



AA Quality Assured Accommodation Programme

Assessment Report



Raptor Retreat Game Lodge

Assessment Date: 08-02-2016
Assessor: Shelby Anderson
Category: Game Lodge

THE AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA NPC
AA Quality Assured Accommodation Programme
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Our Assessor visited your property on 08-02-2016 and compiled the following report:

Check-In

Owned and run by Keith and Sharmaine Le Roux, this is one of my all time favourite places to visit. From the time I send the first email out to Sharmaine, to the time I arrive at the lodge and book in, the establishment is in constant contact with me. To the extent that Keith, co owner and manager, will be in touch with me as I am driving, to make sure that I am safe and sound. On arriving, I am always greeted by the staff, who are all dressed in their beautiful, branded, clean uniforms, with song and dance and words of welcome. All guests are treated to this wonderful hospitality and African greeting, which is typical of this area.

All regulations are strictly adhered to in every area, right from labour law requirements, to statutory requirements, insurances and public liability requirements. Nothing is just brushed over.

Guests are required to sign in and are then given the run-down and low-down by Keith and Sharmaine. This includes safety rules and evacuation drills, should it be necessary. After this, guests are shown to their respective rooms, where again, they are shown where everything is and how everything works. Not once do guests feel unsafe or unsure about anything.

General Efficiency

An all-in establishment, offering dinner, lunch, bed and breakfast. Two self catering units available, with the option of catered or self catering. Under the excellent management and watchful, proactive eye of the owners, this lodge runs like clock work.

Cleanliness

Have yet to find a single spot of dust or dirt anywhere. The rooms are serviced daily, regardless of whether there are guests or not. Sharmaine trains her housekeeping staff herself, so there is no doubt whatsoever that they do not know what is required of them.

Maintenance

Every time I have had the honour of visiting Raptor Retreat, there is ALWAYS something more that had been added or upgraded or improved. Nothing ever stays static, which is so brilliant for any establishment that wants to be known for their excellence. It amazes me every time. Keith always seems to get things done in the shortest amount of time. Since my last visit, they have added another splash pool as well as a spa "tent" where guests can relax and get pampered. The areas where there were large areas of grass have been replaced with stone pebbles. Because of the drought that we are currently in, the owners have been pro-active and decided, because we all need to save water, the pebbles would be more suitable and aesthetically pleasing - How fantastic and proactive!!!

Friendliness

All guests are treated the same way. The owners and staff are friendly, respectful, polite, obliging and professional in every way.

Local Knowledge

As mentioned in my previous reports, everybody remotely connected to this place is very knowledgeable about the bush and what is happening in the area. Keith doesn't only take guests on game drives, he also teaches them to take note of all the fauna and flora in the area. I experienced one of the best game walks ever with Keith as our guide.

Full, beautifully presented information folders are in all the rooms, which tell guests what other activities happen in the area, where to go, what to do, who to contact in case of emergencies, etc.

Service Efficiency

Full service establishment with 2 self catering units available for larger groups or families. The price of the stay is inclusive of everything, except game drives. The owners, rightly so, pride themselves in catering for the local tourists and guests. Their pricing is excellent and affordable.

The lodge does not take children under 14 years of age due to the fact that there are no fences around the lodge and no railings on the beautiful decks, which could prove dangerous for younger children.

Bedrooms (Type 1)

Triple excellent!! All as per my last report. When speaking to other establishments on what a Superior rated lodge is all about, I often site Raptor retreat as the perfect example and recommend that they have a look at the website, and if they can, to visit the lodge. The rooms at Raptors are exceptionally well designed and beautiful. The furnishings, decor, fittings and finishes are of the highest quality. Every room and area has been well thought out and with their almost 90 % occupancy rates, this is evident. All rooms have their own splash pool and all are complete private, offering views of the wild bush, where it is not uncommon for an elephant to come and drink from your private pool, or antelope to graze right in front of your room.

Bathrooms (Type 1)

The most spectacular bathrooms!. As per my previous reports, these bathrooms are something to behold. Floating showers, "wet room" flooring, pebbled drainage, top of the range sanitary ware and fittings. All superior range amenities supplied, including all the extras, like snow white facecloths, shower caps, vanity kits, shaving mirrors on the basin wall. Glass aluminium stacking doors all round with unhindered views all round.

Public Areas

A large, well maintained wooden deck off the dining room and lounge area. Beautifully and tastefully decorated in leather, wood, photos and African art works. Large flat screen TV in the lounge area. Each chalet has its own splash pool but a communal rock pool is available close to the reception/dining area. This area has large canvas umbrellas and wooden loungers where guests can relax and have a drink on their own or with their hosts. A boma area where many a happy evening is spent having braais and lively conversations under the stars.

Building Exterior

Plastered brick with thatched roofs. All external and internal areas are exceptionally well maintained.

Parking

Covered safe parking is available for all guest vehicles.

Grounds & Gardens

Indigenous all round. As mentioned, where there were large areas of grass that needed to be watered every day to maintain their 'greenness', these have been replaced with stunning rock pebbles (from the area) to save on water and adhere to the water restrictions.

Security

On entering the reserve, guests are required to pay park fees, which are used for the maintenance of the roads and the care of the actual reserve. As this is a Big 5 protected area, where wild animals roam freely and there is always the threat of rhino and elephant poaching, security is understandably VERY high. All vehicles and guests are vetted and signed in at the gate, their vehicles checked. The same applies when leaving the reserve, where vehicles are again searched and all findings recorded.

Food Quality

What can I say? When making their booking, guests are asked if they have any special dietary requirements. Sharmaine and her chef oversee all the cooking. Simple uncomplicated delicious meals. Every meal is a taste bud sensation. Excellent cuisine which is fantastically presented. On my visit we were treated to tasty starters, perfectly cooked ostrich steaks, roasted vegetables, Sharmaine's famous green salad, delicious rich desert, and all this with the perfectly paired wine of the house. And did I mention the interesting great company and conversation?

Overall

Keith and Sharmaine have most certainly hit on a winning recipe for success. Don't know if it is because of their backgrounds...Keith from a printing background, and Sharmaine from a marketing and advertising background, but

between them they have got it down pat. I have recommended many people to this lodge and all the feedback had been amazing and uplifting.

Commendations

There are so many commendations! The amazing bathrooms are a definite soothe to the senses. The meals are fantastic! The peace and quite and tranquility of the bush. Awesome wild animal sightings EVERY DAY.

And and and....

Concerns

No concerns

Web Review

A stunning website that makes one want to "go in" and have a look. Sharmaine employed a professional website designer to build their website, which is evident when looking at the quality of the editorials and the professional photos. The information is accurate. Photos in the gallery spot on. Their website can be viewed at www.raptorretreatlodge.co.za



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Raptor Retreat Game Lodge

has been endorsed as

Superior

in the category

Game Lodge

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marilyn Cavendish-Davies'.

Marilynn Cavendish-Davies
HOD AA Quality Assured Accommodation Programme



Room/Unit count: 4

Valid until: February 2017