

REST ASSURED

# Sleeping beauties

Curious sleeps in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands

## ZZZs IN THE TREES

The six treehouses in Hidcote were created by Bruce Attwood, an artist and craftsman who carved them from local woods, embellishing even door hinges with exquisite details. They're like magic castles in the sky reached via tightly wound spiral stairways – once you reach your lofty boudoir you may never wish to come down. Each treehouse has a deck or patio, some with hammocks, and there are fireplaces to make your nest super-snug and cosy warm on colder nights. Take your pick from two-person units or family suites – Planequarium sleeps four adults in two separate bedrooms plus there's space for two youngsters in bunk beds and an aerial bridge connecting to a wooden tower with a spa bath and double shower. Dinner and breakfast are included and are served in a communal dining room with gorgeous views across farmlands to the Drakensberg. [treehouse-acc.co.za](http://treehouse-acc.co.za) ➔





## DOZE IN DAIRYLAND

Jersey cows are the beauty queens of the bovine world with melting chocolate eyes and golden coats, so it's perhaps fitting that where once they munched and mooed is now the fancy-pants **Fordoun Hotel and Spa** in Nottingham Road. Rather than revamp the historical farm buildings into oblivion, the Bates family preserved some of the agricultural heritage. The floatation tank soars heavenwards in what was once a grain silo, the dairy now houses the heated pool and Jacuzzi, and several suites feature original barn stonework. Aside from the usual treatments and facilities, the spa also includes a Turkish *rasul* chamber and you can consult with resident sangoma, *inyanga* and ethnobotanist Elliot Ndlovu. Fordoun isn't one of those spas where being abstemious is equivalent to being saintly – its bistro offers top-class cuisine using locally sourced ingredients (the farm has a herb and veggie garden, and its happy chickens produce free-range eggs), and there's an impressive wine list. Snuggle into your bed after feasting, and you can almost hear the clip-clop of those long-gone Jersey cows as they amble past. [fordoun.com](http://fordoun.com) ➔



Preserved farm buildings are the location for a fancy-pants hotel and spa in Nottingham Road







## SLUMBER WITH THE SAINTS

Peace abounds in Hidcote, near Mooi River. Horses and cows graze in lush green pastures, water reflects diamond-like as it gushes from fountains, and wild flowers shine. It was here that St Andrew's, a magnificent sandstone Anglican church dating back to 1901, was saved by parishioners Jennifer and Paul Hindle. When they heard it was to be deconsecrated and sold, they decided to transform the building into what is now **St Andrew's Retreat**. Thanks to the stone archways and alcoves, there's a sense of being in some sort of medieval castle. Moonlight streams through skylights and there's still a bell up in the tower. Despite the grandeur, though, it's marvellously intimate, with just three bedrooms, plus snugs and alcoves with blankets and fleeces under which to cuddle, a kitchen (where Themban Moyo the butler-cum-chef conjures up heavenly meals) and wonderful grounds in which to explore or relax with a book. 033 266 6101 ➔







*The man-made cave is imbued with handcrafted furniture, all quite quirky and unique*

## RECLINE UNDER A ROCK

Who needs dripping stalactites when you can cocoon in luxury in a man-made eco-cave at **Antbear Lodge**? Situated on 229 hectares between Estcourt and Mooi River, the cave is set into a hillside beneath the Lodge's lawns and offers a secluded retreat from reality. Swing in a hammock-chair on the deck or slide back the glass doors and bubble away in the spa bath, watching the sun set over the Bushman's River Valley and the Drakensberg. Based here, you can hike in the nearby mountains, visit rock-art sites, explore the battlefields or go horseback riding. You can even take a woodwork lesson to get a handle on how some of the quirky, custom cave furnishings were created. Aside from the luxury cave, there are gorgeous suites to pick from, too. And for foodies, chef Jason 'J' Turner is something of a rock star when it comes to all things fresh and home-made: fruits, veggies and herbs plucked from the garden; cream, butter, yoghurt and cheese from the Antbear Jersey cows; breads and cakes baked daily. [antbear.co.za](http://antbear.co.za) ■

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