

The Big Six

By Laura Holt

South African villas



Explorers Club Franschhoek

An hour's drive from Cape Town leads to the vineyards of Franschhoek. Here, adventurer and antiques collector Jo Sinfield has designed a group of stylish self-catering rentals dotted throughout the town. The main one is Explorers Club which sleeps six adults and four children in a mixture of doubles and bunks. It has vintage maps on the walls, recycled furniture and subtle African accents throughout. Three other properties – The Library, Cook's Cottage and The Map Room – are available for smaller groups.

► Explorers Club, 18 Wilhelmina Street, Franschhoek (00 27 72 464 1240; explorersclub.co.za). Nightly rental R5,900 (£415). Sleeps 10.



Wilderness Haven Wilderness

The wild coastal town of Wilderness is known as a top whale-watching spot. Here, you can stroll the shore for a close-up, or spot tail fins flicking from the sun deck of this four-bedroom villa. The outdoor space at Wilderness Haven is exceptional, with dining tables, a pool and sunbeds scattered around a series of wooden decks. Sliding doors channel the cool sea breeze inside, where the double-height reception room looks up to thick bamboo beams.

► Wilderness Haven, 51 Ocean Drive, Wilderness (Bookings: 00 27 44 535 9073; plettvillas.co.za). Nightly rental R5,700 (£404). Sleeps eight.



Soul Arch Plettenberg

Soul Arch stands behind the sweeping dunes of Plettenberg Bay – a key stop along the coastal Garden Route. Built from reclaimed timber and lightweight wood, it resembles an upscale beach hut from the outside, with stacked surfboards and a pool adding to the laid-back feel. Tribal fabrics, handwoven rugs and well-stocked bookshelves lend texture, while the high-spec kitchen and leather dining chairs bring a touch of modern class.

► Soul Arch, Gemini Drive, Plettenberg Bay (Bookings: 00 27 21 790 0972; perfecthideaways.co.za). Nightly rental from R6,200 (£439). Sleeps seven.



Seahorse Cape Town

This whitewashed bungalow stands on the shore of Bakoven, a quiet seaside suburb of Cape Town. Everything here is geared towards the sea – with a lofty lounge, airy bedrooms and several outdoor spaces all facing out towards the mighty Atlantic Ocean. Inside, nautical furnishings and dark oak floors blend with draped white curtains and freestanding tubs. The beachside cafés of Camps Bay and the spectacular scenery of Cape Town are within reach.

► Seahorse, Beta Road, Bakoven, Cape Town (Bookings: 00 27 21 438 3416; capeportfolios.com). Nightly rental from R4,000 (£283). Sleeps eight.



Long Hope Addo NP

Established in 1931 to protect a small herd of elephants, today Addo is South Africa's third-largest national park. It's home to buffalo, lions, endangered black rhinos and Long Hope – a once-ramshackle farmhouse turned exclusive villa, with a ranch-style veranda that glances out across the savannah. Efforts have been made to keep the rustic look intact, but the provision is anything but simple. Meals are cooked by a private chef and game drives are included.

► Long Hope, RiverBend Lodge, Addo National Park (Bookings through Fleewinter: 020-7112 0019; fleewinter.co.uk). Nightly rental from £1,239. Sleeps six.



Richard's House Durban

This quirky artist's residence rests high above the port city of Durban, on a ridge of suburbs collectively known as the Berea. Because of the area's subtropical climate, the outdoor spaces at Richard's are leafy and green, with lush lawns and a small palm-shaded pool. Shelves inside brim with paintings, books, sculptures and CDs, with colourful cushions and couches filling the space with character elsewhere. The city's Botanical Gardens and Essenwood market are a walk away.

► Richard's House, Rorvik Avenue, Berea, Durban (Bookings: airbnb.co.uk; property ref 231279). Nightly rental from £102. Sleeps six.