

SA's Top 10 Child-friendly Holidays

1 Sun & Snow

WHERE Wyndford Holiday Farm, Caledonspoort, Eastern Free State

WHY There is something quaint and comforting about Wyndford. It could be the old-world décor or the fact that, having been established in 1923, it has grown organically. The location is certainly part of the appeal; it's surrounded by the Rooiberg Mountains and is separated from Lesotho by six kilometres of the Caledon River. Children will have hours of fun here, either tubing down the river when it's in full spate or agate-hunting when it's low. The region also regularly enjoys snow; skiing trips to Lesotho can be arranged. For an outing, enjoy a drive to the Katse Dam or visit artsy Clarens, which is just 25 minutes down the road. But you won't need to go anywhere if you don't want to – there's so much on offer on the farm.

TOP CHILD ATTRACTIONS River-tubing, agate-hunting, zip-lining.

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE Daniel Tukker, 10: 'I loved all the organised fun and activities, and making new friends in the games room – and the food is great.'

DETAILS Accommodation varies from Swiss-style chalets with two bedrooms, a bathroom and a lounge to simpler but very comfortable double rooms, rondavels, family suites and rooms with shared bathrooms. Rates are from R520 to R850 per adult sharing and R85 to R385 per child, and they include three 'farm-style' meals and tea in the morning and afternoon. The farm is not licensed but guests can bring their own alcohol. It's a three-hour drive from Johannesburg. Visit www.wyndford.co.za or call ☎ 058 223 0274.

2 Mountain Highs

WHERE Cathedral Peak Hotel, near Winterton, Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal

WHY Cathedral Peak offers so much for the whole family to do that you don't ever need to set foot out of the resort's grounds. But if you don't, you'll miss out on some of the country's most spectacular mountain scenery. Make sure you enjoy the views during one of the 18 signed

hikes, if you can manage it, head for the summit of Cathedral Peak itself. Once you've put your best foot forward, you'll be spoilt for choice back at the hotel, with activities such as archery, horse and pony rides, floodlit minigolf, swimming, badminton and a 10m climbing tower, to name a few the children will love. For grown-ups, there's a bowling green, nine-hole golf course, trout fishing in the dam and a pub. Guests say it's the 'best the Berg has to offer'.

TOP CHILD ATTRACTIONS Climbing tower, minigolf.

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE Jemima Houwing, 7: 'I liked

Dune-surfing, Umngazi



the giant chess set and playing badminton. I also enjoyed the walk to the rock pool. It was beautiful.'

DETAILS Rates depend on the accommodation. They range from R1 115 per adult and from R405 per child, and they are per person per night sharing, including an extensive buffet breakfast and dinner, plus midmorning and afternoon tea. A children's dining room is available for younger guests and they can also eat in the main dining room between 7pm and 8pm. The hotel is 400km from Jo'burg and 200km from Durban. Visit www.cathedral-peak.co.za or call ☎ 036 488 1888.

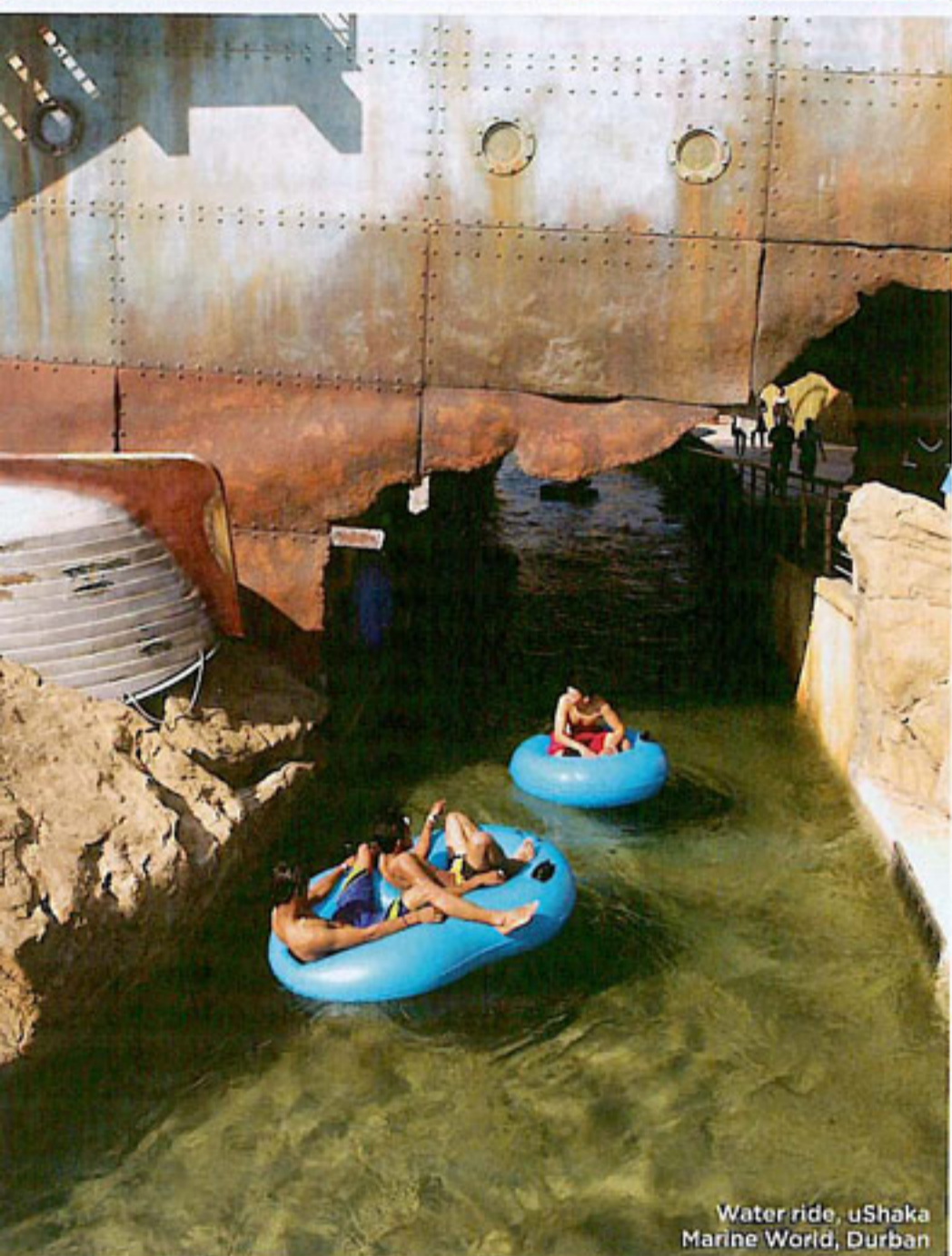
3 Go Wild

WHERE Umngazi River Bungalows and Spa, Port St Johns, Wild Coast, Eastern Cape

WHY Why go to Mauritius when you can go to Umngazi River Bungalows on the Wild Coast, with its indigenous forests, crystal-blue warm waters (even in winter) and unique flora? This perennially popular family resort and spa sits perched on the hillside at the mouth of the Umngazi River and offers beautiful panoramic views. Three ingredients make Umngazi the perfect family →



Sailing, Langebaan lagoon



Water ride, uShaka Marine World, Durban



The labyrinth at The Edge, Hogsback

destination: the overwhelmingly warm and friendly staff, an entertainment team organising endless exciting activities – from outings to mangrove swamps to dune-surfing – and (a huge bonus for families with young kids!) lovely baby-sitters. Of course, there's a lot for active adults to do if reading a book on your balcony is not enough to keep you occupied.

TOP CHILD ATTRACTIONS Dune-surfing, canoeing.

☺ **VOTE OF CONFIDENCE** Josie du Toit, 12: 'I just love dune-surfing; it's great fun and I can always go faster than my brother.'

DETAILS Accommodation options include five types of thatched bungalow (the view and season affect the price), and rates (from R815 per adult and from R195 per child) are per person per night, including three meals. *Visit* www.umngazi.co.za or call reservations on ☎ 047 564 1115/6/8/9.

4 Farm Fun

WHERE Blanco Holiday Farm & Guest Resort, Eastern Cape

WHY Blanco has been hosting families for more than 60 years, so it's unsurprising that its staff know exactly how to entertain all generations. Set deep in the Eastern Cape interior near Tarkastad, halfway between Cradock and Queenstown, Blanco offers a real farm experience (horse riding, daily cow milking and lambs being born, if you're lucky) as well as an endless array of sporting activities from tennis and squash to bowls and golf. It also has its own private game reserve, where guests can spot zebra, springbok, impala, blesbok and black wildebeest. If the call of the wild gets too much, there's a kids' entertainment club with organised events; look out for the Blanco Tractor Cart, which takes a trip every afternoon – packed with littlies!

TOP CHILD ATTRACTIONS Farm animals, kids' entertainment club.

☺ **VOTE OF CONFIDENCE** Leonie de Swart, 13: 'We have been going to Blanco for years and I still like it. I'm too old for the tractor ride, though!'

DETAILS Rates (R495 per adult and from R70 per child, depending on age) are per person sharing per night in thatched accommodation, and include full board and most entertainment and activities. *Visit* www.blanco.co.za or call ☎ 045 846 9163.

5 Family Action

WHERE Langebaan, Western Cape

WHY It's not the province's most picturesque seaside town but Langebaan, just an 80-minute drive up the R27 West Coast road from Cape Town, has a blue-green lagoon that

shimmers like a glistening emerald in the Cape's crown. And it's this attraction that makes it a magnet for families wanting to enjoy an active holiday. The area has almost year-round sunshine, safe swimming waters and reliable wind (an unusual bonus!), making it a perennially popular destination for windsurfers, kitesurfers and sailors. The area also offers perfect cycling and hiking, stunning beaches, deep-sea fishing and a golf course. For outings, take a slow drive through the West Coast National Park (a bird-watcher's delight any time of the year and a flower heaven in spring) to Churchhaven, the Cape's most picturesque little village.

TOP CHILD ATTRACTION Endless blue lagoon for safe swimming and water sports.

☺ **VOTE OF CONFIDENCE** Mark Lemke, 9: 'I love Langebaan because the lagoon is such fun to play in and if you drive around it through the nature reserve you can swim far out and the water only comes up to your waist. It gets a bit windy, though!'

DETAILS If the children are old enough, stay on one of the two houseboats – the largest sleeps up to 24. There are many other self-catering accommodation options available. *Visit* www.houseboating.co.za, www.westcoasthomeservices.co.za, www.langebaanreservations.com and www.sanparks.org.

6 River Magic

WHERE Frog Mountain Getaway, near Swellendam, Western Cape

WHY The Kilpin family, who owns Frog Mountain Getaway, has got it just right when it comes to creating a family destination, particularly for those with younger children. There's a foefie slide over the river, a fenced pool, an extensive playground, a trampoline, canoes and a waterfall walk. And to keep the grown-ups happy, the riverside venue is exclusive, with only four well-appointed self-catering thatched rondavels, each with a double bedroom and a small loft with beds for the kids. The latest addition is the conversion of a labourer's cottage, Nguni Cottage, which sleeps six, so you can take Granny and Grandpa too. It's the perfect mix of outdoor adventure and rural idyll. Go with a group of friends and have the place to yourselves.

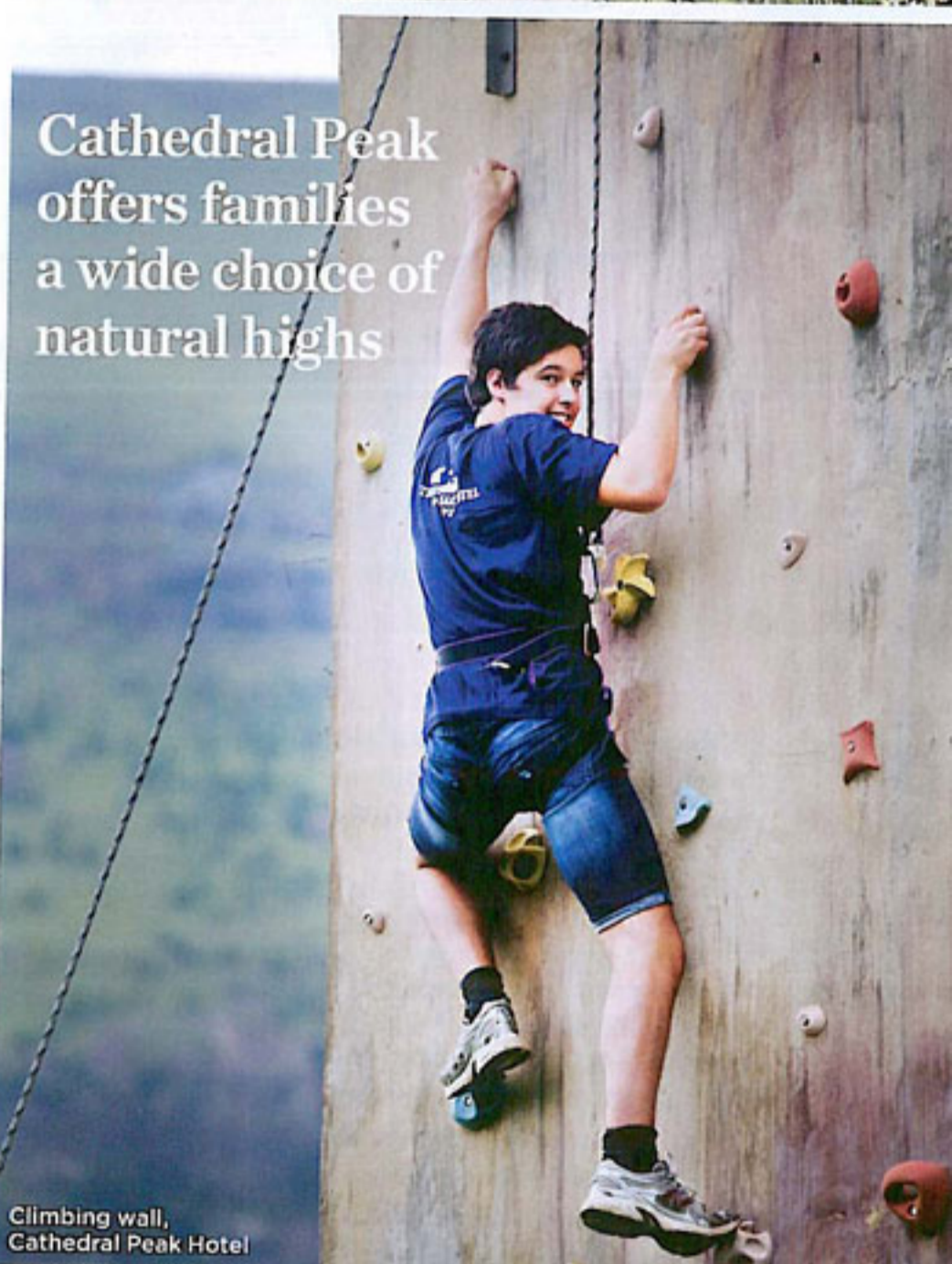
TOP CHILD ATTRACTIONS Foefie slide, canoes, playground, trampoline.

☺ **VOTE OF CONFIDENCE** Leo Houwing, 10: 'It was the first place I went fishing and I really enjoy canoeing on the river. The foefie slide is fun, especially watching my mom have a go!'

DETAILS Rates are per rondavel per night on weekends and during school holidays (R650 during low season and R950 in high season). Find Frog Mountain Getaway →



Riverfront fun, Frog Mountain Getaway



Climbing wall, Cathedral Peak Hotel



Agate hunting in the Caledon River, Wyndford Holiday Farm