

HASMITA NAIR

Jozilicious

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The Harties Cableway has 14 hi-tech cable cars, giving visitors a bird's eye view of the Hartbeespoort Dam.

PICTURE: SUPPLIED

Hartbeespoort and Pilanesberg provide a welcome dose of countryside living

I'LL ADMIT it, when thinking about which South African cities have the most natural beauty, Jozi isn't exactly at the top of the list. I won't argue about the fact that Cape Town is in-your-face beautiful, but Jozi is pretty in its own right – we just need to know where to look. Hike up the Westcliff stairs and admire the view, or take a drive through the jacaranda-lined streets of Parkview and Greenside.

If that's not good enough, a weekend spent in the Hartbeespoort and Pilanesberg area will make you feel as though you've spent a week in the countryside.

I recommend driving through to Harties on a Saturday morning and enjoying the day there. Then take an easy drive through to Pilanesberg, and catch an evening game drive before you spend the night at one of the many lodges in the area.

On Sunday, cool off at the Valley of Waves at Sun City before heading home – you'll be back in the early afternoon, allowing you some rest ahead of the week to come.

WHAT TO DO:

Go up the Harties Cableway

Recently revamped, this state-of-the-art cableway has 14 hi-tech cable cars, giving visitors a bird's eye view of the Hartbeespoort Dam and surrounds. You can purchase a picnic basket to enjoy once you get to the top of the mountain, stroll along the 1km Dassie Loop walkway or just relax and enjoy the scenery around you.

Tickets are priced at R160 for adults at R90 for kids and the cableway is open seven days a week. Visit www.hartiescableway.co.za

Visit the Elephant or Monkey Sanctuary

Situated adjacent to one another, these sanctuaries provide an interactive and educational experience. At the elephant sanctuary, you can walk trunk-in-hand with African elephants, see where they sleep at night and feed them. The Bush Babies monkey sanctuary is one of

only eight free-release primate sanctuaries globally, where the goal is to provide the opportunity for primates to live as they would in the wild. Join the guides on an intimate walk through natural indigenous forests on elevated wooden walkways and encounter a variety of exotic monkeys along the way.

Visit www.elephantsanctuary.co.za and www.monkeysanctuary.co.za

WHERE TO EAT:

Silver Orange Bistro

This country-style bistro, situated on a citrus farm in Hartbeespoort, is an absolute gem – in terms of both food and surroundings. Offering contemporary South African cuisine with a menu that changes frequently, dishes are unusual but refreshingly uncomplicated. Try the duck and fig

samosas or the seared tuna tataki to start, and the grilled sole or slow-braised springbok shank for mains.

Make sure to save some space for dessert. The frozen peanut butter fudge ice cream bar is to die for (it's so good, that it's been on the menu for the past seven years.)

Call 082 378 2948. Visit www.silverorangebistro.co.za

WHERE TO STAY:

Shepherd's Tree Game Lodge

One doesn't need to drive all the way to the Kruger to see the Big Five. Pilanesberg Game Reserve is pleasantly accessible for Joburgers, and has a variety of accommodation options – my favourite being Shepherd's Tree Game Lodge. The nightly accommodation rate includes two game drives a day, high tea and all meals, with the family suites (two rooms adjoined with a



Monkeys get up close and personal at the monkey sanctuary.

PICTURE: RISHAV NAIR

lounge and kitchen area) being particularly convenient if you're travelling with kids. The rooms are modern, luxurious and come standard with an outdoor shower, Char-

lotte Rhys amenities, his and hers basins, oversized Victorian bathtub and a large patio with a gorgeous view of the surrounding reserve.

There's lots to do at the lodge itself, whether it's relaxation or adventure you're after. Lounge around the pool area over cocktails, have a treatment at the in house Amani spa, go on a guided bush walk or try out quad biking.

Dinner is served in the lodge's gourmet restaurant, where you can expect classic dishes like Caesar salad or hearty butternut soup to start, along with a wide selection of dishes for mains, the main feature being meaty grills. The lodge is also equipped with a conference centre, which looks out on to a boma – great for teambuilding events.

Visit www.shepherdstree.com

Hasmita was hosted by Shepherd's Tree for the purposes of this article.

For more ideas of things to do in and around Jozi, visit Hasmita's blog: www.joziliciousblog.co.za

Top spots to talk shop while wining and dining

HASMITA NAIR

ONE is often faced with a catch 22 when deciding where to go for a business lunch.

In the middle of a working day you and your colleagues most likely have limited time, which becomes a challenge, as the best restaurants take time to prepare a meal, especially if it's three courses.

Add in the time it takes to drive to the office and back, and you've easily used up an entire afternoon – time most of us cannot afford to spare.

But there's no need to resort to fast food. These three restaurants are centrally located with excellent service, upmarket ambiance and cuisine that won't disappoint, resulting in an all-round great experience.

1. Grillhouse

When entertaining international colleagues, "a good steak" is definitely high on the list of what visitors to South Africa most want, and you'll struggle to find a better steakhouse



The gorgeous Saxon Qunu Grill offers diners a plethora of delicious meals in 60 minutes.

PICTURE: RISHAV NAIR

in Jozi than the Grillhouse. The dark wood booths with plush leather seats and private dining areas lend themselves to an exclusive, sophisticated experience, accompanied by incredible service. The owners are hands-on and have a team of passionate managers – no less than three of them came to check on my table during my meal. It's no surprise

that the biggest seller is fillet steak. We ordered ours medium rare, and it was cooked to perfection. One of Jozi's oldest steakhouses, Grillhouse has remained at the top of its game due to continuous innovation. Today, its offering extends to a boutique retail butchery, which, with the restaurant, is supplied by the Grillhouse's own deboning plant, allow-

ing the entire process from purchase through to storage conditions and ageing to be carefully controlled.

Address: The Firs Shopping Centre, Corner Oxford Road and Bierman Avenue, Rosebank. Call 011 880 3945. Visit www.thegrillhouse.co.za

2. Winehouse

Another aspect of dining foreign visitors are particularly interested in is wine. At Winehouse, in the exclusive Ten Bompas Hotel, this is a focus which becomes apparent when walking into the double-volume, glass-fronted wine cellar, where you'll find thousands of bottles of South African vintages and a large collection of auction wines purchased annually at the Cape Winemakers Guild Auction in Stellenbosch. The menu is small with a French flair, with fresh ingredients sourced from the hotel's vegetable garden, while the restaurant manages to be inviting, homely and classy at the same time. Considering the quality of food, prices are extremely reasonable, with a three-

course meal costing around R250 a person. Try the pan-roasted Norwegian salmon served with a beetroot and barley salad and salsa verde.

Address: 10 Bompas Road, Dunkeld West. Call 011 341 0282. Visit www.tenbompas.com

3. Saxon Qunu Grill

The gorgeous setting of this restaurant alone is bound to impress, and your guests will be even more tickled at the prospect of Qunu's business lunch menu.

Reminiscent of a New York "power lunch", the restaurant offers diners a plethora of enticing meals, which change daily to offer maximum variety.

Catering to the busy executive, the business lunch offers a selection of either a two- or three-course menu, or the daily grill with a glass of wine, all within 60 minutes or the meal is on the restaurant.

Address: 36 Saxon Road, Sandhurst. Call 011 292 6000. Visit www.saxon.co.za