



‘Zulu’ escorts us up the stairs to the lodge’s entrance. With the warm reception from Desmond and Elizke Gouws, the lodge’s general managers, Woodlands is rapidly feeling more ‘home’ than resort. This feeling of comfort is also reflected in its interior. This is a place where people can feel at ease. As Desmond says about the lodge’s ethos, “I’d rather visit a place where I feel at home than feel that if I move a chair it’s going to mess with the Feng shui”.

## Safari and Battlefields

A large lounge and dining area leads towards the bar with snooker table. Authentic Battlefield paraphernalia adorn the walls. This treasure trove provides a clue about Woodlands second unusual feature – it’s the only Battlefield lodge in a Big 5 reserve. Geographically the lodge is perfectly situated to offer guests the combined experience of a safari and the battlefields. With picnic baskets packed, Mike Nel a specialised battlefield guide takes guests on day excursions to nearby sites of Roukes Drift, Islandwana, Spioenkop and Blood River.

## Food, glorious food

Elizke informs us high tea is about to be served. Tables are set in the dappled light of a large acacia tree. The expansive lawns are perfect for children (and Zulu the Meerkat) to explore. As Eliske says, “Woodlands is a family orientated lodge. Here kids can run freely around in the gardens and swim.”

The high tea treats on offer prove to be a foretaste of another outstanding feature of Woodlands – superb cuisine. When Eliske