

The top 10 residential estates in South Africa



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2017 Estate Ratings

Ratings criteria include:

- Design and space.
- Communal gardens and parks.
- Maintenance.
- Location.
- Security features.
- Views, scenery and wildlife.
- Activities – gym, swimming pool, golf, horse riding, polo, tennis.
- Facilities – shops, offices, parks, gathering places, children playgrounds, schools, hospitals.

Recent trends in this space over the past year:

- There has been a rise in demand for retirement estates especially. Wildlife estates are also on the rise. Overall, there is move away from traditional golf estates.
- Many developers are now creating small neighborhoods within the estates as a pose to the old model where houses were spaced evenly around the entire property. The new model allows for more parkland and open spaces between the neighborhoods.

First place – Val de Vie

Val de Vie in Paarl retains its position from last year as the top residential estate in South Africa.

Highlights of the estate include: beautiful vineyards, polo fields, an equestrian center, a highly rated golf course, natural fynbos scenery, parks, lakes and mountain backdrops. House/apartment prices on the estate range from R3 million to R50 million.

Val de Vie contains a number of district and unique neighborhoods, including:

- The Polo Village - one to two bedroom apartments designed by Stef Antoni.
- Pearl Valley - houses spread along the Pearl Valley Golf Course.
- The River Club - large plots along the Berg River.
- The Reserve - large plots bordering on a Fynbos Reserve.
- Evergreen Retirement Village – new 600 unit retirement village (400 homes, 200 apartments) with full frail care facilities and recreational facilities.
- The Gentleman’s Estate – most exclusive neighborhood on Val de Vie - offers residents their own private stables, garden and vineyard. Properties on the Gentleman’s Estate range from 3 to 6 hectares each.
- Several other neighborhoods including: La Vue, the Vines and the Oaks.

Second place – Steyn City

Steyn City, ranked fourth last year, moves up to second place this year. The newly built Johannesburg estate includes: an equestrian center, a golf course and over 250 hectares of landscaped parkland.

The communal areas, vegetation and parklands on the estate are particularly impressive, as is the bird life. The parklands on the estate successfully emulate parks such as Hampstead Heath and Richmond Park in London, where local residents gather during weekends and after work to meet, talk and walk their dogs. The estate is also very child friendly with walking paths and underpasses under all the roads.

To promote bird life, Steyn city works with a local company called Ecosolutions to encourage owls to live on the estate. This is a particularly noble idea and speaks to the benefits of residential estates in preserving endangered birds such as owls. Wild finches and bee-eaters are also common on the estate.

The estate is still at early development – there are plans to add: two private schools, offices, convenience shopping, a retirement village and a private hospital. Once fully complete, Steyn City will be the most extensive estate in the country (in terms of facilities and activities). House/apartment prices on the estate range from R2 million to R30 million.

Third place - Zimbali

Zimbali is located next to Balito, 45kms north of Durban. It is arguably the most picturesque estate in the country, with its own natural lagoon and forest. The bird life on the estate is very impressive - it is home to several types of kingfishers, louries, bee-eaters and even the rare Crowned Eagle is a resident (the largest eagle in Africa). Notably, the estate is right on the beach. House prices on the estate range from R5 million to R50 million.

Fourth place - Fancourt

Fancourt is located in George on the Garden Route. It is undoubtedly South Africa's top estate for golfers, with three highly rated courses on one estate. The two original courses (the Montagu and the Outeniqua) were built in the early 90s, whilst the world famous Fancourt Links (the top rated golf course in Africa) was added in 2000. There are several different residential areas on the estate including: Links Ridge, Links Avenue, Cape Dutch Village, Oakland's Village and Montagu Ridge. House prices on the estate range from R3 million to R50 million.

Fifth place – Waterfall Equestrian Estate

Waterfall Equestrian Estate is located in Waterfall City in Johannesburg, overlooking the newly built Mall of Africa. It is arguably the most exclusive estate in the country - stands on the estate are particularly large, starting from around one hectare each. House prices there range from R10 million to R70 million.

Sixth place – Steenberg

Steenberg is one of the pioneer estates of South Africa. Originally a vineyard, Steenberg was re-developed by JCI in 1990 to include a golf course, hotel, spa and housing estate. The estate still contains a large winery and vineyard to this day. There are relatively few houses at Steenberg, when one considers the size of the estate. House prices on the estate range from R5 million to R35 million.

Seventh place – Mjejane

Mjejane Lifestyle Estate is the only wildlife estate in our top 10. It is located on the banks of the Crocodile River (bordering and open to Kruger Park). Notably, Mjejane has access to the full big five. The estate offers 200 stands (around 50 houses have been built to date) over 4,000 hectares with 10km of river frontage. House prices on the estate range from R5 million to R30 million.

Eighth place - Whalerock Ridge

Whalerock Ridge is located in Plettenberg Bay on the Garden Route. The 100 hectare estate offers residents impressive views over Robberg Beach. The bottom gate of the estate is located approximately 100 meters from the beach. House prices on the estate range from R3 million to R35 million.

Ninth place - Waterfall Hills Retirement Estate

Waterfall Hills Retirement Estate is the only retirement estate in our top 10. It is located in Waterfall City in Johannesburg. Retirement estate living is on the rise in South Africa and this estate has definitely set the benchmark that others will look to follow. House prices on the estate range from R3 million to R6 million.

Tenth place - Fransche Hoek Estate

Fransche Hoek Estate (also known as Fransche Hoek Agricultural Estate) is a relatively new estate situated in Franschhoek. Franschhoek is the fine food capital of SA and one of the fastest growing towns in the country in terms of wealthy people buying homes there. The estate has its own private vineyards and fruit orchards. All the houses on the estate have lovely views of the surrounding valley. House prices on the estate range from R10 million to R60 million.

Sub-categories (alphabetical unranked):

Top 10 wildlife estates in SA:

- Gondwana Private Residences
- Hopewell Conservation Estate
- Intaba Ridge
- Kruger Park Lodge
- Mahathunzi
- Mjejane
- Raptor's View
- Royalston Wildlife Estate
- Shandon Estate
- Zandspruit Estate

Top 10 golf estates in SA:

- Eye of Africa
- Fancourt
- Pearl Valley (part of Val de Vie)
- Pezula Golf Estate
- Pinnacle Point
- Simola
- St Francis Links Estate
- Steenberg
- Steyn City
- Zimbali

Top 10 retirement estates in SA:

- Constantia Place
- Evergreen Bergvliet
- Evergreen Noordhoek (new)
- Evergreen Val de Vie (new)
- Mount Edgecombe Retirement Estate
- Plettenberg Manor (new)
- San Sereno Bryanston
- Somerset Lifestyle & Retirement Village (new)
- Tokai Estate (new)
- Waterfall Hills Retirement Estate

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New World Wealth is a global market research group, based in Johannesburg, South Africa. We specialize in ratings, surveys, country reports and wealth statistics.

Contact

Andrew Amoils

New World Wealth

andrew@nw-wealth.com

+27 10 007 5712

www.nw-wealth.com

Suneeta Motala

AfrAsia Bank

Suneeta.Motala@afasiabank.com

+230 403 5500

www.afasiabank.com