

Conference Check Hoedspruit



Kapama River Lodge

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

14 000 hectares of a private Eden, with a luxurious 5-star lodge and spa at its epicentre – Kapama is both extra-special and exquisite. As a destination it sets new standards in the conferencing arena – and I would recommend it without hesitation for any number of reasons, not least of which would be the very healthy staff attitude, the customer experience, fabulous accommodation, great meals, a stunning conference centre and spa, plus an exquisite game viewing experience. It's all at a middle-market price – well below what you'd expect.

Sure, it's a little further away than you might want to travel – but consider this: I stayed with a conference group from Johannesburg who had travelled by coach – and no one complained about the 5-hour trip – which is obviously shorter by car – and quicker still by scheduled flights into Eastgate Airport at Hoedspruit – literally across the road from the reserve entrance.

WHERE IS IT?

By road, take either the N12 or N4 from Johannesburg to Witbank and then the R540 towards Belfast, Dullstroom and Lydenburg. Next, drive the R36 to Orighstad, through the Strydom Tunnel, and at Hoedspruit take the R40 to Klaserie.

Continue on the R40 towards Nelspruit and Klaserie. Pass the Eastgate Airport / Timbavati turn-off on the left and continue for about another 7 km along the R40. Look out for the Kapama Game Reserve signs on the left-hand side and enter the reserve via the thatched roof entrance gate. The gate is manned on a 24-hour basis.

Alternatively, South African Express Airways operates two flights daily between Johannesburg and Eastgate Airport flying De Havilland Dash 8 aircraft, carrying 50 passengers.

LODGE FACILITIES

42 en suite bedrooms and 20 brand-new spa suites are luxurious with distinctly African furnishings and log-beam ceilings under thatch. It's five stars all the way – without TV in the rooms – which at first seems odd, but becomes very, very unimportant as one blends into the style and serenity of the surroundings. (For those occasions when you really want to catch up on world news or watch a sports game there is a stunning underground Media Room).

The central guest areas boast a large rim-flow swimming pool overlooking the river bed, and a long, L-shaped relaxation lounge and bar under double-volume thatch curves around it. On either side is a huge, double-sided fireplace.

The boma dining area has tables arranged under a low thatch in a horseshoe curve around a roaring outdoor fire that gives a glow to evening meals and it is an exquisite setting. It all has the feeling of a luxurious home from home (assuming, of course, you're used to living in a multi-million rand property).

CONFERENCE FACILITIES

The lodge offers a sophisticated and separate African-styled indoor event

and outdoor dining complex which can comfortably seat up to 170 delegates in classroom style or 350 in cinema style. Immediately adjacent to the River Lodge itself several other accommodation packages on the reserve are available for bigger groups. My group of 80 fitted and blended in well with the space which was very comfortable. The lodge supplies standard conferencing equipment and a technician and sound system as part of its package.

Teambuilding and amazing animal adventure packages (including the darting and study of animals with a resident veterinarian) are available at remarkably realistic prices.

VERDICT

One of the finest South African lodge properties I've seen. It's a must-use venue.

PRICE

From R1750 per person sharing, including all conference facilities, full English breakfast, light luncheon and dinner in the open-air boma or thatched dining room. (Special bush dinners can be arranged), teas, coffees, cakes, pastries and afternoon snacks and 2 game drives daily (including night drive by spotlight) in open safari vehicles, accompanied by experienced rangers and expert Shangaan trackers. ■

Michael Jackson

CONTACT

Call +27 (0)12 368 0600 or
email res@kapama.co.za
Website: www.kapama.co.za

