



This Month — South Africa, Coastal Maine

Andrew Harper's Hideaway Report[®]

A connoisseur's worldwide guide
to peaceful and unspoiled places

Our 25th Year

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The Best of South Africa: Our Exclusive Updated Trip Planning Guide

Many exciting new discoveries highlight the findings from our latest visits to South Africa, a nation that has understandably become one of the world's top vacation destinations. In addition to helpful travel advice, our updated guide points you to the most sensational safari lodges, luxurious city hotels, charming wine country hideaways and exclusive seaside resorts.

To contact our featured hotels from the U.S., dial 011 + 27 + the phone/fax numbers shown in each listing. Reservations and trip planning assistance can also be obtained through our Q Club office at (800) 375-4685. Enjoy!

Johannesburg Hotels

Like it or not, this is the hub city for most international flights, though non-stop service to Cape Town is available from London. Violent crime is a serious problem in downtown Johannesburg, so if you desire a day room before flying on elsewhere, we suggest the new and surprisingly upbeat **Airport Sun International**, situated just across from the main terminal. Executive Double/Single (7AM-6PM), \$150. Tel. (11) 961-5400 or Fax (11) 961-5401.

For a stylish and relaxing overnight before or after your tour of

South Africa, opt for **The Grace**. A good value for those desiring a spacious suite with a separate living area, the sophisticated and graciously staffed 75-room luxury hotel sits along a tree-lined street in upscale Rosebank, 40 minutes north of the airport (transfers provided). Facilities include a fine dining room/conservatory, roof garden café and cozy bar-lounge, plus an outdoor lap pool, exercise room, small spa and covered skywalk to an adjacent shopping mall. Suite for one or two, \$375, full breakfast and taxes included; Penthouse Suite, \$480. Tel. (11) 280-7300 or Fax (11) 280-7333.

Another solid choice is **The Westcliff**, a handsome 120-room Mediterranean-flavored resort hotel terraced into a lush hillside looking down on the Zoological Gardens in the fashionable suburb of Parktown, 30 minutes north of the airport (transfers provided). A pleasant staff oversees its formal restaurant, atmospheric *Polo Lounge Bar* and casual café cupped around a scenic horizon pool. Tennis and a health/fitness spa round out the amenities. Luxury Double/Single, \$330, taxes included. Junior Suite, \$485; Studio Suite, \$810; Luxury Suite, \$970. Tel. (11) 646-2400 or Fax (11) 646-3500.

Best Safari Lodges – From Kruger National Park to the Kalahari Desert

The uniqueness of South Africa lies in its wondrous spectacle of exotic wildlife and wilderness scenery. As such, a safari experience should be the focal point of your trip. A minimum 3-night stay is recommended at Singita, Royal Malewane, Londolozi or Ulusaba, followed by three nights at marvelously contrasting Singita Lebombo or Tswalu if time allots. You should also set aside a week to explore cosmopolitan Cape Town and its dramatically beautiful environs, including the fetchingly peaceful wine district and ruggedly scenic Indian Ocean coast (see Pages 4-6).

Bear in mind, seasons are reversed in South Africa, with the cooler, drier and more bug-free August to late October period being an ideal time for observing animals in the less-dense spring underbrush; the heaviest rains and hotter, more humid temperatures usually occur from December through March. Anti-malarial medication is strongly advised for all game-viewing areas; consult your physician. Be sure to bring a sweater and insulated jacket for the occasionally chilly dawn/dusk game drives; also pack a brimmed hat and plenty of sunblock.

At our five small and very special suggested Kruger area safari lodges you can expect close-up encounters with lion, leopard, cheetah, Cape buffalo, elephant, giraffe, white rhino, hippo, hyena, warthog and many other exotic mammals and birds. Unless otherwise noted, the lodges possess their own airstrips and can be reached from Johannesburg via Federal Air in approximately 90 minutes. Scheduled commercial flights to Kruger area airports are also available, followed by short onward air or road transfers.

Singita

Sensational Singita occupies a vast private tract of land in the Sabi Sand Game Reserve bordering the unfenced boundary of Kruger National Park, a protected wilderness area the size of Massachusetts that boasts more species of wildlife than any other park in Africa. Comprised of two separate and self-contained lodging compounds set along the banks of the Sand River, the environmentally harmonious property merges nicely into its pristine surroundings.

Both nine-suite camps possess obliging staffs and the same indulgent amenities, with “Ebony” exuding a more intimate English colonial feel. That said, we personally prefer “Boulders Lodge” furnished in a stunning African motif enhanced with tribal artifacts and brightly colored indigenous textiles. Its soaring open-air lounge represents a masterful work of timbered art and extends to a panoramic observation deck for gazing at elephants and hippos frequenting the river bed below. The lower level of the verandah serves as the site for bountiful buffet breakfasts and lunches. Admirable dinners (backed by

an impressive wine cellar) are served in a book-lined candlelit dining room, or alfresco in a traditional bamboo enclosure (*boma*) around a blazing fire.

The lavish cottage suites possess four-poster beds, separate living areas trimmed by rock fireplaces and huge baths with clawfoot tubs and indoor/outdoor showers. Private plunge pools centerpiece the scenic wildlife-viewing decks, where you can also arrange a soothing massage. Cottage Suite for two, \$1,800, all meals, open bar, laundry, dawn/dusk game drives, mid-day walking safaris and taxes included; Single on request. Tel. (11) 234-0990 or Fax (11) 234-0535.

Singita Lebombo

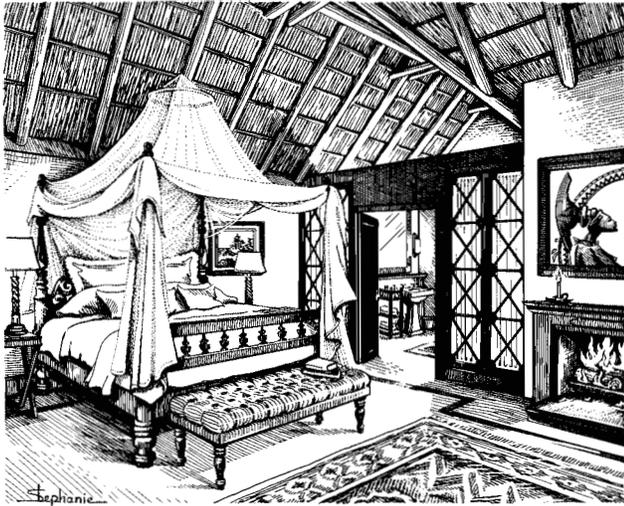
Totally different than other Kruger lodges from the standpoint of its chic contemporary styling and solitary wilderness environment, Singita’s unique new sister property is secluded on the undiscovered eastern boundary of Kruger National Park bordering Mozambique. Twenty timber and glass loft suites cling to panoramic rocky promontories overlooking the Nwanetsi River and fertile, mountain-backed savannah, the spacious baths augmented by alfresco showers. Between game drives, you can enjoy a variety of inviting indoor-outdoor living/dining areas, a cooling lap pool, treetop fitness center and in-room spa treatments.

This is the only private concession in this truly remote and tranquil corner of the park, which is noted for its unusually high concentration of wildlife. Suite for two, \$1,800, all meals, open bar, laundry, dawn/dusk game drives, mid-day walking safaris and taxes included; Single on request. Air transfers can be arranged between the two Singita properties. Tel. (11) 234-0990 or Fax (11) 234-0535.

Royal Malewane

Tucked amid the Thornybush Game Reserve along the western fringe of Kruger National Park in a rich wildlife-filled landscape, this exclusive lodge ranks right up with Singita when it comes to providing a supremely comfortable and memorable safari experience. Affording splendid outlooks into the unspoiled reserve, Royal Malewane’s casually elegant, open-air lounging and dining areas come adorned in evocative English furnishings, African artifacts and Persian carpets arrayed under vaulted thatched roofs reaching heavenward in a web of artistic timberwork. Amiable service and first-rate meals add to the contentment.

Elevated walkways wend from the colonial-style central lodge to six free-standing guest suites with working fireplaces, each unit beautifully appointed with polished wood furniture, Oriental rugs, original art, an imposing four-poster bed, plus a sitting alcove



cupped by a deep-cushioned sofa. Double doors open into a spacious bath equipped with twin sinks, a Victorian clawfoot tub and indoor/outdoor showers. An oversized plunge pool and enticing thatched lounging pavilion with two day beds highlight the scenic deck. The intimate property also offers a palatial two-bedroom Royal Suite that's unrivaled anywhere in the African bush.

Lodge Suite for two, \$1,445, all meals, open bar, dawn/dusk game drives, mid-day walking safaris and taxes included; Single, \$1,090. Two-Bedroom Royal Suite with private butler, chef and game vehicle with private ranger/tracker, \$5,100. Royal Malewane is reached via a one-hour commercial flight from Johannesburg to Hoedspruit (Eastgate Airport), followed by a 40-minute land transfer to the lodge. Tel. (15) 793-0150 or Fax (15) 793-2879.

Londolozi

Another deluxe and imaginatively designed Sabi Sand riverside enclave, Londolozi occupies its own private far-flung game reserve adjacent to Singita. Five independent camps (total of 36 chalets and suites) are connected by trails, each self-contained compound offering a swimming pool, elevated open-air reading/dining lounge and sweeping verandahs for observing wildlife in the picturesque river basin below. We particularly recommend exclusive "Tree Camp," which is shaded by ancient ebony trees and comprised of just six exquisitely appointed cottage suites with luxurious baths and teak decks edged by private plunge pools. Tree Camp Suite for two, \$1,600, all meals, open bar, laundry, dawn/dusk game drives, mid-day walking safaris and taxes included; Single on request. Tel. (11) 809-4300 or Fax (11) 809-4400.

Ulusaba

Richard Branson's recently revitalized safari lodge nestles on the banks of the Mabrak riverbed in the Sabi Sand Game Reserve. The rustic-style enclave

consists of 10 comfy bungalows elevated on stilts and connected by wooden swing bridges, more conveniently situated River #1 and Elephant #2 and #3 being attractive choices. A dramatic central lodge shelters an excellent indoor/outdoor dining room and bar-lounge wrapped by scenic game-viewing decks. Ulusaba also operates Rock Lodge set on a nearby sweeping bluff, but we prefer Safari Lodge for its more authentic bush setting that often provides amazing close-up observations of resident elephants. Elephant Room for two, \$1,260, all meals, open bar, laundry, dawn/dusk game drives, mid-day walking safaris and taxes included; Single, \$940. River Room, \$1,460. Tel. (13) 735-5460 or Fax (13) 735-5171.

Beyond Kruger

Tswalu Kalahari Reserve

Set at the foot of the Korannaberg Mountains in the Northern Cape Province, this remote 220,000-acre desert reserve offers the plush safari ambience of Singita and Royal Malewane, but in a magically contrasting open setting. Owned by the visionary Oppenheimer family (the guiding principals behind the De Beers diamond consortium), the sanctuary represents Africa's largest conservation project devoted to the restoration of Kalahari wildlife. Virtually a lifeless wasteland 10 years ago, Tswalu is now home to 200 bird species and a burgeoning population of more than 12,000 animals, including the rare desert black rhino, sable and roan antelope, lion, cheetah, Cape buffalo, giraffe, zebra and more.

The main camp resembles a traditional African tribal village, its magnificent central lodge topped by a strikingly vaulted thatch roof. Here you will find a refreshing pool, lounge and one of several indoor/outdoor venues (another being Koranna Lookout, a handsome outpost built into a panoramic cliff). Prior to delicious dinners, drinks can be imbibed on lantern-lit dunes or in a special desert shelter that's been constructed for the enjoyment of the area's colorful sunsets. Trimmed by chiseled rock, red clay walls and assorted African artifacts, the nine stylishly revamped guest cottages feature soaring stone fireplaces, expansive baths with soaking tubs and indoor/outdoor showers, plus living room-like verandahs looking out over the tawny landscape capped by a colossal sky that sparkles with a jillion stars at night.

Being a long-term work in progress, wildlife sightings tend to be more low-key and less abundant than Kruger, but then no other safari destination can match the mystical isolation and awesome serenity of Tswalu's desert setting. Cottage Suite for two, \$1,165, all meals, open bar, laundry, dawn/dusk game drives and walking safaris included; Single, \$875. Tswalu is reached via a regularly scheduled 90-minute air charter out of Johannesburg. Tel. (11) 883-7918 or Fax (11) 883-8201.

Cape Town, The Winelands and Scenic Indian Ocean Coast

Many daily 2-hour flights connect Johannesburg and Cape Town. In addition, the famous Blue Train offers a scenic 27-hour overnight journey to Cape Town, which departs Pretoria (near Johannesburg) on select Monday/Wednesday/Friday mornings, arriving in Cape Town at noon the next day. The elegantly restyled train features a dining salon and several spacious club lounge/bar cars, plus butler-serviced guest suites with private baths. Tel. (12) 334-8459 or Fax (12) 334-8464. www.bluetrain.co.za



A strikingly beautiful and urbane city, Cape Town is backdropped by magnificent Table Mountain and a wealth of stunning seaside scenery. Attractively restored Edwardian and Victorian buildings line many of the streets and at the historic docks, the newly fashionable Victoria & Alfred Waterfront has been admirably restored into a series of upscale shopping malls, specialty stores and cafés interspersed with pedestrian plazas and promenades.

A rental car is suggested to explore Cape Town's enchanting environs, the well-maintained and well-signposted roads being easy to drive. Optionally, all of our suggested hotels can arrange a driver-guide for you to tour the area's key sights. Allow a day for the circular tour of the Cape Peninsula, being sure to include a stop at world-renowned Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, the verdant 1,000-acre estate bursting with specimen plants and tropical exotics.

Several days should also be devoted to a leisurely ramble around the fetching wineland valleys that embrace Cape Town (see Page 5). The sprawling estates produce many highly acclaimed vintages and vintners warmly welcome visitors for tastings and cellar tours. And finally, if time allows, proceed east along the ruggedly picturesque Indian Ocean coast to Hermanus and Plettenburg Bay (see Page 5). Bear in mind that the best time to visit safari lodges (mid-

July to late October) is the off-season in Cape Town, though crowd-free September/October can oftentimes be quite lovely, with spring temperatures in the 60s.

Cape Town Hotels

Enviably situated on an animated quay overlooking a yacht basin in the colorful Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, **Cape Grace** is a marvelous luxury choice for those seeking intimate environs and doorstep convenience to many of Cape Town's premier shops. Tastefully furnished and graciously staffed, the distinguished 120-room hotel features a recently restyled restaurant serving excellent regional cuisine, a popular bar-lounge (noted for its single malts and international wines) and large outdoor swimming pool. Superior Double/Single, \$555, breakfast and taxes included; Loft Terrace Room, \$580. Suite, \$875. Tel. (21) 410-7100 or Fax (21) 419-7622.

Recalling the nostalgia of Cape Town's colonial past, the legendary **Mount Nelson Hotel** sits amid seven acres of immaculate lawns and palm-studded gardens, 20 minutes from the V&A Waterfront. A dignified British ambience permeates the 200-room grande dame, which incorporates several "country house" lounges, the formal *Cape Colony Restaurant* and a flower-filled verandah looking out over a large landscaped swimming pool. A bit gloomy in the July-September off-season when the appealing outdoor dining and leisure amenities are closed, "Nellie" nevertheless represents one of those classic properties that's well worth a visit for those who don't mind paying a premium for historic character. Luxury Double/Single, \$705, taxes included. Junior Suite, \$925. Tel. (21) 483-1000 or Fax (21) 424-7472.

Cloistered on the panoramic slopes of Lion's Head in prestigious Bantry Bay (15 minutes west of Cape Town), **Ellerman House** represents the area's most exclusive lodging. Once the home of shipping magnate



Sir John Ellerman, the aristocratic seaside mansion has been gorgeously transformed into a refined full-service boutique hotel. Superb art and antiques decorate the stylish deep-seated parlor and splendid library, as well as a handsome "gentleman's bar" trimmed in rich leather and Table Mountain granite. Memorable dinners are served in a formal dining room complemented by an extensive cellar of South African wines, while lunches can be enjoyed on the oceanfront patio adjacent to an enticing 80-foot freshwater pool set amid the palm-studded lawns.

There are just 11 distinctive Edwardian-flavored accommodations, most opening onto private balconies yielding wonderful sweeps of the bay. An obliging staff can arrange everything, including rental cars and drivers to whisk you to the V&A Waterfront, plus guides for touring the wine district. Deluxe Sea View Double/Single, \$675, breakfast, laundry, airport transfers and taxes included. Sea View Suite, \$960. Tel. (21) 430-3200 or Fax (21) 430-3215.

Wine Country Suggestions

One of the most appealing aspects of Cape Town is its remarkable proximity to South Africa's most renowned wine country, a dramatically scenic region of cloud-wreathed mountains and rural tranquility lying less than an hour's drive outside the city. More than a hundred wineries and all manner of dignified old Cape Dutch farmsteads lace the captivating landscape, where trout streams tumble down lush hillsides planted centuries ago with olive groves and orange orchards.

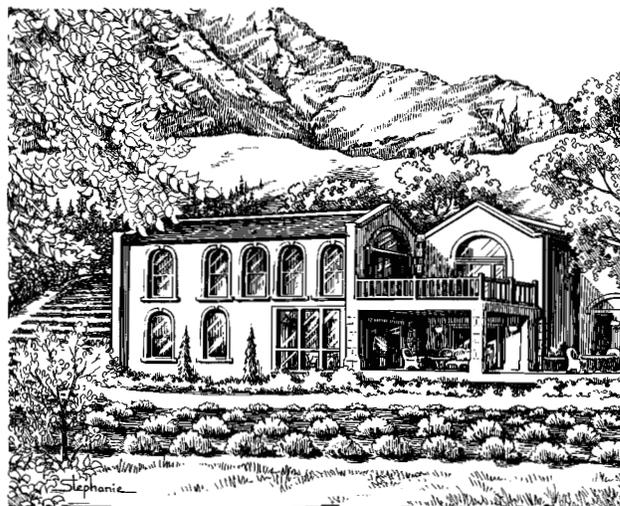
It is possible to tour such sophisticated wineland towns as Stellenbosch, Paarl and Franschhoek on a hectic day excursion from Cape Town, but based on our many visits we suggest a leisurely three-day exploration, using the comely mountain-backed Franschhoek Valley as your touring base. Both our recommended lodgings are tucked away in the quaint and historic village of Franschhoek, which is noted for its appealing bistros, galleries and craft shops.

Exuding a delightful country house-in-the-village feel, **Le Quartier Français** sits at the far end of Franschhoek, its white façade trimmed by windows and doors highlighted in a delicate shade of lavender blue. A dozen or so tables occupy a wide terrace shaded by stately trees and it is here guests and residents alike idly chat over glasses of local wine in anticipation of the inn's superior Cape-Provençal cuisine, served in a charmingly stylish restaurant. A convivial bar completes the intimate public spaces, all ably overseen by a friendly and helpful staff.

Seventeen lodgings are reached through an exquisite garden, where mature trees and boxwood hedges edge a manicured lawn centerpieced by an oval swimming pool. Most of the traditionally furnished units feature high ceilings and wood-

burning fireplaces, the decorative scheme of earth-toned colors harmoniously offsetting the flowers and subtropical vegetation viewed through the windows. Well-equipped baths come with twin sinks, large tubs and separate shower stalls. For the utmost comfort, reserve one of two extra-spacious suites opening onto their own private gardens with plunge pools. Due to the popularity of the dining room, dinner reservations should be made at the same time as your room booking. Deluxe Double/Single, \$310, taxes included, meals extra. Suite, \$595. Tel. (21) 876-2151 or Fax (21) 876-3105.

A grand new discovery, **La Residence** nestles amid vineyards, olive groves and lavender fields on the peaceful fringe of Franschhoek. The splendidly appointed and beautifully sited Tuscan-style villa was designed by Liz Biden (owner of Royal Malewane, see Page 2), its luxurious interior cloaked in a treasure trove of European antiques, Persian carpets and objets d'art. In addition to opulently comfy living and dining areas opening onto a cloistered courtyard pool, the mansion shelters five guest suites, a library and expansive patios backdropped by the region's colorful mountains.



To ensure the privacy of guests, this exclusive winelands gem can only be booked by one couple, family or group of friends. Villa for two (one suite), \$1,985, all meals, beverages, airport transfers, plus private butler, chef and chauffeur for wine country excursions included; Villa for four (two suites), \$2,315; for six (three suites), \$2,650; for eight (four suites), \$2,980; for ten (five suites), \$3,310. Tel. (21) 876-4100 or Fax (21) 876-4822. email: biden@icon.co.za

Hermanus and Plettenberg Bay

Those yearning for a splendid Indian Ocean setting may wish to consider a few days in the popular holiday resort of Hermanus, 90 minutes southeast of Cape Town. A whale-watcher's nirvana, the town spans a formidable line of cliffs and is the best place

in South Africa to view the celebrated annual whale migration, which peaks in September and October.

Birkenhead House (yet another smartly styled new creation of Royal Malewane's Liz Biden), commands a sweeping point overlooking Walker Bay, where many of the whales calve each year. Two beguiling beaches stretch out from either side of the promontory and are reached by a short flight of steps. Well-chosen antiques, cosmopolitan artifacts and inviting deep-seated furnishings embellish the sanctuary's glass-walled central living/dining area and 11 guest accommodations, Room #1 affording especially striking ocean vistas. A panoramic infinity pool and separate two-tiered courtyard pool add to the pleasure of a stay, as do the in-room Swedish/Thai massage treatments, fitness gym and breathtaking nearby cliff path walks. Deluxe Double, \$790, all meals, snacks, house wines/ beverages and laundry included; Deluxe Single, \$590. Tel. (28) 314-8000 or Fax (28) 314-1208.

Another 3½ hours eastward from Hermanus along the famed "Garden Route" brings you to Plettenberg Bay, considered by many as South Africa's most upscale beach resort. During the August-October off-season, exciting boat rides can be taken around the bay for close-up encounters with migrating whales, dolphins and Cape seals. The best seaside address is **The Plettenberg**, a refined and graciously staffed 40-room hotel capping a stunningly scenic headland between two long and glorious beaches. Breakfast and lunch are served in a panoramic indoor/outdoor dining room and dinners in a more formal restaurant specializing in delicious seafood dishes. Seaview Suite for two, \$575, full breakfast, taxes included; Single on request. Premier Seaview Suite, \$665. Tel. (44) 533-2030 or Fax (44) 533-2074.

A sumptuous and idyllic inland option, recently opened **Kurland** encompasses a sublime 1,500-acre private estate between the verdant Outeniqua Mountains and Indian Ocean, 20 minutes east of Plettenberg Bay. The ancestral property of diamond tycoon, Baron Peter Behr, the venerable Cape Dutch homestead has now been transformed into an hospitable luxury country house hotel by the latest generation of heirs. A wealth of antique furniture, Persian carpets and original oils grace the casually patrician main house, its comfy living area leading out to a verandah surveying an enticing swimming pool, immaculate paddocks and serene emerald pastures dotted with polo ponies. Back inside, an intimate candlelit dining room offers excellent regional cuisine and South African wines served by an exceptionally polite and amiable staff.

Twelve thematically designed suites (many with plunge pools) are decorated to the highest standards and feature plush baths with heated floors, huge glass shower stalls, clawfoot tubs and chaise longues.

Ten of these units also offer an additional upstairs children's room, Kurland being unique in welcoming small children, who are also provided their own attractive swimming pool, play area and dining venue. A health/fitness spa, tennis and equestrian pursuits (the hotel boasts one of the finest polo complexes on the African continent!) round out the amenities of this very special spot. Superior Suite for two, \$795, breakfast, dinner, taxes included; Single on request. Tel. (44) 534-8082 or Fax (44) 534-8699.

Something Different

Bushmans Kloof

A magical oasis of impeccable style and comfort, this 15,000-acre wilderness reserve is set amid an ancient landscape of dramatic rock formations, waterfalls and flower-carpeted veld in the foothills of the unspoiled Cederberg Mountains near the Great Karoo Desert (4 hours by car or one hour by charter air north of Cape Town). More a relaxing country house resort than a safari lodge, the unique ecological refuge harbors a wide variety of antelope species and birdlife, all manner of colorful wildflowers (best appreciated in the exuberant springtime months of September and October), plus 130 remarkable Natural Heritage rock art sites left behind by the San Bushman people 10,000 years ago.

The lodge itself comprises a cluster of white-washed single-story buildings scattered across manicured grounds gently sloping down to the Boontjies River, where you may swim in natural rock pools of crystal-clear water. Decorated in a civilized African manner with leather sofas, old hunting trophies and splendid works of art, the luxuriously intimate main house cossets several inviting lounges, a well-stocked library, billiard parlor, indoor/outdoor dining room and walk-in wine cellar. During warm-weather months, meals are also served in a distinctive pavilion, many of the ingredients for the outstanding modern country cuisine being derived from an organic herb, fruit and vegetable kitchen garden.

The 16 handsomely furnished accommodations include nine extra-special suites trimmed by scenic private patios and well-equipped baths with separate shower stalls. A typical two-night stay might include a late afternoon game drive with sundowners after arrival, a guided morning walk to view the Bushman petroglyphs, followed perhaps by a spa treatment and then a dip in one of the lodge's many swimming pools. Suite for two, \$795, all meals, guided rock art walks, game drives and taxes included; Single, \$590. Road and air charter arrangements on request. Tel. (27) 482-2627 or (27) 482-1011.

On The Road

Kennebunkport and the Picturesque Mid-Coast of Maine

Perhaps best known these days as the site of the Bush family compound, Kennebunkport is one of New England's most sophisticated coastal resort communities. Tucked away in the southwest corner of Maine (less than 2 hours from Boston), the village features an abundance of creditable restaurants, art galleries, antique shops and specialty boutiques, along with the requisite leafy streets lined with historic Federal homes.

The White Barn Inn Kennebunkport

This is Maine's class act, a reliably exemplary establishment that not only boasts exceptionally comfortable and well-appointed accommodations, but also one of the finest hotel dining rooms in the country. Though it's located just a short stroll from Kennebunkport's animated town center, the romantic property is nonetheless an oasis of calm, comprised of several classic clapboard buildings, including two stylishly converted barns and a carriage house.

On our latest incognito visit we found ourselves welcomed with customary warmth by the inn's superlative staff, a splendid team trained and motivated by highly experienced GM Roderick Anderson (formerly of Blantyre), who was himself on hand at reception to extend his personal greetings and hospitality to arriving guests. The interior of the main house artfully retains the atmosphere of a charming private home, complete with proper antique furnishings, lavish floral arrangements and teetering piles of books, magazines and newspapers. Heavy fabrics, deep sofas, rocking chairs and walls adorned with period prints and gilded mirrors further enhance the traditional decorative motif.

Two restored Victorian barns shelter the dramatic award-winning restaurant, where candlelit tables laden with crystal, silver and fine linens are strikingly juxtaposed against gnarled beams, weathered siding and rustic 19th-Century farm implements. Executive Chef Jonathan Cartwright and his talented colleague Sebastian Pfeiffer have been justly acclaimed for their inspired marriage of New England ingredients and classic European culinary techniques. Having enjoyed a pre-dinner cocktail in the stylish new piano bar, we settled at our table to savor superb pan-seared scallops on a roasted eggplant and pine nut salad, followed by steamed Maine lobster nestled on a bed of homemade fettuccine with carrot, ginger, snow peas and a cognac coral butter sauce. Understandably, fish and seafood dominate the menu, but meat dishes are not neglected, including such specialties as roasted spring chicken with garlic-whipped potato filling, sautéed veal sweetbreads

and the kitchen's famous seasonal venison loin with preserved Maine blueberries and roasted root vegetables. Heightening the pleasure of the refined dining experience are exceptionally amiable and knowledgeable waiters who are more than happy to discuss the nuances of the various dishes and suggest appropriate accompanying wines.

The 25 guest quarters vary considerably and include six newly renovated, king-bedded junior suites outfitted with working log fireplaces, overstuffed chairs, writing desks, CD stereo systems and wide-screen plasma TVs. Luxurious bathrooms come with glass-enclosed deluge showers, whirlpool tubs, white marble vanities and distinctive black granite floors. For the utmost spaciousness, opt for one of the cathedral-ceilinged May's Cottage Suites or the new Loft Suite, all featuring separate fireplaced living rooms, private patios and oversized marble baths equipped with two-person Jacuzzis and steam showers. For a longer stay, consider one of the inn's three Wharf Cottages located two-tenths of a mile away on the banks of the Kennebunk River. Each of these units offers a fireplace, kitchenette and waterfront patio, as well as twice-daily maid service and a specially delivered morning breakfast basket.

In addition to its exalted restaurant, The White Barn possesses a spectacular 50-foot heated swimming pool nestled in a tranquil woodland setting of birch and pine. Massages, facials and herbal body wraps are available in poolside cabanas and a light "bistro menu" is served here at lunchtime. Junior Suite for one or two, \$590, bountiful continental breakfast included; May's Cottage or Loft Suite, \$675-\$725. Wharf Cottage, \$545. Special off-season rates on request. Open year-round. No children under age 12. No smoking. Jacket for dinner. Tel. (207) 967-2321 or Fax (207) 967-1100.

The Inn at Sunrise Point Camden

It's a 2½-hour drive north from Kennebunkport to beautiful Penobscot Bay and the picture-postcard mid-coast of Maine. En route and not far from Camden, be sure to stop in Rockland and visit the extraordinary Farnsworth Art Museum showcasing the iconic works of three generations of Wyeths, as well as the classic landscapes and portraits of such renowned American artists as Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakins, Fitz Hugh Lane and others. A few miles farther on lies the wonderfully picturesque village of Rockport with its own impressive art center exhibiting the handcrafted objects and paintings of contemporary Maine artists.

A fetchingly pretty seaside village in its own right, mountain-backed Camden climbs up a steep

hillside overlooking an astonishingly colorful harbor filled with everything from simple sailing vessels and working lobster boats to grandly evocative windjammers and sleek million-dollar yachts. Many interesting shops, galleries and cafés embrace the docks, the latter providing perfect front row seats for observing the lively waterfront spectacle.

At times it seems that every third building on High Street houses a lodging of some sort, but none are really special. The exception hides 10 minutes outside town, down a wooded dirt road where a bright yellow sign advises passersby to beware of a wandering moose. Press on and at the bottom of the hill you will come upon the serenely sited Inn at Sunrise Point, a traditional 1920s shingle-style residence fronting a wide expanse of lawn affording mesmerizing vistas of the island-studded bay.

Recently purchased by Stephen and Deanna Tallon (an affable couple from Ireland and Australia respectively), the engaging porch-trimmed compound encompasses a picture-window dining room, sunny conservatory and relaxing cherry-paneled library. Three smallish, but pleasantly furnished guest quarters occupy the second floor, however, the prized accommodations are the five spacious cottages dotting the grounds. All are similarly appointed with oceanview decks, fireplaced sitting areas, wet bars, TV/VCRs and well-equipped baths featuring oversized whirlpool tubs, separate shower stalls and plush lounging robes. "Fitz Hugh Lane" resides just ten feet from the edge of a cliff, where you can hear the sea lap soothingly on the rocky beach below; also suggested is the new "J & L Cottage" with a kitchen and separate living room affording a stunning seaside outlook, plus equally panoramic "Winslow Homer" located 100 yards away at the opposite end of the shoreline.

Each morning a hearty breakfast of homemade pancakes, blueberry muffins, fresh fruit and such is served in the main house in a room looking out on the bay, where porpoises and seals are almost a daily sight. High above, ospreys and eagles hang effortlessly on the steady breezes. For lunch and dinner, you are spoiled for choice by numerous restaurants in Camden and Lincolnville Beach, the *Atlantica* in Camden serving excellent fresh fish and seafood in a notably animated setting.

Cocooned from the hectic and tourist-oriented summer world of downtown Camden, this casually sophisticated hideaway represents an idyllic base for exploring the surrounding region. In addition to touring the coastal villages, scenic hikes can be taken in nearby Camden Hills State Park, as well as day trips to the timeless islands of Islesboro and Monhegan. Cottage for one or two, \$320-\$415, full breakfast included. Open year-round. No smoking. Tel. (207) 236-7716 or Fax (207) 236-0820.

Publisher's Announcement

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Like most sophisticated travelers you want the assurance of knowing you're receiving the best price available when you reserve rooms at the world's finest hotels and resorts. You also appreciate the recognition and extra courtesies provided to special VIP guests. That is why we established Andrew Harper's Q Club.

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You should receive your personal Q Club invitation sometime this week. If it does not arrive by August 6, please phone us at (800) 375-4685, or go to AndrewHarperTravel.com and click on 'Q Club.'

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