



Looking towards the Cedarberg Mountains from Clanwilliam Dam

## NAMAQUALAND

Driving north from Cape Town, the traffic dwindles as the tar road meanders between hills and into rugged mountains. Whilst it's pleasant for most of the year, during the famous flower season (late August and early September) Namaqualand's hills and heathlands burst into flower, carpeting the ground with vibrant oranges, purples and yellows.

Detour slightly west, to the coast, and you'll reach Langebaan, gateway to the West Coast National Park. This has a fantastic population of sea birds and is a major attraction during the flower season. Stay at the **Farmhouse Hotel**, which sits on the hill with wonderful views of the Langebaan Lagoon. This old Cape farmstead dates back to 1860 and has retained much of its charm. It has 16 comfortable rooms, most with lagoon views, a small private lounge area and a lovely fireplace for chilly winter evenings.

Inland, barely two hours' drive from Cape Town, you will reach Clanwilliam, a tiny settlement where leafy streets are surrounded by extensive orchards. Here the simple **Clanwilliam Hotel** (being renovated) or the new, Moroccan-themed **Clanwilliam Lodge**, are ideal bases for exploring the mountainous Cedarberg Wilderness Area. This protects one of the Cape's last remaining stands of mountain fynbos vegetation, so bring your hiking boots and explore for a few days.

In the heart of Clanwilliam, **Ndedema Lodge** is an elegant Victorian house, with a swimming pool and fruit trees in its garden. Inside you'll find three individually decorated bedrooms with air conditioning, and often fresh flowers throughout. Outside is a separate garden cottage. All have en-suite bathrooms with showers, and some also have large Victorian baths. Ndedema's welcoming owner, Wilma, is always very helpful with advice on the local area.

East of Clanwilliam, over the dizzy heights of the Pakhuis Pass, you will find the luxurious **Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve & Retreat**. In the foothills of the

Cedarberg Mountains, the 16 spacious, country-style rooms are nestled in manicured, indigenous gardens, with stunning views. Food is a real focus here: a candlelit dinner on the mountainside is a real highlight. Activities concentrate on nature drives, guided visits to see the area's prolific rock art, and nature trails. You are

free to hike around if you wish, and there is a spa available.

For exclusive use only, a stunningly converted farmhouse, **Koro Lodge**, boasts a dedicated guide and chef, and accommodation for a family of up to 10.

Over the years, we've seen the town of Springbok, in the heart of Namaqualand, change from a rural backwater into a bustling little town. In the flower season, visitors flock here. There is even a local "flower hotline" to find the day's best blooms – so at this time of year you must book trips well in advance.

High on a hill overlooking Springbok, **Mountain View Guest House** has 13 suites. All have air conditioning, a mini-bar and a TV, and are tastefully decorated. Most have a private patio and their own entrance, and outside you'll find a peaceful garden with indigenous plants and also a small swimming pool.

Not far from the town centre, **Annie's Cottage** is a restored manor house with 11 individually designed rooms, each decorated in an ornate colonial style, with a different colour scheme. It has a cool shady veranda, a manicured garden and a small swimming pool.

In central Springbok, the **Old Mill Lodge** has 11 comfortable rooms. It's still a very simple place, where you help yourself to tea and coffee from the kitchen before relaxing on the veranda.



Rock art at Bushmans Kloof

### Car Hire in South Africa

The car categories used in South Africa are similar to those in Namibia, and included in our self-drive prices is:

**Group C/B** Toyota Corolla/Yaris or similar. With radio/CD, air-con, ABS & p/steering. Comfortable for 2–3 people, and included in our prices.

A range of other cars is available – supplements on request – including:

**Group P/J** VW Chico/Citi Golf or similar, with a radio/tape. This is slightly smaller and cheaper than a Group C/B; fine for trips on surfaced roads, like those in Cape Town and the Garden Route.

**Group D/D** Toyota Yaris T3/Chevrolet Aveo or similar. With radio/CD, air-con, ABS, p/steering & automatic.

**Group K/S** Nissan X-Trail 2WD/Hyundai Tucson or similar. With radio/CD, air-con, ABS & p/steering; manual transmission.

**Group S/O** Toyota HiLux single-cab 4WD or similar. With radio/CD, air-con, p/steering & automatic.

**Group L/W** Toyota HiLux double-cab 4WD or similar. With radio/CD, air-con & p/steering.

**Group N/E** VW T5 Microbus/Toyota Quantum or similar. With radio/CD, air-con & p/steering. Seats eight people.

### Complete Car Cover

We hire the best vehicles that we can and these include unlimited mileage and all local taxes. For many years we have also offered a UK-based insurance scheme that covers your LDW (loss/damage waiver), with a minimal excess. We believe that this is unique to Expert Africa. It offers supreme peace of mind, by avoiding the high excesses that are often charged by other companies. Note that drivers aged over 75 or under 25 should specifically discuss their vehicle insurance with us, drawing our attention to their age. In some cases, cover may be restricted or supplements payable. Note also that 4WD vehicles, and minibuses/people carriers, may require different insurance provisions.

### One-way rentals

Note that within South Africa (and also between South Africa and Namibia) it's very easy for us to arrange one-way car hire. This makes it easy to start your fly-drive trip in Port Elizabeth, and end it in Cape Town or even Windhoek. There will usually be a one-way drop-off fee for this, which is always paid locally by you (usually upon collection) and is additional to any price that we quote to you.



One of the bedrooms at Annie's Cottage, Springbok