

# HONEYMOON SUITE GRANDE PROVENCE

A HONEYMOON SUITE IS BOUND TO BE LOVELY, BUT WHAT ONE WANTS MOST OF ALL IS PRIVACY. SONYA SCHOEMAN TRIED AND TESTED ONE OF FRANSCHHOEK'S BEST

## RATE IT

For complete privacy it'll cost a couple from R12 000 a night. For five couples sharing the cottage, from R25 000. The excellent and discreet staff stay until guests retire for the night, or leave earlier if their services are no longer required. The place is unpretentiously luxurious and very charming. And you'll be joining the ranks of royalty and celebrities (Prince Edward and Jude Law have stayed here). It gets 9.5/10. Grande Provence, Main Road, Franschhoek. 021-876-8600; www.grandeprovence.co.za

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## 1 ROMANTIC RETREAT

Frankly, if you're with someone you adore, satisfaction is not difficult to achieve, so honeymoon suites automatically have an unfair advantage. To offer another perspective, I would send sparring couples to the Honeymoon Suite in Grande Provence's The Owner's Cottage. It has all the environments that facilitate coming together: a fireplace, comfortable couch, enormous bed, secluded bath, soft lighting, a semi-private garden lined with roses. If booking out the entire cottage for the two of you alone, then there's also the pool, the pool *loggia* with another fireplace and spacious cushioned benches, a jacuzzi-with-a-view at the top of a suggestive set of stairs, a cosy lounge (again, a fireplace) and, best of all, numerous charming nooks for lovers to intertwine themselves in. To be stand-offish with so many picturesque opportunities, you'd have to have a criminal lack of imagination.

## 2 NIGHT-TIME TRYSTS

Of course, one shouldn't restrict love to the cloak of darkness, but in this suite it would be lovely. It's a spacious room but with an intimate feel. At one end is a large bed with silky cool cotton sheets, and at the other a large fireplace. It's far enough away from the bed to keep the room warm but not overheat two bodies. The only issue I had with the room was that the windows were shut at night as a security measure (no burglar bars), and the air-conditioning switched on. Personally, I prefer access to fresh air and the sounds of the countryside.

## 3 FAVOURITE MOMENT

Dinner can be made in the cottage by a chef, but we had dinner at The Restaurant in the manor house. The food paired with the estate wines was exceptional. And it provided my favourite moment: walking back from the venue through the vineyards on a warm night, with the moon spilling light over rows of curling vines and the rocky mountains beyond.

## 4 THE BIGGER PICTURE

The things that set top-end hotels apart from each other are few. At this level, the decor is bound to be tasteful, the quality sky-high, the service impeccable, the added value plentiful. The building is bound to be an architectural delight and the setting gorgeous. All this applies to Grande Provence, but it also has this rare perk: it offers complete privacy. Only one party can book out The Owner's Cottage, a delightfully contained, converted home with an exquisitely manicured garden dotted with rambling roses. It's charm with a capital C. The cottage is set in vineyards, and beyond that rise the Franschhoek mountains. The scenery is gorgeous whichever way you look. It can take a maximum of 10 guests in five bedrooms.

PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED

CHECK IN AT... ESCAPES



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