



SAMARA

KAROO RESERVE

# FACT SHEET





# AT A GLANCE

## SAMARA KAROO RESERVE

Reserve size	67,000 acres / 27,000 ha	Country	South Africa
Big Five	Yes, incl. black & white rhino	Province	Eastern Cape
Malaria-free	Yes	Region	Great Karoo
Maximum guests	40 guests	Nearest commercial airport	Port Elizabeth / Gqeberha
TGCSA grading	5 star	Nearest airfield	Graaff-Reinet
Eco-accreditations	The Long Run	Nearest town	Graaff-Reinet
Open dates	Year-round	Airstrip on-site	Yes, 1.5 km gravel airstrip

## LODGE COMPARISON

	Karoo Lodge	The Manor	Plains Camp
Lodge style	Traditional Karoo farmstead	Contemporary Karoo villa	Eco-luxe tented camp
Maximum guests	24 guests	8 guests (exclusive-use)	8 guests
Number of suites	10 suites	4 suites	4 suites
Minimum stay*	2 nights*	2 nights*	2 nights
Children welcome	Yes, all ages	Yes, all ages	Over 16s only
Altitude	885 metres	847 metres	721 metres
GPS coordinates	-32.353965,24.861095	-32.391615,24.856976	-32.478655,24.913448
what3words address	<a href="#">///tots.fiscal.studied</a>	<a href="#">///mothership.cocoon.squids</a>	<a href="#">///ballerinas.enlightened.caverns</a>
Electricity / power	220V AC	220V AC	220V AC (mess tent only)
Swimming pool	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gift shop	Yes	Limited selection	Limited selection
Wifi	Yes	Yes	Accessible in public areas
Laundry service	Yes	Yes	Not available
Fenced grounds	Yes	Yes	No
Wheelchair access	In certain suites	In certain suites	No

\*A minimum stay of 3 nights is applicable to Karoo Lodge and The Manor during the period 20 December – 10 January inclusive annually.





# THE SAMARA STORY

---

*"In 1997, we fell in love."*

It was a very strange feeling because it was totally unprompted and quite unexpected. A battlefield is not normally the sort of place one associates with affairs of the heart. However, the battle sites of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift in KwaZulu Natal must have inspired some primal emotions that led to conduct quite markedly in contrast to our normal, rational behaviour.

After a long dinner accompanied by several glasses of superb South African Cabernet up in Northern Natal, the site of British triumph and Zulu tragedy, we started chatting to a chap from quite a different part of South Africa – the Great Karoo. Magical tales were woven about the vast herds of springbok which once roamed this area, the "Vanished Kings", the black-maned Cape lion who majestically reigned over the Plains of Camdeboo, the rhino, the cheetah, the now-extinct quagga, the explorers, the characters of yesteryear and the haunting beauty of the semi-desert land.

Overwhelmed and smitten by the magnificence of it all, we went away determined to visit the Great Karoo.

Apieskloof ("Monkey Valley") became the first farm that formed the nucleus of Samara and in 1997 we happily became its owner. The dream continued – amass enough land to have a self-sustaining ecosystem that would support wildlife: the herds of antelope that used to inhabit this area, and the predators to keep the balance that helps maintain these fragile ecosystems.

67,000 acres and more than twenty-five years later, Samara's rewilding journey has picked up pace. The land is beginning to recover from the effects of generations of agricultural exploitation. The haunting beauty of the landscape that first inspired this campaign of rejuvenation has returned.

An ambitious programme of land rehabilitation and wildlife reintroduction has brought Samara's valleys, plains and mountains back to life. Herds of springbok, black wildebeest, zebra and eland now roam the Plains of Camdeboo. Rhinoceros, elephant and cheetah meander across the veld once more. Almost two centuries after it was last seen, the lion reigns again.

Samara's vision now extends beyond our borders to the creation of South Africa's 3rd largest protected area in a Global Biodiversity Hotspot, providing a winning plan for the people and wild places of the Karoo. In staying with us, you become co-creators of this living legacy. Thank you for joining us on our journey.

*Sarah & Mark Tompkins, Founders*

# OUR VISION & MISSION

## *Rewilding the Great Karoo*

Samara is a passionate conservation undertaking and a catalyst for land-use change in the Great Karoo. 67,000 acres of land have been restored since 1997, and we are working with local stakeholders to create a protected area spanning 3 million acres in one of only 36 Global Biodiversity Hotspots, the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Thicket. This will link the Camdeboo, Mountain Zebra and Addo Elephant National Parks with private land in an ecological corridor, focusing on an innovative partnership-based conservation model.

The Great Karoo is the region that up until 1897 witnessed one of the world's largest migrations – when vast herds of springbok roamed these plains in search of new pastures. As well as the multitude of antelope, herds of elephant moved through the river systems, desert-adapted black rhino thrived in the dense thickets, and the predators – Cape lion, leopard, cheetah, spotted hyena, even wild dog – accompanied the melee of prey species across this breathtaking landscape. Resurrecting this malaria-free "Serengeti of the South" and returning the landscape to its former glory forms an integral part of our vision.

Putting dreams into motion, however, requires practical action. We consulted expert ecologists to determine the conservation potential of the land before purchasing 11 farms encompassing 5 of South Africa's 9 vegetation biomes. We then began the mammoth task of eradicating alien invasive plants, tearing down internal fencing and resting the land for almost a decade. Little by little indigenous animals have been reintroduced to the area, with a focus not only on iconic and endangered species but on the ecosystem processes they promote.

We continue to actively restore and rehabilitate the most degraded areas through soil erosion control and the planting of indigenous vegetation, like Spekboom.

In 2006, we set up our first lodge to give social meaning to this conservation undertaking. As a significant employer in the area, one of our proudest achievements is helping our staff realise their own dreams: putting them through further studies and supporting their personal development. We welcome cutting-edge researchers from around the world and educate school children from our local community. We have long seen Samara as site of learning and discovery at multiple levels; a place for personal introspection as well as science generation.

We also welcome discerning travellers exploring a remote corner of the world well off the beaten track, sometimes by accident, but most often by choice.

*Thank you for choosing to support us*