

STAY HERE

# Pick a villa

DRAWING ON YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND WHAT HE'S LEARNT FROM HOLIDAYS WITH TWO BUSY BOYS, TRAVEL JOURNALIST DAVID ROGERS PICKS SOUTHERN AFRICA'S BEST VILLAS FOR FAMILIES AND GROUPS.



**WHY CHOOSE A VILLA?** Villas are great if you want to share special safari times with your family and close friends (rather than the first-time visitor to Africa in chalet six who wants to be your new best buddy). With a team of dedicated staff at your disposal, you can live the good life, and villas often make good financial sense for groups of five or more. In general, these properties come with it all – they're fully serviced and have in-house chefs. Meals are often interactive and flexible from picnics to midnight snacks. Find out more about the five villas listed here, as well as a range of others, at [www.villasandafrika.com](http://www.villasandafrika.com).

EASTERN ZAMBIA



**LUANGWA SAFARI HOUSE**  
+265-179-4491/5483,  
[www.robinpopesafaris.net](http://www.robinpopesafaris.net)

LAKE MALAWI



**NDOMO HOUSE AT KAYA MAWA**  
+265-999-318-360,  
[www.kayamawa.com](http://www.kayamawa.com)

KRUGER PARK



**FITZPATRICK'S AT JOCK**  
041-509-3000,  
[www.jocksafarilodge.com](http://www.jocksafarilodge.com)

COASTAL MOZAMBIQUE



**SANTORINI VILLA**  
011-705-1258, 082-883-3774,  
[www.villasantorini.co.za](http://www.villasantorini.co.za)

SOUTHERN CAPE



**BIRKENHEAD VILLA**  
015-793-3977,  
[www.birkenheadvilla.com](http://www.birkenheadvilla.com)

	SETTING	VIBE	CROWD	STAY	EAT	HIGHLIGHT	NEED TO KNOW	COST
	The villa borders Zambia's South Luangwa National Park with its wide-open plains, meandering rivers and some of the best leopard viewing in the world.	Built from thatch, fallen hardwood trees and a great sense of imagination, it's the perfect balance between comfort and true bush. No internet, no TV and no sounds but the barking of baboons and birdsong.	Make this your bush home – the team has the natural warmth and humour to make everyone, whether English, American, Dutch or South African, laughing out loud and feeling very much at ease.	Upstairs or downstairs in four double en suite bedrooms – each open to the outside with four-poster beds and views to the trees. One has a copper bath and all are uniquely decorated.	Expect home-made salads, breads, pickles and a lemon poppy seed cake that will have you begging for more. Meals are best enjoyed under the giant ebony trees at the deck, watching elephants come to drink.	The house has a vast doorway wide enough for a teenage elephant to pass through. Once inside, the drama of the suspended wooden stairs, giant wrought iron chandelier and triple-volume ceiling will blow you away.	The house is unfenced with open balconies and staircases, so it's not for inquisitive toddlers. It's closed from mid-January to mid-March. Special rates for SADC passport holders are sometimes available.	Full-board from \$540 a person a night (min four adults) excluding park fees of \$50 a day.
	Kaya Mawa is on Likoma, the largest island on Lake Malawi. The views over the expansive blue waters are so grand that the villa will quickly have you under its spell.	There's an island feel, so pack sunglasses and swimsuits and let the water wash your troubles away. There's a barefoot, beach atmosphere and the Malawians you meet everywhere are some of the sunniest people you'll find in Africa.	You can easily imagine sultry models showing their curves for <i>Sports Illustrated</i> on this island. It's often visited by tourists who come to wash off the dust of their safari experiences in Malawi or nearby Zambia.	<b>Take your pick from four bedrooms – three are en suite. All are wonderfully open and flow onto verandas that overlook a swimming pool and private beach.</b>	Chef Rich Greenhall has worked for Jamie Oliver and learned a thing or two about creating wonderful, easy-eating meals. Make sure you ask him to make <i>chambo</i> (tilapia fish) and chips – it's a Malawian speciality.	The water is clean, fresh and warm – put on a pair of goggles and you'll feel like you're in a giant fish tank. The cichlids here occur nowhere else and attract bubble blowers from all over. You can tumble out of your room and see fish right on the shore – no boat required.	The village of Likoma Island, which lies a few kilometres away, has a towering cathedral – a replica of the one at Winchester in England – and it's a vibrant place to visit on a Sunday.	Full-board from \$460 a person a night (min four adults and three nights).
	In the heart of Big Five country in the rolling hills of southern Kruger and overlooking the Biyamiti River; you'll struggle to find a better wildlife area.	The lodge takes its name from Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, author of the bestselling <i>Jock of the Bushveld</i> . It's decorated with wagon wheels and memorabilia that recall his intrepid journeys between Lorenzo Marques (Maputo) and the mining towns near Barberton in the 1800s.	Birding aficionados, pack your Swarovskis and iPad loaded with <i>Roberts Birds of Southern Africa</i> – you'll start ticking from your veranda. It's also a great spot for families with a pool and space for up to 10 people.	Sir Percy never had it this good. Three bedrooms are strung along the river and all have air-con, indoor and outdoor showers. The living area has a TV, fireplace and mod-cons such as a Nespresso machine.	<b>Dine on spicy boerewors and Cajun chicken at a candlelit table under the stars in a traditional reed-walled boma. You'll be serenaded by the camp choir, which performs for groups who stay for a few nights.</b>	Sundowners on a granite koppie are top of the world – and so is the game. Lion, leopard, elephant, wild dog, buffalo and black and white rhino are all on show.	The villa doesn't have Wi-Fi – but that's a good thing, right? If you really must get connected – or have a massage – the main Jock Camp is a short drive away. There's a spa and gym there too if you need it.	Full-board from R3 308 a person (half-price for kids under 11 and under sevens stay free).
	The villa is on the mainland a few kilometres north of the town of Vilankulo with sublime, inviting views over the Indian Ocean to Bazaruto Archipelago.	With its striking blue and white decor and dazzling views of white sands and blue water, it's easy to see why this villa has been named after one of Greece's most famous holiday islands.	Bring the family, the friends, the children, the friends' children... and maybe a few more! This is a big house, after all. And just a two-hour flight from Johannesburg.	The house sleeps 10 adults in five bedrooms, or eight adults and six children (there's a fun rumpus room for the kids with bunk beds). It's gloriously modern and fresh.	The house has a state-of-the-art kitchen with a team of excellent chefs. Expect delicious crab curries, home-baked Portuguese bread and peri-peri prawns, washed down with 2M beers.	The islands, the islands, the islands ... you'll want to stay, snorkel and explore Bazaruto Archipelago for longer than a week. You'll have a vehicle at your disposal to hit the town, where you'll find wonderful things to see and do.	The islands are a 20-minute boat trip away and you must plan a trip for a sunny day when the snorkelling is at its best.	Full-board from \$3200 for the villa a night. Or you can take a room at \$350 a person a night. The rates include one trip to the islands.
	In the seaside town of Hermanus and looking over Walker Bay with its lob-tailing whales. Plus there are beaches, fynbos-covered mountains and a cliff path to explore. It's next door to the exceptional Birkenhead House.	It's ornate, gilded and richly colourful (there are crystal chandeliers, gleaming fittings and nudes on the walls), but the down-to-earth, friendly staff makes you feel at home.	The house is used regularly by the Biden family, who own the Royal Portfolio including neighbouring Birkenhead House, as their own private hideaway.	<b>Five upstairs rooms – each with wonderful views and bathrooms – sleep 10. Downstairs are the dining areas, kitchen and a playroom.</b>	The highly trained chefs prepare exquisite meals in the open-plan kitchen. Kids will love mucking in to help make pizzas.	Stars and celebrities have shot champagne corks aplenty in this delightful spot. The attention to detail and sincere, generous service is exceptional.	Whales and fynbos flowers are best from July to September, but for summer sun and beaches visit between November and April. Also don't miss a chance to visit Gansbaai to cage-dive with its world-famous great white sharks.	Full-board is from R26 700 a night for the entire house (sleeps 12).



At the time of going to print, \$ was equivalent to R10.08.