

# into

Our Editor-in-Chief, Charl Francois Edwards, checks into Blou in Keurbooms as its first guest, experiencing the allure of Babylonstoren's new far-flung 'addition'...



...a cozy hideaway set between the lush forrests and rugged coastline along the Garden Route in Keurboomstrand. Turn the page for your exclusive first look...

# blue





Previous spread Charl getting lost in his book, with ceramic Shellegance shells adding a pop of blue in the bathroom doorway. Opposite The brightly tiled pool, sauna and steam room. Above The reception area, where guests are welcomed with open arms on arrival. Below A mini tiled footbath.

Artist Henry Matisse once said, 'A certain blue enters your soul'. He is spot on.

It's a quote that entered my mind the minute I set foot at Blou in Keurbooms, the just-opened coastal self-catering accommodation by Babylonstoren, their latest gift to the world of experiential design and our hospitality landscape, and the ultimate in barefoot luxury and effortless ease. My kind of place.

It's been a year or so since I first heard of the rumours of this special property, located on the rugged coastline between Keurbooms River Nature Reserve and Nature's Valley, on the edge of the Indian Ocean.

Keurbooms has long been a favourite place of mine, and for so many others, all deeply protective of this special spot. So too are Blou's owners, Karen Roos and Koos Bekker, who have been holidaying there with their children for decades. A new development like this was therefore in the safest of hands. And the result speaks of much respect, appreciation and fondness of the surrounding beachside enclave, a sleepy hollow of a coastal holiday town that attracts a diverse group of visitors year-round. >







This page, clockwise from top left Charl admiring some decorative dolphins, just one of the many design details that make this property so special. One of the kid's rooms in the attic. The clean lines and minimalist decor of one of the master bedrooms. **Opposite** The living room's calm and crisp colour palette.



A small driveway leads us to the entrance of Blou, on the forrest side, tucked away between milkwoods and indigenous keurboom trees, and located right beside a caravan park. This is not lost on me, as the cottages almost feel like they are placed like caravans themselves – I later hear that this was Koos's brief to Malherbe Rust Architects, the same designers of Babylonstoren's iconic Garden and Fynbos cottages.

These cottages, connected by wooden boardwalks and set between lush vegetation, are at first unassuming, modest too, until one notices the modern glass and metal boxes protruding from each cottage. I quickly realise these aren't just any cottages. This old-meets-modern style and white-washed stone juxtaposed with metal and glass is synonomous with Babylonstoren, and what I call "the Babylonstoren aesthetic". The A-frames of these structures are also slightly taller by design, with pitched rooves that are steeper than those of the cottages at Babylonstoren. Very elegant.

The interiors, designed by Karen, are contemporary and minimalist in design, with lean, beachy looks, and a mixture of local and international design pieces. It's sophisticated yet laid-back, and a clean canvas to appreciate the best of what Blou has to offer through the windows and skylights: the shifting shades of blue sky and sea. >





**Opposite** The clean lines of the kitchen, where many meals and coffees are enjoyed during Charl's stay. The stainless steel surfaces offer a contemporary touch, creating an instantly modern mood. **This page** Picasso, his lovers and friends would have approved of the views.

As we wander towards our cottage, we walk past another quintessential and now iconic trademark of the Babylonstoren signature: a blue-tiled pool, one half covered in glass and connected to a sauna and steam room, and the other exposed to the outdoors and sun. I end up running between all of these, on repeat, a couple of times during my stay. Literally into the blue.

We arrive at our cottage on the front of the property, oceanside, where we are met with an overwhelming expanse of blue skies and blue ocean. Playful dolphins too. I walk inside, and spot my favourite photograph on the wall (coincidence?), a vintage poster of Matisse's friend Picasso, holding a beach umbrella. I pour myself a glass of wine, walk out onto the verandah, and settle into my armchair as if I'd already been here for weeks.

I'm lucky to call this cottage home for a couple of days, enjoying every nook, while also exploring the unspoiled stretch of coastline towards Nature's Valley. I soak up every sunny and cloudy moment, and every day I'm met with a different kind of blue palette, losing myself in every blue view and hue. What a perfect name.

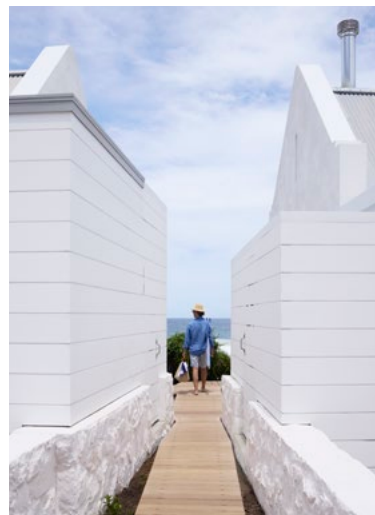
A certain Blou has entered my soul...







**This page** Three of the eight cottages are situated right on the beach, around the corner from Ristorante Enrico, a local favourite. The seafront cottages offer endless views towards Nature's Valley to the left, as well as Robberg Nature Reserve towards the right.



\*Due to Blou's limited availability, only guests who have already stayed at either of its sister properties, Babylonstoren Farm Hotel or The Newt in Somerset, can make a reservation. For enquiries, contact [reservations@blouinkeurbooms.com](mailto:reservations@blouinkeurbooms.com), or have a look at [blouinkeurbooms.com](http://blouinkeurbooms.com) ●