

LUCKY CRANE VILLAS • MCGREGOR

COUNTRY ESCAPES

Capetonians hankering for a country escape are spoilt for choice. Recently, I set out to explore three new finds, each just over a two-hour drive from the city or airport, but more importantly, all far enough away from the madding crowd. **BY JARED RUTTENBERG**



McGregor is a village I've returned to repeatedly ... and for good reason. This secluded 19th-century village is one of the country's most peaceful staycations. On several visits, I had walked past the line of newly built Lucky Crane Villas and was now finally here for a stay.

The white-washed villas couldn't be more perfectly located: on the one side, they are flanked by the village, and on the other, the gardens spill out towards the krans-cliff with Cape Fold mountains towering behind. Glancing back at the villas from the krans, they resemble a string of glistening pearls adorning the edge of the town.

The villas are designed with connection and relaxation in mind. My friends quickly slotted into go-slow mode, soaking up the poolside sunshine and later shifting to the braai and fire-warmed lounge.

Monika Schmalzl, the gracious owner, has poured years of passion into the villas, carefully crafting a comfy stay with her hospitality experience. They vary in size from cosy two-person accommodations to spacious three-bedroom options, each with its unique atmosphere. All have pools, Rock Martin sports a hot tub, and Little Swift has a sauna. Being adjacent also means they are perfect for larger gatherings of friends or family, ensuring everyone has their own space.

The beauty of McGregor is the ability to walk everywhere. When you do venture out, enjoy a wine tasting at Bemind, coffee from The Blend, and some reflection at the Temenos gardens.

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