

WEEKEND **HOTSPOT**

THE BERG HOUSE AND COTTAGES

FIND IT:

BETWEEN Harrismith and Bergville in the northern Drakensberg, you'll find the collection of cottages snuggled into a cozy spot with a stunning view of the berg — snow-capped during our visit.

ACCOMMODATION:

There are five cottages catering for different-sized groups, from Thamela (bask in the sun), which sleeps nine, right down to the newest of the lot, Thandanani (the place everyone loves), where we ensconced ourselves one rain-soaked weekend.

Our cottage is what I would term rustic chic, sparsely but tastefully decorated with an en-suite shower, a little kitchen and a lovely fireplace. A dining table sat forlornly on our front stoep as the weather forced us indoors to have dinner in front of the fire.

FOOD:

The cottages are fully equipped for self-catering purposes, but you can also opt for a dinner and breakfast option, which is well worth it. The delicious home-cooked fare is delivered to your doorstep in baskets, and the dishes collected later on. I was rather fond of

the quaint breakfasts, with the scrambled egg in toast baskets a particular favourite.

En route to lunch we ventured into Bergville, where I spent the first few years of my life. Sadly, the village has seen better days, and its dishevelled appearance left me feeling rather blue. Thank goodness then for Bingelela, a restaurant on a farm just outside of town. The food was superb and I can highly recommend the honey nougat ice-cream as a sweet treat after the Thai prawn and chicken curry or a gourmet burger.

For a warming sherry we popped into the Amphitheatre Backpackers, where we chose to ignore the suspicious stares of much younger backpackers. I have to say that in all my youthful backpacking days, I don't remember a hostel being this funky — there is even a spa of sorts and a library.

EXTRAS:

Berghouse owners Vaughn and Chantel Piccione offer guests a wide range of activities, from horse riding to white water rafting down the Tugela. But really, it is the tranquillity and scenery that take first prize.

DETAILS:

Visit www.berghouse.co.za for rates and information. — *Leizl Mattison*



RUSTIC CHIC: The fireplace of Thandanani