

HOTEL REVIEW

FOURDOUN HOTEL AND SPA, KZN MIDLANDS

HILARY BILLER

LOCATION

Arriving at Fordoun, you'd swear you were in the middle of Scotland.

Picture the scene – a “here to stay” soft drizzle, a long and winding driveway lined with towering oaks and surrounded by lush, emerald vegetation, a sprinkling of cows in the field and a thick mist hanging like a veil over the estate.

The hotel was originally a farm, whose first homestead was built in the 1860s. It is a mere stone's throw from Nottingham Road and the Mooi River Plaza, and four hours from Joburg.

ROOMS

The current venue has been sensitively built around the original homestead and the design and layout retain the sense of history.

There's a variety of rooms – luxury suites scattered around the estate; original stone walled rooms close to the hub of the hotel; some facing the dams, others offering uninterrupted vistas of the Drakensberg mountains – which are even better soaked up while soaping yourself in the outdoor shower at sunrise.

There are self-catering cottages at Fordoun Village, a little way from the main hotel.

STYLE

It's like a beautiful old farmhouse set on a rambling estate, luxurious without ostentation. The accommodation offers



A MIDLANDS FLING

space, lots of windows and private patios to lap up the scenery. There are flat-screen TVs in the rooms, fireplaces and air-conditioning. The main building features the Skye restaurant, bar and reception area with comfy sofas, laden bookshelves, beautiful artwork and a few friendly cats.

FACILITIES

The large estate offers well sign-posted walks, birding, fishing, swimming and mountain biking.

If that all sounds too much like hard work, head to the spa for some pampering including the opportunity to consult with traditional healer Dr Elliot Ndlovu (booking 24 hours in advance).

SERVICE

Many of the staff have a long history with this family-run hotel and the service is impeccable.

THE FOOD

The Skye Bistro is open to guests and the public for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Chef Lorenzo Giliomee prides himself on his use of mostly local and seasonal produce, much of which is produced on the farm.

Breakfasts are a highlight – their Midlands omelette, made with farm fresh eggs filled with local smoked trout, fresh herbs and Indezi River Cheese is memorable.

THE 'DO' LIST

Spend time in the tranquil, heated, saline pool. Once a grain silo, it even has star lights on the ceiling – you'll be back for more than one session. Or book a royal Zulu bath – a 40-minute soak in Dr Ndlovu's herbal compound. Take a drive – Nottingham Road, Curry's Post, and Howick are close by.

RATES

Doubles are from R2 200 to R4 500 per night, depending on the type of accommodation. Rates include breakfast.

BOOKING

Visit fordoun.com

Biller was a guest of the Fordoun Hotel