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Balugha River Estate, near East London

## Investing in the great outdoors

● *Eco-estates that offer roaming wildlife or equestrian facilities are changing the face of security estate living for many South African residents*

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PROPERTY TREND

# Investing in the great outdoors

*Eco-estates that offer roaming wildlife or equestrian facilities are changing the face of security estate living for many South African residents*

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Royalston Coastal Wildlife Estate, Port Elizabeth

Modern residential estates are not only about the type of homes and security. Often, these sprawling developments incorporate open parkland, wildlife sanctuaries and equestrian spaces, to give urban residents a sense of getting away from it all. Chief among these are eco-estates.

"Eco-estates have become the trend in developing real estate – particularly in areas rich in natural beauty," says RE/MAX of Southern Africa CEO and regional director Adrian Goslett. He calls the eco-estate the Tesla Model S of real estate. Aside from being attractive and environmentally friendly, these housing developments have a sustainable lifestyle focus and have been built around some form of nature conservation.

RE/MAX Bushveld owner Loua Boshoff agrees on what drives eco-estate buyers. "It's a lifestyle decision. People move to these estates to enjoy a quieter existence – to escape from the hustle and bustle of the urban jungle and to enjoy outdoor activities."

This type of estate has popped up across SA, particularly along the North

Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. Says RE/MAX Dolphin Realtors broker/owner Simon Peacock: "As more of the area is developed, there has been increasing demand for lifestyle or eco-estate living. We have had the privilege of being involved in the sales on most estates along the Dolphin Coast, including Simbithi Estate, Zimbali Coastal Estate, Dunkirk Estate, Brettenwood Estate and the latest launched, Elaleni, an exclusive estate in Sheffield Beach."

**RESIDENT PROFILE**

John Bredenkamp, committee member of Boskloof Eco-Estate in the Helderberg basin near Somerset West, says these estates appeal because of their proximity to nature. "Eco-estates allow a resident to walk into a natural environment from their doorstep." He says residents in Boskloof are health- and nature-conscious, and place a premium on privacy. "The average age is about 40, with no children and middle to high income."

Brian Macaulay, a sales executive at Zandspruit Bush & Aero Estate in Hoedspruit, Limpopo, says the estate's buyer profile ranges from 35 to more than 70, with a 50:50



Boskloof Eco-Estate, Helderberg basin, Somerset West

South African-overseas investor split. "There are many reasons for buyers looking at eco-estates, ranging from security to space, tranquility, wildlife and indigenous forests,"

The setting and eco-friendliness are key factors for clients of Neil Tucker, principal agent for Grip Realty, which sells homes in Breakwater Bay in George. He says these homes appeal to higher net worth clients, nature lovers and in many cases those who wish to be more self-sufficient by investing in solar energy and water-harvesting

systems. "Another overriding factor is the sheer beauty of the estate," says Tucker. "With dramatic cliffs over the ocean and indigenous forests, it is hard not to fall in love with Breakwater Bay."

**AMENITIES**

While gorgeous natural surroundings are a big drawcard for many investors in eco-estates, it is what the estate management adds to the mix that often closes the deal for most. "Eco-estates have a far lower running cost than golf

**"With dramatic cliffs over the ocean and indigenous forests, it is hard not to fall in love with Breakwater Bay"**

Neil Tucker, principal agent, Grip Realty



Mahathunzi, KwaZulu-Natal Midlands

and many other high-density estates, and have more to offer the entire family," says Macaulay.

Polofields in Waterfall, for instance, is an eco-friendly estate near to the suburbs of Woodmead and Kyalami. It has three polo fields and a small dam surrounded by shady indigenous trees, is home to a variety of waterfowl, making bird-spotting an activity for residents, along with a lifestyle centre and varied activities.

**EQUESTRIAN**

Equestrian spaces and facilities are also a big drawcard. Mooikloof Estate in Pretoria, for instance, offers residents large stands – each 1ha – in the middle of suburbia. The estate also features a spacious dam-side recreational area, and offers residents cycling, tennis, bowling greens and picnic areas. An equestrian centre houses central stables, several arenas and a 20km horse trail.

Blue Hills Equestrian Estate in Kyalami offers views of the Magaliesberg mountains and about half the estate comprises green belts and wetland.

Its prime property stands range from 5,000m<sup>2</sup>–15,000m<sup>2</sup> and are the largest in the area. Aside from cycling trails and fishing dams, its equestrian amenities include spaces for the housing of horses.

**SECURITY**

Security is always a top concern. Wildlife and eco-estates often appeal because security measures make sure residents feel safe in these open spaces.

"Eco-estates essentially offer a lifestyle that has become lost to us; one where we had the freedom to walk out of our front doors without giving any thought to possible dangers and threats. Of course, the reason they can do this is because of the significant investment in security," says John Hart, property director of Serengeti

Estates, situated between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

**RETIREMENT**

Eco-estates also present a compelling case for retirement investors. The Negester Klein-Kariba sustainable lifestyle estate bordering the Klein-Kariba Resort outside Bela-Bela, an hour from Pretoria, has been developed for residents of 50 or older.

"Negester Klein-Kariba offers retirees the proximity of a busy city lifestyle with the tranquility of the bushveld setting. All homes have been designed with low energy consumption and a low ecological impact in mind," says RE/MAX's Boshoff.

The estate has 83 hectares of bushveld surroundings with many walking trails and free-roaming wildlife. It also has its own medical care centre and a range of sporting and other facilities.

**EASTERN CAPE**

In the Eastern Cape, 20km from East London,



Gondwana Game Reserve, near Mossel Bay

Balugha River Estate offers an unspoilt view of the sea and abundant wildlife, with blesbok coming to the river's edge for water. Residents enjoy direct river and beach access and beautiful views. Surrounding game reserves are a short drive from the estate.

Also close to East London is the Kidds Beach Estate, a rapidly expanding gated green development, which aims to build 5,000 homes in the next 10 years. It consists of six secure estates, with homes from R700,000 to R10m.

In picturesque Chintsa, Olivewood Estate and Golf Club was launched with the opening of an 18-hole championship golf course. The estate is zoned for 550 homes on the 1,000ha property, with phase one accommodating 100 erven. Once Olivewood is completed, 60% of the estate will remain undeveloped, leaving an array of natural landscapes, including forests, open

plains, riverbanks and dams for wildlife sightings.

Royalston Coastal Wildlife Estate is a 1,000ha secured residential reserve in Port Elizabeth among rolling hills and open fields along with ocean views. Game roams among homes as they visit a lake and watering holes. Bomas and bush sites are interspersed around the reserve for braais or picnics with friends and family.

**KWAZULU-NATAL**

Only 5km from Pietermaritzburg Airport is Intaba Ridge Secure Eco-Estate, close to top schools and only 11km from the popular Midlands Mall.

"Intaba Ridge has been developed with the vision of creating something special. There has been no compromise on security or on the eco-friendly nature of the estate. While the estate itself has an ethos of peace and tranquillity, its location gives those who live here easy access to good schools, retail

**TOP 10 WILDLIFE ESTATES IN SA**

1. Gondwana Game Reserve Private Residences
2. Hopewell Conservation Estate
3. Intaba Ridge Secure Eco-Estate
4. Kruger Park Lodge
5. Mahathunzi
6. Mjejane Lifestyle
7. Raptor's View
8. Royalston Coastal Wildlife Estate
9. Shandon Estate/ Eco Reserve
10. Zandspruit Bush & Aero Estate

Source: New World Wealth 2017 Estate Ratings



Intaba Ridge, Kwazulu-Natal Midlands



Breakwater Bay, George

# HOMEFRONT



Blue Hills Equestrian Estate, Midrand

outlets and work,” says the game estate director Brendan Falkson.

Mahathunzi, which borders Hilton College in the Midlands, will give residents the thrill of living on a declared nature reserve. Mahathunzi, with the adjacent Karkloof Safari Spa, is in the process of having the entire 3,000ha area declared a nature reserve through the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme.

## WESTERN CAPE

Nature estates are also booming around and

near Cape Town, with the city already offering staggering scenery close to urban centres.

Boskloof Eco-Estate is in the Helderberg Basin with south-facing sea views that include Table Mountain and the False Bay coastline.

This estate encompasses the natural beauty and splendour of Cape mountainside flora in a secure, private nature reserve of 51ha.

The estate has 73 exclusive homes. It has prohibited further development to

preserve its scenic and ecological qualities.

On the Garden Route, Breakwater Bay on the cliffs of Herolds Bay is a private, natural estate, only 20 minutes from George.

The secure estate offers access to a private nature reserve on the outskirts of the city.

Gondwana Game Reserve near Mossel Bay offers private residences on the reserve, which has the Big Five.

It is close to championship golf courses such as Pinnacle Point and Fancourt.



Zandspruit Bush & Aero Estate, Limpopo

## GAUTENG

In Gauteng, the Blair Atholl Golf & Equestrian Estate recently brought to market the last tranche of 80 vacant residential stands.

“With a natural urban migration to the west of Johannesburg increasingly evident, Blair Atholl Golf & Equestrian Estate, with its easy access to Lanseria Airport, appeals to affluent home buyers seeking secure and elite estate living,” says Peet Strauss, Pam Golding Properties development manager for Johannesburg. The estate

also offers a golf course, an equestrian centre, running and bike trails, small game, a fitness centre and a spa.

Meanwhile, east of Johannesburg, Serengeti Estates has launched a new cluster village, The Signature Residences. “Serengeti has traditionally offered freehold homes, ideal for people who wish to have a custom-designed house,” says estate developer David Nagle.

“We wanted to broaden our appeal and so introduced the Whistling Thorn apartments in 2017

– ideal for first-time or entry-level buyers. With the launch of The Signature Residences, we’re extending our reach further.”

The Signature Residences is aimed at young families who want space, with a garden and swimming pool, but want to avoid the maintenance associated with a freehold home.

In Limpopo Province, Zandspruit Bush & Aero Estate in Hoedspruit delivers African bush living, allowing homeowners to immerse themselves in the bushveld lifestyle.