

Singita Boulders Lodge: Reconfigured and redecorated

17 years after opening, Singita Boulders Lodge in the Sabi Sand has been thoughtfully reconfigured and redecorated to reveal its essential character and define its unique sense of place on the boulder-strewn banks of the Sand River.



Singita Boulders Lodge lounge

The original inspiration for the lodge came from the geometry of these ancient, weathered boulders and the natural curve of the river bed. This time around, architect Sally Tsiliyiannis of GAPP Architects & Urban Designers and designers Cécile & Boyd have taken further cues from nature, incorporating the colours, textures and elements of the surrounding landscape.

"The focus is on bringing together reflections of light, texture, colour, shadows, relationships between inside and outside and the spirit of the place to create form and space," explains Tsiliyiannis. Boyd Ferguson of Cécile & Boyd agrees that it was crucial to retain the essence of the place in the redesign.

Guest areas have been opened up, lowered, and brought closer to the river, allowing full engagement with the setting beneath the ebony and weeping boer bean trees. Characterised by handcrafted design with the integrity of authentic African provenance, the lodge merges with the shifting light, shapes and moods of the environment, providing a sanctuary for travellers wanting to connect with nature.

Earth-like features

Throughout the lodge, pared-down interiors in a palette of charcoal, chalk, bone, rust, copper and ochre bring out the original colours of Singita Boulders, and reflect the four elements of earth, fire, air and water. Dramatic sculptural shapes, abstract art, and carefully curated collections of crystals, seed pods, bones and other found objects articulate a deeper connection with the wild. There is a sense that everything has been derived from the earth. Rustic and worn, woven and carved, furnishings include iconic pieces fashioned from fossilised tree stumps, slabs of solid stone, artisanal wrought iron and leather, each element designed to reveal its intrinsic beauty. Awe-inspiring original contemporary paintings, sculptures and soft, sensual textures - a sheep-skin rug to step onto when you get out of bed, the feel of natural flax bed linen on your skin - add subtle layers of luxury.

Open to the elements or separated from the outdoors by glass walls, the lodge provides a continuous connection with the prolific wildlife and birdlife for which the Sabi Sand is so well known. Cleverly designed communal spaces, such as the new sociable Copper Bar serving freshly pressed fruit juices, espressos and cocktails, provide new opportunities for guests to connect with their surroundings and with each other.

An outdoor dining pavilion

One of the most spectacular vantage points above the Sand River is the chosen site of a new, outdoor dining pavilion with a series of matted, nest-like ceilings suspended at different heights to resemble the branches of a tree. Tsiliyiannis maintains that the greatest architecture in Africa is the trees, which she constantly uses as a source of inspiration. Raw timber decks of varying sizes are suspended above the ground, creating intimate spaces for private dining and relaxation close to the pool. Light comes from clusters of nest-shaped woven lampshades, a central fireplace creates an inviting, focal point and

cascading water adds a reflective, cooling quality. Sandblasted driftwood tables are strung out along the river bank to make the most of the views. Copper vases hold simple, found collections of twigs, wild blooms and grasses. Hand beaten cutlery, wonky pottery plates and rustic linen napkins complete the rustic, casual elegance.

A sense of tranquillity

The 12 privately spaced suites, two of which are designed exclusively for families, blend soulful, sensual Africa with high design to instil a sense of tranquillity and ease guests into the rhythm of safari life. It's as if the very soul of Singita Boulders Lodge has been fine tuned and stripped back down to the basics, freeing up guests to experience and explore nature like never before.

The luxurious creature comforts and attention to detail, for which Singita Boulders has always been known, have been creatively woven into every aspect of the safari experience so that at every turn there is something new to delight the eye and quieten the soul.

Ferguson explains that in a world where everything at a certain level has become inherently generic, and therefore bland, the eye easily becomes bored - especially when over-exposed to beautiful, aesthetically pleasing surroundings. "Eventually, what happens is that one stops seeing at all. My role in redesigning and repositioning key aspects of the Boulders experience was to enable guests to engage with the lodge from the moment they arrive and throughout their stay. There is a sense of authenticity, earthiness and primal beauty, so that they start seeing things again with a fresh perspective - perhaps even rediscovering aspects of themselves from which they may have been cut off."

For more, go to www.singita.com/boulders-lodge

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