

ROOM OF THE MONTH

A GIRAFFE AT THE WINDOW

IN THE HEART OF MOKALA NATIONAL PARK, A TREETOP EYRIE TAKES BUSHVELD PURISTS BACK TO THE DAYS WHEN AFRICA'S WILD PLACES WERE EMPTY OF TOURISTS. BY SCOTT RAMSAY

There is only one tree house in all of South Africa's diverse national parks. In the middle of Mokala, off the beaten track and far from the two main camps, lies a small wooden cabin with double bed and tiny bathroom, perched halfway up a copse of camelthorn trees. Don't get a fright if a giraffe pokes its nose into the window while you're snoozing.

An expansive deck with braai, table and chairs spreads into the branches of the trees. Basic and modestly equipped it may be, but it's comfortable and perfectly suited to the surroundings. At sunset a waterhole in front of the tree house lures thirsty gemsbok, buffalo, kudu and the occasional rhino. At night, it's just you, your partner, the stars, the flicker of flames and the howl of hyenas. In the morning, you'll be thinking, 'I had a tree house in Africa...' Karen Blixen would have approved. Self-catering from R1100 for two peoplea night. 053-204-0158, kebo.ngongwane@sanparks.org.

SOUTH AFRICA'S NEWEST NATIONAL PARK. Mokala, lies at the southern end of the Kalahari sand deposits, 70 kilometres southwest of Kimberley. Look out for superb specimens of Cape buffalo as well as the country's largest herds of rare sable and roan antelope.