



# RIDE WORLD WIDE

## South Africa 2012

### Horizon Horseback Adventures

#### Information Sheet

Horizon Horseback Adventures is based on Triple B Ranch in the Waterberg in South Africa's northern Limpopo province (formerly the Northern Transvaal). Triple B, which has long been one of South Africa's most successful working cattle ranches, continues to operate as a cattle, game and arable farm but in addition to this, part of the farm is now a centre for riding holidays. This Information Sheet covers holidays at the main Horizon base - for details of Horizon's 'Saddlebag Safaris' please see our separate information sheet. Horizon is a fantastic choice for riders who want variety and flexibility and all levels of rider, from novice to experienced, are individually catered for, as well as those who want to combine riding with other activities. Riding options include rides out to enjoy the scenery (the Waterberg, which neighbours the Drakensberg, is a UNESCO biosphere reserve), rides to view and track game, cattle work, polocrosse and cross-country. Non-riding activities include walks, visits to neighbouring game reserves, farm and village tours. There is a good-sized swimming pool at Horizon, a tennis court that guests can use a short drive away and plenty of opportunities to learn about local life in South Africa. Accommodation is comfortable, food is delicious and (the reason many people return) Laura and Shane Dowinton, who manage Horizon, and their staff are incredibly friendly and welcoming. They do all they can to ensure each holiday is personalised and tailored to suit. Horizon is an easy two and a half to three hour drive from Johannesburg.

**Dates** We can arrange for you to stay at Horizon for any number of nights throughout the year, although we generally suggest 5 to 8 nights to make the most of all the activities and riding on offer. Please call us to check availability for the dates you have in mind.



**The Horses** There are around 65 horses at Horizon with an excellent selection to suit both experienced and less experienced riders. The majority are between about 14.1hh and 16.3hh, although there are some smaller ponies that are ideal children. Most have either been bred locally or on the farm itself and they include South African Boerperd crosses, part Thoroughbreds, Anglo Arabs, pure Boerperds and pure Thoroughbreds. They are all working 'bush horses' that are honest, good natured and sensible - but also responsive and forward going to ride, as well as being well schooled and very sure footed. Maclellan style saddles (which are quite similar to westerns) are used, with some English or Australian stock saddles available for those who prefer. Shane Dowinton who runs the riding from Horizon is an expert horseman (in the 'horse whisperer' mould!) and breaks and schools many of the horses himself. He has been using gentle training methods on young and problem horses for over 25 years and his skill and technique when handling young horses is superb. His horses are calm and contented and he is real pleasure and an inspiration to watch.

**Riding** During a stay at Horizon you have a choice of several different riding options, the emphasis being on tailoring your itinerary to suit. You may choose daily rides out - a few hours in the morning and / or evening, or (weather allowing) longer rides with a picnic lunch - to explore over 20,000 acres of undeveloped bush. Rides often include game viewing - game is not the main focus at Horizon but part of the farm is being preserved as a small private nature reserve and is home to hippo, zebra, kudu and several species of smaller antelope such as impala, steenbok and duiker. For those who want a more concentrated 'game experience' a 2 night mini riding safari, staying in a comfortable lodge on a neighbouring reserve, home to giraffe, zebra and wildebeest (amongst other species), is an option, or you can go on an afternoon game drive at neighbouring Entebeni Reserve, home to the 'Big 5' (there is a small extra charge for both these options). Other riding options at Horizon include working cattle - as part of a busy cattle ranch with a herd of 1200 stud Bonsmara cattle (an attractive and hardy African breed), there are always cattle to be moved, brought in for branding, weighing or to be checked for sickness - and Bonsmara cattle are good-natured and ideal for mustering. Polocrosse (an amalgam of polo and lacrosse!) is another very popular option and there are always plenty of chances to try this exciting - and very addictive - game. Those who have never played before will be given basic instruction and lots of encouragement (one chukka is usually all it takes to become an addict!) and friendly matches are often arranged. As well as all of this, riding lessons are available, you may have a chance to swim with your horse in one of the dams, there are special activities for children such as camp-outs, orienteering, treasure hunts and mounted games, and experienced riders can also try the ranch's show jumps and small cross-country course. The latter was designed by one of South Africa's top course builders and built for use in an annual '3 phase' event hosted by the farm. It includes over 100 fences of various levels. You will be asked to wear a hard hat when you ride - there are some hats available to borrow but we suggest you take your own to ensure a good fit.

**Pace** One of the main emphases at Horizon is flexibility and the pace at which you ride is tailored (as far as possible) to suit. The going around Horizon itself is generally good, with many wide, soft and sandy tracks that are perfect for canters but equally, with rides out from the base split according to guests' ability and preferences, you can choose a gentle pace if you prefer, enjoying the atmosphere, space and peace of the African bush.



**Riding Experience** To fully enjoy the riding options at Horizon you should have some previous riding experience - but riders of all abilities are welcome and riding programmes are (as far as possible) individually tailored to suit. The variety of riding and horses on offer mean it is an ideal choice for those who are reasonably experienced - but less experienced riders and novices, are very welcome. Programmes are flexible and great care is taken to ensure that experienced, less experienced and novice riders all have fulfilling and fun riding. There are plenty of staff and several guides and if guests are of different standards, groups can be split according to ability. Generally rides are limited to 4 or 5 guests - or you can ride alone with a guide if that suits best. The ranch is also a fabulous place for a family holiday. The minimum age for children is usually 8 years and children must have some riding experience, but younger or novice children can be taken by prior arrangement, especially if the whole lodge is booked for a private group. During July and August there are special family weeks open to families with children of any age and ability - if you are planning a trip with children please call us to discuss.

**The Terrain** One of the great joys of riding in this area of South Africa is the variety of terrain. Although cultivated in parts and used for cattle and crops, much of the land around Horizon is undeveloped and even the areas used for grazing are largely untouched bush and scrub, much as they would be in a natural state. There is thick bush in places, with diverse vegetation, but this then opens out to allow long canters on wide sandy tracks, across open farmland and over grassy plains. Rolling hills and rocky outcrops provide spectacular views of the surrounding country and the Melk River, which cuts through the land, empties into large lakes or 'dams' where water is stored - and which provide wonderful opportunities to swim - with or without your horse!

**Accommodation** The Horizon base can sleep a maximum of 14 guests (occasionally more for families or if booking as a private group) with accommodation in the main ranch house and in four thatched cottages ("rondavels") close to it. The ranch house was originally a farmhouse, now tastefully converted to provide comfortable, homely guest accommodation. With no TV or newspapers it is the perfect spot to get away. It has three comfortable twin bedded rooms - the two that are normally used for guests are garden facing with en-suite bathrooms with loo and shower and French doors opening onto the veranda; a third smaller room is used on cross-over nights and as an extra room when needed. The four thatched rondavel cottages are set slightly away from the main house and are comfortable and attractively furnished with double or twin beds and en-suite bathrooms with bath / shower and loo. One cottage, used as the honeymoon suite, is set by itself overlooking the dam (lake) and two others share a small covered veranda, set up with sofa and chairs. The ranch house itself has a good sized, comfortable sitting and dining room with open fireplace and also a large covered veranda ('stoop') that is the perfect spot for meals on warm, balmy evenings and for evening drinks. Lunch or barbecues are often served in a thatched 'boma' or under a shady syringa tree close to the house, there is a swimming pool in the garden and the grounds stretch down to the shores of the dam (lake) where there is the chance of seeing the resident wildlife come in to drink.



**Meals** You will be extremely well fed at Horizon with three delicious home cooked meals a day, all produced from fresh local ingredients as well as tea and snacks in between! Barbecues or "braais" - a great South African tradition - are a favourite and often feature the farm's superb beef. Drinks are included - you might start the evening with a Pimms or Gin and Tonic, and good quality local wines are served with lunch and dinner. Vegetarians and particular tastes can be well catered for but please let us know in advance of any special dietary requirements. When children are staying dinner is often served in two sittings allowing them to eat earlier in the evening.



**Weather** This part of Southern Africa is a good place for riding year round. In summer, November to February, daytime temperatures can reach 35 degrees C or more, however, so you will normally ride early in the mornings and late afternoons when it is pleasant and cool, with the hottest part of the day spent relaxing by the swimming pool. Summer is the rainy season with thunderstorms or showers possible between November and February, but rain is generally in short sharp bursts and it is often hot in between so rain rarely interferes with riding programmes. Autumn is March to April, when it is usually pleasantly warm (mid 20's C) and very pretty as leaves change colour. It begins to cool down, particularly at night, in May. June to September is winter, the dry season. It is usually still warm (shirtsleeves weather) during the day, but it can get cold when the sun goes in, with temperatures sometimes dropping to just above zero at night.

**What to bring** We will send you a list suggesting what to bring when you make your booking.

### **Example Itinerary:**

You are free to decide how to spend your days at Horizon and the staff will do all they can to ensure you have a wonderful time. Please call us to chat about your riding experience and the amount of riding you would like to do so we can help plan your stay. Two night 'mini safaris' can be arranged for an extra charge (850 Rand; approx £85) - usually Tuesday to Thursday each week. In addition to riding, guided walks, farm tours, village visits, game drives and visits to neighbouring game reserves can all be arranged. If you wish to combine a stay at Horizon with a stay at another local lodge (eg Ant's Nest or Ant's Hill which also offer riding - see our separate information sheet) you will need to book these in advance. The following is an example of a typical itinerary at Horizon:

**Day 1** Transfer to the Horizon homestead (about a 2 ½ hour drive from Johannesburg). Lunch and time to relax before meeting the horses and a late afternoon ride to get used to them and for a first view of the area, perhaps stopping for drinks at sunset at one of the hippo dams. Return to the ranch house for drinks, dinner and the night. (D).

**Day 2** Woken with early morning tea and a light breakfast before setting off on a ride through the farm to the Baber's historic thatched farmhouse, passing the local African village and farm creche (where you will be well entertained). Ride back to Horizon, perhaps stopping en-route at the dam for a cooling swim with your horse, the perfect way to build an appetite for lunch and a siesta. In the afternoon, relax and snooze by the pool and then after tea, an exhilarating ride along some of the farms many miles of sandy tracks - ideal for some long canters! Dinner and night. (B,L,D).

**Day 3** Breakfast and perhaps an introduction to Polocrosse today - starting with the basics you will soon be addicted to this invigorating sport. After lunch you might want to tag along on the weekly shopping trip to the local town of Vaalwater, for some retail therapy bush style! Return to Horizon for tea and then set off riding to a scenic point on the dam wall, stopping for a drink whilst the sun sets. Dinner and night at the ranch house. (B,L,D).



**Day 4** An early wake up call and chance to watch horses being brought into the corrals before setting off on a 2-night wilderness safari. A long ride of about 4 hours takes you to a tranquil, stone and thatch lodge on a neighbouring private game reserve. Lunch on arrival, then a siesta by the pool. After tea in the late afternoon, your guides will take you on a bush walk to see more of the reserve, perhaps tracking game, which will hopefully include giraffe, zebra and wildebeest, on foot. Return to the lodge as the sunsets for drinks and dinner around the camp fire. (B,L,D).

**Day 5** A long morning ride in the reserve, tracking game through the bush. Return to the lodge for lunch and to relax by the pool. The afternoon brings the option of a game drive or another ride within the reserve, arriving back at the lodge for sundowners on the veranda. Dinner and night at the lodge (B,L,D).

**Day 6** An early call for breakfast with prompt risers likely to see game such as giraffe, wildebeest and zebra. Ride back to the ranch house at Horizon arriving in time for a leisurely lunchtime braai. In the afternoon visit the community shop where locals make fantastic leatherwork including made- to-measure chaps and beaded browbands or ride out again if you wish. Overnight Horizon (B,L,D).

**Day 7** Today offers another challenge with a chance to help muster and move cattle - Triple B Ranch is one of South Africa's top stud Bonsmara farms with more than 1500 head of cattle, which need to move regularly to new pastures, be monitored and checked and there is always work to do. Or try your hand at cattle cutting - after bringing a herd in from pasture you take it in turns to move one cow away from the group, an activity that puts you and your horse against the herd instinct of cattle. For those who do not want to ride, a tour of Triple B Ranch with the owner Charles Baber, a great character and mine of information, is a fascinating option. Lunch at base and in the afternoon set off on a ride into the Triple B game area, tracking giraffe or zebra and learning the signs of the wild and medicinal values of the native bushes and trees. Dinner and the night at Horizon. (B,L,D).

**Day 8** Your final morning and a mounted treasure trail might be organised - a great game with clues leading you to various points on the farm. Finish with a celebratory drink before returning to the ranch house for a farewell lunch. Alternatively those addicted can try another session of polocrosse. Depart in the late afternoon for Johannesburg. (B,L).



## 2012 RATES:-

### Low Season -

**11th January to 20th February, 1st May to 30th June & 10th November to 10th December**

£165 per person per night

Discounted rates:

Children under 16 in garden cottage (sharing) OR standard double room (single or sharing) - £130 per person per night

Adults / children over 16 in standard double room (sharing) - £160 per person per night

### High Season -

**21st February to 30th April, 1st July to 9th November & 11th to 31st December**

£205 per person per night

Discounted rates:

Children under 16 in garden cottage (sharing) OR standard double room (single or sharing) - £160 per person per night

Children under 16 in standard double room (sharing) - £155 per person per night

Adults / children over 16 in standard double room (single) - £175 per person per night

Adults / children over 16 in standard double room (sharing) - £160 per person per night

**cont over**



## 2012 Rates cont

**NB** Those booking as a couple or in twin accommodation are usually allocated lake / garden cottages; single travellers are allocated standard double rooms. If a couple / twin are happy with a standard double room and this is available, the above discounted rates apply.

Rates **INCLUDE** all riding and other available activities, twin accommodation, meals and drinks. They **EXCLUDE** international flights to Johannesburg and taxes, transfers between Johannesburg and Horizon, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), supplements for single rooms (unless indicated otherwise), extra activities (eg 3 day mini safari, game drives on neighbouring properties), any visa fees and any tips you may wish to leave staff.



**Transfers** - We can arrange car transfers from Johannesburg to Horizon on request. There are regular transfers to Horizon departing Johannesburg International airport at 10.00 and there is a regular return transfer departing Horizon at 15.00. The seat rate for these transfers is £65 per person each way (£130 per person return). Transfers can also be organised at other times - the rate is usually £190 per car each way (£380 return) in a Polo type car seating 1 to 3 passengers; for a bigger vehicle seating 4 to 12 passengers the rate is £290 each way. Please note that transfer rates are subject to change and should be confirmed when you book.

**Single rooms** - The above accommodation rates are based on two people sharing a twin / double room, however as Horizon is a popular choice for single travellers, the lodge allocates 3 rooms (the rooms in the house) to single travellers without charging a supplement. Please enquire about availability of these rooms when you book. If none of them are available and you are not prepared to share a twin room with another guest of the same sex if asked (e.g. if the ranch house is fully booked and / or the numbers or mix of guests requires) to guarantee a single room, a 20% single supplement is normally charged. Please note that this is not compulsory for single bookings, but it will be charged if you are not prepared to share a room if necessary.

**Example costing**

High Season - A 7 night stay at Horizon in a lake or garden cottage (sharing) including return transfers at set times from / to Johannesburg, is £1565 per adult.

Low Season - A 7 night stay at Horizon in a lake or garden cottage (sharing) including return transfers at set times from / to Johannesburg is £1285 per adult.

**Group / family bookings** - We can usually offer special rates for groups or families booking the whole lodge (minimum 8 people). **Please enquire for details**

**TRAVEL / FLIGHT INFORMATION**

The nearest international airport to Horizon is Johannesburg. British Airways, South African Airways and Virgin all have one or two direct daily flights from London to Johannesburg, normally departing London in the evening (around 20.00), arriving Johannesburg early the next morning (around 08.00).

You can also fly via Europe (eg with Air France, KLM, Al Italia) but we strongly recommend a direct flight to minimize the risk of delays etc. Airfares vary depending on the airline you choose and the season, but expect to pay around £650 to £900 per person for a London / JNB economy return. We would be very happy to advise further on and to book flights for you. Please ask if you would like a flight inclusive quote for your holiday (our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213).

**General visa and health information** (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

**Visas** If you hold a full British Passport and are visiting South Africa for a holiday only and staying less than 90 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.

**Health** No inoculations are legally required for entry to South Africa from Europe but inoculations against Tetanus and Hepatitis A are recommended and also against Typhoid, Cholera and Yellow Fever in some circumstances. The Waterberg is a Malaria free area but if you are planning to travel on in South Africa after / before your visit you may be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets. You should always consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(draft 13/1/12)

