

THE OBSERVATORY

ESCAPE TO A NEW KIND OF ISLAND



Surrounded by the diverse Waterberg region and overlooking the Palala Valley lies Leobo Private Reserve, a 12 000-acre estate encompassing rugged rocks, bushveld savannah, natural streams and an abundance of wildlife. This magnificent, malaria-free destination provides the setting for an exclusive private house, the Observatory, designed by award-winning architects Silvio Rech and Lesley Carstens.

The dynamic duo have received a list of accolades which include (among many more) Tatler Traveller's most Innovative Design of the year 1997 (North Island, Seychelles), Most Consistently Brilliant Hotel 2008, Designer of the Year 2011 (Randlords) by the interior Design Institute of SA and most recently, 2nd place in World Building of the Year (Villa) 2012.



After working on developing the Platinum Collection of Bush Camps for Wilderness Safaris for many years, the architects developed a signature which enhances natural forms, shapes, textures and colours of Africa. With a varied setting such as the Waterberg, which offers spectacular mountain terrain, a rich archaeological and cultural legacy, in addition to an astounding array of flora and fauna indigenous to the area, the challenge was to design a house that highlights the African experience.

The owner of the Observatory, Rory Sweet and his wife Liz, shared their enthusiasm and plenty of input with Silvio and Les to bring to fruition an innovative African Villa that speaks a diverse vocabulary in terms of structure and design.

The house consists of a cellular conglomerate that is true to African structural design, like huts around a kraal. As each part unfolds, the visitor is filled with a sense of wonder which reflects Rory and Liz' vibrant personalities and love for adventure. The extraordinary dome which houses the astronomical observatory was sourced by Rory in America; star-gazing in the bush suddenly acquires a touch of scientific precision. Tucked under this dome is an eccentric double-storey library with an open fireplace which is an explorer's haven, with authentic books on Africana and modern day adventure.

The Rech/Carstens ethos involves using local craftsmen, local materials and style in order to create authentic pieces of furniture and interiors. For instance, the immense hippo-skeleton chandelier which hovers over the sandstone dining table, or the wildebeest-hide ceiling in the small lounge and the beautiful beaded light -fittings which hang like multiple pearl necklaces over a window frame.

The astounding expanse of the living area allows guests to enjoy an uninterrupted panorama, thanks to a steel-engineered roof which does away with any columns needed to support a covered veranda. This space leads to a heated infinity pool which blends in beautifully with its natural surroundings. For a "James Bond in the Bush" experience, an outer flight of stairs leads to the sunset deck where you can soak in the Jacuzzi with a drink whilst looking at the stars.

Gourmet meals will be created by a renowned and expert chef who will be flown in especially to cook epicurean cuisine meeting every guest's preference and requirement. Fresh, local produce will be used. A butler is also on hand to attend to all beverages and to administrate the household staff. Activities include thermal imaging equipment for night time game viewing, 4 x quad bikes, 2 x 700cc racing quad bikes, and an electric camouflage golf buggy. If you want to add to the sounds of the bushveld, there is a multi-room music system and a starlight safari by local astronomer Dr Phil Calcot will captivate you, as he picks out the various planets and stars with a high powered laser pointer.



The Observatory is a veritable feast for all the senses, an inimitable space with its bespoke interiors and African cutting edge style that somehow does not impact on the beauty of the Waterberg. As a result of the owner's spirit of adventure together with the visionary architectural design, this unique destination will undoubtedly leave you spellbound. ♦

The Observatory is a veritable feast for all the senses, an inimitable space with its bespoke interiors and African cutting edge style that somehow does not impact on the beauty of the Waterberg. As a result of the owner's spirit of adventure together with the visionary architectural design, this unique destination will undoubtedly leave you spellbound. ♦

For more information:
www.leoboprivatereserve.com
The Observatory is only booked on an exclusive basis for small groups.

Bookings: Reservations@fish-i.co.za
Tel no 087 808 1513