

TOURISM TUESDAYS

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#TourismTuesdays

AUGUST 2026 EDITION

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As we wrap up August, South Africa's Women's Month, we reflect on a month filled with meaningful engagements, exciting events elevating destination South Africa's story.

South Africa recently took major step towards transforming the international travel experience through the launch of the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA). Launched by President Cyril Ramaphosa at OR Tambo International Airport on 12 August, the digital system is designed to make international travel to South Africa easier, faster and more predictable, while strengthening border security.

We also look back at some of the month's key tourism and industry moments, including Minister Patricia de Lille's recent tourism engagements in India, the launch of Tourism Month on 13 August, the South African Music Awards (SAMAs) on 15 August, Tyla's A-Pop event on 16 August, as well as the SATSA Conference from 19–21 August. Together, these engagements showcased South Africa's diverse tourism offering and highlight the important role that culture, music, business and unique experiences play in attracting visitors to our shores.

Sport also brought people together this month. During the 7 August rugby match provided an opportunity for the Minister to join public and private-sector stakeholders in supporting our national and regional teams, while using the occasion to strengthen relationships and engage with stakeholders. We also look forward to our countries co-hosting the Cricket World Cup.

As we look ahead to September, the Africa Tourism

Leadership Conference, taking place from 2–4 September, will bring together key industry leaders and stakeholders. Chief Quality Assurance Officer, at South African Tourism, Bronwen Auret will deliver a Masterclass on the Importance of Grading while Corne Koch will join a panel discussion on "MICE Masterclass - The Experts' Insights", alongside other industry experts.

From travel facilitation and tourism experiences to culture, sport and business events, August has reminded us that there are many ways to tell the South African tourism story. As we move into the months ahead, we remain focused on creating opportunities to showcase our country, strengthen partnerships and inspire the world to choose South Africa.

*Regards,
Tourism Tuesdays Team*



President Cyril Ramaphosa Launches Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

South Africa has taken an important step towards making international travel to the country easier, faster and more secure with the official launch of its new [Electronic Travel Authorisation \(ETA\)](#) system.

Launched by President Cyril Ramaphosa at OR Tambo International Airport, the digital system is designed to make the travel process more predictable for legitimate international visitors while strengthening border security. The President described the reform as part of building a South Africa that is more open, welcoming, secure and competitive.

For tourism, this is an important development. Making it easier for

international travellers to plan and enter South Africa can help create a more welcoming travel journey from the very beginning, supporting the country's ambition to attract more visitors, investment and international business.

The ETA has already demonstrated its role in strengthening the integrity of the travel process. According to the Department of Home Affairs, the system is part of a broader digital transformation that uses automated visa adjudication and biometric verification to improve efficiency and security, while supporting tourism, investment and the attraction of skills.

The system was initially piloted during South Africa's G20 Presidency for travellers from China, India, Indonesia

and Mexico, before being expanded as part of the country's move towards a more digital visa regime.

For South Africa's tourism sector, the message is clear: a better travel experience starts before the traveller even boards the plane.

The ETA is another step towards making South Africa more accessible, more secure and easier to experience, helping create a smoother journey for international visitors from the point of planning their trip to their arrival at our shores.

[Click here](#) for the full article



Minister Patricia de Lille Leads Tourism Engagements in India

South Africa's Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, visited India from 18 to 23 August 2026 for a series of engagements aimed at strengthening tourism ties, exploring new partnerships, and enhancing connectivity between India and South Africa.

During her visit to New Delhi, Minister de Lille met with Ms Jyotsna Suri, Chairperson and Managing Director of The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, to discuss potential partnerships and opportunities for greater collaboration across the hospitality sectors of both countries.

The Minister's Delhi engagements also included the filming of a digital video highlighting the shared passion for cricket and South Africa's upcoming

Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), with the aim of inspiring more Indian travellers to discover the diverse experiences of the Rainbow Nation.

The Minister also travelled to Jaipur, where she will participate in the BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting on 21 and 22 August. The meeting brought together Tourism Ministers from BRICS member countries for discussions on tourism cooperation, knowledge exchange, and opportunities for collaboration.

Her Jaipur programme also included a series of bilateral engagements with tourism counterparts from multiple countries, providing an important platform to explore new avenues for partnership and further strengthen South Africa's position as a preferred destination for Indian travellers.

The visit underscores the growing importance of India–South Africa tourism relations and the shared opportunity to build stronger partnerships, improve connectivity and create new pathways for tourism growth between the two markets.







Find Your Joy at Home: South Africa Kicks Off Tourism Month

September marks Tourism Month, an open invitation for South Africans to explore their own country while welcoming visitors from near and far.

Running throughout the month and building towards World Tourism Day on 27 September, Tourism Month promotes accessible and meaningful travel.

The national launch was held at the award-winning South African restaurant 9th Avenue Marina in Durban under the theme, “Growing South Africa’s Tourism Sector in the Digital Era.” On 13 August.

Highlighting the opportunities presented by digital technologies, Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille noted that artificial intelligence (AI) now sits between the traveller and the destination.

“Discovery has moved, and our job is to move with it, and to move faster than we are comfortable with,” she said.

Minister de Lille encouraged the industry to “get small tourism businesses onto the platforms where travellers are already searching” – helping to ensure that South Africa’s hidden gems are no longer hidden.

“We travel our own country far less than we should – usually because we have quietly decided it is not for us, or not affordable, or something you do once a year in December if the year has been kind,”

In 2025, South Africa welcomed 10.5 million international tourists – a 17.7% increase on 2024’s figure and above pre-COVID levels.

Three-quarters of those visitors came from the rest of African continent.

At the launch, Minister de Lille also called on South Africans to explore

their country.

“We travel our own country far less than we should. Usually because we have quietly decided it is not for us, or not affordable, or it is something you do once a year in December if the year has been kind,” she said. “I want to challenge that. A weekend away is tourism. A day trip is tourism. Taking your family to a place you have driven past for 20 years is tourism. It is standing beneath the baobabs of Limpopo, our host province this Tourism Month, or diving into the warm water on the KZN coast. Every province has stories waiting to be experienced.”

The call to all South Africans this Tourism Month is to find their joy, and find it here at home.





More Than Music: SAMA32 Shines a Spotlight on North West Province

South African Tourism was a strategic partner in SAMA32, supporting the awards not only as a celebration of South African music and talent, but also as a platform to promote the country as a tourism destination.

This was seen on August 15, 2026, when the Sun City Superbowl in the North West Province hosted the 32nd Annual South African Music Awards “Homecoming Edition,” bringing together some of the country’s top musicians, media and music fans.

Returning to the North West province, the awards honoured excellence in the nation’s diverse music scene and

emphasised how South African music has shaped the country’s cultural identity and appeal on a global scale.

The South African Music Awards demonstrated how major cultural events can play a significant role in destination positioning, driving travel and showcasing the experiences available to visitors. By hosting the awards at Sun City, the event provided a platform to shine a spotlight on the North West province and inspire visitors to explore the province’s diverse tourism offering, from its natural landscapes and rich heritage to its entertainment and hospitality experiences. It also highlighted South Africa’s appeal as a dynamic destination

where music, culture and leisure come together to create memorable experiences.

South African Tourism was a strategic partner in SAMA32, supporting the positioning of the awards not only as a celebration of South African music and creative talent, but also as a platform for destination marketing, cultural exchange and economic growth. As music continues to transcend borders, events such as the SAMAs provide a powerful avenue to highlight South Africa’s diverse tourism offering, inspire travel and encourage visitors to experience the destination beyond the event itself.



Tyla's A*POP Homecoming



Two-time Grammy Award winner Tyla brought her A*Pop era home with a special takeover at Gold Reef City on 16 August 2026, in partnership with South African Tourism and powered by Absa.

The event marked a homecoming for the Johannesburg born artist, giving her the opportunity to reconnect with fans in the city where her music career began. The takeover followed the release of Tyla's sophomore album, APOP, a 14-track project blending her

signature "Popiano" sound with pop, R&B, house and South African musical influences.

Tourism and destination impact

The Gold Reef City takeover showed how a major cultural moment can

double as a destination drawcard, giving fans a reason to experience Johannesburg firsthand. Events built around homegrown talent create the kind of buzz that positions a city as a place to visit, not just a backdrop, encouraging fans to build trips around future dates. That impact is set to continue: Tyla's upcoming A*POP World Tour will bring her back to South Africa for two dates, Green Point Track in Cape Town on 4 January 2027 and Johannesburg's Expo Centre, Nasrec on 9 January 2027, giving both cities a concrete, bookable reason for domestic and international fans to travel, and a further opportunity to showcase what

each destination offers beyond the concert itself.

SA Tourism's involvement

The partnership provided an important opportunity for SA Tourism to engage with the creative, and entertainment, while facilitating access to the experience for key stakeholders and 200 tourism students studying various tourism and hospitality related courses from higher learning institutions across Gauteng. Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille described Tyla as "a daughter of the African soil and an advocate for South Africa," underscoring the use of the artist's platform to inspire the next

generation of tourism talent.

By aligning with Tyla, South African Tourism was able to position South Africa within conversations around music, entertainment, youth culture and travel, with the potential to convert global interest in Tyla into greater awareness, consideration and desire to visit South Africa.





Beyond the Game: Rugby Creates Opportunities to Connect and Showcase South Africa

Rugby brought more than sporting excitement to South Africa this August. It also created an opportunity to connect stakeholders, strengthen relationships and showcase South Africa as a destination through the power of sport.

As the All Blacks took on the DHL Stormers on 7 August, the Minister of Tourism hosted key public and private-sector stakeholders, creating an opportunity for engagement and

networking around the match.

A rugby game is more than the game itself. Players, officials, media, supporters and often their families have an opportunity to experience South Africa beyond the stadium. This creates a positive ripple effect across the tourism value chain, with hotels, restaurants, transport providers and local attractions benefiting from increased visitor activity.

Major sporting events also give host cities international visibility and provide a platform to showcase South Africa's hospitality, culture, food and diverse tourism experiences.

From the field to the destination, every moment is an opportunity to showcase South Africa.



Cricket World Cup 2027: South Africa Gets Ready to Welcome the World

The countdown to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027 is gaining momentum, with South Africa preparing to welcome cricket fans from across the globe.

As a co-host alongside Zimbabwe and Namibia, South Africa has a unique opportunity to use one of the world's biggest sporting events to profile our cities, culture, hospitality and diverse tourism experiences.

For tourism, the World Cup is about much more than cricket. Fans travelling for matches can be encouraged to stay longer, explore further and experience more of South Africa from our beaches and wildlife to our food, culture and vibrant cities.

With the world of cricket preparing to come to Southern Africa in 2027, the opportunity is clear: **turn every match into an invitation to discover more of South Africa.**





South African Tourism Champions Collaboration and Partnerships to Accelerate Sector Growth

South African Tourism has reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with the tourism industry to accelerate inclusive growth, strengthen Destination South Africa's competitiveness and carry a distinctive and compelling destination message to the world.

This was the central message throughout South African Tourism's participation at the 2026 SATSA Conference, held at the Southern Sun Cape Sun in Cape Town under the theme "Eduze Kwam | Staam My By".

Through keynote and panel discussions, South African Tourism's executive leadership addressed destination differentiation, conservation, global competitiveness, visitor readiness, major sporting events and emerging growth markets. These engagements were aligned with the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan (TGPP), which is built on collaboration between government and the private sector.

Delivering the keynote address, South African Tourism Interim Chief Executive

Officer Sechaba Motsieloa called for an enduring partnership across the tourism ecosystem.

"None of us, not government, not this industry, not any single business in this room can carry South Africa's story to the world alone," Motsieloa told delegates.

To illustrate South Africa's unique destination proposition, Motsieloa shared a video of an international tourist who had the word "Ubuntu" tattooed on her body during a recent visit to the country.

"She wasn't trying to remember South Africa. She was trying to keep it," Motsieloa said. "We didn't have to convince her of anything. We didn't hand her a slogan, or a campaign line, or a reason to come back. She simply spent a few days with us, with our people in our beautiful landscapes, and something in her changed permanently."

The experience demonstrated the emotional connection created by South Africa's people, landscapes and spirit of Ubuntu, a powerful point of differentiation that the tourism industry must collectively take to the world.



South African Tourism Chief Marketing Officer Sithembile Ndaba reinforced the importance of understanding South Africa's competitive environment, benchmarking the destination against the best in the world and tailoring its message for different markets.

"We need to tell our story, and we need to know our unique value proposition," Ndaba said. "It is not a one-size-fits-all campaign, because every market is different. A traveller from Europe is different to a traveller from Ethiopia. As an industry, we need to work together strategically to land our unique message in different markets."

Ndaba participated in the panel discussion titled "SANParks at 100: Legacy, Growth and the Road Ahead", where she highlighted the central role of South Africa's national parks in building the country's reputation and sustaining its competitive wildlife tourism offering.

"Our wildlife offering tourism continues to shape South Africa's reputation in the competitive space," she said. "We need to preserve these parks. They are at the centre of it all."

Chief Quality Assurance Officer Bronwen Auret participated in the

panel discussion, "The Collaboration Advantage: How Government and Industry Are Building a Common Roadmap for Tourism Growth".

Her contribution focused on destination readiness ahead of the 2027 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, which South Africa will co-host with Zimbabwe and Namibia. The tournament presents a significant opportunity to coordinate industry planning, strengthen service and quality standards, and ensure that visitors experience a seamless and welcoming destination throughout their journey.

During her engagements, she reinforced the importance of extending readiness beyond sporting venues to accommodation, attractions, transport, visitor information and the broader tourism value chain.

Chief Strategy Officer Siyabonga Mthethwa participated in the panel discussion, "Beyond the Middle East Horizon: New Markets, New Routes and the Courage to Grow".

The discussion examined opportunities presented by the Middle East and other emerging growth markets, including the need to diversify South Africa's international market portfolio, strengthen trade partnerships and tailor

the destination's proposition to the needs of different travellers.

Collectively, South African Tourism's contributions demonstrated that tourism growth must be approached as an interconnected system. Compelling marketing must be supported by quality experiences; new markets must be connected to suitable products and routes; major events must be matched by destination readiness; and South Africa's natural and cultural assets must be protected for future generations.

Through the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan and its continuing collaboration with broader tourism industry, South African Tourism remains committed to positioning tourism as a powerful driver of economic growth, employment and inclusive development.





TOURISM GRADING COUNCIL SA

TGCSA CORNER

AUGUST 2026

Benchmark Properties

An array of outstanding properties that make every visit a pleasure.

Benchmark Properties are accommodation establishments that have been specially selected by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) Property Approvals Committee because they offer an exceptional visitor experience. Selection is based on the overall quality and uniqueness of the property, rather than its star grading or type of establishment.

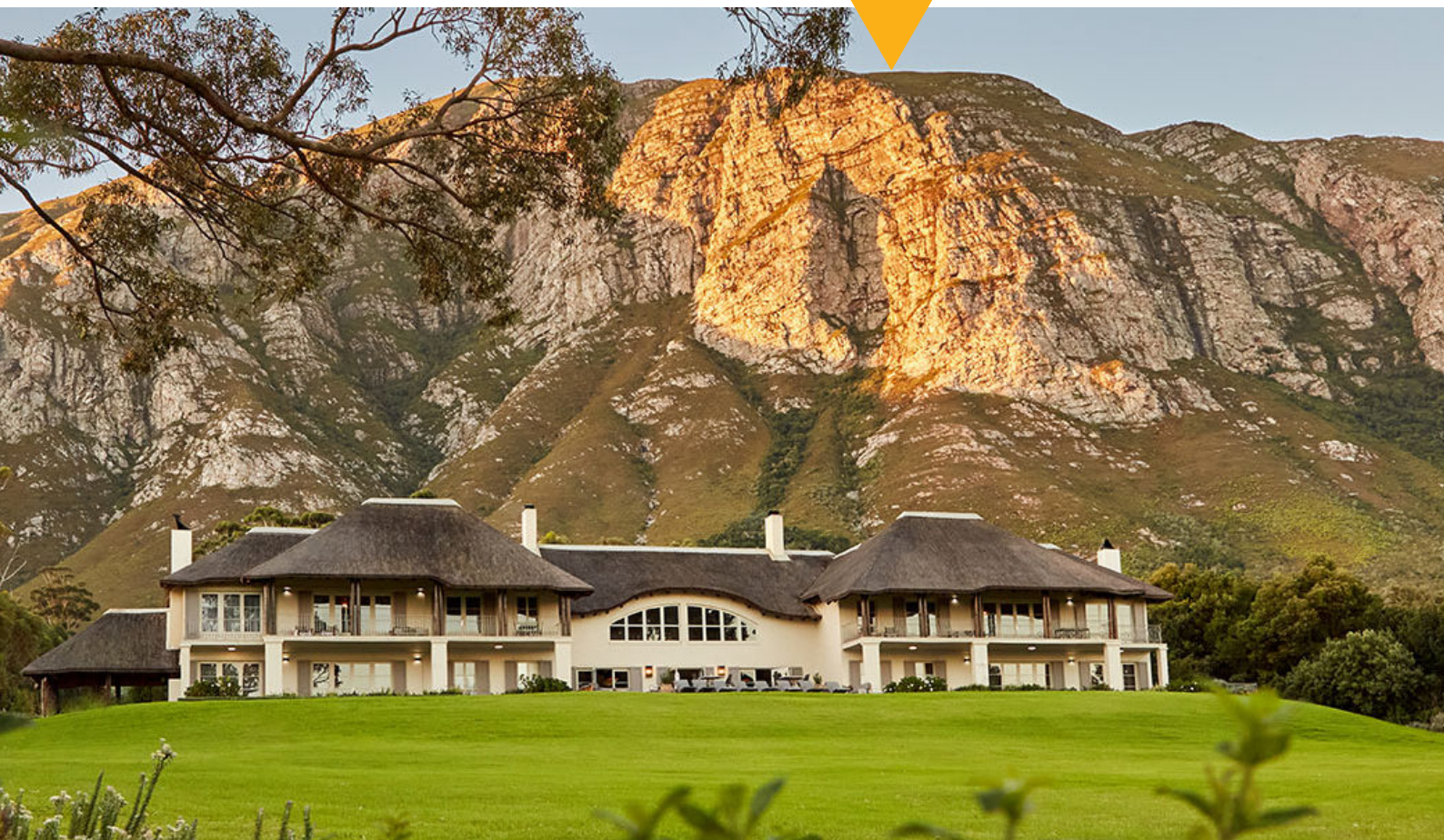


The Thatch House Boutique Hotel

Location: Hermanus, Western Cape

Set on seven private acres along the banks of the Klein River Lagoon with the Cape Fold Mountains rising behind, The Thatch House is an exclusive boutique hotel just outside Hermanus, the world's whale-watching capital, and roughly 90 minutes from Cape Town. Six spacious double-volume suites open onto the lagoon and manicured gardens, while facilities including two swimming pools, a Jacuzzi, floodlit tennis court, putting green, kayaks and treehouse make it equally well suited to couples, families and small group bookings on an exclusive-use basis.

Contact: Email: bookings@thethatchhouse.com, call: +27 28 314 0555, or visit: thethatchhouse.net.

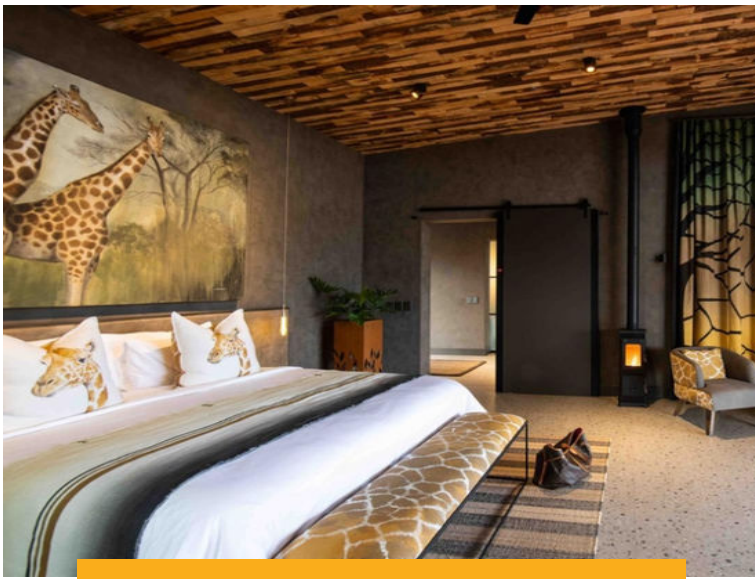


AUGUST 2026

Premium Properties

An array of outstanding properties that make every visit a pleasure.

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa's 5-star premium classification represents the highest level of luxury accommodation in the country. This special designation distinguishes exceptional establishments from standard 5-star venues, awarded only to places offering outstanding quality, personalised service, and memorable experiences.

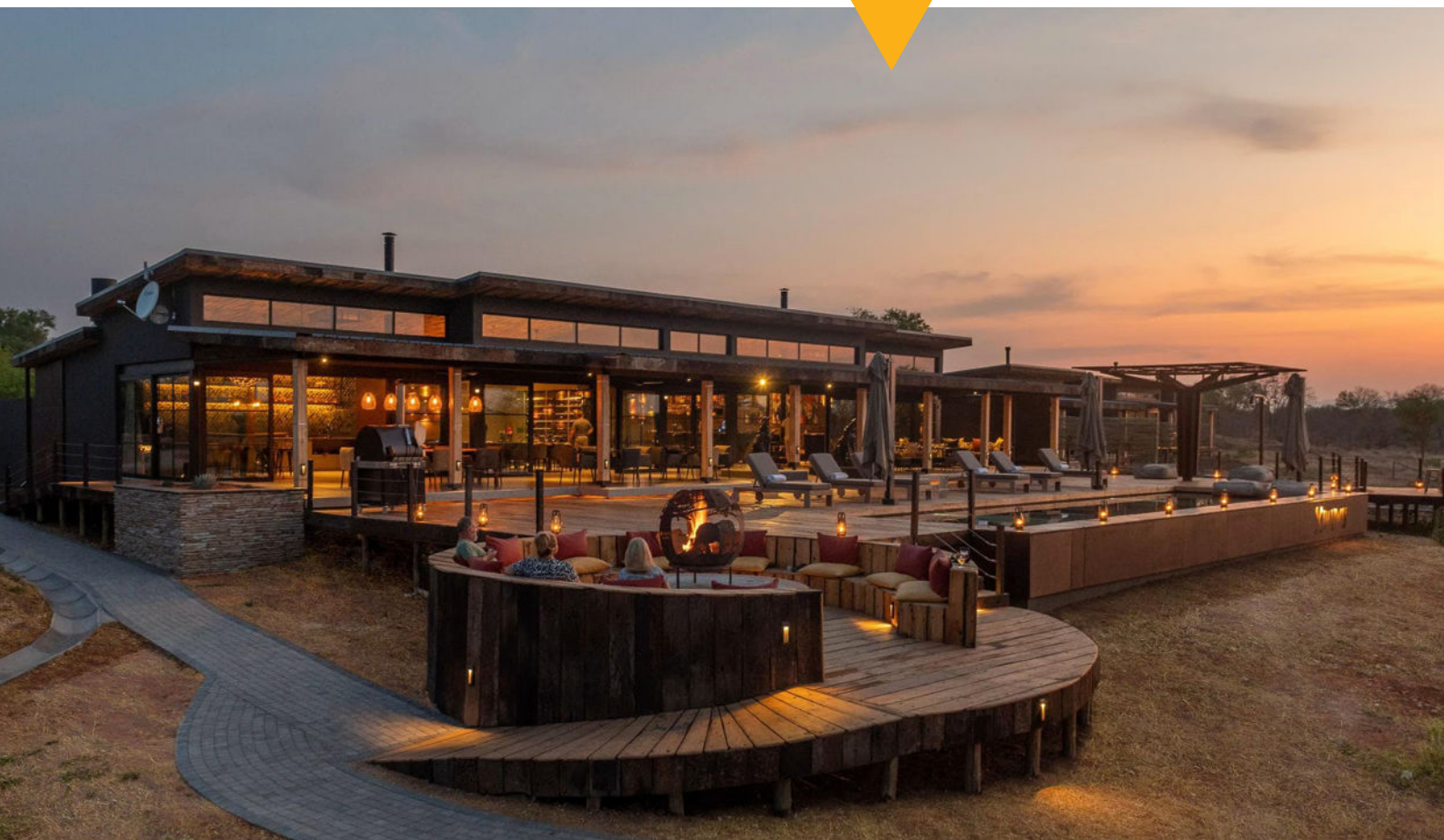


Ximuwu Lodge

Location: Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Limpopo

Set within the unfenced 60,000-hectare Klaserie Private Nature Reserve in the Greater Kruger, Ximuwu Lodge is one of only 28 properties in South Africa to hold the TGCSA's 5-star Premium status, and the only Premium lodge in the country with Universal Access Level 3, making it South Africa's most inclusive luxury safari experience. The lodge welcomes a maximum of eight guests across four wheelchair-accessible north-facing suites, each with floor-to-ceiling views over the waterhole, and offers the private Tluka Villa, wheelchair-accessible game vehicles, thermal-vision night drives, sound safaris and helicopter experiences.

Contact: Email: reservations@ximuwu.com, call: +27 15 004 0340, or visit: ximuwu.com.



Upcoming Events



African Tourism Leadership Conference

2 - 4 September 2026

Meropa Casino
Entertainment World,
Limpopo



Sho't Left Travel Week

5 - 11 September 2026

Visit: shotleft.co.za



Heritage Day

24 September 2026

Nationwide



World Tourism Day

27 September 2026

Global



South African Tourism Investment Summit

30 September to 1 October
2026

Johannesburg, Gauteng



TBCSA Conference

27 & 28 October 2026

Sun City Resort,
North West



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