



### Brookdale Estate, Western Cape, South Africa

There is only one proviso when you stay at Brookdale Estate, a new private manor house and vineyard set in the foothills of the Klein Drakenstein Mountains in South Africa's lush Paarl Valley. And that is to treat the place – all 80 hectares of it – like it's your own, whether exploring the indigenous fynbos trails, joining in the harvest or simply relaxing by the freshwater swimming pool. With your own private cellar, there's literally wine on tap, including Brookdale's first Chenin Blanc vintage and a very smooth Syrah – plus the estate's vivacious young winemaker Kiara Scott will treat you to an exclusive wine tasting. Designed in original Cape Dutch style, the spacious five-bedroom manor house features gently rounded gables, whitewashed walls and thatched roofing. The H-shaped interior is a study in elegant simplicity with two chic sitting rooms in cool colour palettes, formal dining room, breakfast room and library leading from the central vestibule, complete with sweeping staircase and a welcome breeze at either end. You'll enjoy delicious 'refined home cooking' by resident chef Sue-Ann Allen, a former *MasterChef South Africa* runner-up, whose menus are inspired by the estate's organic kitchen garden. Meantime, a butler and housekeeper are on hand to attend to your every need, including serving signature Brookdale gin cocktails at sunset while you watch the ancient granite mountains turn from vivid orange to hazy pink and purple in a thrilling natural light show.

**BOOK IT:** Sleeps ten. From R90,000 (approx. £4,230) per night, all inclusive. Minimum of seven nights. [brookdale-estate.com](http://brookdale-estate.com)

### Villa Penna,

Tenuta di Murlo, Umbria

If your brood is particularly rambunctious, you can truly relax here: there is nobody within earshot. There are very few corners of Europe as deliciously untouched as this corner of Italy, and it's twice as private if you're staying on a several-thousand-hectare private estate that's been owned by the same family since the 13th century. Owner Carlotta has lent her incredibly chic Italian taste to this medieval farmhouse, transforming it into a warm and welcoming retreat from real life. Days pass listening to the cicadas by the pool, rowing across the estate's private lakes or walking through olive groves that are hundreds of years old. All while never catching a single whiff of another soul. It hardly needs saying that this is a foodie's paradise. Arrange for the chef to serve lunch at the poolside outhouse or dive into the twice-baked pear and pecorino soufflé at nearby restaurant Il Caldaro, which has a particularly romantic garden terrace. What's more, if you don't stock up on a few crates of the local Sagrantino grape variety, you really are missing a trick.

**BOOK IT:** Sleeps eight. From €10,000 (approx. £8,950) per week, including maid and concierge service. [murlo.com](http://murlo.com) ■

