

Situated in the pristine and isolated De Hoop Nature Reserve in the Overberg Region near Cape Agulhas, Morukuru Ocean House offers a bird's eye view of one of Africa's greatest whale nurseries.

Oceanfront Splendour





Often cited as one of the most beautiful coastal reserves in South Africa, the 36 000 ha De Hoop Nature Reserve offers 51 km of pristine white beach dotted with iconic dunes, limestone cliffs and crystal rock pools, and surrounded by a warm Indian Ocean, as well as lush wetlands and coastal fynbos home to more than 260 species of birds. Nestled amidst this natural splendour is Morukuru Ocean House, a flagship accommodation offering on the reserve. Aside from its awe-inspiring setting and luxurious finishes, the four-bedroom, oceanfront getaway is sought after for its bird's eye view of Africa's greatest whale nursery, when the Southern Right whales migrate to the shallow coastal basins off the Overberg Coast for the calving and nursing season from mid-July to November.

Our visit to the luxurious home-away-from-home was during the whale season,

and before we had even reached the well-hidden villa amongst the fynbos, we saw the fluke splashes and lobtailing of numerous Southern Rights just off the coast. A fitting greeting indeed. The villa itself, with its subtle colours and rooftop garden, is cleverly hidden, blending in to the hillside and integrating seamlessly with the ocean and fynbos. Bespoke art and furniture from Europe adorn every nook and cranny, and eight adults and four children can relax and sleep in total comfort.

Many luxury villas are hesitant to accommodate children, but Ocean House boasts an entire room dedicated to kiddies activities, and the friendly and attentive staff are always eager to whisk them away for dune boarding, soccer games, rock pool excursions, and kite building and flying. The Morukuru Family shell bag they are given to use to store their collected shells for the duration of their stay is also always a highlight. There is a sense that the house is all about families

and spending quality time together in a very private wilderness area. This is not surprising, as Morukuru is essentially a company focused on family, relationships and people.

While a stay at Ocean House is all about quietly connecting – to family, friends, nature, and yourself – and there are no schedules, there are so many wonderful complimentary activities on offer that we tried to do as much as possible during our short visit. Soon after arriving we rushed off to do the walk to the dunes for sundowners on our first evening. What a surprise to arrive, after a 20-minute amble along the coast, to find a table set with drinks, snacks and burning lamps – plus sand boards for the kids! The evening was spent high up on the sugar-white dunes, marvelling at the whales and the menthol-blue ocean while sipping our drinks and watching the kids run up and glide down the dunes. Back at the villa, we were greeted with steaming hot chocolate and took advantage of the opportunity to wallow in the bath with its



view over the sea. Dinner afterwards was excellent, as meals at Ocean House are prepared exactly as you like them, when you like them. The meticulously trained chefs are able to provide a wide array of catering options, from traditional, formal and nouvelle cuisine to utterly relaxed and casual snacks on demand. They encourage guests to eat al fresco as much as the beautiful African weather allows, and believe that every meal is an occasion. Guests are also able to personally select wines from the cellar to accompany and complement their meals. Children, of course, are catered for as very important guests.

An early mountain bike ride led by the manager the next morning was yet another highlight. The air was misty and cool, and the birds sang merrily as we wound our way through the reserve on top-end mountain bikes, in search of some of the area's majestic antelope. This adventure was followed by a wonderful leisurely breakfast, after which

we headed out on a guided marine walk to explore the rock pools and other striking natural phenomena that make the beach at De Hoop a photographer's delight. Our guide was most helpful, sharing fascinating insights on the amazing marine life we encountered on the journey. When we next visit the area, we would like to experience a guided fynbos walk, as there is no doubt much to learn about the incredible diversity and beauty of the area's rich and unique vegetation.

Ocean House takes great pride in its setting, and uses sustainable green energy wherever possible, operating entirely off the grid in a bid to conserve this pristine natural heritage.

With only 24 hours to experience Morukuru Ocean House, we never got to sit in the hot tub overlooking the cliffs, enjoy a wine tasting at the nearby estate, play tennis, or go on a game drive to see the reserve's diverse wildlife. We didn't star gaze through the villa's telescope or indulge in an in-house

spa treatment, but we certainly got a feeling for the exclusive, yet very warm energy of the magnificent property.

For more information visit www.villasandafrica.com or contact info@villasandafrica.com.

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