

De Hoop Reserve - a must-visit destination for nature lovers

 By [Robin Fredericks](#)

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De Hoop Nature Reserve, home to the De Hoop Collection, is a nature lover's dream. Situated in the Overberg and about three to four hours from Cape Town, the reserve is the perfect getaway for travellers to experience spectacular views and connect with nature.



A favoured destination for hikers, cyclists, and bird watchers, the reserve spans 36,000 hectares of land and boasts diverse ecosystems, wetlands, coastal dunes, fynbos, and forests.

As a marine protected area, and one of Cape Nature's flagship nature reserves, the reserve is famous for being a breeding ground for the Southern Right Whale, which frequents from June to November. It provides habitat to an array of wildlife including bontebok and the Cape Mountain Zebra, as well as eland, grey rhebok, baboon, and yellow mongoose.

If you're looking for a truly unique experience, the Vulture Experience is not to be missed. You'll hike up to the Vulture Deck on Potberg Mountain, where you can watch these magnificent birds swoop and soar above you. It's an experience you won't forget in a hurry, and the views are spectacular.



For those interested in marine life, the interpretative marine walk is a must-do. Led by a qualified guide, you'll explore rock pools and sandy beaches at Koppie Alleen and learn about the fascinating marine life that calls the reserve home.





In addition to hiking and marine walks, De Hoop Nature Reserve offers an opportunity to explore the Vlei through an Eco Boat Cruise. The cruise is a great way to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of the reserve.

The one to two-hour cruise takes visitors through the Vlei where they can enjoy birdlife, game, otters, and if lucky, spot a porcupine. Here, knowledgeable guides provide information about the reserves history and the importance of protecting the ecosystem.

De Hoop also offers a wide variety of accommodations, including self-catering options and the recently restored and refurbished De Mond Villa, where visitors can enjoy breathtaking views and natural wonders of the reserve in style over a two-night stay. The villa is fully catered and guided - a minimum of five guests per night - and includes guided activities, excluding the eco-boat cruise and the vulture experience.



The villa features five ensuite bedrooms, an elegant interior, a boma, and a swimming pool, and overlooks the stunning Ramsar vlei, which is home to a plethora of birdlife and wildlife. It is a modern and vibrant accommodation, with a spacious yet cosy interior. The accommodation is catered, with a focus on local cuisine and ingredients.





I found the ambience of the villa to be relaxing. The refreshing and invigorating crisp morning air is perfect for morning yoga with stunning views of the Vlei. In the evenings, sitting around the fire with delicious Potjiekos, while stargazing, is an incredible experience.

In addition, the new De Hoop Trail - "Vlei to Whales" a four-day, 38km guided walking experience promises to be unforgettable, with the villa providing a fully catered and guided experience.

Another stop to make at the reserve is that of The Fig Tree restaurant, which offers a stylish dining area overlooking the vlei.

The menu has a little something for everyone, with a range of delicious and locally sourced cuisine, including fresh seafood, game meats, and vegetarian options. William's wine cellar at The Fig Tree is also home to over 3,000 acclaimed wines.

An additional experience to try is about an hour and a half's drive from De Hoop Nature Reserve in Stanford, where Lady Stanford River Cruises offers leisurely cruises and canoeing down the tranquil Klein River.

The cruise, which takes place on a modern, eco-friendly boat, can accommodate up to 26 passengers and is manned by experienced guides who are happy to share their knowledge of the area and the river.



Five reasons to visit the De Hoop Nature Reserve

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De Hoop Nature Reserve will leave you with memories of beautiful beaches, stunning landscapes and unforgettable wildlife. It's the perfect getaway for nature lovers, those who want to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life, and those who appreciate stunning views and a good book. It is also a chance to fall in love with a hidden gem in the Western Cape, a place of unparalleled peace and tranquillity, and one of the Cape's last unspoiled places.

It will leave you feeling refreshed and renewed - a perfect destination for mind, body and soul.

De Hoop Collection and the Landy Stanford are both members of Cape Country Routes.

Robin Fredericks was a guest of the De Hoop Collection.

ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

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