

Fancourt is not only fancy, but sustainable too



By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

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As the big black entrance gates open and you drive through the lush, tree-lined avenue, you are transported to a different world. This is the heritage of Henry Fancourt White which dates back to the mid-1800s.



Everything is in full bloom and I'm almost sure it's not just because of the recent rain. I'm convinced the Jurassic Park-sized flowers are always in bloom here, flaunting all the colours of the rainbow.

It is a world where cars are replaced with golf carts, bicycles, and little ones on tricycles.

Tarmac changes to brick pathways, winding their way through evergreen golf courses, houses, hotel rooms, restaurants, and entertainment areas. Traffic jams are a long forgotten memory as you take in endless sights of perfectly manicured grass carpets and the Outeniqua Mountain range staring at you from the background.

On my recent visit to Fancourt, I noticed a couple of things which intrigued me. One of them being a golf ball in my bathtub where the bath plug is supposed to go.

With that in mind, and the fact that the magnificent 613-hectare property boasts four options for food and drink, four swimming pools and three golf courses, I decided to have a chat with Peter Dros, director of sales and marketing, about the

luxury establishment's sustainability efforts and I was quite impressed.

■ *What particular things, if any, have Fancourt changed in order to run a more sustainable establishment?*

We understand fully that sustainability in tourism is important and have adapted some of our procedures and activities to ensure that we run a more sustainable establishment that will not detract from our guests' overall experience.

Fancourt is, for example, known for supporting the local vendors and the community as we try to buy as much local produce and other products as we can.

We are systematically eliminating exotic plants and trees from the estate and ensuring that we only cultivate those species which are indigenous to our environment.

We also use our own water on the estate to water the courses. And, as you've seen, we have replaced bath plugs with golf balls – although bath plugs are still available to our guests on request. We have also completely halted the use of plastic straws and only make use of environmentally-friendly straws.

■ *That's cool. Do you find it difficult to educate your residents and visitors regarding sustainability? How do you approach this task?*

We educate our residents and guests about our sustainability efforts through newsletters and notifications which are strategically located all over the estate.

■ *Tell us a bit about how you choose the excursions for your visitors. I went to an ostrich farm where they don't do any ostrich riding anymore - is this in accordance with your policy? Or was it just coincidentally?*

We have actively chosen to only support excursions that do not promote animal interaction.

■ *What are your thoughts on sustainable tourism in general in South Africa? How do our efforts compare with some of the other initiatives and practices that are arising in other countries?*

This is growing and is being addressed in South Africa. South Africa has a long way to go to catch up on certain countries like Norway, Costa Rica and Bhutan but I think it's definitely something we are all working on.

Fancourt is situated in Montagu Street, Blanco, George. For more, go to www.fancourt.co.za.

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work here and here. Contact Ilse through her website here.

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