

# ELLE

20%  
OFF  
LEVI'S  
570  
FOR EVERY READER

www.ellemagazine.co.za

SOUTH AFRICA

JULY 2007

R24.95 (VAT INCL)

OTHER COUNTRIES R21.88 (EXCL. TAXES)

**FASHION  
SPECIAL**  
**new jeans**

THE SEXIEST  
NEW SHAPES  
& COOLEST  
COLOURS

**cellulite's  
on shaky  
ground**

ELLE RATES  
VIBRATION  
TRAINING

**EXCLUSIVE**

**JENNIFER  
LOPEZ**

'I'VE NEVER FELT  
THIS SETTLED,  
BALANCED  
OR FOCUSED  
IN MY LIFE'

**winter  
style**

**68** PAGES OF HOT NEW COATS,  
BOOTS, HATS + GLOVES  
& HOW TO WEAR THEM

ISSN 10259791



9 771025 979046

07007



**RELATIONSHIP 101** why two rights  
can make a wrong

## soul sanctuary

Take a trip to the Buddhist Retreat Centre at Ixopo where the world slows down enough to remind you what's really important in life.... By Janet van Eeden

Driving through the hills towards Ixopo, which Alan Paton described as 'lovely beyond all singing of it,' the rush of taxis ferrying tired commuters melts away as you turn off to the Buddhist Retreat Centre (BRC). Five kilometres along a dusty track and you're in another world; it's as if you've slipped through a portal and arrived at Shangri La.

You're immediately struck by the tangy scent of pine cones and needles and the exquisite silence, broken only by birdsong and the humming of bees. It's so quiet that the flapping of a bird's wings as it bustles through the air seems loud.

Overlooking a valley surrounded by a ruffle of hills, the BRC is idyllic. Natural pine and wattle forests surround the centre, which was set up by Louis van Loon 27 years ago to provide a place of quiet contemplation for tired souls. The BRC was awarded National Heritage status by Nelson Mandela for Van Loon's successful conversion of a neglected farm into a haven for indigenous birds and flora. For the weary soul, walks around the BRC are restorative and the peace of nature prevails in this secure environment. A small lake at the centre of the property is a place for reflection, both literal and figurative, and walks range from very gentle to strenuous. Or take a stroll through the labyrinth, or spend time in the Zen gardens or at the Stupa on the hill and enjoy the giant Buddha in the garden.

Underpinned by Buddhist philosophy, the BRC offers weekend guided retreats on a variety of subjects from drumming, kite making, Zen and pottery to silent guided retreats. Noble silence is observed in the lodges (and in the dining hall until after breakfast each day) which is simply and elegantly appointed. A meditation hall has scheduled meditation times but remains open.

The delicious vegetarian food has been so admired that BRC and Double Storey published a recipe book, *Quiet Food*, which has made waves internationally.

Accommodation varies from single rooms in the old lodges with shared ablutions, to single en-suite rooms in the new lodge, to self-contained cottages in the kutis.

After a weekend absorbing the natural beauty and silence I have to agree with the words of one of the Masters, Shanti Deva, who said: 'May all who live and breathe hear the song of birds, the wind in the trees, the light of the sun, and the sky itself singing aloud to them an endless rhapsody of holy teachings.'

*Buddhism is not prescriptive, and its teaching of mindfulness does not interfere with or exclude any religious denomination.*

## a river runs through it

Sumptuous accommodation, gourmet dining and the gift of nature make Summerfields River Lodge & Rose Retreat Spa on the Sabie River the ultimate luxury getaway. By Nikki Benatar

It doesn't get better than this, I muse. I'm lying facedown on a massage lounger on the riverside deck of a spa pavilion having a Touch of Nature treatment. The Sabie River cascades in front of me and the heady scent of wild roses permeates the entire open-air gazebo. In fact, it's almost impossible to escape the scent and sight of roses and other delicious aromas anywhere on Summerfields' 100-hectare property, since it lies in the heart of a rose, macadamian and litchi plantation near Hazyview in Mpumalanga.

The luxuriously appointed tented suites, set beneath a forest of Jackalberry and Tambotie trees, offer all the trappings of an ultra high-end lodge – fluffy white bath gowns, home-baked biscuits, chocolates on the pillows of folded-down beds, and iPods with playlists to accommodate all tastes. (Though my musical preferences naturally tend towards Muse and Franz Ferdinand, while I was at



ABOVE: A ZEN GARDEN AT IXOPO. RIGHT: THE OPEN-AIR RIVERSIDE SPA AT SUMMERFIELDS IN MPUMALANGA

## VIVALDI'S THE FOUR SEASONS ENHANCES THE IMPOSSIBLY CALM SURROUNDINGS

### travel info

#### GETTING THERE From Gauteng:

Travelling on the N3, by-pass Pietermaritzburg. After 18 km, take Exit 61 (Umhlanga Road/R56 off ramp) and follow the R56 signs towards Richmond/Ixopo. Before Ixopo turn right into D64. After 7 km, you will find the BRC entrance sign on your right. From Durban Take Exit 61 (Umhlanga Road/R56 off ramp) from the N3 and follow the R56 signs towards Richmond/Ixopo. Turn right into D64. After 7 km you will find the BRC entrance sign on your right.

From the South Coast: At Park Rynie turn off the N2, heading inland on the R612 to Umzinto/Ixopo. At the crossing with the R56, turn right towards Richmond/Pietermaritzburg. After 5 km turn left into D64. After 7 km you will find the BRC entrance sign on your right.

**WHAT TO BRING** Something warm, walking shoes and a torch.

#### FOR MORE INFO Call (0)39 834

1863 or 082 579 3037, e-mail

[brcxopo@futurenet.co.za](mailto:brcxopo@futurenet.co.za) or visit

[www.brcixopo.co.za](http://www.brcixopo.co.za).

**RATES** Prices range from R220 to R370. This includes three meals and tea-time treats.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUPPLIED



Summerfields I couldn't help opting for classics such as Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* that enhanced the impossibly calm surroundings.

Chef Lienkie Erasmus prepares the most delicious, unpretentious country-style food –

exactly what you'd expect in these natural surroundings. Everything is homemade and prepared from scratch – from the bread and pastries to the chutney and mayonnaise. I fell in love with her rose-meringue disc layered with chantilly cream and seasonal berries, finished with a vanilla pod syrup. The char-grilled lamb cutlets served with chunky rosemary potato wedges, butternut purée and creamed spinach, topped with a herbed red-wine jus were also sublime and don't leave without trying the Vietnamese prawn and lemon grass salad.

The post-prandial customised bath ritual comes highly recommended. You select the aroma bath you want off a menu, and staff will prepare it while you're at dinner so it's ready on your arrival back to your room. I opted for the Sleep Easy (and boy, did I!) – a blend of essential oils that clam the nervous system and relax your body and mind.

If you should tire of spa treatments, reading, bird- and hippo-watching and languid walks around the 100-hectare farm, there's a wide variety of sporting and adventure activities on offer nearby, including horse and quad-bike rides, hot-air-ballooning, river-rafting and tubing, abseiling and game drives to the Kruger National Park (which is only 10 kilometres away).

#### travel info

**GETTING THERE** ELLE travelled to Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (KMIA) from Cape Town courtesy of Airlink, where we were transferred to Summerfields by car. Airlink has direct flights daily from Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town to KMIA. For more info, [www.flyairlink.com](http://www.flyairlink.com).

From Pretoria: Take the N4 towards Witbank/Middelberg.

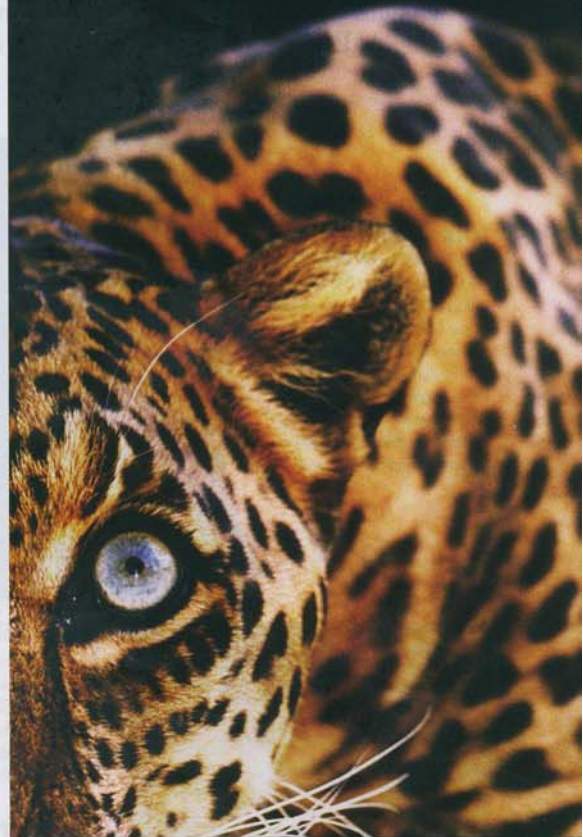
From Jo'burg: Take the N12 towards Witbank/Middelberg. Then join (or stay on) the N4 towards Middelberg, continue through Machadodorp en route to Nelspruit. At Nelspruit, head north on the R40 towards White River and Hazyview, then take R536 towards Sabie where you will find Summerfields approximately 4,5km further, on the right-hand side of the road.

**WHAT TO BRING** Something warm and comfortable walking shoes.

**FOR MORE INFO** Call (013) 737 6500 or visit [www.summerfields.co.za](http://www.summerfields.co.za).

**RATES** From R1 250 pp sharing.

## Dressed to kill.



The most exciting catwalk in the world isn't in Milan or New York, it's right here.



**Djuma**  
Game Reserve

Where the big 5 roam.

Sabi Sand Wildtuin Tel: 013 735 5118  
[djuma@djuma.co.za](mailto:djuma@djuma.co.za) [www.djuma.com](http://www.djuma.com)

