

Game reserve an oasis in the Karoo

■ MAGNIFICENT mountains, lingering landscapes and cub-caring cheetahs are what's in-store for guests at the luxurious two-year-old Samara Game Lodge in the heart of the Camdeboo mountains, discovered ALISON CANTER.

THE malaria-free Samara Private Game Reserve, situated 280km from Port Elizabeth, is simply breath-taking and an ideal get-away for some serious soul rejuvenation.

When I visited the lodge last month, it was the super-efficient staff that immediately set me at ease in the traditional colonial setting.

Taking care of your every personal need, including supplying visitors with luke-warm face cloths after dusty game drives, is what the Samara staff do best.

Embarking on the adventure drives – one in the morning and another in the evening – we were treated to a variety of buck sightings, including kudu, springbok, eland,

gemsbok and duiker on the 28 000 hectares.

Rhino and giraffe also roam the four-biome landscape, but unfortunately, they were not spotted on our trip.

But not seeing them was no real disappointment for a fairly-regular game park visitor like me, and the visits to Samara's ever-popular cheetahs made up for it.

On our first outing in the afternoon, we bravely climbed out of the

Land Rover and walked about 50 metres towards Mozart and Beethoven, the two male cheetahs who roam the spacious park together.

Our knowledgeable tour guide, Les Slabbert, found them with his specially designed tracker device,



ENJOYING their 28 000 hectare Karoo view is cheetah mother Sibella (left) and her six cubs, aged 2 months. Pictures: Alison Canter

and we were astounded by these magnificent creatures. For anyone who is a feline lover, be prepared to be bowled over by these majestic but languid cats.

The following morning, after a hearty Karoo breakfast, we went in search of the female cheetah, Sibella, who has survived against all odds, and her six cubs.

When our team eventually found her, she was tucked away, with her half a dozen brood, under a tree. It was a sight that was utterly remarkable and should be experienced by any passionate nature-lover.

Purring away, Sibella was taking a nap with her eight-week-old cubs. I must admit, it was rather overwhelming being a mere five metres from these sleek creatures – which

can run at 100km/h.

Other animals spotted were bat-eared foxes and their pups; many bird species and friendly roaming tortoises.

And for those who have a taste for

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fine dining, you will not be disappointed by Samara's top-class spread.

Particularly enjoyable was the Kudu beef burger and sweet potato chips, a simple yet delectable lunch.

And after my belly was full, I retreated to my elegant en-suite bed-

room, with classic farm-style decor complementing the spacious room.

The cost is R2 300 per person per day sharing in high season and R1 280 in low season.

The price includes luxury en-suite accommodation, all meals, tea and coffee, two open Land Rover safaris per day, local house wine and non-alcoholic drinks.

If you have driven to Samara, you will also get your vehicle washed *gratis* before your 2½-hour drive back to PE.

The most memorable part of the visit?

The precise attention to detail by all staff of the lodge, the exquisitely prepared cuisine and the charming cheetahs.

□ More info: 049-891-0558 or 083-554-4583.

SAMARA Private game reserve's head game ranger Les Slabbert introduces resident cheetah's Mozart and Beethoven.



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