

NORTH ISLAND

This uninhabited, former fruit and spice plantation was purchased in 1997 by *Wilderness Safaris*, with whom we have long worked using their safari camps in Southern Africa. The last 14 years have witnessed one of the most ambitious rehabilitation, conservation and tourism development projects in the world.

The decision to gradually return the island to its natural state has resulted in a complex, costly and ongoing commitment to eradicate the feral animals and alien vegetation, and to reintroduce endangered endemic species. As the heart of North Island's philosophy, this momentous task continues daily under the hands-on direction of a resident ecologist, who is a fountain of knowledge for interested guests.

As the damaging hands of time are turned back, the island's natural beauty is enhanced: twin granite peaks at its extremities, stunning deserted beaches to east and west, and cool native forest between the two. A holiday here is a rewarding privilege.



NORTH ISLAND VILLAS

North Island seems to receive a constant flow of accolades and awards. Be it an award for the Best New Sensation, the Best-Designed Hotel, the Best Room or the Best Hotel on Earth – we would have to concur. North Island is sensational; its standards match both its stunning surroundings and the hype.

Since its opening in 2003, the media, design-conscious celebrities and affluent travellers from all over the globe have vied to stay in one of North Island's 11 handcrafted villas. Yet in spite of its success, it remains a blissfully understated affair: sanctuary, not stardom, sets the tone here.

Stretching along the island's east beach, the structures and interiors of the villas and main piazza combine traditional styles from mainland Africa, Zanzibar and Bali with the clean lines and space of contemporary design. Intricate, hand-cut floor and door carvings meet concertina glass walls; shaggy, woven thatching covers a sunken marble bath; coral rock curtains contrast with super-soft cotton bed linen – every intricacy is tasteful and thoughtful. Each large, sea-facing air-conditioned villa boasts its own ocean-view plunge pool, open-sided dining room, kitchenette, personal room attendant, wireless internet access and golf buggy (for getting around when you don't want to walk, and sunset rides to the funky cocktail bar on West Beach!).

Each villa also has a separate lounge, with its own stylish en-suite bathroom, which

can easily be converted into a large second bedroom for a family travelling together.

If you can drag yourself away from your villa, you'll find flexible island activities included in the rate, ranging from mountain biking to guided walks; snorkelling to scuba diving; fishing to body-boarding and kayaking. There is also a wellness centre and small gym above the central piazza, a palm-shaded swimming pool hewn into the granitic boulders, a cool library (the venue for pre-dinner drinks and nightly island talks), and a well-equipped activities centre.

The extensive daily menu is merely a suggestion, with virtually all meals being

prepared on request, whilst the wine cellar offers a wide and eclectic selection of fine wines, champagnes and spirits from around the world. Dining is flexible in time and location – though the private beach barbecues take some beating!

On every level, North Island strives to exceed expectations and deliver a truly stupendous experience. It has a price tag to match its very high standards, though it's difficult to argue that it doesn't offer value for money... after all, what price for a private paradise?



A villa at North Island: the ultimate in privacy



North Island conservation