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hello spring



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POSH GLAMPING

Posh Tents are exactly what you get at the Canvas Collective Africa tented camp, which roams between three countryside locations in the Western Cape according to season.

Words: Carrie Hampton





“When thousands of primary-colour flowers follow the sun, and the night sky sprinkles millions of stars over the scene, there can be no place on earth I would rather be.”

Camping, yes, but not as you know it. Ten tents, each the size of a bachelor flat, with king-size beds and an en-suite shower bathroom, gather around a fire pit lauded over by a chandeliered bar and dining cabin made of glass, steel and canvas.

Like many exclusive safari camps, the Posh Tent Experience is a fully-inclusive tariff of fine wines and chef-made gourmet cuisine, with a pampered breakfast-in-bed option and morning mimosa cocktails positively encouraged. Pot still brandy sipped in the wood-fired hot tub under a sparkling milky way completes the indulgences.

This was my experience in the Posh Tent Overberg location. The camp is situated in late summer-autumn, deep in the scenic hills and valleys of Porcupine Hills Guest Farm, some 20km from Bot River. The hills are doodled with trails for do-it-yourself or guided hikes, and the uphill effort is worth the views of the Riviersonderend mountains, whose sandstone peaks separate the Breede River Valley from the Overberg.

On the circular route back from my 4km hike, I couldn't resist

following the signs to the secret forest, which delivered hide-and-seek nooks, a tree swing and a path to a pond with a couple of canoes. The child in our group charmed the camp staff, stoked the fire and ran wild in nature. Children under 12 stay free on a sofa-bed or in the parent's king-size if they are willing. There's a catering supplement for children over 12.

In advance of the spring flowers, the camp relocates to the Cederberg's Biedouw Valley, where each tent nestles on a bed of blossoms. The linear positioning of the tents overlooking a dam lends more privacy than Overberg's horseshoe layout. The arrangement with the new owner of this land was a stroke of luck, as such a sought-after site is hard to come by. There are bike and hiking trails, Bushmen paintings to be discovered, and wild horses roaming this land. When thousands of primary-colour flowers follow the sun and the night sky sprinkles millions of stars over the scene, there can be no place on earth I would rather be.

In summer, the camp removes to its third locale overlooking the historic town of Tulbagh. Fringed on



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three sides by grand mountainous scenery, the town's complete history is revealed by a saunter along Church Street, boasting the most heritage buildings in one short road.

I wondered how such an extensive camp set-up could just pack up and leave. But, co-owner Dez Lundy tells me, "I've set up incentive group camps with 750 tents, so 10 luxury tents aren't a problem for me!" He explains that it takes about three days to dismantle, three days to move to the next location and 10 days to set up, with help from electricians, plumbers, and engineers to install the unseen scaffolding supporting the restaurant structure. It's a tread lightly approach, leaving no scars on the landscape.

The whole concept for the Posh Tents arose in lockdown when Samara Stern and Dez Lundy met at the non-profit Ladles of Love feeding scheme. Sam's family had become financial supporters of this charity, and Dez became a volunteer. Dez's operations expertise and innate charm brought in 48 tons of donated vegetables per week, feeding 50 000 people. In addition, Sam's event management and business experience helped her initiate a sandwich drive achieving a World Record of 320 000 sandwiches

made in one hour.

Philanthropy and innovation brought these two young people together, and they featured in a newspaper article entitled *Lockdown Love*. Their people-focused ethic continues in their Posh Tents endeavour, which supports seven staff and their extended families, with extra waiters and kitchen staff hired locally. "We had an exciting COVID," says Samara. "We started a business at the worst time, but with my events experience and Dez's tented camp know-how, we knew we could make our dream a reality." They fully conceptualised their Posh Tent Experience in just one year, and the Canvas Collection Africa was born. They decided to go with an upmarket product and have created a luxurious, pampered experience. The 5-star tents have high-quality bedding, electric blankets, a fan heater and a Nespresso machine, and the wine and food include vintage Cape wines, MCC, breakfast, lunch, plated gourmet dinner, room mini-bar and a midnight snack pack. It costs R6 500 per tent per night, with Winter Specials on offer.

This delightful high-end Posh Tent glamping is for those who want to be in nature but still have the home comforts they know and love.

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