

leisure

Keeping you up to date on your local theatre, music and movies

Immerse yourself in nature without sacrificing life's little luxuries

● Set on a working farm on the Garden Route, AfriCamps at Oakhurst offers travellers the best of both worlds

Kathryn Kimberley

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There's a particular kind of traveller who loves the idea of the outdoors — the fresh air, the wide-open spaces, the soundtrack of birdsong — but quietly draws the line at roughing it.

I count myself firmly among them. Give me nature, yes, but with good coffee, a hot shower and a comfortable bed at the end of the day.

That's why glamping, with its seamless blend of wilderness and comfort, feels like the perfect compromise.

Recently, my family of four took that compromise one step further, immersing ourselves in nature on a working dairy farm in the heart of the Garden Route — without sacrificing life's little luxuries.

AfriCamps at Oakhurst is set on Oakhurst Farm, one of the few remaining large working farms along the Garden Route.

Spanning an impressive 640 hectares — including 200ha of pristine fynbos and indigenous forest — the setting is as expansive as it is serene.

The eight boutique glamping tents are positioned to overlook rolling green fields and the majestic Outeniqua Mountains, offering a front-row seat to both the rugged beauty of Wilderness and the quieter rhythms of farm life.

Cows and horses graze lazily nearby, while baboons, farm dogs and chickens add to the authenticity of the experience.



The eight boutique glamping tents offer a front-row seat to both the rugged beauty of Wilderness and the quieter rhythms of farm life Picture:Kathryn Kimberley

It's a place where children can roam freely and reconnect with the outdoors — something our daughter and son, aged 11 and eight, embraced wholeheartedly after a long school term.

From the moment our booking was confirmed, the experience felt personal.

Friendly staff kept in touch via WhatsApp, checking in on our journey and ensuring everything was ready for our arrival.

rival.

By the time we reached our tent just after lunch on Saturday, our pre-ordered braai baskets and a generous supply of wood (available to pre-order) — for both the fire and the hot



A generous breakfast basket can be pre-ordered and delivered to your tent Picture:Kathryn Kimberley

tub — were already waiting.

After settling in, we made our way to the farm's conference centre, where the Springbok-Barbarians match was being broadcast on a big screen.

The atmosphere was lively, with fellow guests and even a few locals gathered to watch.

With the wood-fired pizza oven blazing, we grabbed a couple of pizzas from the farm stall, slid them into the oven and settled in with drinks as the excitement unfolded.

It wasn't long before our son and his new friends had assembled their own impromptu little rugby team on the lawns.

Back at our tent, the evening took on a slower, more relaxed pace.

We lit the private wood-fired hot tub and fired up the built-in braai — the perfect setting to celebrate SA's win.

The glamping tents sleep up to five people and are thoughtfully equipped with everything you need: a Buitengewoon wood-fired hot tub, indoor fireplace, electric blankets, Wi-Fi, a

spacious rain shower, and a fully functional open-plan kitchen complete with gas stove, bar fridge and air conditioning.

Sliding doors open onto a spacious wooden deck, which quickly became our favourite spot.

Here, surrounded by sweeping views and the gentle sounds of birds and cattle, time seemed to slow down.

Dinner was effortless, thanks to the braai basket — beautifully packaged and filled with a selection of meats, garlic rolls, seasonal vegetables, a fresh salad, and marshmallows for the children to toast.

While the kids soaked in the hot tub, we got cooking, ending the evening with full plates and even fuller hearts.

The next morning brought another highlight: a generous breakfast basket filled with sausages, bacon, free-range eggs, English muffins, cheese, muesli, Oakhurst yoghurt, fresh farm milk, fruit, juice, butter, jam and freshly ground coffee.

It was the kind of breakfast that invites you to linger a little longer.

With full bellies, we headed to the stables for a guided horse ride through the forest, fields and hills of Oakhurst.

Our guide, Kathryn, was patient and attentive, making sure the children felt confident before letting them ride independently.

I, meanwhile, quietly bonded with my horse, Strider, who made the experience all the more memorable.

The adventure continued at the farm dam, where we grabbed life jackets and paddles for a leisurely canoe — one of several complimentary activities available to guests.

With the water still and the weather near perfect, it was the perfect spot for sundowners.

Back on land, the farm continued to offer simple, wholesome pleasures.

The children delighted in feeding and grooming the horses, and we even got to meet — and feed — a pair of

particularly endearing donkeys.

Playgrounds scattered across the property cater to all ages, with swings, trampolines, basketball hoops, a bike park and more, while a swimming pool offers relief during the warmer months.

For those wanting to explore further, there are opportunities to visit the dairy, watch milking in action, feed the chickens, or take on various hiking and biking trails.

Beyond the farm, the greater Wilderness area opens up into the iconic Garden Route — a region celebrated for its unspoiled beaches, rivers, lakes and lagoons.

When Monday morning arrived, we weren't quite ready to leave. After one last stop at the farm stall for coffee, we packed up and headed home — relaxed, recharged and already dreaming about our next visit.

Since launching its first tent in 2014, AfriCamps has grown into a sought-after collection of outdoor destinations, now boasting more than 200 handcrafted tents across 19 locations in SA — from the Klein Karoo and Cape Winelands to Zululand, Magoebaskloof and the fringes of the Kruger National Park.

For those of us who love nature but aren't quite ready to give up our comforts, it's proof that you really can have the best of both worlds.

● This was a sponsored trip. The views remain that of the reporter.

Gig guide for Nelson Mandela Bay



diary@arena.africa

QUILT FESTIVAL

The 23rd SA National Sew Awareness quilt festival will be held at Collegiate Girls' High School on July 7-10 from 8am to 5.30pm and on July 11 from 8am to 1pm.

Expect exhibitions, workshops, classes, demos, lectures, vendors, a coffee shop, raffles, lucky draws, shopping and much more.

Register for the full week at R340 which includes a goodie bag and a shoulder bag.

The cost for day visitors is R75 for adults, R45 for scholars and free to under 12s.

Inquiries: www.sewawareness.co.za

THRIFT GO

There are some fabulous items to be found at GQ's preloved clothing markets at the weekend, including:

● PE Moth Bowls Club, 37 Albany Road, Central, on Saturday from 9am to 1pm;

● Vovotelo Bakery and Café in Walmer on Sunday from 9am to 1pm.

Shop for ladies and men's preloved clothing and accessories at prices to suit every budget.

Inquiries: 082-857-7563

SAAF MUSEUM

Step into a world of aviation history. Visit the SA Air Force Museum Port Elizabeth in Forest Hill Drive.

Opening times are Tuesdays to Thursdays from 9am to 3pm, Fridays from 9am to 1pm,

Saturdays from 9am to 3pm and Sundays from 10am to 4pm. The museum is closed on public holidays.

Entry is free but donations are welcome.

Inquiries: Morné 079-600-6216

FARMERS' MARKET

The Van Stadens River Farmers' Association will host a farmers' market and auction at Fitches Corner on Saturday from 9am to 3pm.

The auction will include poultry and other goods. Exhibitors, food stalls and fresh produce will be available.

Public entrance is free. The market is pet friendly.

Inquiries: Johan, 071-910-2651

DIE SAAM TREK

Algoa Regional Council presents Die Saam Trek, a night filled with worship, praise and unforgettable moments at Ebeneser International, Algoa Park, on Saturday from 4pm.

Tickets are available from Quicket at R180 per person.

Inquiries: Fiona, 083-316-0000 or Elrich, 073-140-0912

MUSIC TRIVIA

EddieMacs@VP will host a music trivia fundraiser on Friday at 6pm.

Get your team together, put your music knowledge to the test, and support Rebecca, who has been selected to represent Eastern Province in the SA Country Districts hockey tournament.

namet. The cost is R100 per person for tables of six to eight.

Bookings: Michelle Batista, 082-424-5876

NIGHT MARKET

The What's Good in the Hood food and craft night market will be held at 60 Willow Road, Fairview, on Friday from 5pm to 9pm.

Public entrance is free. There is safe parking and the market is pet friendly.

LET'S GO HIKING

Enjoy a weekend of hiking in nature with a choice of several hikes, varying from easy to moderate fitness levels, including:

● Maitlands Nature Reserve hike — a moderate 8km hike on Saturday with hike leaders Jean-Marc and Ryan. Meet at the reserve at 8.15am. The cost is R30 per person;

● Breath-taking Sacramento Trail — an easy 8km hike on Saturday with hike leaders Andre and Juan. Meet at the Schoenies cannon at 8.15am. The cost is R30;

● Black Mamba trail hike at 3 River Trails — an easy 6km hike on Sunday with hike leader Gareth. Meet at Crossways Kitchen at 8.15am. The cost is R100 per person.

Bookings: Visit the Let's Go Hiking Port Elizabeth Facebook page

WINDSONG BOHEMIAN MARKET

The Windsong Bohemian Market will take place at The Green, Holmeleigh Farm, on Saturday from 9.30am to 2pm.

This is a quirky bohemian market featuring food trucks, handcrafted goods from local crafters, farmers and artists, a farm pub and fun activities.

There is loads of safe parking. Regret no dogs.

Inquiries: windsong.boho.market@gmail.com

MODEL TRAIN RIDES

The Port Elizabeth Model Locomotive Society will host a public running day at 33 Stella Londt Drive, Sunridge Park, on Sunday from 10am to 12.45pm.

Tickets cost R10 per person per ride (cash only).

CROSSWAYS VILLAGE MARKET

Head down to the Crossways Village Market on Sunday from 9am to 2pm.

Enjoy live music, food trucks, farmers' produce, homemade delicacies, arts and crafts, toys, fashion, décor, plant and flower stalls.

EVERYTHING FRENCH

This July celebrate Bastille Day at Alliance Francaise in Richmond Hill while enjoying delicious French-inspired food, live entertainment and a festive atmosphere filled with music, culture and community.

Young explorers can discover the magic of French through their Kid's Club, while adults are invited to cook, create and connect. Whip up the perfect chocolate mousse, carve your own masterpiece at their Sip & Craft: Lino Printing workshop, enjoy award-winning French cinema.

Inquiries: 063-499-4417

MARKET IN THE PARK

Market in the Park will be held in St George's Park on Sunday from 9am to 1pm.

Browse the many stalls, including bric-a-brac, vinyl records, plants, crafts, toys, collectables, music, bags, food and much more.

Inquiries: Maureen, 082-257-4691

To be featured in the weekly events guide, email your event details to diary@arena.africa

Neighbourhood pub that stood the test of time



When he was a pre-pint (yet to qualify as a half-pint), the City Slukker was often perplexed, with his face glued to a passenger car window (instead of a beer), by the sign which read "off sales".

What did it mean? If something was off, why were they selling it? And why were they usually close to hotels?

Time, of course, usually reveals all. And instead of just asking his dad, he eventually figured out that this was where you could buy a bottle of your favourite tipple without going into the bar. Simply put: a liquor store.

These were the days — a tad nostalgic if you are of an age to remember — when the only pubs were to be found in hotels.

These establishments were the only ones able to obtain a licence.

In PE/GQ, think Farmers' Home, Edward, Grand, Hollywood, Grotto (Beach), Walmer Gardens, Hunters and of course that Vegas of venues, Lillie's — all in hotels.

Sounds a little archaic now but that was how slukking worked.

And your "off sales" could



Brewmaster Pub & Grill is a neighbourhood pub with good old-fashioned grub

be around the corner from your accommodations or on the other side of town — linked by some invisible umbilical cord which only made sense to the Liquor Board back in the day, which of course makes you wonder what they were thinking (or drinking).

The Slukker mentions all this pub-formation because suddenly, around the late '80s, the "independent" bar opened its fridges and one of the very first was the Blinking Owl in Newton Park (which got everyone blinking and created a fresh generation of night owls).

Of course, Sundays were still out of bounds (and rounds) unless you were having a meal which prompted one inventive beachfront bar to offer R5 hot dogs.

Hardly anyone ate them, but you could then order a

frostie and pretend to nibble your doggie.

But back to the Owl. And then, of course, there was The Brewmaster in 3rd Avenue, Newton Park.

And it's still there to this day. It may have changed hands and shaken thousands over the years, but it still remains unapologetically what it set out to be: a neighbourhood pub with good old-fashioned grub and grub.

So CS popped in to see what it looks like these days and contrary to popular belief, some things don't change (except prices naturally, which simply means more price and less change).

There are plenty of meal specials like steak, egg and chips for two people for R180. Plus a wide variety of burgers, baskets, salads, ribs and

other dishes to select from.

All in all, a great buzz and really good food. Can't be faulted.

(Ratings out of 5) BEER BAROMETER: (5) Good beer and ice cold at a good price.

BITE BAROMETER: (4): Steak, egg and chips special among a thoroughly extensive menu of different menu options.

BUZZ BAROMETER: (4): Great buzz and all the trimmings.

BOG BAROMETER: (5) Clean and well maintained. Venue: The Brewmaster, 3rd Avenue, Gqeberha

Contact: 041-365-3591 All pub visits are unannounced and drinks and meals are paid for in full.

Prices are accurate at time of publication.