

Travel ^{MAGAZINE} Essence

YEAR END ISSUE

A timeless escape:

**LE JADIS BEACH
RESORT AND
WELLNESS**

*Afriiski Mountain
Resort:* **DISCOVER
LESOTHO'S SKI
DESTINATION**

**INSIDE VICTORIA
FALLS' INSIKA LODGE**

**AN URBAN OASIS
AT PALM HOUSE
BOUTIQUE HOTEL**

**PHIL SCOTT-
RIDDELL**

**ON THE BIG PIVOT: FROM AVIATION TO
OPENING PAMARAH LODGE**



MARULA
HILL
TRAVEL

Travel
Essence
Getaways



EXCLUSIVE SOUTH AFRICA SAFARIS 2025

LIMITED
SPACE

Hosted by
Yvonne C. Mtengwa



RESERVE
YOUR SPOT



Culture • Lifestyle • Taste-Making

TravelEssence^{MAGAZINE}

Culture • Lifestyle • Taste-Making





**On The Cover:
PHIL SCOTT RIDDELL**

Editorial

Yvonne C. Mtengwa
Editor-in-Chief

info@travelessencemag.com

Creative Direction

Lucy Nkosi

lucy@lucynkosi.com

Social Media


Elena Kavalaris

Elena@hazelfeather.com

GENERAL ENQUIRIES


info@travelessencemag.com

www.travelessencemag.com

 @Travelessencemagazine

 @TravelEssenceM1

 @TravelEssenceMag

 Travel Essence Magazine

Published by Narratives PR LLC – FZ
Registered at Ras Al Khaimah
Economic Zone (RAKEZ)

There is a magic in the African night, a sense of mystery and power that hangs heavy in the air. The stars burn with an almost insolent brightness, and the moon paints the landscape in silver.
— WINSTON CHURCHILL



This year has been quite the adventure! So much of an adventure that we find ourselves looking back at our achievements as a publication and can only be grateful for how far we've come. Beyond turning 4 years old, we launched our all-new online content hub, which was well received and certainly signifies our growth and the depth of content we have produced over the years. We embarked on a filming project that I look forward to sharing more about in much greater detail and reignited a refreshed look and feel for our newsletter.

We also soft launched our Travel Essence Getaways arm; our version of curated travel experiences where we take discerning guests to some of the places across Africa that we have loved. Though largely still in trial phase, it has been a gift partnering with the likes of Marula Hill Travel, working with a suite of brands that readily opened their doors for us

to bring in our guests and being a part of the excitement of one discovering the continent for the first time. We look forward to onboarding new partners into the New Year.


2024 was also the year we visited a few iconic destinations for the very first time, courtesy of their local tourism boards. Mauritius, Malawi, Lesotho and the great Okavango Delta were huge highlights for us, with so much remarkable content curated from these locations. Credit goes to the awesome luxury travel and tourism professionals behind the scenes who pulled together such robust itineraries. A time of discovery was truly had.

Trends from last year seemingly continued into 2024, with more and more travellers showing up at airports with renewed vigour for exploration and connection. They made up for lost time by embarking on ambitious journeys, the rise of eco-conscious tourism continued to gain momentum, with travellers prioritizing sustainable practices and supporting local communities. The wellness tourism industry flourished, offering travellers opportunities to rejuvenate their minds and bodies through yoga retreats, meditation workshops, and health-focused experiences. The digital nomad lifestyle remained popular, with many professionals choosing to work remotely from various destinations. Travellers sought out immersive experiences that allowed them to connect with local cultures and traditions, and of course, artificial intelligence revolutionized the industry, providing personalized recommendations, streamlining bookings, and enhancing overall travel experiences.

The future of travel looks promising, with a continued focus on sustainability, technology, and personalized experiences. We at Travel Essence Magazine remain committed to simplifying the storytelling journey, unpacking more of the hidden gems and experiences in hospitality, travel and hospitality you should be in the know of. As the countdown to Issue 30 begins, join us in celebrating this huge milestone too. We are excited and couldn't have managed it all without your support. 🙌

Yours truly,

Zywanne C. Mtengwa



Travel Essence Getaways

*Your
call to
exploring
Africa*

CURATORS OF

Exclusive Destination Retreats • Bespoke leisure and lifestyle experiences • Content Creator Trips • Investor Tours To key African Markets And More...

To get started on planning your exclusive solo or group travel experience through our extensive network of high end boutique hotels, lodges and camps in Africa's key travel destinations, email us at info@travelessencemag.com.

www.travelessencemag.com

Contents

YEAR END ISSUE

Cover Story

08 | Phil Scott-Riddell on the Big Pivot: From Aviation To Opening Pamarah Lodge

Editor's Pick

18 | Peregrinations Through Wilderness King's Pool: A Sanctuary on the Linyati River
By Yvonne C Mtengwa

24 | Palm house boutique hotel: Discover An Urban Oasis In The Heart Of A Historic Corner Of Cape Town

30 | A Timeless Escape: Le Jadis Beach Resort and Wellness Mauritius

Taste-makers

34 | Jörg Pfütznner takes Singita Premier Wine Direct into a New Era

38 | The Life-Changing Benefits of an African Safari: Adventure, Connection, and Renewal

42 | The Test Kitchen Fledgelings Story: Serving Up Bold Plates for Diners, and a Brighter Future for Budding Chefs
By Yvonne C Mtengwa

Adventures In Wild Africa

48 | The Warm Heart of Africa's Pumulani Lodge: A Lakeview Retreat's Call for Relaxed Luxury
By Yvonne C Mtengwa

52 | Insika Lodge: A Boutique Blend of Luxury and Nature
By Yvonne C Mtengwa

56 | Singita Milele 6 months on: Plenty to Love About This Expansive, Contemporary Villa in the Heart of the Serengeti

The Wanderlust Within

64 | Afriski Mountain Resort: A Peak into Lesotho's Ski destination
By Yvonne C Mtengwa

70 | Serenity in the Seychelles
By Sarah Kingdom

Pulse Of The City

78 | Clay House Boutique Hotel: A Fresh Take on Abuja's Hospitality Scene



64



34





Phil Scott-Riddell on the Big Pivot:

From Aviation To Opening Pamarah Lodge



7. PHIL SCOTT-RIDDELL:
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR
LIFE GROWING UP? WHERE
WERE YOU BORN AND WHAT
CHILDHOOD MEMORIES
REMAIN VIVIDLY IMPRINTED IN
YOUR MIND?

I was born in the town of Chinhoyi about 120km outside of Harare, Zimbabwe. My father was the crop spraying pilot based in the small village of Raffingora (near Chinhoyi), where I spent my first three years of life before moving to the capital city of Zimbabwe.

My strongest childhood memories are standing in the cockpit of the aircraft next to my Father, and flying low across the fields, with steep pull-ups and wild tight turns at each end of the field. The planes only had a single seat and were never designed for passengers...so a few aviation



laws were definitely broken! It turns out that it is possible to get four people into a Thrush – my Mother on one side of Dad, my older sister on the other side, and me as a very small child on Dad's shoulders!

Unfortunately, my Father eventually died when I was 19 years old as a result of the terrible injuries he sustained while crop-spraying. It was his passion that raised me and he loved the thrill of his job. I was equally raised by a truly loving Mother; and she only passed away a year ago.

2. WHAT INSPIRED YOUR DESIRE TO ENTER THE FIELD OF AVIATION?

Without a doubt my interest in aviation was strongly influenced by my upbringing surrounded by aircraft. I had really wanted to be a crop-spraying pilot like my Father, but his tragic death put me on a more conservative aviation path, spending most of my career flying jets at high altitude.

I started flying Boeings for Air Zimbabwe when I was 24 years old and was a Boeing 777 Captain with Emirates by the time I was 34. I was truly fortunate to fly some wonderful aircraft in my career. My logbook shows that I have accumulated 12000 flying hours and landed in 77 countries. My flying career allowed me to see the world, and helped to confirm that the best place for me to live is Zimbabwe!

3. AT TRAVEL ESSENCE MAGAZINE, WE LOVE A STORY THAT UNPACKS ONE'S BIG PIVOT. FROM AN ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER IN AVIATION TO RETURNING HOME TO ZIMBABWE TO OPEN PAMARAH LODGE? TAKE US THROUGH WHAT PROMPTED THAT MOVE?

I left Emirates and Dubai at the end of 2006 to take up a job flying a corporate jet based in Harare. Although it was a very financially turbulent time in Zimbabwe, it was a wonderful move for our family. Our return to Zimbabwe coincided with our daughter being able to start her high schooling in Harare. As much as we appreciated all the opportunities that Dubai and





Emirates afforded us, we had a strong yearning to return to the slower pace of life in Zimbabwe, and to the beautiful country of our birth.

On a holiday to Victoria Falls in 2016, we came up with the idea to leave Harare and move to Victoria Falls. When we started looking at properties to buy, we came across a very rustic Lodge that was definitely in need of an upgrade. We came to Victoria Falls to buy a home, and ended up buying a Lodge instead!

As I got older I started to contemplate what would happen after flying. There are age restrictions for flying careers, normally 65 years old, plus the ever-increasing risk of not being able to pass the stringent aviation medical tests every 6 months.

It made sense that after spending about 50% of my adult life living in a hotel, that we should build one. I certainly knew how to be a guest in a hotel, but I had absolutely no idea how to build one and run one. It is fortunate that I really love a good challenge, and we forged ahead with the building project.

4. HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO BUILD PAMARAH LODGE AND WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACED AS YOU WORKED ON YOUR DREAM PROJECT?

I reckon I should have been awarded a prize for the slowest built Lodge in Victoria Falls! We were not in a hurry to build as I was still flying for a living, and the Lodge was really our retirement "Plan B". Our bank was very interested in what we were doing, but they never lent us money.





It seems that pilots who have never built or run a Lodge are high risk! I guess you cannot blame them... This turned out to be a blessing because we self-funded the project, which was finally finished after a four and half year build.

One of the challenges of building in a remote place like Victoria Falls is that most things for the project need to be imported. Recognizing the strategic importance of tourism as a foreign currency earner, the Zimbabwean Government had introduced a scheme that waived the duty on the import of goods that were being used for tourism infrastructural development. This helped us immensely. However, the waiver process required sign off from several different government departments, so each import needed to be planned months ahead. We quickly learned to plan well ahead to ensure

were the consequences of Covid-19. Like so many around the world, we were deeply impacted by this unforeseen change of circumstances. When lockdown happened, we were about halfway through the build; in aviation terms, we were at the “point of no return”. We had to complete the build and get the project over the finish line. To compound the challenges, I lost my flying job which had been funding the project, and we needed to use our life savings to finish the build. We were investing all we had in a dead tourism sector, not knowing when things would recover. Certainly it was a very difficult time.

There was a quote from Winston Churchill that helped me tremendously during the difficult times: “You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks.”

that all the fixtures and fittings got to site on time.

Without a doubt, the biggest challenge we faced

There were many barking dogs along the way – naysayers, discouragers, critics, prophets of doom. I quickly learned to filter out the noise, and focus on the destination.

5. LET US SWITCH GEARS AND TALK A LITTLE ABOUT FAMILY LIFE. WE LOVE A FAMILY-RUN BUSINESS WHERE THE OWNING FAMILIES EFFECTIVELY OPENS ITS DOORS TO GUESTS, MUCH LIKE LETTING PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD INTO YOUR HOME? CAN YOU TAKE US THROUGH WHAT A DAY IN THE LIFE OF RUNNING PAMARAH LODGE LOOKS LIKE FOR YOUR FAMILY?

PAMARAH is an acronym for our family names: Phil and Mornette and Ross and Holly (PaMaRaH) and I count it one of my greatest blessings in life that we can live and work together. I believe it works well for us because we all bring different strengths and skillsets to the business.

Mornette (my wife) has an incredible eye for detail, and this is often commented on in the guest reviews we receive. Mornette is responsible for



all the marketing; the incredible Instagram and Facebook posts are all done by her. Mornette also responds to every review that we receive.

Ross (my son) worked in the UK as a chef for 7 years in a variety of different restaurants, including a brief stint in a Michelin restaurant. His final job in the UK was working at Balmoral Castle for the Queen before she passed away. Ross is the obvious family member to run the restaurant. Holly (my daughter) has a Masters degree in Maths and Theoretical Physics, plus a teaching degree. Needless to say, she is brilliant with numbers, and uses those skills with great precision to run the admin and finance aspects of the business.

We all really like to engage and interact with our guests. That is the best part about hospitality - meeting and talking with guests from around the world. I used to fly around the world meeting people, now I stay in Victoria Falls and they all come here! No two days are ever the same.

6. UNVEIL PAMARAH LODGE TO US IN WORDS. WHAT SORT OF EXPERIENCE CAN GUESTS EXPECT WHEN BOOKING A STAY AT PAMARAH LODGE?

Having spent many years staying in large impersonal brand name hotels, with long corri-



dors, multiple levels and countless rooms, we strive to offer the complete opposite: peaceful, private and personal. We try to talk to every guest. Ideally, we want to help our guests with building their itineraries, booking their activities, arranging their transfers, making restaurant reservations, and suggesting options for them to enjoy. We want them to enjoy their holiday while the team takes care of their logistics.

The Lodge is quiet, safe and tranquil. Pamarah Lodge is small, intimate and well-appointed. What we say about ourselves is not nearly as important as what our guests say about us in their online reviews. Read our reviews on TripAdvisor, Google, Booking.com or Expedia to get an authentic insight into our guest experience.

7. AS A FAIRLY NEW ENTRANT INTO ZIMBABWE'S HOSPITALITY SECTOR, WHAT TRENDS ARE YOU SEEING IN THE BOUTIQUE HOTEL AND LODGE SPACE IN ZIMBABWE, AND IN VICTORIA FALLS SPECIFICALLY?

It is probably because of the niche that we operate within, but many guests have told us they no longer want to stay in large hotels. There are also many people who were stopped from traveling because of Covid, who are now more determined than ever to get out and experience the world.

8. FOR ANYONE LOOKING TO INVEST IN THE SECTOR, WHAT FIVE NUGGETS WOULD YOU PUT FORWARD FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION, GIVEN THE COMPLEXITIES THAT EXIST IN THE LANDSCAPE?

1. Building the Lodge is actually the easy part. Operating it is infinitely more difficult. Learn the laws of the land and implement them from the outset.
2. Recognise that the tourism sector is very competitive. Stretch your budget as far as you can to achieve the best level of build quality you can afford. Do it properly the first time.
3. Spend the money on a good designer. You pay a lawyer for legal advice, and an accountant for accounting advice. Likewise, spend the money on a professional designer. They are worth every cent.
4. Identify your brand. What is unique about your offering. What differentiates you from all your competitors.
5. Your staff are your greatest ambassadors. Choose them wisely.

To learn more about Pamarah Lodge and book your stay with them, visit <https://pamarah.com/>



9. WHEN YOU ARE NOT AT THE LODGE ATTENDING TO OPERATIONS OR GUESTS, WHAT DOES PHIL LIKE TO DO FOR FUN?

I cherish time with my family more than anything. Any moment we can spend relaxing together is my happy place: whether that is having a picnic on the banks of the Zambezi River, or a meal out together, or playing a game a chess, or walking the dogs. Nobody ever lay on their death bed wishing they had spent more time at work! Tourism is a 365 day a year job so it is very easy to lose that balance between work and relaxation.



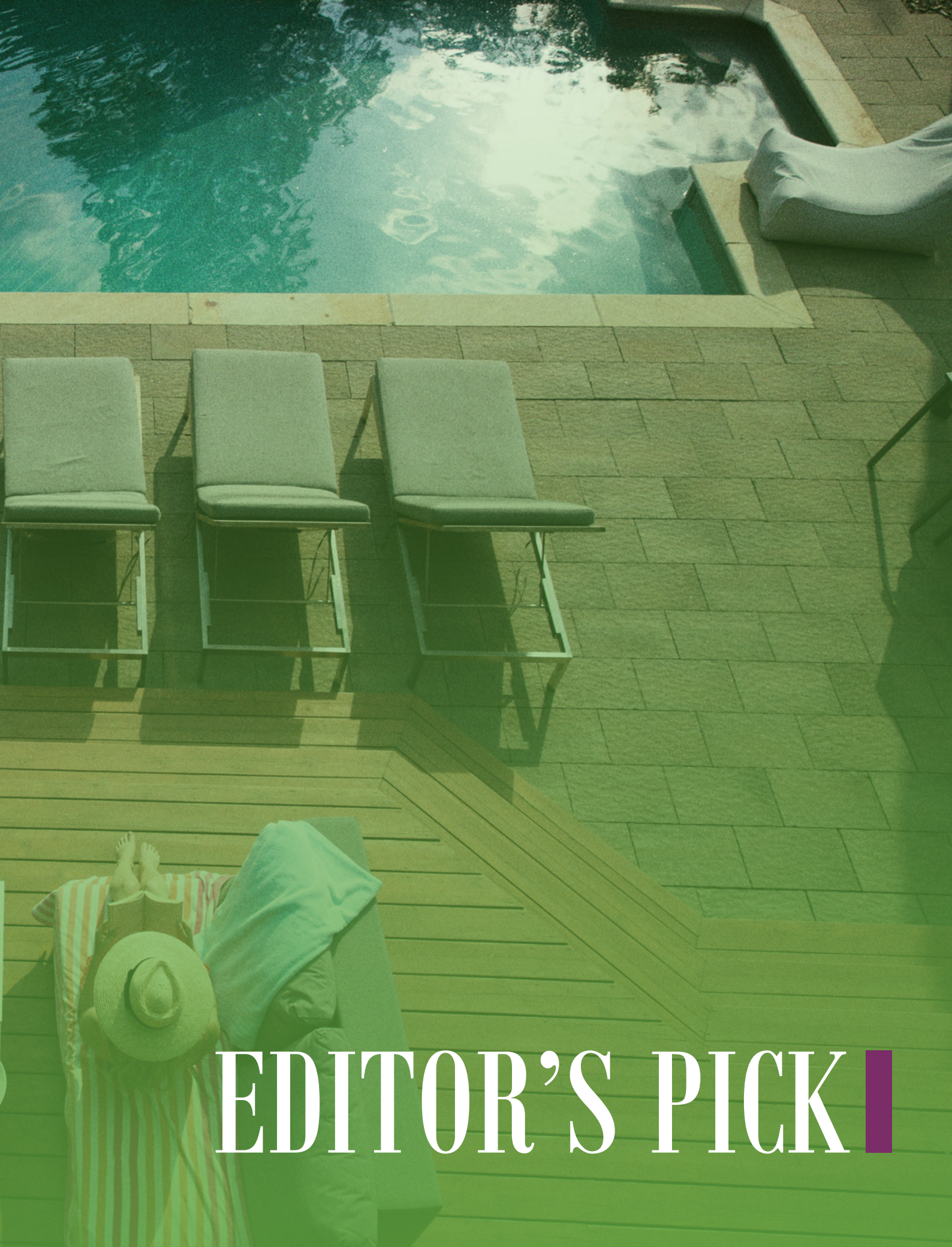
10. WHAT IS THE LASTING LEGACY YOU WOULD LIKE TO NURTURE AND BE KNOWN FOR?

I think the legacy I would like to leave for my children are the attributes that I observe to be increasingly rare in this world: honor, integrity, honesty, principle, dignity, fairness, trustworthiness, compassion, humility. To have the courage to swim upstream in a downstream world. To go against the flow. To have the courage to walk your own path, dance to your own tune, and not to try to live someone else's expectation of how you should live your life. 🍷





HYDROPOOL



EDITOR'S PICK |



Peregrinations Through Wilderness King's Pool: A Sanctuary on the Linyati River

By Yvonne C Mtengwa

I've always been drawn to the wild, untamed beauty of Africa. The vast, open plains, the diverse wildlife, and the serenity of the bushveld have an almost magnetic pull. I also have a deep-rooted love for hospitality brands that set a premium on merging luxury curated experiences for their guests, with an impassioned call for conservation efforts and impacting the communities from which they operate.

Our Wilderness Air chartered plane dipped below the clouds, revealing a breathtaking panorama of the Okavango Delta. As we descended, the expanse of water and papyrus marshes unfolded, a tapestry of green and blue that stretches to the horizon. We were heading in for our third and final stop through the Delta, where my dear friend Taku and I had just enjoyed a trip of a lifetime, experiencing three camps out of Botswana's Wilderness Destinations portfolio. First it was With Wilderness Jao and then Wilderness Vumbura Plains, each blessing us with such distinctive experiences. Wilderness King's Pool awaited our arrival, and of course, the excitement was palatable.



Alighting from the plane, we were greeted by a warm welcome from our guides Wise and Sonny, who whisked us away in our designated safari vehicle for a 45-minute drive into camp. The lodge emerges, a masterpiece of African architecture, blending seamlessly with the surrounding wilderness. Named after Swedish royalty for their having frequented the camp so much in years past, one quickly notices how the thatch and canvas accommodations and main camp, come somewhat hidden beneath in a grove of jackalberry trees. Eight spacious suites form King's Pool Camp, overlooking a tranquil lagoon where elephants, buffalos and hippos periodically saunter down for their drink of water, and for the latter, it's a continued exercise of bobbing in and out of the water.

With a swift check-in completed by Camp Manager Kenny, an invitation to start with lunch followed, to which we vehemently obliged. It wasn't too long before a bottle of bubbly on ice was delivered to our table, clinks of glasses shared between Taku and I as we observed a little drama from a crocodile scoping out a warthog and her young grazing the moist green grass from Linyati's edge.

Culinary experiences fit for royalty.

The culinary journey at King's Pool Lodge was as exquisite as the wildlife encounters. The chefs crafted delectable meals, inspired by local flavours and fresh, seasonal ingredients. Each dish served during the days that followed, was a masterpiece, presented with artistry and served in the elegant dining open air





To learn more about Wilderness King's Pool Camp, visit <https://www.wildernessdestinations.com/africa/botswana/linyanti-region/kings-pool-camp>

space. Whether it was a hearty breakfast to fuel our days of adventure, or a laughter filled dinner under Botswana's skies, the dining experience at King's Pool was truly unforgettable.

A secluded sanctuary on the Linyati

Our room, a private haven, was cosy with a rustic flair to it, also offering breathtaking views of the Linyati River, which from the Camp's location, borders Botswana and Namibia. The minimalist decor, adorned with natural materials like wood and stone, created a serene atmosphere. The spacious rooms were elegantly furnished, with comfortable beds, en-suite bathrooms, a private deck, and outdoor shower overlooking the river. The main lodge area is a social hub, with a cozy lounge, a well-stocked bar, and a dining room where delicious meals are served.

Large windows frame the river, allowing us to immerse ourselves in the beauty of the surrounding wilderness.

The main lodge, a sprawling thatched structure, invited us to unwind in its cozy lounge or savour delectable snacks, wines and high teas from the reading spaces and library area. From every angle, the river takes centre-stage, mesmerising you with the ever-changing African landscape, and the gentle hum of the Linyati River providing a soothing soundtrack.

Beyond the thatch and canvas

But the real magic of King's Pool lies in its game viewing opportunities. The Linyati River is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including elephants, lions, leopards, and countless species of birds. Our early morning and late afternoon game drives had us venture off into the bush, offering us the chance to witness these incredible creatures in their natural habitat. Our guides Wise and Sonny passionately drove us across the bushveld, sharing their encyclopaedic knowledge of this great ecosystem and animal behaviours with enthusiasm.

At the end of a long day of exploring, there was nothing better than returning to camp, enjoying yet another shared platter of nibbles as we relaxed by the



pool, sipping on a refreshing drink, and watching the sun set over the river. As darkness falls, the sounds of the African bush filled the air, creating a truly unforgettable ambiance.

As our time at King's Pool drew to a close, I for one reflected on the extraordinary experiences Taku and I had during our 6-day journey with Wilderness. The lodge had become more than just a place to stay; but a sanctuary where we further connected with nature and ourselves, enjoying endless wildlife encounters. While we did not look forward to boarding our charter, we knew we would carry with us the memories of sun-drenched days, starry nights, and the awe-inspiring beauty of the African wilderness.

Wilderness King's Pool is a destination where time slows down and the worries of everyday life fade away. It's a place where the rhythm of nature becomes the soundtrack to your days. As you sit by the campfire, listening to the sounds of the African bush and chatting with the team and other guests, you'll feel a deep sense of peace and tranquility. This is the magic of King's Pool, a truly unforgettable experience that has stayed with us long after we've left. 🌿





Palm House Boutique Hotel:

Discover An Urban
Oasis In The Heart
Of A Historic Corner
Of Cape Town

With the natural beauty of Cape Town on the doorstep, yet safely set apart from the frenetic bustle of the city, Palm House Boutique Hotel and Spa is an urban hideaway amid the leafy streets of Upper Wynberg. Located close to the forested slopes of Table Mountain, and just minutes from the venerable vineyards of Constantia, Palm House has for decades been a fixture of this historic suburb; a stately home transformed into a boutique hotel brimming with character and charm.

And now, with a recent change in ownership, a re-imagining of Palm House has infused this grande dame of the suburbs with the elegance and refinement she deserves.

That new energy comes courtesy of Max Jong and Shelagh Wood, who became custodians of this historic gem in mid-2023. Dutch-born Jong is a successful entrepreneur who divides his time between the Netherlands and Cape Town, while Wood is a proud Capetonian who operates several businesses within the complementary realms of wellness and hospitality.

When the pair took ownership of the property, they realised that although the 'bones' of this elegant home were solid, the hotel needed "a complete aesthetic overhaul," explains Wood. "We placed enormous energy into curating a new look for Palm House to ensure the feel of the property, that almost inde-

finable character, was just right."

While retaining key elements of the original house – note the wood-panelling around the lobby fireplace, the hand-crafted sweeping staircase and first floor landing – the refurbishment entailed a floor-to-ceiling reboot that paid homage to the original while infusing the hotel with a sense of elegant modernity. That meant new herringbone floors that echoed the originals, graceful chandeliers with a subtle sense of grandeur, bespoke wallpapers from a specialist décor atelier, and hand-picked artworks. The result? An aesthetic that brings both sensory delight and a sense of home comfort.

"It was important for us to position Palm House as a real home-from-home for travellers," adds Jong, a seasoned traveller with an innate understanding of luxury hospitality. "Whether you're coming down from Johannesburg for meetings once a week, or jetting in from abroad for the summer, we created a space where people can step through the doors and immediately feel at home."

That cross-over appeal for leisure and corporate travel extends to the selection of elegant guest rooms and suites, which are set both





within the main house and within the spacious Palm House gardens.

Decorated with a sense of approachable luxury, the collection of Garden Suites – available in one- to three-bedroom configurations – are ideal for multi-generational travellers and those looking for a sense of space and privacy. Each offers their own private lounge and sitting area, while private patios step directly onto the wide lawns that lead to the swimming pool terrace.

Stepping through the striking pillared entrance of the century-old main house – a proclaimed National Monument, designed by a protégé of Cape architect Sir Herbert Baker – the casual charm of the Garden Suites is replaced with a sense of contemporary opulence. Here original pressed ceilings blend effortlessly with hand-picked artworks, bespoke wallpapers and richly furnished bedrooms, most offering wonderful views across to Table Mountain. And if it's views you're after look no fur-

ther than the Deluxe King Suite, which offers a spacious lounge and expansive private terrace overlooking the hotel gardens.

FOREST FORAGING AND REFINED DINING

In step with the reimaging of the design and décor comes a new energy in the kitchen, with Palm House Boutique Hotel now set to cement its position as a significant culinary address in Cape Town's southern suburbs.

At the helm is respected executive chef Gregory Henderson, who brings decades of experience and a passion for sustainability to the dining experience at Palm House Boutique Hotel and Spa. Open to both local diners and resident guests, the hotel offers a culinary experience in two parts: casual all-day dining at the Palm Terrace, and more creative culinary fare in the elegant dinner-only de Tafel room.

Beginning with an inventive breakfast menu – don't miss the feather-light omelette soufflé, or indulgent Eggs Benedict – the heart of the Palm Terrace experience is Henderson's menu combining on-trend small plates and family-friendly favourites.

"People love choice," explains Henderson. "So we have made sure that the menu really allows diners the freedom and flexibility to dine and indulge as they see fit, whether they're preparing for a busy day in the office, whiling away an afternoon on holiday or catching up with friends over fine food."

At the Palm Terrace that means a delectable selection of small plates to be enjoyed as they are, or elevated to a main course portion. Think tender lobster cappelini made in-house, or caul-wrapped lamb rack on hand-chopped rata-touille. Even the house burger is given an overhaul, with a patty of hand-ground short-rib on a house-made brioche bun. Create a platter



of plates to share across the table, or select a few for yourself. However diners choose to indulge they can look forward to a menu brimming with Cape-inspired creativity.

Afternoon Tea at the Palm Terrace has also recently been introduced and is served daily between 2pm and 5pm. Enjoy a three-tiered *étagère* of savoury and sweet morsels to share along with fine teas and coffees or why not order a glass of bubbly as an extra spoil?

The menu for de Tafel, the more elegant of the two restaurants is focused on refined dining come evening. Here you'll certainly want to begin with an aperitif or creative cocktail in the intimate bar and lounge, fire roaring in the hearth and

a friendly mixologist behind the bar, before taking your seat for the multi-course menu that takes its cue from the indigenous flora and flavours of the Cape, with a keen eye on sustainability. No surprise there, as Henderson is a proud ambassador for the World Wildlife Fund's South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI).

At de Tafel, chef Henderson has introduced four and six-course set menus (including a plant based menu) that are firmly in step with the seasons, as well as farm and ocean-minded sustainability. Look forward to his inspired take on the Swahili spice routes in the chilli-ginger of fresh Knysna river crab and a velvety sauce packed with Cape Malay flavours, or perhaps the sustainably-caught Kingklip served pan-seared with buchu, honeybush and pickled wild fennel. A plant-based version of Henderson's de Tafel culinary odyssey is also available.

Palm House offers an impressive wine collection centred on boutique Cape estates, with talented sommelier Richard Goza on hand to guide guests through wine pairings over dinner, or tutored tastings during the day.

"Cape Town is a multicultural city, and we really want to embrace that across our menus," adds Henderson. "We want to bring in indigenous flavours and aromas like buchu, rosemary and wild sage, and we'll also be offering foraging excursions for people to learn about the wild almonds and bladdernuts, the edible ferns, and of course the edible mushrooms that grow wild in the forests just a short way from the hotel."

A full complement of staff – led by general manager Ilze Henderson – are on hand to curate every aspect of the guest's stay, from securing restaurant reservations at the best tables in the Winelands to arranging executive transfers.

WELLNESS IN WYNBERG

Whilst securing your accommodation reservation, be sure to pre-book an appointment at the hotel's Açai Spa,



set just a few steps from the main house. Under spa manager Leandra de Villiers the menu of wellness treatments at Açai taps into the holistic products of Africa's Healing Earth range, with a comprehensive selection of hand, foot, facial and body treatments. This includes the signature Palm Journey, a full-day wellness experience inclusive of lunch at the Palm Terrace.

In addition to three single treatment rooms, outdoor jacuzzi and mani-pedi studio, the spa recently expanded to include a dedicated couples' treatment room. But a highlight for many in-house guests and day-visitors to Açai is the unique Banya Sauna. Set in a quiet courtyard, this traditional barrel-shaped sauna of Nordic pine is ideal for relaxing before a treatment, or winding down after a busy day exploring the Cape or battling business.

It's an especially serene corner of a boutique destination built on escapism. Whether you're indulging in the fine cuisine from one of the South Africa's most talented chefs, or enjoying the serenity of an urban oasis, Palm House Boutique Hotel and Spa offers an unforgettable address in one of the most charming corners of the Mother City. 🌿



For more information and online bookings – enquire about this season's Palm House Indulgence Offer, go to www.palmhouse.co.za or email explore@palmhouse.co.za

Follow Palm House's story via:  @palmhousehotel.





A Timeless Escape: Le Jadis Beach Resort and Wellness Mauritius

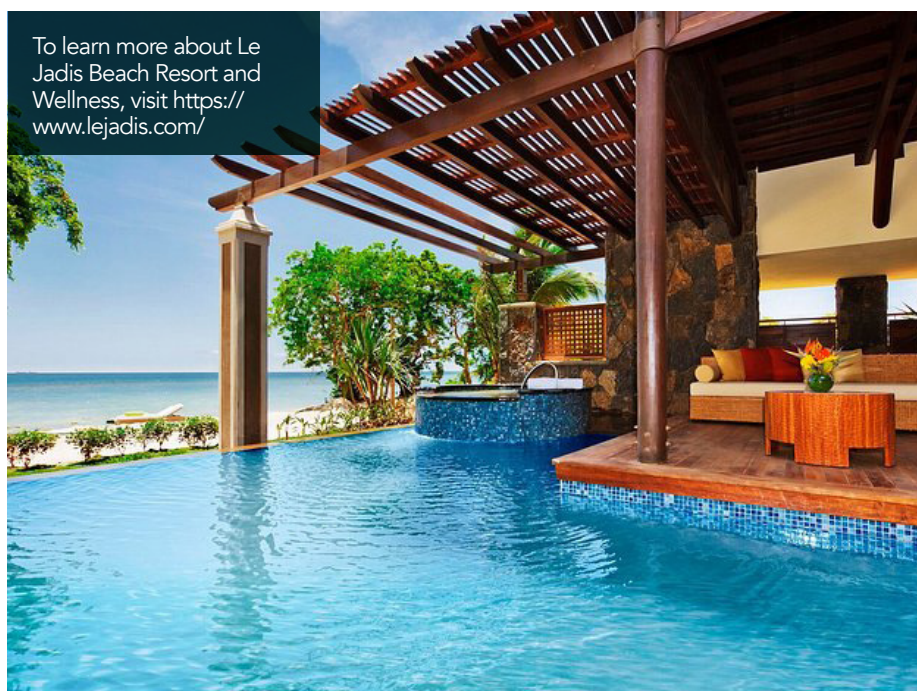
As you glide up the imposing driveway of this iconic resort located in Balaclava at Baie aux Tortues, also known as Turtle Bay, a vision of hospitality grandeur unfolds before your eyes. Le Jadis Beach Resort and Wellness Mauritius, a masterpiece of architectural splendour, beckons you to a world of refined luxury. The grand entrance, a fusion of classic and contemporary design, welcomes you with a symphony of tropical scents and soothing sounds. As you step into the lobby, a cool, refreshing welcome drink is offered, setting the tone for a serene and unforgettable stay.

Your journey continues to your private sanctuary, a luxurious suite that seamlessly blends comfort with sophistication. Each suite boasts a private heated plunge pool, nestled amidst lush greenery or overlooking the azure ocean – some views in totality and others partially, exposing one to varied elements of the resort. Imagine mornings that begin with sipping your morning coffee on your private terrace, the gentle lapping of waves not too far off lulling you into a state of tranquillity. The interiors are a testament to meticulous attention to detail, with opulent furnishings, rich fabrics, and exquisite artwork adorning every corner.

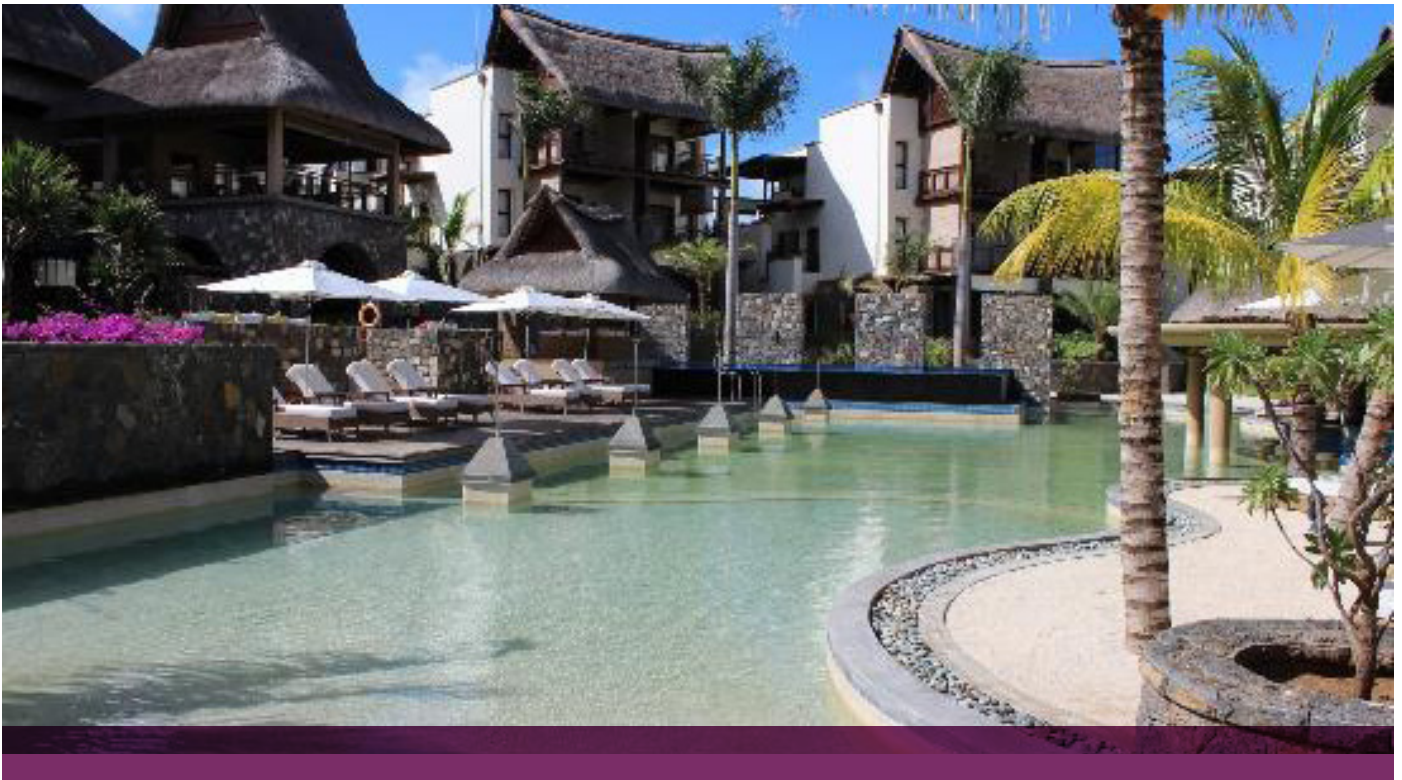
Spaces for ultimate relaxation

Beyond the pristine settings in a beach or poolside cabana, or taking a stroll throughout the resort's green spaces, guests can indulge their senses at the world-class spa, a haven of peace and rejuvenation. Expert therapists guide you through a range of holistic treatments, from soothing massages to revitalizing facials. Immerse yourself in the tranquillity of the spa's serene ambiance, as the gentle sounds of nature and the aroma of essential oils transport you to a state of pure bliss.

Also, you will not want to miss the Hydrotherapy Pool, which features Hydro Massage cascade jets for the upper body, jets for the lower body, waterfalls for the neck and shoulders and more. Here, you will experience



To learn more about Le Jadis Beach Resort and Wellness, visit <https://www.lejadis.com/>



the healing nature of water as it soothes, oxygenates and tones your muscles.

You need not wait for hunger to strike

Dining is a dream, with plenty of platters and plates to relish, each delivering an unsurpassed culinary adventure that is sure to tantalize your taste buds. The resort's diverse dining options cater to every palate, from authentic Mauritian and Creole cuisine to international delicacies. Savor a romantic dinner under the stars at the beachfront restaurant, indulge in a sumptuous buffet at the all-day dining venue, or sip on handcrafted cocktails at the chic poolside bar. Each dining experience is a symphony of flavours, expertly crafted by world-class chefs.

More to get up to across the resort

Beyond relaxation and culinary delights, Le Jadis Beach Resort and Wellness Mauritius offers a plethora

of activities to keep you entertained. Embark on a thrilling water sports adventure, explore the vibrant marine life through snorkelling or diving, or simply unwind on the pristine beach. For those seeking a more active holiday, the resort's state-of-the-art fitness center offers a range of fitness classes and personalized training sessions.

As the sun dips below the horizon, it is commonplace to find yourself enjoying a refreshing cocktail from the Passion Swim Up Pool Bar, hanging out with friends and family for a magical

evening under the stars. Enjoy live music on some evenings, delicious treats delivered to your cabana, room or by your private heated pool. Bask in the company of loved ones, as the resort transforms into a dream-like spectacle. Le Jadis Beach Resort and Wellness Mauritius, managed by Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts is more than just a destination; it's an unforgettable experience that will leave you longing for more. 





TASTE-MAKERS |

A man with a beard and blue eyes, wearing a dark blue jacket over a grey shirt, is smiling and holding a snifter glass filled with white wine. He is in a cellar with shelves of wine bottles in the background.

Törg Pfützner
takes Singita
Premier Wine Direct
into a New Era

Singita's Premier Wine Division begins a new chapter with the appointment of Jörg Pfützner as Buying Specialist. Having recently spent nine years in luxury brand management (coming from his previous role as Private Client and Zone Directorship for LOUIS XIII Cognac for Africa, Middle East and India), Jörg has a deep understanding of fine wines and is poised to drive the Premier Wine Division forward, overseeing the wine strategy and managing wine selections at Singita

lodges in four African countries.

While he now specialises in fine wine and luxury spirits, he has worked in logistics, strategy and partnerships, launches and events, and even developed an app, giving him a holistic understanding of all aspects of the industry. Jörg qualified as a sommelier in Germany before completing the Graduate School of Business' postgraduate diploma in Wine Business Management – run in conjunction with the University of Adelaide – and was the recipient of the Academic Excellence Bursary. A founding member of the Sommelier Association of South Africa,





Jorg worked his way up from his early days in front-of-house to overseeing luxury strategy and serving as a critic on judging panels. This first-hand knowledge of every aspect of wine production, appreciation and service gives him a rounded perspective and allows him to oversee the experiential elements of Singita's wine experience.

At Singita he will manage not only the acquisition of wine and relationships with producers, but also the renowned wine programme across the properties, curating the selections on site in collaboration with the teams, while remaining abreast of future growth opportunities. He aims to elevate the Singita guest experience through wine – which, not unlike ecotourism, is a product of passion,



nature, and time. “Wine is a poetic expression of nature – a song of soil, climate, and people,” he says.

Creating extraordinary experiences has formed a signature part of his career, something perfectly aligned with Singita’s immersive ethos. “Every bottle of wine carries memories – of the vineyard it comes from, the climate, vintage and region. It also reminds us when and with whom it was enjoyed,” he says. Jorg believes that wine is a medium to connect guests with nature, culminating in memorable moments that complement their experience. “Nothing can compete with the majesty of nature; wine should play a supporting role, allowing guests to appreciate the rare experiences of the African bush whilst creating lifelong memories.”

A big part of creating these impactful moments is ensuring every member of the team brings the same dedication to excellence to their role. His hands-on approach will see him recruiting, training and developing sommeliers and wine stewards, and developing Singita’s Wine Academy. “It’s also important to collaborate with our chefs to allow guests to explore South African wines,” he says.

He will also be driving more sustainable systems. “It is vital to continually prioritise sustainability and encourage our producers to do the same.”

A little on Singita

Singita is a conservation and eco-tourism brand that has been helping to preserve Africa’s wildlife and wilderness for the past 31 years, offering guests exceptional safari experiences at 19 luxury, award-winning lodges, and camps across four countries. In partnership with non-profit Funds & Trusts which implement strategic conservation projects in each region, Singita’s 100-year purpose is to preserve and protect large parts of African wilderness for future generations. 

To learn more about Singita, visit
www.singita.com





*The Life-Changing Benefits
of an African Safari:*
Adventure, Connection, and Renewal



Marula Hill
Travel's take
on Why Safari

Few experiences are as evocative and transformative as an African safari. It's a journey beyond sightseeing—it lets you truly feel nature, where the boundaries between traveller and wilderness disappear. For those seeking more than just a holiday, here are some benefits of embarking on a luxury safari in Africa.

Rediscover the Joy of Adventure

As we get older, many of us lose our sense of adventure due to our structured, routine-driven lives. A safari in Africa presents the perfect opportunity to rekindle that spirit of discovery. Each day in the bush is unpredictable and exciting, filled with magical moments you only dreamed of as a child. The landscape becomes your playground: at dawn, you might track a pride of lions looking for an opportunistic meal, and by afternoon, you could watch elephants drinking from a waterhole, surrounded by the gentle sounds of the bush.

The thrill comes not only from the wildlife but also from the journey itself. The vastness of the African wilderness puts everything into perspective. Every bend in the road might reveal something extraordinary—a family of giraffes elegantly crossing the plains, a cheetah basking in the shade, or a dazzle of zebras grazing peacefully. The excitement of not knowing what is around the corner keeps you engaged and helps you step away from the usual distractions of life.

A Rare Opportunity to Disconnect

In today's connected world, finding authentic moments of disconnection is rare. An African safari allows you to escape this relentless cycle and experience the luxury of being "unreachable".

TASTE-MAKERS • AFRICAN SAFARI

Many safari lodges are situated deep in the wilderness, where Wi-Fi signals are weak or nonexistent. Rather than being a hindrance, this becomes an incredible gift.

Imagine leaving behind your emails, the constant buzzing of your phone, and the never-ending need to stay "in touch." On safari, you replace all of that with the natural rhythms of the wild—watching the sunrise, hearing the distant roar of a lion, or sitting under a blanket of stars that seem close enough to touch. This kind of disconnection allows for genuine reconnection—to the natural world, to the people you're travelling with, and to yourself.

Conversations deepen over firelit dinners, and quiet moments provide the space that modern life rarely allows—space to think, reflect, and simply be.

Reconnect with Nature and Yourself

The connection you feel on safari is profound. Being surrounded by nature is inherently calming, and Africa can strip away the unnecessary noise of daily life, allowing you to focus on what truly matters. The sounds of the bush—the hum of insects, the calls of birds, and the rustling of leaves—help you become grounded and fully present in each moment.

It's hard not to reflect on life and your place in the world in this setting. Observing the harmony of nature encourages introspection. Whether watching a mother elephant protect her calf or witnessing a sunset cast a golden glow, these moments invite you to slow down and find meaning in the simple beauty of life. It's a journey that allows you to reset and rediscover parts of yourself that may have been lost amid the chaos of everyday routines.

A Sensory Experience Like No Other

An African safari is a feast for the senses. Every moment is filled with vibrant colours, captivating sounds, and rich scents that combine to create an experience unlike any other. The sights are unforgettable: the warm hues of dawn, animals crossing dusty roads, and the graceful silhouette of a leopard lounging in a tree. The vividness of Africa's natural beauty stays with you long after you return home.

The sounds of the bush are equally mesmerising. The mighty roar of a lion cutting through the night, the distant whoop of hyenas, and the melodic birdsong of early morning evoke a sense of wonder that stirs something profound inside you. Even the scents—the fresh aroma of the earth after rain, the smoky smell of campfire

evenings, the delicate fragrance of wildflowers—heighten your connection to the environment.

A safari awakens your senses in an extremely rare way in our screen-filled lives. It's a complete experience of the wild—a living, breathing encounter that makes you feel deeply connected to the natural world.

The Gift of Time

Time takes on a different meaning in the bush. It moves more slowly, marked by the sun's journey across the sky and the natural movements of the animals. On safari, there are no urgent appointments; instead, you adapt to nature's flow. Mornings begin with a gentle wake-up call as the first light touches the horizon, followed by steaming coffee as the bush comes to life.

This slowing down is one of the most precious aspects of a safari. It's rare to have entire days where you can move at your own pace, dictated only by the sights and sounds of the bush. Time becomes fluid, allowing you to breathe, absorb the beauty around you, and reconnect with what is truly important.

Connecting with People and Cultures

A safari is also about the people you meet along the way. It's about passionate guides who share their deep



To view one of our perfectly curated safari experiences by Travel Essence Getaways and Marula Hill Travel, head over to <https://travelessencemag.com/te-getaways/>

knowledge and love for the animals and the local communities who welcome you into their world. Listening to stories passed down through generations—about the land, the animals, and the ecosystem's delicate balance—adds layers of meaning to every sighting and offers insights into local culture that you won't find in any guidebook.

Travelling with companions, whether friends, family, or fellow explorers, adds richness to the experience. Shared adventures forge bonds that last long after you return

home. Watching the sun dip below the horizon together, feeling the collective awe of spotting a lion on the hunt, or enjoying a quiet sundowner—these shared experiences create significant connections.


A Journey with a Purpose

One of the most rewarding aspects of a safari is the opportunity to contribute to conservation efforts. Many luxury safari experiences are deeply involved in conservation, and by visiting, you help support these initiatives. It's not just about seeing the Big Five—it's about understanding the delicate balance that allows these creatures to thrive and the challenges faced by conservationists who work tirelessly to

protect them.

By staying at lodges committed to sustainability and visiting reserves prioritising wildlife protection, your journey becomes part of a broader mission to preserve Africa's extraordinary biodiversity. Knowing that your travel supports these efforts adds depth to the experience and makes every encounter with wildlife even more meaningful.

An African safari is more than just a holiday—it's a journey that renews your spirit, rekindles your sense of wonder, and reconnects you to the natural world.

So pack your bags, leave the screens behind, and let Africa remind you of what it means to be truly alive. 



The Test Kitchen Fledgelings Story:

Serving Up Bold Plates For Diners, And A Brighter Future For Budding Chefs

By Yvonne C Mtengwa

In the heart of Cape Town's design-driven Old Biscuit Mill Precinct, in the space once home to Africa's foremost fine-dining restaurant, The Test Kitchen Fledgelings offers a contemporary culinary destination where globally-inspired cuisine is served up with a simple goal: transform lives and shape brighter futures.



At the restaurant's generous invitation, I was elated to have the opportunity to finally experience what fine-dining aficionados will fondly remember as The Test Kitchen by chef Luke Dale Roberts, arguably the flagbearer for Cape Town's ascendant restaurant scene. I was to learn that as with most dining and hospitality establishments affected by the Covid-era shutdowns, doors closed here too for the final time in September 2021. But Dale Roberts saw not an ending, but a new opportunity, which today reveals a distinctive dining experience with a hugely impactful story that forms its foundations.

Out went the multi-course degustation experience that had made The Test Kitchen famous worldwide, and in came a fresh look, revamped menu and a bold new mission. Like a phoenix, from the ashes flew up The Test Kitchen Fledgelings.

*Upliftment in its truest form,
one serving at a time...*

"At the heart of it, The Test Kitchen Fledgelings is both an upliftment project and restaurant that focuses on the mentorship of young individuals – our Fledgelings – who often come to us with absolutely no experience in a kitchen, restaurant or bar environment," explains Dale Roberts.

From the start, the philosophy at The Test Kitchen Fledgelings has been to offer people with passion and perseverance an opportunity to train for a career in the restaurant trade, either in the kitchen or out on the floor. While trained chefs are encouraged to strike out into new roles in the restaurant industry, many choose to stay at The Test Kitchen Fledgelings or move to other kitchens in Luke Dale Roberts' portfolio of restaurants.

"With any new Fledgelings



we're not looking for experience, we're looking for attitude," says Dale Roberts. "We look for those people who are hungry to learn, hungry to grow. And then we give them the space and the mentorship to do that."

Today, three years after opening, that mentorship now comes not only from Dale Roberts but from Fledgelings who have worked their way up through the kitchen to become accomplished professional chefs in their own right. Every morsel of food served was art on a plate and the palate, a celebration of the amalgamation of fresh, locally sourced ingredients and creative culinary prowess.

"It's been so rewarding to see some of the people who started with us knowing very little about a restaurant kitchen, learn new skills and hone their craft to the point where they can now teach others starting in much the same position," says Dale Roberts. "It's a cycle that works. We take people from all walks of life and give them skills, a trade and a sense of dignity."



From pots and pans to running the pass

And Head Chef Nathan Clarke is the perfect example of someone seizing the opportunities on offer at The Test Kitchen Fledgelings.

Raised in a challenging home environment, in an impoverished corner of Cape Town, Clarke first joined The Test Kitchen in 2014 as a sculler; a humble beginning to what would become a stellar career in the kitchen. With enormous dedication and hard work, Clarke worked his way up the ranks from sculler to finish as demi chef of The Test Kitchen.

And when Covid closed the doors of The Test Kitchen, Clarke was the perfect choice to lead The Test Kitchen Fledgelings.

“It’s been such a pleasure to work with Nathan over the last decade,” says Dale Roberts. “He comes across as quiet and understated, but underneath he’s just buzzing with energy and ideas. He brings his own style and palate to the kitchen, which is just brilliant when we’re knocking ideas around for new dishes. And because he’s worked his way up through the ranks, he’s really earned the respect of all the other cooks in his kitchen.”

Loading: Seasons of delicious!

And with Clarke at the pass The Test Kitchen Fledgelings has certainly hit its stride, recently showcasing a fresh summer menu that displays the depth of talent in the kitchen, tapping into local flavours and Dale Roberts' global experience.

Take the classic Scots dish of Cullen Skink; here given a bold 'Fledge' twist with notes of curry oil, fennel and saffron lightening the palate. Local rock lobster is plated with a seafood ravioli atop a fragrant Thai-style butternut broth. Bruschetta showcases kudu bresaola, hand-cured in the kitchen, while classic confit duck leg gets a local turn with lentils and naartjies. Seasonality comes into play too this summer, in the heirloom tart of slow-roasted tomatoes, aubergine and zucchini dressed with a pine nut and olive salsa.

These are just some of the highlights, but Clarke refuses to single out a signature dish.

"They all have to be bangers!" says Clarke with a laugh. "Every single dish has to be great. Even if you're ordering the wagyu burger with fries, which people love, it's got to be the best burger you've ever tasted."


With Clarke focused on integrating complexity into each dish, there's a firm focus on perfecting the finer details from in-house stocks and pickles to hand-made pasta.

"Apart from making the flavours of the dish that much better, I make sure that everything we do in the kitchen is a teaching moment," adds Clarke. "It's an opportunity to learn something new or practice a skill. That's part of why we're here, and it's how we make sure our chefs keep getting better, all the time."

The vibe that is Test Kitchen Fledglings

And from the moment you step through the doors, it's clear that The Test Kitchen Fledgelings is unlike any other upmarket dining destination in the city.

There are no starched aprons here. No ostentatious cutlery or fawning service. Instead, the music might be low-key amapiano, and don't be surprised if the waiters break into a little dance on their way to your table. It's slick service with a side order of authentic character and charisma. In each dish, plating is contemporary without uncalled-for complexity, as Clarke ensures that precise flavours in perfect balance take precedent over foams or fuss.

It's a thread that runs throughout The Test Kitchen Fledgelings, serving up inspired global plates while letting the flock of Fledgelings spread their wings and stamp their own Cape character on one of the city's most memorable dining experiences. 



TTK Fledgelings is situated at The Old Biscuit Mill, Woodstock, Cape Town and open Monday – Saturday for dinner 18h00 to 22h00 and Thursday – Saturday for lunch from 12h00 – 13h30. For reservations or more information call 021 447 2337 or visit www.ttkfledgelings.co.za







ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA

The Warm Heart of Africa's *Pumulani Lodge:* A Lakeview Retreat's Call for Relaxed Luxury

By Yvonne C Mtengwa



With 10-days of traversing Malawi, my third two-night stay took me to Pumulani Lodge, which from afar, appears painted onto a hill on the west side of the Nankumba Peninsula in the Southern shore of Lake Malawi. Heavy rains had poured over the nation in the weeks preceding my visit, raising the lakes water levels to heights that washed out most beaches bordering Lake Malawi. With flooding evident in many places I had seen, I was curious what I would find on this side of the Lake's shores, Lake Malawi of which is also home to more species of fish than any other in the world.

Owned and operated by Robin Pope Safaris, my early afternoon arrival heralded a few upcoming days where time would slow down, giving me the much-needed time to regroup and rest after the days of exhaustive travel since touching down in country. I was looking forward to the worries of my present world melting away, from mounting deliverables in my mailbox contending against limited WIFI access.

With many a thought brushed aside, disembarking the car assigned to me by Malawi Tourism Authority and being guided into Pumulani's lobby area, brought with it a different sense of excitement. To begin with, I was captivated by the imposing, ultra-high ceilings in the lobby area, adorned with wooden fish carvings as decorative pieces strewn above us. A few steps in and I took in a deep breath, relishing the fresh air and first sighting of the body of water before me on this side of Lake Malawi.

AT FIRST GLANCE

The lodge itself is a masterpiece of simplified design, blending seamlessly with the natural surroundings, and showstopping in a sense particularly as you consider the size of each suite. Each suite which comfortably fits a small family, boasts a breathtaking view of the crystal blue lake, displaying a contemporary twist on African décor as the generously appointed rooms invoke a barefoot sort of luxury. Huge patios separated by floor-to-ceiling windows add to the allure of the indoors while celebrating the natural woodland cascading down the hill toward the lake shore.

To learn more about Pumulani Lodge, visit <https://www.robinpopesafaris.net/camps-lodges/pumulani-lodge/>



One of my favorite things to do was simply relax by the pool, sipping on a cocktail and watching the sunset. The sunsets at Pumulani are truly spectacular, painting the sky with hues of orange, pink, and purple. It's the perfect way to end a day of adventure.

And after relaxing swims at the pool, which might I add is located almost three-quarters a way up the hill towards the main lodge, or at a time self-allocated for an afternoon siesta or moments of quiet with self, the patio to my Suite No. 4 became my space to appreciate the serenity of my surroundings. Though the beach carried remnants of flooding that had taken place from the rains, with the tide quite high such that one couldn't enjoy a beach bed or a walk on the shore's edge, the gentle rustling of leaves from the surrounding foliage became somewhat of a soothing chorus, with views of the rolling lake's surface mesmerising me into a dreamy abyss of relaxed reflection.

ONTO DINING WITH A VIEW

Perched on a massive deck at the main lodge is the dining and relaxation lounge area, where guests can settle down for their meals while embracing the Lake as waves drift off onto the horizon. And from here, I enjoyed what I believe was a highlight for other occupants for Pumulani Lodge as it was for me – rustic, hearty plates of food, inspired by local flavours but in every sense superb for an international palate.

With talented chefs at the helm of Pumulani's creation of delicious meals using fresh, local ingredients, the contemporary start to the morning, followed by a hot individualised classic English breakfast accompanied by a piping hot cup of coffee or freshly squeezed orange juice, was a feast for the senses. Lunches and dinners delivered a variety of dishes, from a warm soup starter or salad, to grilled fish, succulent steaks or a vegetarian option.

Whatever your preference, a dreamy




location to conjures up epic rest and spirited adventure...

To add to the charm that's encapsulated in Pumulani Lodge's walls is its location. The lake is crystal clear and perfect for swimming, kayaking, and paddleboarding. The lodge offers a variety of water sports activities, including diving and snorkelling. For those who prefer to stay on land, there are plenty of opportunities for hiking, birdwatching, and cultural tours to nearby communities.

The staff at Pumulani are incredibly friendly and attentive. They go out of their way to make sure that guests have a memorable stay, tailoring experiences for you to suit your knack for adventure or need to enjoy water or hiking activities in the area. And so if you're looking for a truly unforgettable African experience, my recommendation Pumulani Lodge by Robin Pope Safaris comes in quite high. It's a place where you can relax, rejuvenate, and connect with nature, and whether you're an adventure seeker or simply looking for a peaceful retreat, Pumulani has something for everyone. With its stunning location, luxurious



accommodations, and exceptional service, Pumulani Lodge is a true gem in the heart of Africa. 

Tips for visiting Pumulani Lodge:

- **Best time to visit:** The dry season, from May to October, is the best time to visit. The weather is warm and dry, and there are fewer mosquitoes.
- **What to pack:** Light, breathable clothing, swimwear, a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and a good book.
- **Things to do:** Swimming, kayaking, paddleboarding, diving, snorkelling, hiking, birdwatching, cultural tours, and simply relaxing by the pool.
- **How to get there:** The easiest way to get to Pumulani Lodge is to fly into Lilongwe International Airport. From there, you can take a domestic flight to the nearby airstrip or take a scenic drive.

Insika Lodge: A Boutique Blend of Luxury and Nature

By Yvonne C Mtengwa



Customary for me to do with each time I plan a trip into Victoria Falls, I reached out to my good friends Luke and Suzanne Brown of Vayeni with an inquiry on what new boutique lodges they could recommend for me and the group of guests from Dubai I was bringing in on a whirlwind experience of our city bordering Zimbabwe and Zambia.

With a call to “experience the primal nature of Victoria Falls,” Insika Lodge is set a short distance away from the banks of the Zambezi River, offering a luxurious escape into the natural beauty of one of Africa’s most prolific tourist destinations.

Check in was swift on the morning of our arrival, delivered with some fresh cooling towels and a signature colourful mocktail. This haven of tranquillity, designed to harmonize with the natural beauty of its surroundings, seemed in every sense ready to provide an unforgettable experience for my guests who as residents of Dubai, are well versed in appreciating and experiencing the finer things in life. With keys in hand, we were whisked away to our rooms, where the spaces that welcomed us were as fit for kings and queens as they were ready to truly unveil a sensory experience unlike anything else about town.

A SYMPHONY OF DESIGN AND NATURE

Insika Lodge’s architectural design is a masterful blend of contemporary elegance and traditional African aesthetics. The lodge’s spacious rooms and suites are thoughtfully crafted, featuring clean lines, natural materials, and earthy tones that evoke a sense of calm and serenity. You’ll love the look and feel of the tex-

tured cloth that covers your cushions, the upholstery on the couch that’s perched in your room and facing your patio. Large windows frame breathtaking views of the gardens outdoors and the surrounding landscape, where we would later experience the low grunt of buffalo coming onto the premises for their nightly grass-grazing ritual.

A highly refined ode to African elegance felt to me like it was at the cornerstone of my room’s design aesthetic. From the open shower design, a standalone bathtub well placed against a textured wall, a double vanity and a private toilet, meant that whether I was lathering up for my day-end relaxation in my king size bed, or simply enjoying my space boasting a private veranda, an in-room lounge/reading nook, a tea, coffee and workstation, and a bar fridge I could request to be filled, all was well in my little sanctuary.

A CULINARY JOURNEY

Insika Lodge’s dining experience is as impressive as its accommodations. Our itinerary was packed full of a combination of meetings and curated adven-



To book your stay with Insika, visit them online at <https://insikalodge.com/>



ture-style activities offsite, and so it was essential that we loaded up on savoury meals before heading out for the day. With intricately woven overhead lamps and dramatic fans hanging from the restaurant's ceiling, these elements added to the allure of our dining settings. A delectable fusion of international and locally inspired cuisine to choose from, including grass fed Matabeleland steaks or the catch-of-the-day of local tilapia, an option of venison for the curious epicurean, to even their tasty vegetarian and vegan options, all meals comprise of locally sourced ingredients. We enjoyed a hearty variety of dishes to choose from, relishing each plate from the restaurant or the garden seating with views of the sparkling blue infinity pool.

The lodge's bar, a favourite hangout spot for our group, you'll find is the perfect place to unwind after a day of adventure, for your pre-dinner drink or as you await your next shuttle pick

up for experiences beyond Insika's walls. Sip on handcrafted cocktails, fine wines, or refreshing beverages while socializing with fellow travellers or simply enjoying the tranquillity of the surroundings.

A HAVEN FROM WHICH TO APPRECIATE THE WONDERS OF NATURE

Insika Lodge offers a range of amenities designed to pamper and rejuvenate its guests. If you'd like a full immersive stay that includes a little spa pampering, Insika's on-site spa provides a serene escape, offering a variety of treatments, including massages, facials, and body scrubs. The spa's tranquil ambiance and expert therapists create a truly indulgent experience.

For those seeking a more active lifestyle, the lodge through its network of suppliers, offers a variety of activities. You can certainly book activities about town such as guided nature walks, bird-watching excursions, game drives and more. The nearby Victoria Falls National Park provides endless opportunities for adventure, from white-water rafting and bungee jumping to helicopter tours and river cruises.

THE ZAMBEZI VISTA: A LUXURIOUS SAIL DOWN THE RIVER

Most exciting, and certainly a perfect activity for those carrying a penchant for luxury in the throngs of nature, is the opportunity to enjoy a sunset cruise on the Zambezi onboard Insika's very

own luxury cruises – the Zambezi Vista. You can enjoy the option of a sunrise or sunset cruise, yoga sunrise cruise or take the boat out on exclusive ride tailored to you and your guests.

Perfect to soak up Africa's golden sunsets from the Zambezi River, the modern, opulently decked-out and spacious lounge style seating onboard the boat is perfect for ultimate relaxation on the water. No better way than to enjoy a 4-course canapé menu, their selection of premium drinks including cocktails at Sunset or a continental breakfast with fresh fruits, cold meats, cheeses and warm pastries, filter coffees, teas, and fruit juices at Sunrise.



WHO WILL LOVE INSIKA?

Insika Lodge caters to a diverse range of travellers, from couples seeking a romantic getaway to families looking for a memorable vacation. From my stay, I found that the lodge's serene atmosphere, coupled with its proximity to the iconic Victoria Falls, made it an ideal destination for nature lovers, adventure seekers, and those who simply want to unwind in luxury.

Whether you're exploring the majestic Falls, embarking on a thrilling safari, or simply relaxing by the pool, Insika Lodge offers the perfect blend of comfort, luxury, and natural beauty. It's a place where we were able to, albeit short our stay, reconnect with nature, indulge in world-class amenities, and create lasting memories. 🌿





Singita Milele 6 months on:

Plenty to love about this expansive,
contemporary villa in the heart of the Serengeti







Comfortable sophistication & contemporary luxury

Drawing inspiration from this magnificent setting, the design is a fresh and contemporary interpretation of African safari. Milele features five individually designed suites – Journey, Pride, Coalition, Dazzle and Crash – each with a unique identity that pays tribute to the Serengeti’s iconic wildlife (namely giraffe, lion, cheetah, zebra, and rhino) and are layered in natural tones and textures to echo the surrounding wilderness and the unique features of each species. All have outdoor showers, a bar deli, private deck and en-suite bathroom, but each has its own layout, personality and special features, including lounge areas, dressing rooms and workspaces.

Contemporary African art and curated design pieces by local artisans further



This extraordinary new villa offers uninterrupted views from its hilltop position – and its spacious configuration invites families or groups of friends to make the most of a fully immersive wilderness stay while in Tanzania.

Meaning “forever” in Swahili, the name Milele encapsulates the 350,000 acres of unspoilt savannah surrounding this remote and secluded villa.

“Singita Milele’s generous spaces and easy flow – combined with the rich inspiration it draws from Grumeti and its wildlife – embody the ultimate sense of freedom,” says Georgie Pennington, Head of Creative Direction at Singita.

celebrate the setting and deepen the villa's sense of place.

The ideal retreat to celebrate, connect & unwind

Striking an easy balance between relaxation and adventure, sociability and seclusion, sophistication and comfort, Milele has been designed for up to 10 guests, perfect for a family, or friends travelling together and to mark special occasions in a memorable setting.

Shared living spaces, spread across the property, all designed around relaxation and comfort, include a cinema

room, fitness centre, heated spa pools and an outdoor sala. An outdoor boma and firepit are conducive to starlit evenings recollecting the events of the day, while the rim flow swimming pool is an ideal place to cool off as guests survey the scenery, and the expansive terrace is a perfect space to gather for celebratory meals.

Enjoy nature at your own pace

Singita Milele gives guests the freedom to enjoy exclusive use of the villa, with their own host, dedicated Field Guides, chefs, and full lodge team at

hand to create an all-inclusive safari experience that is entirely tailored to their liking. From flexible mealtimes to private game drives and guided bush walks, guests have access to exciting nature-based activities throughout their stay.

Specifically designed to minimise the barriers between guests and nature – visually, acoustically, and physically – all the suites include outdoor showers and floor-to-ceiling glass doors opening onto large decks. Restorative wellness experiences include yoga and meditation, and guests can also opt for





wellness treatments on their private decks or from the outdoor sala. Activities range from exclusive daily game drives to meaningful visits within the concession to experience the work of the Grumeti Fund – Singita’s non-profit conservation partner in Tanzania – up close.

For wine lovers, private wine tastings guided by a world-class Singita sommelier open the door to Singita’s renowned collection of award-winning wines in Milele’s fully stocked cellar.

Incomparable location

Set in 350,000 acres of pristine wilderness in the thriving Grumeti Reserve in northern Tanzania, this contemporary villa is located on the world-renowned annual migration route and offers guests a front-row seat to one of nature’s greatest spectacles – and exclusive access to this immense re-



ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA • SINGITA MILELE

serve and incredible game viewing all year round.

Children of all ages are welcome at Singita Milele. Singita Grumeti's private landing strip is just a 10-minute drive away, making transfers seamless.

A little on Singita

Singita is a conservation and ecotourism brand that has been helping to preserve Africa's wildlife and wilderness for the past 30 years, offering guests exceptional safari experiences at 16 luxury, award-winning lodges, and camps across four countries. In partnership with non-profit Funds & Trusts which implement strategic conservation projects in each region, Singita's 100-year purpose is to preserve and protect large parts of African wilderness for future generations. 



To learn more about Singita and its iconic lodges across the continent of Africa, visit www.singita.com



THE
WANDERLUST
WITHIN

Afriski Mountain Resort: A peak into Lesotho's Ski destination

By Yvonne C Mtengwa



The term skiing isn't synonymous with a trip to Africa. In fact, when I received a call from my travel planning family over at Poised Solutions to come and check out a ski resort in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho within a matter of days, I responded with an emphatic "YES! - I'll be there," before making a quick dash towards my laptop to read up on the destination ahead of my trip. It's commonplace for me to add an extra leg to a pre-planned trip, but nothing could have prepared me for the warmth of a people, and adrenaline-filled adventure that followed only 4 days later.

Checked in and ready for my flight from Dubai to OR Tambo International Airport in South Africa's Johannesburg metropolis, I mentally readied myself for a trip I didn't quite know what to expect. Yes, I had been presented with a full itinerary, well understood that I would be visiting Afriski Mountain Resort in its off-season to get a sense of its facilities while imagining what it would look like when snow-capped in the winter months. Being mountainous, I knew June to August, possibly into September, the temperatures drop significantly, and so I was quite curious to understand what was on offer for me, or any other guest visiting the resort beyond the winter months.

Getting there.

Ntebu and Tsepang Mohale, sibling co-owners of Maluti Travel &



Tours looked after my transfer, which turned out to be such a vibe as we made the drive from South Africa into Lesotho. Thankfully so, as the drive was unexpectedly long. If flying into OR Tambo, you'll have to drive close more than 5 hours from Gauteng, through Free State Province towards the border into Lesotho. There was a further 5-hour drive, first through flatter terrain with striking views of cliffs that envelope the narrow highway, before the winding road snaked its way up the mountain, with the landscape transforming with every bend.

This 1-hour long stretch leading up to the resort is incredibly scenic, with lush green valleys giving way to rugged peaks, and the air growing crispier and cleaner as you go up. As

we ascended towards Afriski Mountain Resort, nestled high in the Maluti Mountains of Lesotho, a sense of anticipation filled me. We arrived post sundown under the moonlit skies, with our vehicle's headlights beaming so far ahead that I was able to get a good sense of how beautiful the terrain would be by day. I mentally registered that we would have to make this drive again on one of the days following, so I could truly appreciate the beauty of the Maluti Mountains.

Waking up at Afriski Mountain Resort.

After a 10-hour drive post a 9-hour flight, a hot meal and shower were the order to usher me into the next 5 days at the resort. I was assigned a beehive wooden chalet, equipped with

a living, dining space and crackling fireplace, a generously apportioned kitchen, bedrooms, and bathrooms that could comfortably accommodate as many as eight people.

Floor-to-ceiling windows offered breathtaking views of the valley where other cabins and styles of accommodations stood. Through them, I could see that resort itself is a marvel of rustic architectural ingenuity, blending seamlessly with the surrounding natural beauty.

Take your pick!

A wide variety of accommodation options dot the resort's terrains, from self-catering lodges, luxurious apartments, and mountain chalets. If you are looking for something a little more





Out and about at Afriski Mountain Resort

Early morning starts revealed that beyond it being the only ski resort in Southern Africa, this was no ordinary ski retreat, but rather a year-round destination and unique blend of adventure and tranquillity. My experience alongside my Guide Tsepang, coupled with the time we spent with our 'adventure captains' truly spoke to the spirited adventurer in me.

From a guided hike, climb and trekking up the mountain range enveloping the resort, to abseiling down a cliff after summiting the mountain range, views were panoramic as much as they were breathtaking. The sun beamed brightly from the sky, subtly combated by the cool mountain breeze, feeding us a healthy dose of sensory gratification.

Next on the activity itinerary was to experience part of this terrain onboard quad bikes, an exciting feat for those who can fathom a mash-up between roaring engines and the surrounding whistle of wind blowing across your face and through the

budget friendly, a cozy Park Home vibe with some charming units is found at Whistler Park. Here, one, two or 3-bedroom options are set and conveniently located near the resort entrance and just 700 meters downhill to the main reception area.

The Afriski Backpackers accommodation is the dedicated fun-zone at the Resort. It is cool and quirky, with a no frills take on hospitality, offering affordable entry-level options. Easy on the pocket, featuring communal living spaces, a shared kitchen, and bathrooms, this set of accommodations is perfectly suited for young, vibrant solo or group travellers and adventure enthusiasts with a preference for chilled out vibes. Afriski Backpackers is also managed by the team from Afri-Adventure, the party behind the Resort's full suite of year-round outdoor adventure activities while at the resort.



mountain range. Adding to my dose of childlike fun of paintballing as the sun set, Monster Rollers, specially designed off-road scooters that leverage one's ability to balance and control theirs, was a perfect way to navigate descending the resort's downhill trails. Whether you've never been on a Monster Roller or are well experienced, this experience presents a unique way to explore the mountainous landscapes while navigating a man-made trail.

Dining from Africa's highest restaurant

Coined so because in fact, Sky Restaurant at Afriski is located 3200m above sea-level, bearing stunning vantage point of the slopes surrounding the resort. Meals were hearty and incredibly generous, accompanied by a glass of wine, juice or whatever the mood dictated. From a beautifully marinated fillet of the day's fresh catch to sticky barbeque pork ribs, each meal delivered a filling well suited for a group of people that had spent the morning or afternoon navigating the mountains and gliding down the slopes.

Evenings were spent in the company of my Guide and some of the amazing staff, as we had enjoyed plentiful opportunities to learn a little more about each other during our hikes and nature walks. The warmth of the fireplace in my chalet and the soft glow of the lamps created a cozy atmosphere, perfect for unwinding after a day of adventure. Mine was to revel in moments of reflection over a glass of wine or catch up on writing from the inspiration acquired from my surroundings and interactions with the teams and other guests.


The drive back down the mountain was as scenic as the ascent, with the changing landscape offering a constant feast for the eyes. We took off after four incredibly, adventure focused days, heading towards the border post in Maseru. Leaving the resort was an internal confirmation to myself that I would have to return to Afriski Mountain Resort to experience it during



To learn more about Afriski Mountain Resort, visit <https://www.afriski.net/your-stay>

To book your adventure itinerary while in Lesotho, visit <https://afri-adventure.com/>

the winter months. A perfect combination of tranquillity and adventure, it was easy to appreciate why the destination is not only a favourite among the locals and regional guests, being fully booked during winter, but is perfect for a staycation for the same.

As I reflected on my stay, I imagined the appeal for international guests to head into Lesotho for a skiing holiday to Africa, and on the slopes of the Maluti Mountains. I had come to Afriski seeking a combination of rest and exploration, and I had found both in abundance, enjoying an unforgettable adventure-fuelled itinerary by Afri-Adventure. 



Serenity in the Seychelles

By Sarah Kingdom





Mother nature was generous when it came to the Seychelles. The idyllic archipelago of islands is scattered across the Indian Ocean like a necklace of precious stones. So beautiful is this cluster of islands, that early explorers thought they'd stumbled upon the Garden of Eden. Emerald green rainforests blanket the mountains and dazzling turquoise waters, lap stunning shorelines of white sand that are lined with swaying palm trees.

Touching down on Mahé, the largest of the Seychelles' 115 islands, we knew we'd arrived somewhere magical. Eager to dive into the heart of the island, we set off for Morne Seychellois National Park, that covers a fifth of Mahé Island. Taking the Morne Blanc hike, known for its steep climb and incredible views, we followed a trail that snaked up through dense forest and towering fern trees. Under the cool shade of the forest canopy, colourful birds flitted through the undergrowth, their calls echoing through the air. Climbing higher, we left the forest and emerged onto a viewing platform. Sweeping views of the ocean lay before us, sparkling in the morning sunlight. Breath-taking panoramic views of the west coast of the island, and an azure



sea that stretched endlessly toward the horizon, dotted only by distant islands.

Once back down at sea level it was time to explore Victoria, one of the world's smallest capital cities. This is a city you really can't get lost in. Home to just 25,000 people, 90% of the country's population, Victoria is well worth a wander - 18th and 19th century French and British architecture, a rainbow-coloured Hindu Temple, the Sir Selwyn-Clarke Market, with its stalls of seafood, tropical fruits and souvenirs, and the silver-painted colonial clock tower inspired by Big Ben, which didn't actually work for the first 96 years of its life! When the humidity got the better of us, we retired to the leafy Botanical Gardens. We checked out some of the 280 plant species, including the endemic Coco de Mer plants - the much-loved and somewhat suggestively shaped, botanical icon of the Seychelles. We paid a visit to the pen of resident giant tortoises, took a glance at the spice grove and checked out the patch of rainforest that a mass of fruit bats call home.

We had a table booked for lunch at Marie Antoinette Restaurant. With its wood and iron colonial-style architecture, steep red roof, polished wooden staircase, wide verandas, shuttered windows and lace tablecloths, the



restaurant is a slice of Seychelles history. Established as a restaurant in 1972, the signature Creole Menu is a well-guarded family secret that hasn't changed much in more than 50 years. We dined on some spice-infused Creole favourites - parrotfish fritters, grilled red snapper in yellow curry sauce, chicken curry, tangy mango salad, pumpkin chutney, and steaming white rice, all washed down with a chilled Seybrew beer. Having just seen the bats in the Botanical Gardens though, we weren't brave enough to try the curried fruit bat we spotted on the menu.

At the end of a day spent exploring the Mahé's busier north, we retreated to the quiet southern peninsula and our villa at the Four Seasons Resort Seychelles. Our villa was perched on stilts and tucked into the hillside that overlooked Petite Anse Bay, the best swimming beach on Mahé. A cool ocean breeze floated up the granite hillside from the beach and into our room, while our private infinity pool was just what we needed for a refreshing dip. From our verandah we gazed out over the bay below, a tiny comma of pure white sand, lapped by aquamarine waves - we felt like we were floating above the entire world.

Four Seasons has partnered with WiseOceans, a marine conservation organisation, to preserve the waters of Petite Anse Bay. After breakfast we wandered down to the beach, and after chatting with the resident marine biologist about the resorts marine discovery programme, we donned mask, snorkels and fins and headed out in to the water. Swimming towards the rocky point at one end of the bay, clouds of bright vibrant fish were everywhere - big and small, long and short, spotted and striped. Butterflyfish, surgeonfish, pufferfish, parrot fish, angel fish, even the occasional octopus. Stream-



lined stingrays, clumps of colourful coral, anemones with their resident clown fish, a vibrant underwater world that the Four Seasons is working hard to protect.

Having soaked up plenty of vitamin 'sea', it was time for a visit to the spa. Perched on the highest most point of the property, the Four Seasons spa has mesmerising views. On arrival I was drawn towards the floor to ceiling glass windows and could see down over the resort and out across the shimmering water. Scents of lemon, peppermint, coconut and tropical flowers filled the air as I was whisked off for a thoroughly rejuvenating and restorative massage.

Our stay at the Four Seasons was everything we could have hoped for, memorable meals in remarkable restaurants, incredible underwater encounters, a sublime spa, breath-taking views. We were sad when our stay came to an end, but with so many far-flung islands to choose from, we'd decided it was time for some island hopping.

Next stop was the blissful Platte Island, a tiny emerald speck in an ocean of blue. 130km south of Mahé the island is home to the Waldorf Astoria Seychelles. After a quick flight we were touching down in a luxurious island paradise, where the only sounds to be heard were the lapping of waves

on the shore, the wind rustling through palm fronds and overhead, the calls of swooping seabirds.

The Waldorf stamp of opulence was everywhere; from the lavish villas to world class restaurants and the spa with its sophisticated, therapeutic menu. Luxurious bedroom suites dotted the perimeter of the island, each carefully set back from the oceanfront and each featuring a dramatic fan-shaped roof, that paid subtle homage to the hawksbill turtle that lay their eggs on the island's beaches every year. Folding glass doors lead out to a deck, a private pool, and our pathway to the beach. Early in the morning, hundreds of Lesser Noddys and Sooty Terns chattered in the palm trees overhanging our room. On morning walks around the perimeter of the island we spotted baby sharks and sting-rays, that skimmed through the shallow waters. At the end of every day we sat on the warm sand of the beach and watched as the sun sank towards the horizon. Flocks of seabirds, silhouetted against an orange and pink sky, flew towards the island, preparing to roost for the night. At night time, walking barefoot back from dinner, the blanket of stars overhead was nothing short of magical.

From thousands of stars in the sky, to a five-star experience on land, Platte Island was where we truly felt the magic of the Seychelles. Thanks to the fact that the island has barely been inhabited before, save a handful of workers from its previous life as a coconut plantation, Platte Island is a natural paradise. Hundreds of hawksbill turtles nest here annually, and at the right time of year guests can witness newly hatched turtle poking their heads out of the sand and making





their dizzying crawl, on tiny flippers, all the way to the water. The island is ringed by reef, and the house reef is home to numerous stingrays, manta rays and small reef sharks. The underwater seagrass meadows here are some of the best preserved in the Indian Ocean, perfect for year round turtle grazing, and there's a dedicated marine conservation centre, with a fulltime marine biologist, to monitor and preserve all this natural wonder.

Departure day came and after a short flight we were back on Mahé. We really weren't ready to leave, so for a one last taste of the islands we called in at Takamaka Rum. Rum was brought to the Seychelles by the British Navy, around the middle of the sixteenth century and for years nearly every family in the archipelago has had its own unique concoction of herbs and spices that they blended to make their own rum arrange. Nowadays, Takamaka distillery has perfected the art, and for the last 22 years has been producing a range of Seychellois Rums, blended with local fruit and spices extracts, that captures the spirit of the islands in every sip. We got lucky and had a behind the scenes tour, sampling them

all, before wobbling our way to the airport and pouring ourselves onto our flight home.

Whether planning a tropical beach stay in the Seychelles, or perhaps contemplating a combination of a safari with some sand, the bush with the beach, Mahlatini Luxury Travel have been putting together African travel itineraries for over 20 years and can plan a visit with just the right amount of adventure and relaxation. 





PULSE OF THE CITY



CLAY HOUSE





Clay House Boutique Hotel: A Fresh Take on Abuja's Hospitality Scene

Husk Collection, a modern boutique hospitality brand established by visionary entrepreneurs Adesuwa Belo-Osagie, Founder and CEO, and Tope Adekoya, Deputy CEO and Co-founder, proudly announced the upcoming launch of its inaugural property, Clay House. Opening its doors in December 2024, in the prestigious Maitama district of Abuja, Clay House redefines the essence of hospitality by intertwining contemporary design with the vibrant cultural tapestry of its location.

Building on the success of 7-Fifteen Capital Limited— known for developing Abuja's first, truly luxury, waterfront property and transforming the Jabi shoreline — Husk Collection seeks to create inviting spaces that blend comfort and convenience with the rich cultural heritage of West Africa. Clay House is the first in Husk Collection's portfolio of properties designed to transform how guests experience West Africa.

Bringing a fresh perspective to Abuja's hospitality and lifestyle scene and nestled in one of Abuja's most sought-after neighborhoods, Clay House features ten thoughtfully designed rooms ranging from 18 to 54 square meters. Clay House draws inspiration from local influences and native natural resources yet infuses each space with ultra-modern twists. The hotel will redefine the hospitality landscape in Abuja by balancing sophisticated, sleek design and personalized, attentive service with one-of-a-kind food, beverage, and entertainment offerings reflecting the best of the cultural and social milieu of its location. The brand's enhanced approach to high-end travel will inform the hotel's extraordinary service which offers all the personalized attention one might want in a luxury hotel, but in a friendly, unpretentious, and current manner, with superb training and efficiency, without the gold epaulettes or obsequious formalities.

"We created Husk Collection to bring a fresh perspective to the hospitality industry in West Africa," said Adesuwa Belo-Osagie, CEO and Co-Founder of Husk Collection. "Our vision is to blend authenticity, understated luxury, modern convenience and a relentless attention to detail to deliver experiences that resonate with today's high-end traveler."







This boutique property boasts a seamless blend of contemporary design, cultural richness, and exceptional service, making it a standout destination for discerning travelers. At the center of the property, lie the chic Clay Restaurant and Clay Bar, offering exquisite settings in which guests can enjoy a fusion of international and West African flavors crafted by world-class chefs and mixologists. Guests can also unwind at the exclusive, outdoor pool lounge, a stylish retreat that complements the well-maintained swimming pool, inviting relaxation in an atmosphere of elegance and serenity. With its artful interiors featuring thoughtfully curated decor, Clay House provides a harmonious escape, where every element has been designed to inspire and delight.

Bringing Art into the mix

Beyond the luxurious accommodations and culinary offerings, Clay House takes pride in its cultural engagement through a unique partnership with Art Ng. This collaboration brings an inspiring art space to life within the hotel, showcasing a rotat-

ing collection of impeccable works by emerging and established African artists, kicking off with works by Nigerian artist, Sor Sen.

By understanding that a hotel is more than just a place to sleep—it's a hub, a meeting place, a cultural center, a site for relaxation, reflection, and hard-earned leisure time—Clay House offers not just a hotel but a seamlessly integrated experience, a small haven within a bustling city. It reflects an international ethos with a local product; a more comfortable stay, and an elevated experience. 



A CALL FOR *Contributors*

ARE YOU A **HOTEL, TOUR OR WILDERNESS CAMP OPERATOR** OFFERING DISTINCTIVE EXPERIENCES YOU WANT PROSPECTIVE GUESTS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT?

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR MORE COVERAGE OF YOUR **TRAVEL, HOSPITALITY, LEISURE AND LIFESTYLE BRAND** AND OPERATION TO EXPAT TRAVELLERS IN THE UAE?

ARE YOU A **TRAVEL BLOGGER OR CONTENT CREATOR** LOOKING TO SHARE YOUR STORY WITH THE WORLD THROUGH AN ENGAGING TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE FOCUSED PLATFORM?

Register your interest in becoming a contributor or send your proposed content (press release, feature article, listing guides or reviews) to info@travelessencemag.com.

All content should be accompanied by relevant hi-resolution images or video content, facts sheets and a bio for personality profile pieces.

A MEMBER OF OUR EDITORIAL TEAM WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU.

Culture • Lifestyle • Taste-Making

📷 @Travelessencemagazine | 🐦 @TravelEssenceM

📌 @TravelEssenceMag | 🌐 Travel Essence Magazine





📷 @Travelessencemagazine | 🐦 @TravelEssenceM1

📘 @TravelEssenceMag | 🌐 Travel Essence Magazine