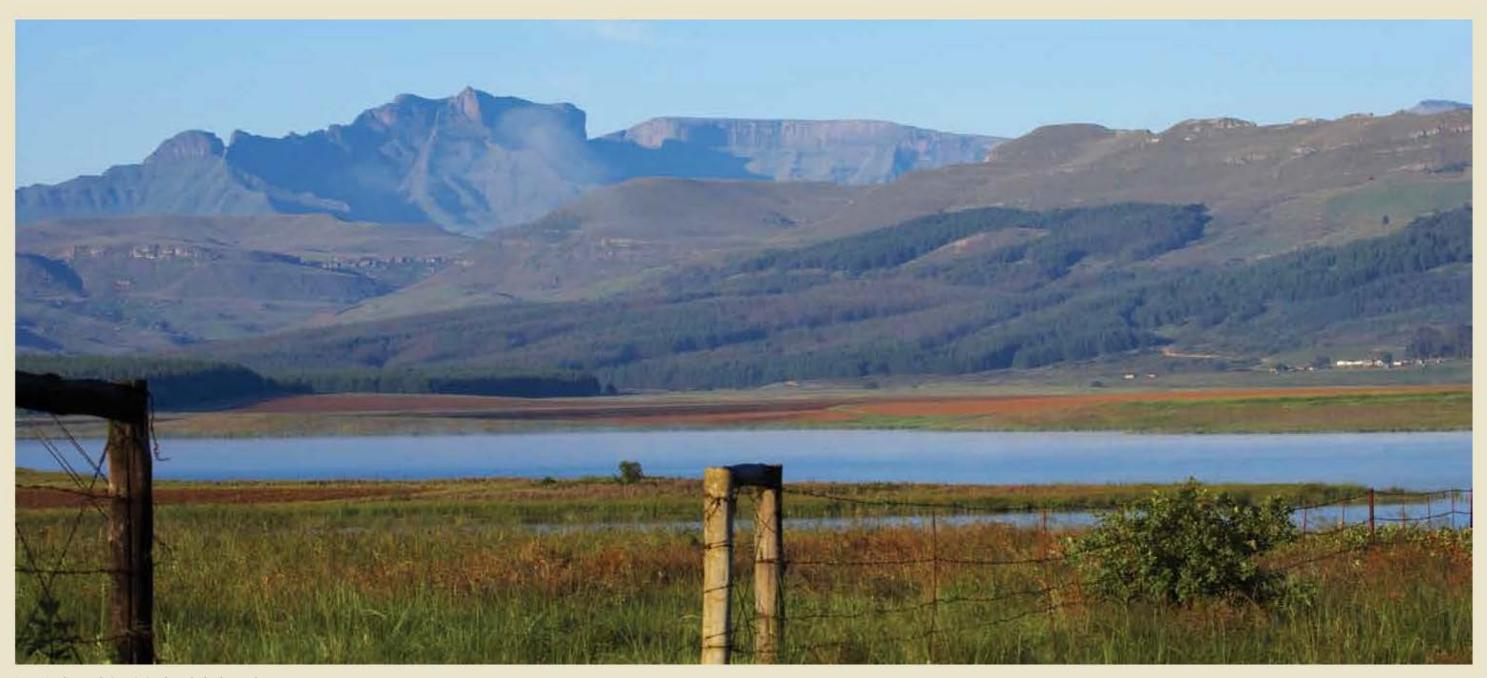
View to the south towards Giant's Castle



Experience the mighty Drakensberg from the seat of one of the helicopters that operate in the Cathedral Peak surrounds. Flights vary in duration from 20 minutes upwards. As one surges skywards, the scenery that opens up is awe-inspiring. Thick blankets of cloud stretch puffily towards the horizon, jagged spines of mountain spurs snake valley-wards beneath one's feet, and herds of eland graze peacefully on the grassy slopes. This is an experience never to be forgotten. One might even land on the little Berg and enjoy a picnic complete with champagne before continuing the flight and returning to base. For those who wish to experience the thrill of open-air flight and feel the wind whistle past, micro-lighting is also available.



page63 | Giant's Castle



Near Kamberg with Giant's Castle in the background



Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse

Legendary food, spectacular scenery and tranquility form the essence of the Cleopatra experience. A warm welcome to this idyllic mountain farmhouse in the heart of the Drakensberg mountains near Giant's Castle is guaranteed. Fine gourmet food is prepared with love, care and flavour in mind and the use of local ingredients, home grown herbs and vegetables makes dining a delightful experience. Many artifacts of interest enhance a décor aimed to sooth; whilst the local fauna, flora, birdlife, San rock art and hiking trails create memories never to be forgotten.



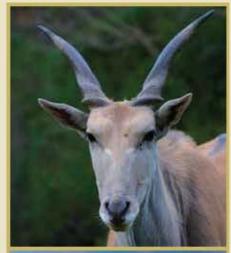
DRAKENSBERG MOUNTAINS | Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse | page65



Trout dam at Kamberg

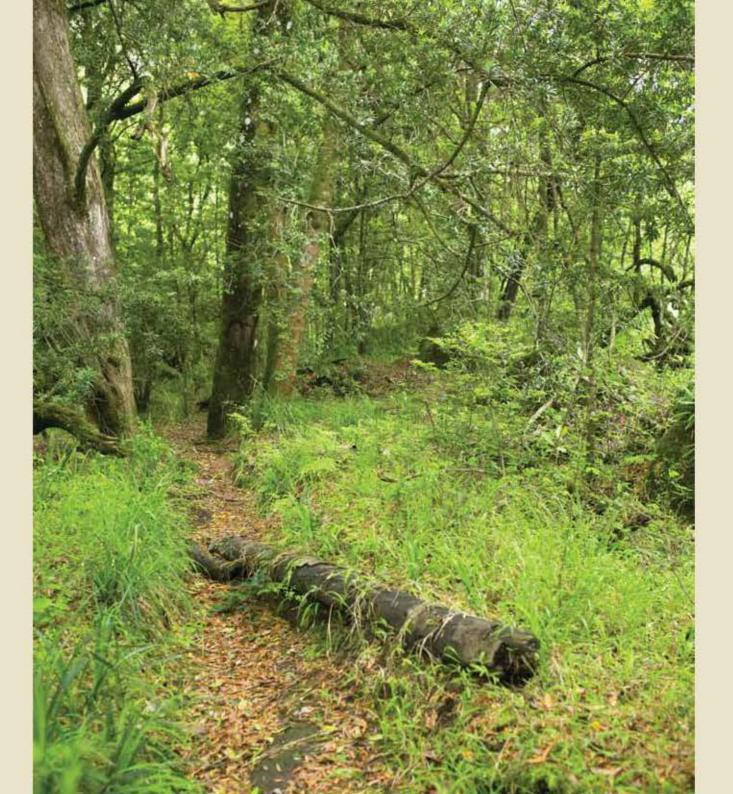


The magnificent eland is the largest antelope in the world. In days gone by herds roamed the Drakensberg foothills and formed a major part of the San diet. The population remained stable until the influx of European settlers into the region. Unfortunately, unrestricted hunting took its toll and by 1890 it was reported that there were only 27 eland left in the district. This calamity led to the proclamation of Giant's Castle, the first wilderness area in the Drakensberg. Happily, today herds in their hundreds can be seen grazing peacefully along the grassy banks of mountain streams.











Giant's Castle

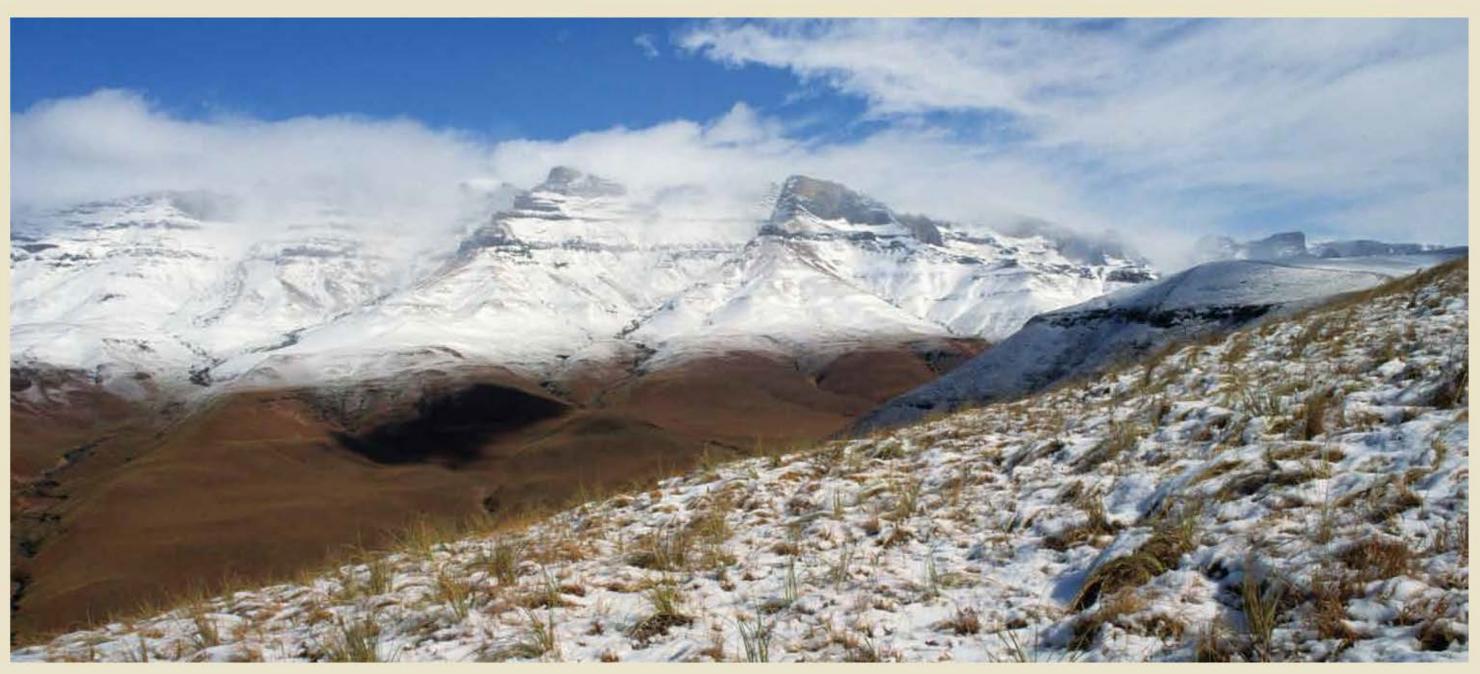


Zulu Naters Game Reserve

ZuluWaters Game Reserve is a unique destination in that it allows one to tailor-make one's encounter with Africa. Set in 3 000ha of pristine wilderness overlooking Giant's Castle, ZuluWaters offers a plethora of pursuits for the adventurous soul. Ride the reserve on sturdy Appaloosas, sail the plains in a hot air balloon, helicopter to White Mountain for a champagne picnic, or get up close to the wildlife with the reserve's trained rangers. For the more contemplative in spirit, simply relax, fly-fish the pools of the Bushman's River or take a guided walk to view the local San rock art.

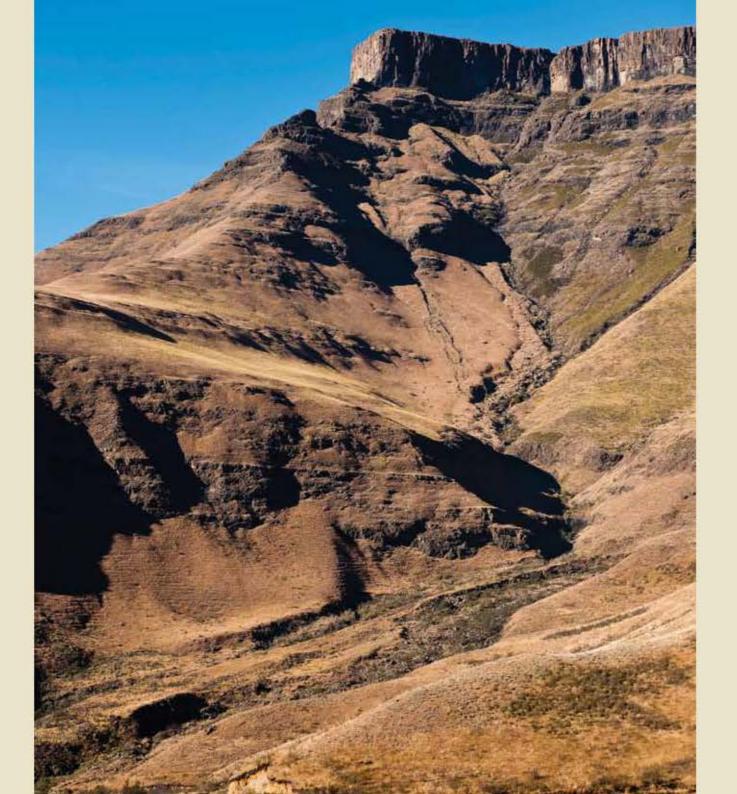


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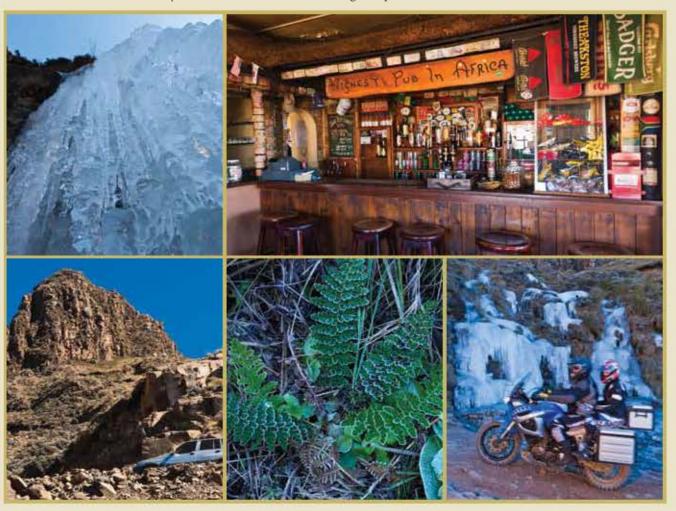


Giant's Castle wreathed in snow and cloud





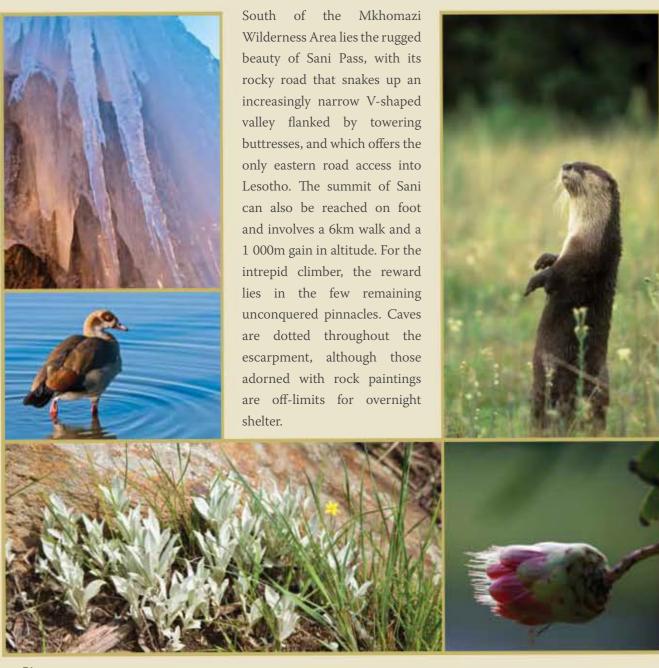
Sani Pass was originally developed as a bridle path in 1913 and used as a route for trade between South Africa and Mokhotlong, in Lesotho. All goods were carried up and down by pack mule. The first vehicle negotiated the path in 1948 and today, this steep zigzagging pass that climbs the face of the Drakensberg escarpment is used on a daily basis. The road is only accessible to 4x4s and in winter an icy layer covering the surface makes it especially treacherous. The route along the top, aptly called the "Roof of Africa", claims to be the highest road in Africa and third highest in the world. It peaks at a heady height of 3 200m above sea level and the summit of the pass crests within a couple of kilometres of Thabane Ntlenyana, which at 3 482m is the highest peak in southern Africa.



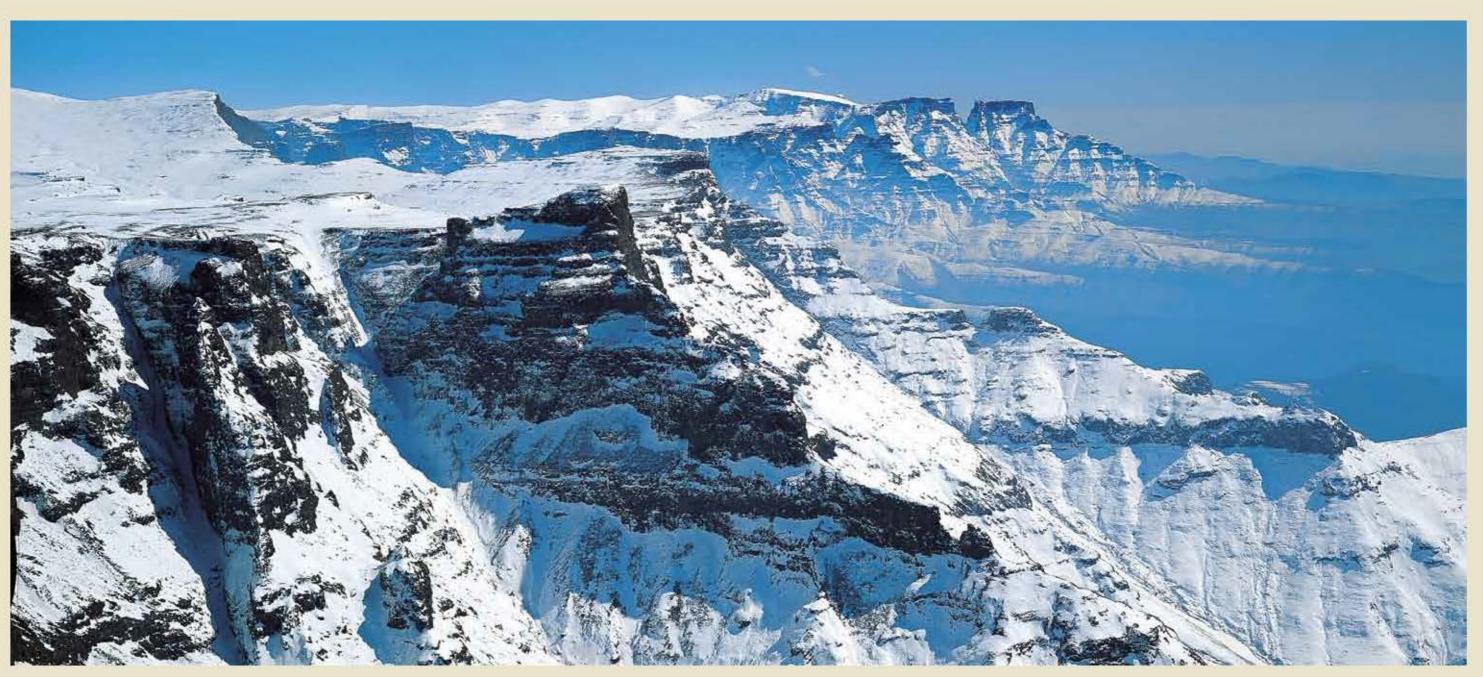
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Hodgson's Peaks, Himeville







A winter wonderland - view towards the central Drakensberg



Moorcroft Manor

Moorcroft Manor offers eight classically decorated rooms all with bathrooms en suite. Guests awake to the tranquil sights and sounds of the countryside, with soft sunlight filtering through light mist and a rainbow of colours reflecting from the crystal like dew drops. An array of hiking opportunities encircle the Manor, with something to appeal to the beginner and experienced hiker alike. For those visitors who enjoy the quieter things in life, a plethora of well-stocked dams and rivers holding an abundance of trout are just a short stroll away.



DRAKENSBERG MOUNTAINS | Moorcroft Manor | page 76



For those who take the time to pause and look beyond the majestic mountain peaks of the Drakensberg, a miniature world of industrious activity is there for the viewing. Ants scurry busily along the many footpaths in their endless quest for food. Down at ground level, the sturdy dung beetle rolls a goliath ball of dung, preparing a future hatching place for her young. Butterflies whisper past in splashes of joyous colour. Colourful ladybirds skim through the sweet-smelling air. Cicadas hum a cheery chorus in the trees. This is Africa, where insects abound in all their complex, energetic beauty.

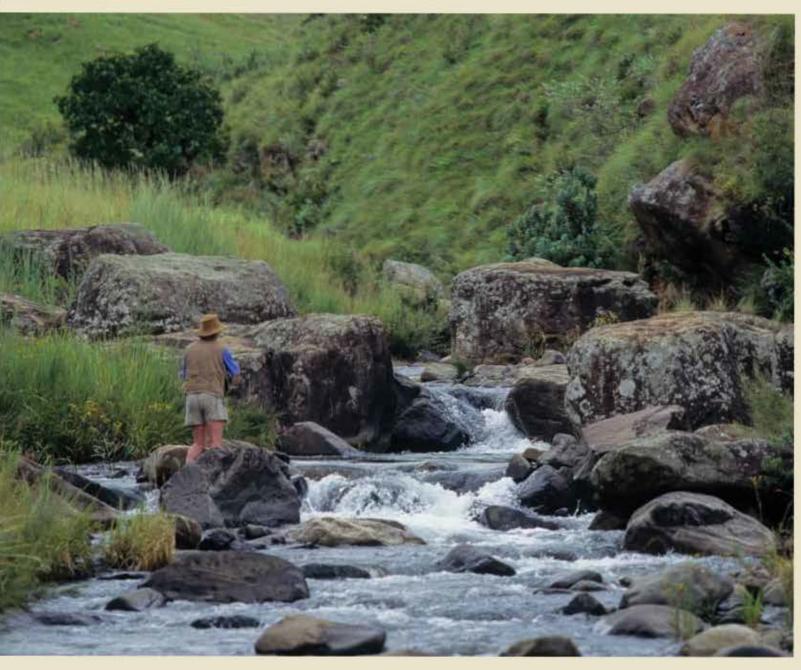






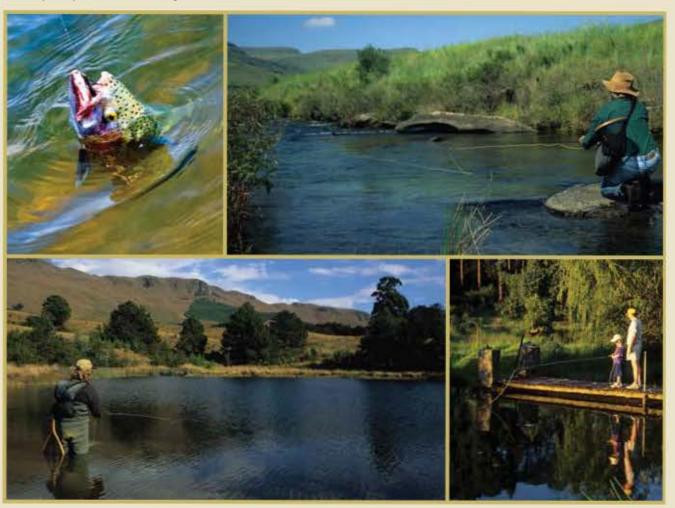


Autumn leaves, Himeville



page 79 | Fly fishing for trout, Lotheni River

Fly fishing has become popular in the Drakensberg owing to the abundance of excellent trout and bass. The many crystal rivers and clear dams in the higher reaches are regular favourites with skilled fly fishermen, as well as with the growing number of recently initiated fishermen and women who embrace this most challenging and satisfying of angling pursuits. First imported to South Africa from Scotland in 1890 by Balgowan farmer John Clarke Parker, brown and rainbow trout now occur throughout the region and reach good sizes in the cool mountain waters and in well-stocked rivers such as the Bushman's and Injisuthi. These are trout with an impressive fighting spirit. They make for very tasty meals, whether grilled or fried.





Cattle herders near Himeville



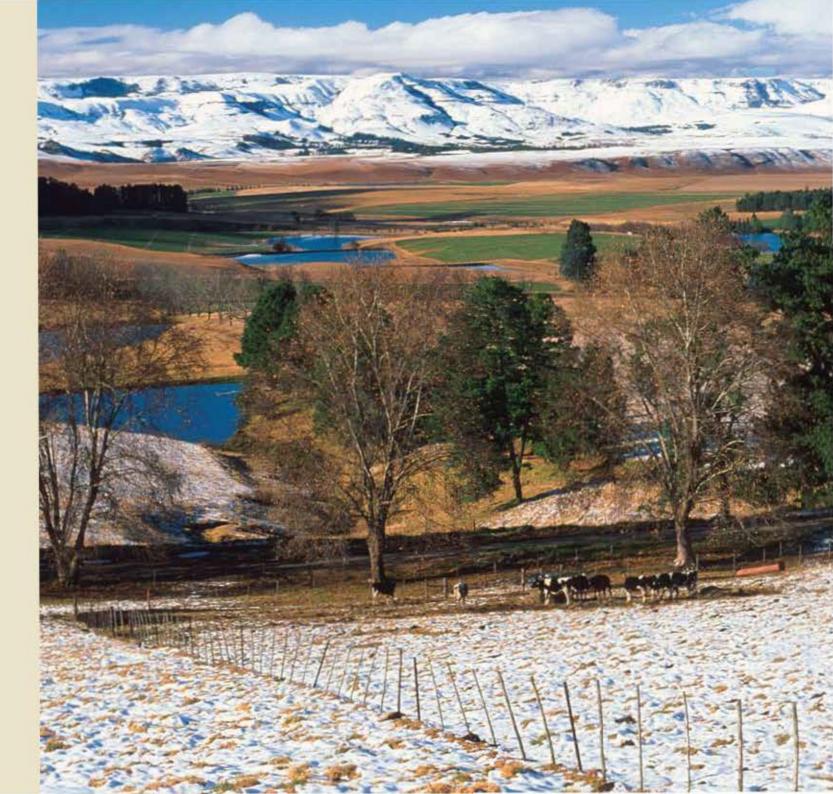


Bushman's Nek presents one with the ultimate freedom of vast open spaces, scenic rivers and foaming waterfalls. Located in the southernmost section of the Drakensberg, it marks the end of the Giant's Cup Hiking Trail, a 68km path along steep gradients that passes through virgin forest and mountain grasslands and provides many spectacular views of mountain peaks. Wildlife here is varied: eland, reedbuck, grey rhebok, oribi, klipspringer and jackals; but also dassies and porcupines. Buzzards and black eagles are frequently seen soaring above the slopes and crystalline streams are stocked with trout.



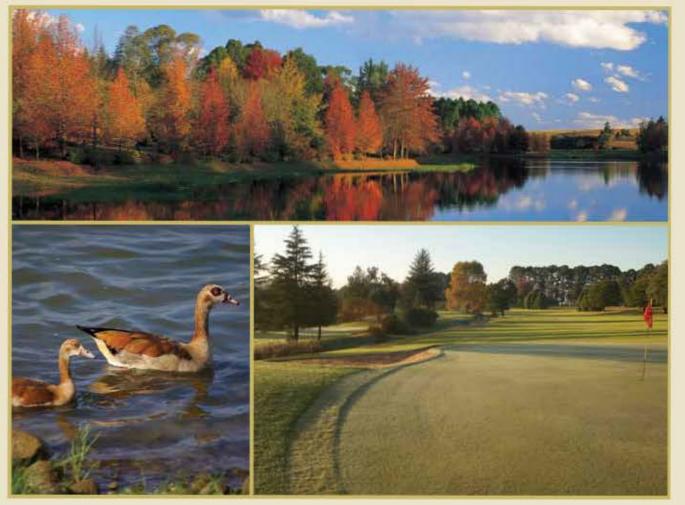




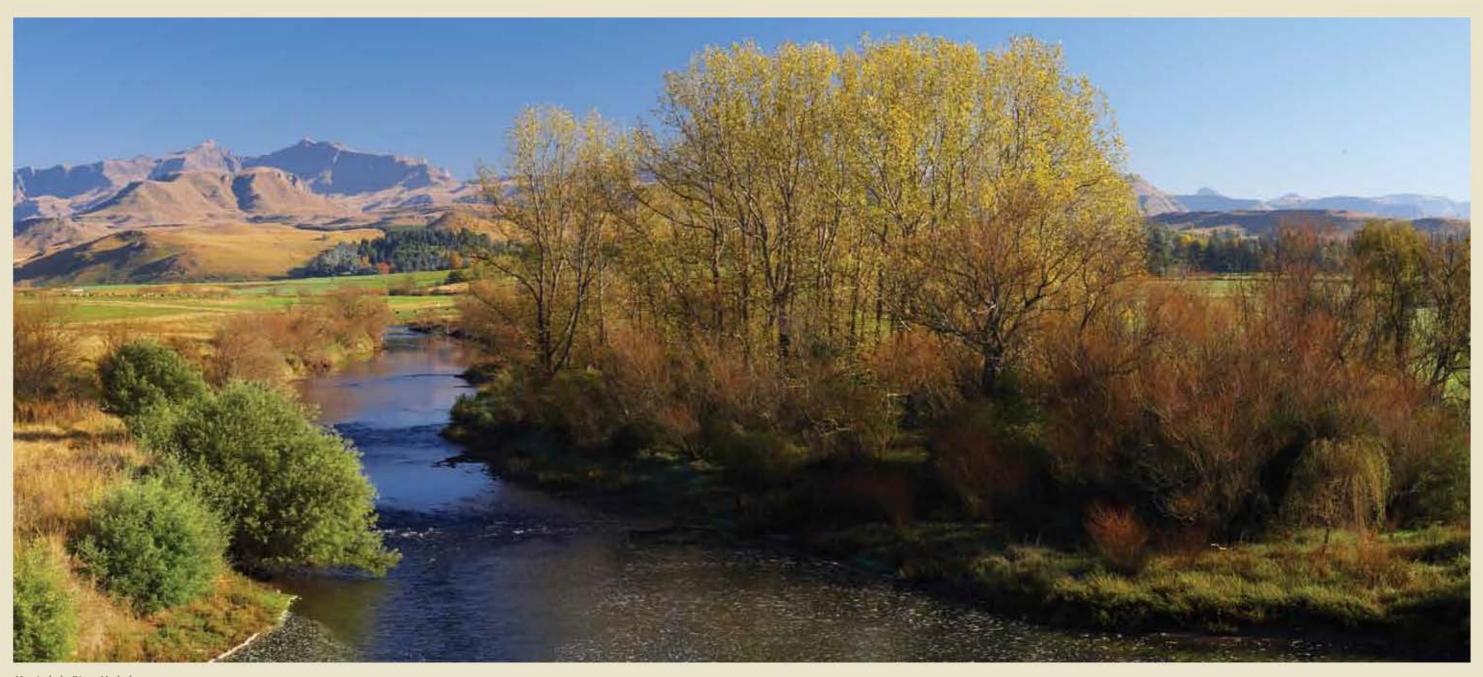




For the golfing enthusiast, a visit to the Drakensberg area is a definite must. All courses are open to the public, offering well-manicured 9 or 18-holes with absolutely spectacular views. Here are ideal locations to attempt hitting small white balls into tiny holes in the turf hundreds of meters away - with various sizes of steel sticks! For business purposes or personal pleasure, regardless of whether or not one's score is up to par, the mountain peaks and fresh air make for a most enjoyable experience. The Drakensberg is now an extremely popular holiday destination; yet remains a place of beauty, peace and absolute tranquility. Come visit this magic mountain range and allow the spirit of Ukhahlamba to enter one's soul.



page 83 | Champagne Sports Resort



Umzimkulu River, Underberg



The Sisonke Stimela is a skillfully restored luxury steam train that offers a choice of trips through the natural splendour of the southern KwaZulu-Natal midlands and Drakensberg. The journey encompasses grasslands, mist belts, indigenous forests and nature reserves. Interspersed with this magnificent scenery are traditional Zulu villages that allow a glimpse of rural African life. Sisonke includes the southernmost part of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg National Park; a park adjacent to Lesotho and bordering on the Eastern Cape Province in the west. This region is home to over eighteen Trappist monasteries and cathedrals, such as the beautiful Richenau Mission that was built in 1886 and nestles on the banks of the Pholela River.



page85 | Kings Cote Pass near Underberg

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Drakensberg Contacts

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Battlefields http://www.drakensberg-tour.co.za/ battlefields.html Bushman Rock Art www.central-drakensberg.co.za/ bushman-rock-art.html

Canopy Tours www.drakensbergcanopytour.co.za

Cathedral Peak www.drakensberg-tour.co.za/ cathedral-peak.html

Cavern Berg Resort www.cavern.co.za

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Frost Editing sallyfrost@vodamail.co.za

These simple line drawings are only portions of the Drakensberg mountain range and not all of the peaks are named. Not to scale.

heights* . Sani - 3 200m . Thabane Ntlenyana - 3 482m . Giant's Castle - 3 325m . Champagne Castle - 3 459m . Monks Cowl - 3 234m Cathkin Peak - 3 149m . The Bell - 2 930m . Cathedral Peak - 3 004m . Mont-aux-Sources - 3 283m . Sentinal - 3 165m

The 3 highest peaks in South Africa: Mafadi - 3 450m . Injisuthi Dome - 3 410m . Champagne Castle - 3 377m The highest peak in Southern Africa: in Lesotho, near Sani Pass . Thabana Ntlenyana - 3 482m



southern Drakensberg - Sani

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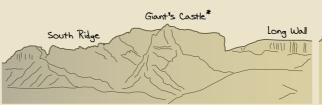
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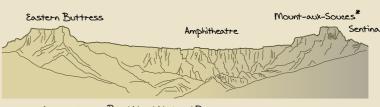
central/southern Drakensberg - Giant's Castle



central Drakensberg - Champagne Valley



central/northern Drakensberg - Cathedral area



northern Drakensberg - Royal Natal National Park

