

ISSUE 2 • AUGUST 2020

# TRAVEL ESSENCE MAGAZINE

**TONGAI**

**DHAFANA**

PIONEERING IN  
NICHE TERRITORY

**Zephné  
Weston**

CONNECTS THE HIGH-END  
TRAVELLER WITH AFRICA

**Fireside Chat**

WITH LUKE BROWN  
OF VAYENI

*Conquering  
Peaks*

5 DAYS OF  
HIKING UP  
MALAWI'S  
MOUNT MULANJE

**A GLIMPSE**

INTO BOTSWANA  
BASKET WEAVING

SOLO TRAVEL  
IS THE NEW  
“IN”



**Flic en Flac Beach**  
Rivière Noire, Mauritius

Nestled on the west coast of Mauritius in Black River District, is the picturesque seaside village of Flic-en-Flac. The famed public beach is a favourite for local islanders, families and tourists alike, who enjoy the white sandy beaches and warm temperatures throughout the year.

---

# Travel MAGAZINE Essence

Culture • Lifestyle • Taste-Making



On The Cover:  
**ZEPHNE WATSON**  
Cover Design: Lambotique

## EDITORIAL

**YVONNE C. MTENGWA**

Editor-in-Chief

[info@travelessencemag.com](mailto:info@travelessencemag.com)

**DAPHINE MABHIZA**

Content Director

[daphinemabhiza@gmail.com](mailto:daphinemabhiza@gmail.com)

## DESIGN AND LAYOUT

**JOSEPH TAFADZWA MULAMBO**

Creative Director

[lambotique@gmail.com](mailto:lambotique@gmail.com)

## MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

**LOUISA CONRAD CHORUMA**





Market Engagement Director

[louiconrad@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:louiconrad@yahoo.co.uk)

## CONTACT DETAILS

[info@travelessencemag.com](mailto:info@travelessencemag.com)

[www.travelessencemag.com](http://www.travelessencemag.com)

@Travelessencemagazine   
@TravelEssenceM1   
@TravelEssenceMag   
Travel Essence Magazine 



# Editor's Welcome

“ *Africa changes you forever, like nowhere on earth. Once you have been there, you will never be the same. But how do you begin to describe the magic to someone who has never felt it? How can you explain the fascination of this vast, dusty continent, whose oldest roads are elephant paths? Could it be because Africa is the place of all our beginnings, the cradle of mankind, where our species first stood upright on the savannahs of long ago?*

*BRIAN JACKMAN*

”

The reviews we've received since our first issue of Travel Essence Magazine went live on July 20th have been nothing short of amazing. Many words can describe the feeling of surrendering your heart into something you feel so passionate about, before holding your breath as each piece of feedback comes in! For this note, I choose to use "Humbled." We are incredibly humbled by the words of encouragement from the readers of our first issue, and believe we are on the right track in doing our part to give you all a glimpse into what makes Africa so intriguing and exciting.

Ours is a continent of fighters and innovators. Perhaps that too is why we've always been plagued by our fair share of negative publicity, anchored in the truths of societal injustice, political impasses, economic instabilities and so on. But these exist the world over – not just in Africa. This is in fact why Travel

Essence Magazine aims to bring to the fore a distinctive message; one that truly captures the essence of our joys and celebrations on the continent, connecting readers with the vast array of travel, cultural and lifestyle experiences across our plains.

We boast the incredible honour of being the youngest continent in the world, with a reported more than 75% of our estimated 1.2 billion inhabitants under the age of 35. This is a resounding gong of promise. This is also a call for Africa's youth to play an active role in contributing towards a revitalized future, founded on a vibrant, more youthful narrative. We chose travel because through it, our lives, individual and collective missions continue to evolve. It has been through seeing vast landscapes teeming with wildlife that we came alive or hiking up mountain trails that we felt the wind blow against our faces like never before. It has been through moments of watching waves of water on the shores of Africa's coasts lap against our feet, that the soul of the earth spoke to us. It is through travel and exploring the rich diversity of Africa's cultures and spaces, that we realised we have a real opportunity to share this and more with people from all over the world.

Our mission is bold enough:

*To invoke curiosity and desire for exploration in today's globally conscious individual, connecting them with the diverse travel, culture and lifestyle experiences on offer through industry tastemakers and brands across Africa.*

Need we say more? Join us on our journey as we connect the world with the essence of Mother Africa, it's people and places through the eyes of industry professionals, adventurers and content creators alike! Our story's evolving, and we're thrilled to have you along for the ride!

Thanking all the entrepreneurs, adventurers and content creators who shared their inspiring stories with us for this Issue. Your contributions to the travel industry and promoting our wealth of pristine destinations, experiences and wildlife conservation efforts are invaluable!

We are routing for you as you anticipate ongoing industry recovery in the remaining months of 2020.

To our readers, thank you for letting your minds escape for a time, as you immerse yourself in snippets of what Africa has to offer!

Love and Light!

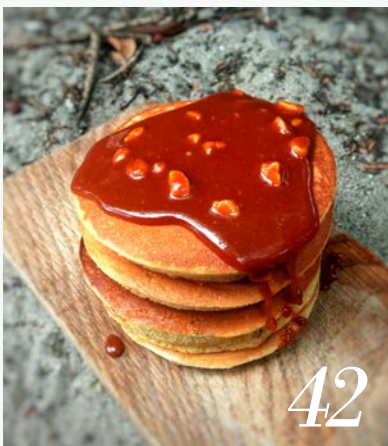
*Gyronne C. Mtengwa*

# Contents

## TASTE-MAKERS



- 08 Zephne Weston talks Asante Travel: Connecting the high-end traveller with Africa
- 22 Pioneering in niche territory: A spotlight on Mosi Wines Founder Tongai Dhafana
- 28 Fireside chat with Luke Brown: Building the Vayeni dream

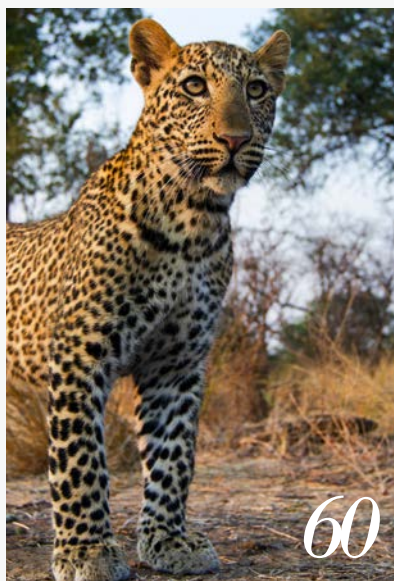


## CULINARY ESCAPADES

- 37 Mr. B's Dessert Emporium - Inside Sindiso Ncube's delicate dessert culture
- 40 From the Black Chef's Kitchen: Slow Cooked Afro Lamb in Tomato Sauce with Three-Cheese Macaroni
- 42 Tapiwa Guzha's Tapi Tapi Ice-cream: A sweet celebration of traditional flavours and textures

## ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA

- 50 10 Tom Varley images to get you exploring the Smoke that Thunders
- 60 Conquering peaks: 5 days of hiking up Malawi's Mount Mulanje
- 68 Safari on foot? Take on South Luangwa National Park with Zambian Ground Handlers
- 74 Taking to the skies with Vuyo the Bush Pilot
- 78 Gonarezhou National Park - A wild marvel to explore



## THE WANDERLUST WITHIN

- 88 "Travelicious" Beyond Boundaries with Theresa Powell-Ethiopia: An awakening journey from Addis Abba to the Omo Valley
- 94 A Glimpse into Botswana Basket Weaving
- 98 Namibia: 7 reasons why you should visit this paradise of contrasting landscapes
- 104 Soweto's Vilikazi Street: From the base of Freedom Fighting to a hub of black entrepreneurship
- 108 Solo Travel is the new "IN"

## AFRICA TO THE WORLD



- 116 5 Reasons to Support 100+ Black Owned Businesses when in Dubai and the greater UAE
- 120 Black Girl in Dubai's picks on 5+5 Black Owned Businesses to Check Out in the UAE



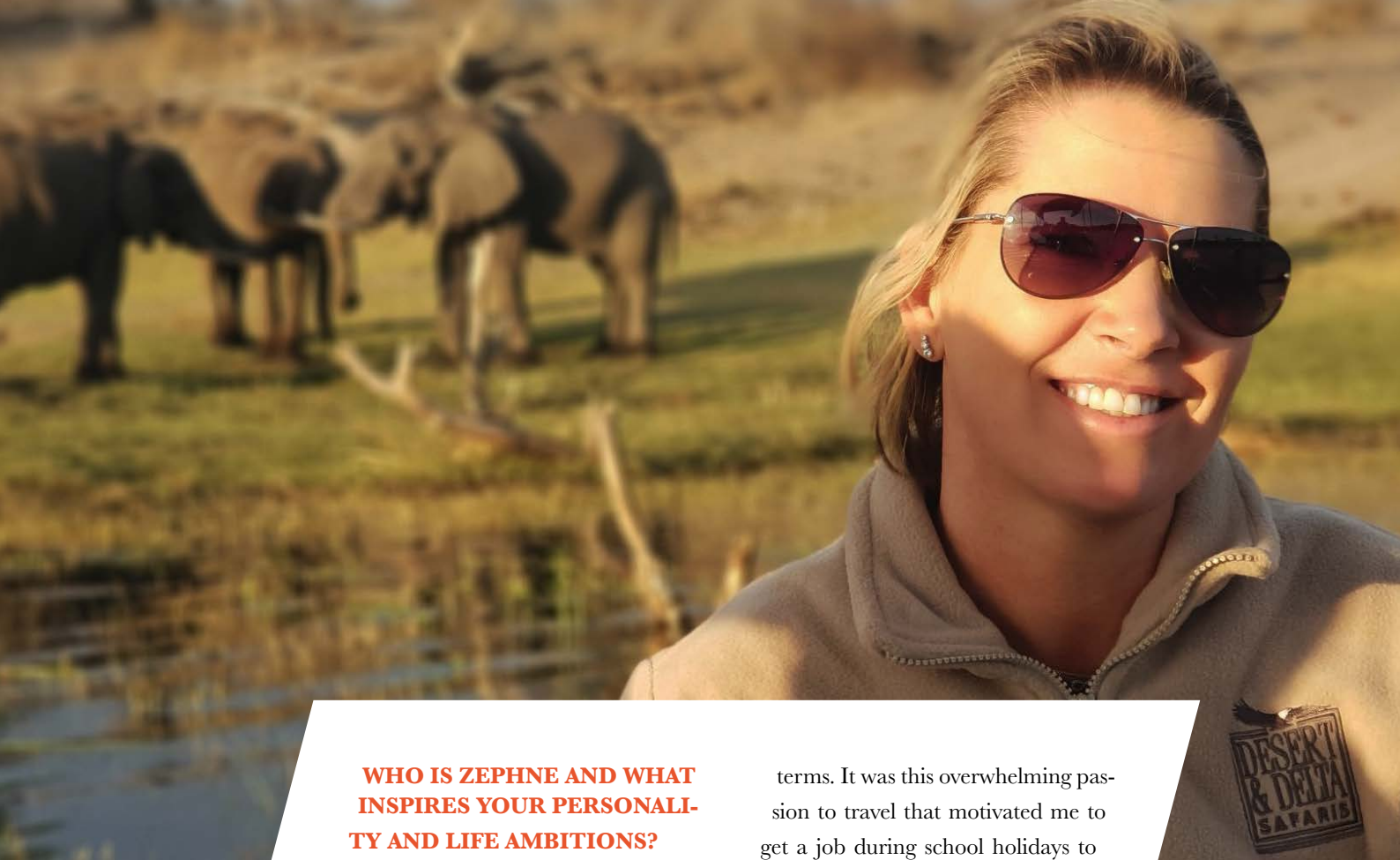
# Taste-Makers

A close-up portrait of Zephne Weston, a woman with long, wavy, light-colored hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark, possibly black, top and a thin gold necklace. The background is a dark, neutral color.

*Zephne Weston talks*  
*Asante Travel:*

CONNECTING THE HIGH-END  
TRAVELLER WITH AFRICA





**WHO IS ZEPHNE AND WHAT INSPIRES YOUR PERSONALITY AND LIFE AMBITIONS?**

I had very humble beginnings on a farm in South Africa, situated in the Karoo, a semi-desert area in the central part of the country. Ever since I can remember, the idea of travelling was a magical concept. As soon as I could read, I loved getting lost in travelling stories and books about countries all over the world. Always a nature lover, time spent outside amongst animals was one of my favourite pastimes.

It was a teacher that truly inspired my desire for seeing the world through my own eyes. She would often go on international trips and we would hang onto her every word as she recounted stories of the incredible sights she experienced in the world's most famous cities. My yearning for embarking on my own adventure just grew stronger as time went by, I longed to be free and to discover the world on my own

terms. It was this overwhelming passion to travel that motivated me to get a job during school holidays to earn some money.

As soon as I completed high school, I had enough money (and courage) saved up to buy a one-way ticket to London, a 2-year working Visa, a backpack, with GBP 43 remaining.

My mother's wisdom stayed with me. As an 18-year old, I worked extra hard, always went beyond what was expected of me and never compromised on quality and service. By the time I was 19, I managed a team of 30 staff at a well-known establishment. I needed to work 80-hour weeks to prove myself, but I knew if I made the sacrifices early, I would reap the rewards.

I managed to travel across Europe and parts of the United States until my two-year working visa expired and I had to return to South Africa.

“*Africa is real. I love travelling and seeing the world, but this is home. This is where I feel centered.*”

“

*I don't compromise on quality and I absolutely love what I do!*

”

Luckily, fortune favors the brave and I was given the opportunity to move to Cancun, Mexico where I worked in the hotel industry and later as Mexico Manager and Product Contracting Manager for The Mark Travel Corporation (now part of Apple Vacations). Living in Mexico was sometimes quite hard, given how young I was and in a fairly important role.

I often had to deal with prejudice due to my age and being a young woman, but this just pushed me to work harder so I could make my mark and become indispensable.

**WHEN DID THE JOURNEY INTO RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS IN LUXURY TRAVEL BEGIN FOR YOU?**

I returned to Africa in 2006, as I desperately missed the continent of my birth with its wonderful culture, natural beauty, variety, and unique people. Most of all, I realised that the people I met along the way in the USA and Mexico would prob-

ably never experience the Africa that I knew and loved and so I was determined to show them its beauty and diversity.

All the experience I gained during my time in the USA and Mexico, all the people I met and travelled with gave me great insight into the lifestyle and expectations of the high-end traveler.

The luxury traveler has high expectations. Looking for authentic experiences, making a difference and finding a deeper experience is important. It is typically someone who works really hard and when they take a vacation, they want to immerse themselves in it. Truly switch off and connect with their families, friends, and surroundings.

Returning to South Africa, I realised that all my accumulated experiences to date had taught me that this is more of a niche market than it seems on the surface. Just because you call something luxury or be-





spoke, does not mean that you truly understand this type of traveller!

It's about making sure that the finer details are taken care of. That all the simple luxuries are a given and that truly unbelievable experiences are created, underpinned by the best service. Very soon after my return to South Africa, some of my Mexican and American friends asked me to arrange trips for them to Africa.

They loved the level of detail and care that went into their vacation planning and were overwhelmed by their trips – the beauty they saw and the unique places they visited. They, in turn, referred their friends to me, some of them have been booking their annual African trips through me for the past 14 years – every time to a different destination!

Over the years I have worked with different companies where these clients fol-

lowed me. In 2019 I decided that it was time for me to do it on my own terms. And so, Asante Travel was born. I thrive on excellence. I don't compromise on quality and I absolutely love what I do!

**ASANTE TRAVEL - WHAT MAKES YOUR BUSINESS AND THE EXPERIENCES YOU OFFER DIFFERENT, GIVEN THE COMPETITIVE NATURE OF THE GLOBAL TOURISM LANDSCAPE?**

Every aspect is personal to me. Each itinerary is designed from scratch, based on the client's specific requirements, goals and budget. Firstly, I do a very thorough analysis of a client's expectations before we even start the planning process. An important aspect is putting myself in their shoes and I plan every trip as if it is for myself or my family.

A lot of care and attention goes into each itinerary! I love research and ensure that I completely understand every detail of

“

*I love research and ensure that I completely understand every detail of the itinerary and that it makes complete sense before sending it to a client.*

”

TASTE MAKERS



the itinerary and that it makes complete sense before sending it to a client. Each itinerary is tailor-made to suit each client's specific requirements.

Therefore, the most important part of the work takes place before the client receives the first proposal. Where possible, I try to suggest areas, safari lodges and experiences that I have experienced first-hand. I ensure that I stay up to date with any changes and new projects happening in the area I recommend. I will never propose an itinerary for something I would not absolutely love to do myself.

Further to that, once clients are travelling and if I am not travelling with them (which I do with my VIP clients in request), they have access to me 24/7 via WhatsApp. We are constantly in communication and their trip is monitored. Behind the scenes we are also in constant contact with the

lodges and hotels where the clients are staying to make sure everything is going perfectly.

A vital aspect of my itineraries is that I only use suppliers who have the same high standards as I have. It's important that my suppliers can be relied upon and who remain in communication with me. You need a partner who lets you know when things go differently than planned and who will pull out all the stops to rectify any situation that may occur, this can then be turned into a positive adventure without it impacting the client in a negative way.

My clients become my friends and together, we strive to create experiences that are life changing. Trips that remain part of people's lives forever and impact the way they look at Africa, nature, and the environment.





**YOU'VE WORKED ALL OVER THE WORLD, ENJOYING AN ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER IN THE AMERICAS, YET YOU STILL FOUND YOURSELF COMING BACK HOME TO SOUTH AFRICA AND FOCUSING ON GROWING YOUR BUSINESS FROM HERE? WHY AFRICA AND WHY NOW? WHY WAS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO VENTURE INTO LUXURY TRAVEL AS OPPOSED TO OTHER NICHE SEGMENTS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY?**

Africa is real. I love travelling and seeing the world, but this is home. This is where I feel centered. Here, I can be close to nature and it is where I feel closest to my authentic self. I want everyone to experience this beautiful continent in a meaningful and authentic way, to take care of the environment and to understand the circle of life. In Africa, time can stand still. Here, you can connect with nature, yourself, your loved ones, your children in a way I feel you are not able to do anywhere else.

Here, is where man and planet can become one and be grateful to each other, protect each other and teach us the most beautiful lessons. Africa changes us and I feel that when you come to Africa, you take a part of it back with you and once you've tasted it, you always want to come back here.

Changes are happening all over the world and it is becoming harder to escape from social media, corporate pressure, and expectations of society. On safari, you have the opportunity to remove yourself from that and just be one with nature.

I've found that a lot of my clients get to reconnect with their soul and their loved ones. They get to create new relationships and friendships that often last a lifetime. For me, it's about seeing how living simply can be beautiful and how the relationship between man and planet can change the course of the future. And we need to do this now, before we get swallowed up in the crazy rat race. I ventured into the luxury travel sector because I thrive on creating trips that I would love to embark on myself. I enjoy luxury travel that is unique and

intimate. I want to create and have experiences that are exceptional and truly different. I appreciate the fact that the average luxury traveler travels with a consciousness that we need to take care of our planet and have the means to make a change by either contributing to social projects or by creating awareness in their respective networks.

Asante [ah-san-teh] means thank you or gratitude in Swahili and the name is such a huge part of my amazing journey in the travel industry. Asante Travel wants to take our clients on this journey with us and welcoming travelers to the wondrous, pulsating and colourful continent of Africa.



“

*To create a truly extraordinary experience, there must be soul, and human interaction.*

”

**WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF GUEST EXPERIENCE IN BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM?**

The guest experience is everything. You can stay in the most exquisite accommodation, but unless there is authenticity and a truly immersive experience, it could just get lost between other travel memories - there won't be any real impact. To create a truly extraordinary experience, there must be soul, and human interaction.

It is vital to understand your client well enough to create experiences that they have not dreamed possible or create journeys and even encounters they never knew they needed.

This is not something an online booking site can provide. Why embark on an experience if it's not extraordinary?

Being a boutique operator allows us to do this. We only work with a few selected clients at a time who are completely blown away by our service and their trip, rather than appealing to the mass market.







## TASTE MAKERS



### **WHAT ARE ASANTE TRAVEL'S BEST-SELLING PACKAGES? WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR CLIENTS ARE LOOKING FOR WHEN THEY MAKE THEIR BOOKINGS FOR A LUXURY TRIP TO AFRICA?**

Safaris are one of the main reasons people want to visit Africa. One of our key focus clientele is the multi-generational family.

I have children myself and love to travel with my husband and kids. It's amazing how you connect with one another when removed from your everyday life, from technology and e-mails. Seeing how your children connect with nature, their family and with themselves in Africa is a great

sight. How they remember their African safari years after they have been here, is the goal. If children can learn here about the environment and taking care of nature, it will have a substantial and lasting impact on them.

Romantic trips are also a favourite - whether its honeymooners, couples celebrating anniversaries or couples travelling together. It's incredible seeing couples experience these amazing things together, how they connect on a different level than when they are at home.

“

*I enjoy luxury travel that is unique and intimate.*

”

Our best-selling packages includes Southern Africa, with countries like South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Often these countries get combined, depending on how much time the clients have. I always recommend that they carve out at least 2 weeks. If they have more time available, it is always wonderful to end the trip with a beach experience, which can include Mozambique or the Indian Ocean Islands.

Another popular choice is East Africa. Kenya and Tanzania offer some incredible safari options and they are easily combined with gorilla trekking experiences in Uganda or Rwanda. A lovely way to end your East African safari is to spend a few days on the Kenyan Coast, or the Seychelles due to the direct flights from Nairobi or even one of the Tanzanian islands like Zanzibar, Pemba, Mafia Island, etc.

**LET'S TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR FAVOURITES. WHICH ARE YOUR FAVOURITE HOTEL/LODGE/BUSH CAMPS TO WORK WITH IN DELIVERING BESPOKE PACKAGES TO YOUR CLIENTELE AND WHY?**

Africa is a huge continent with so many different offerings! To single out any specific properties would not be fair, as each person has a unique taste. Instead, I prefer to focus on boutique experiences. Smaller, more intimate hotels and lodges are my preference. Many of the luxury safari lodges are very small and intimate with only between 3 to 10 rooms, which makes it very personal. With a group of friends or family of between 6 to 10 people travelling together, it is very easy to exclusively book a boutique safari lodge. What a wonderful vacation if everything at the lodge - all activities and meals is catered around your requirements. No need to fit into other people's agendas or get up early to be on a shared safari vehicle.

You can get up when you are ready, eat when you want to and do what you want, and all the activities are planned around your specific requirements. What's even more luxurious is that the entire staff are there for you.

Private luxury villas are another fantastic option. These villas vary in size and can accommodate anything from 2 to 25 people. They are fully staffed and reserved exclusively. The level of luxury and service, attention to detail and dedication to create intimate and unique experiences inspires clients to return time and time again.

Bespoke is all about exclusivity, not having to stick to a rigid schedule. You are part of a family, you are home and visiting loved ones in a foreign, exotic country! This can be achieved if we reserve accommodation exclusively.



## TASTE MAKERS

### IF YOU WERE PUTTING TOGETHER EXPERIENCES FOR A GROUP OF MILLENNIALS, WHICH TOP THREE SPOTS WOULD YOU RECOMMEND AND WHY?

In 2020, millennials are classified as being between the ages of 23 and 39 years old. We do not focus on student groups, creating crazy party atmospheres, but instead on real and authentic experiences. We usually have over 30's booking with us, and younger of they are part of a multi-generational trip with their parents.

My suggestion would be – a combination of Cape Town and Cape Winelands, followed by a safari in the Kruger National Park, followed by adventure at Victoria Falls; a Tanzanian safari, starting in a mobile camp where you follow the wildebeest in the great migration, followed by a few days in a luxury camp before finishing off on a beach in Zanzibar. A third option would be Gorilla Trekking in Uganda, a few days in the Masai Mara and finishing with feeding the giraffes breakfast in Nairobi. Regardless of which experience one would pick, they are sure to head back home having enjoyed plenty to create eternal memories.

“

*Romantic trips are also a favourite - whether its honeymooners, couples celebrating anniversaries or couples travelling together.*

”

### WHO INSPIRES YOU TO KEEP STRIVING FOR GROWTH IN ALL AREAS OF YOUR LIFE - PERSONALLY, PROFESSIONALLY AND AS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

My years spent in the USA and Mexico included meeting and working with incredible mentors in the travel industry who I look up to and hold in high regards. At a young age, I was taught of the importance of not compromising on service and that integrity, authenticity, relationships, and service orientation are the things to be valued most of all.

I have various mentors in the industry, a group of remarkable female entrepreneurs who support each other, amazing staff who share my values and an absolute passion for travel in Africa.

Above all, I have the most incredible supportive family with a kind husband who allows me to work all hours, to travel regularly to see new products, visit trade shows or accompany my VIP clients on their vacations. Without the support of my husband, I would not be able to immerse myself in doing what I love.





**THE WORLD IS REELING FROM A GLOBAL PANDEMIC, YET INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS ALIKE ARE LOOKING AHEAD TO ASCERTAIN WHAT THEY NEED TO DO TO ADJUST TO THE NEW REALITY. WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR MEN AND WOMEN WORKING IN YOUR INDUSTRY, WHO HAVE BEEN IMPACTED HUGELY BY COVID-19?**

First, operational expenses and overheads had to be cut to as low as possible. Without income, you cannot sustain your expenses. To keep your brand and your reputation relevant, you must continue to keep people informed about what they can do in a positive way. If you have changed your booking policies for anyone booked for now and moved the dates, then use this as a positive reminder. If you get any enquiry, act quickly. With fewer leads for the

future, it is vital to increase conversion and pursue every lead with reassurance and understanding. Also, you need to remove reasons not to book. Clients will be worried about reserving a vacation now in case they need to cancel their holiday because of travel restrictions caused by COVID-19 regulations. It's important to make sure that they have full travel insurance for this purpose, especially if they are booking directly. Revise your terms and conditions and let them know.

Communication is going to be key to maintain business relationships with overseas tour operators, as well as direct bookings. You must have open communication with everyone. Reply to questions as quickly as you would normally and keep them updated as to what is happening in your country or destination. Keep them informed so they are reassured that their travel plans are in good hands.

Travel will return and staying positive during these times is critical. It is important to stay relevant and remember that we are in this industry because we understand the value of excellence and service. Continue to be authentic and provide value to your clients. You need to show your strengths and your understanding of your clients' fears. Ensure that you are up to date with all safety protocols and adhere to this at all times.

I love this quote: "I always liked the unknown. Ironically, I familiarized myself with the uncertainty of life. Life can change in any minute of the day. God can turn anything around in a speck of a moment. I know for a fact that everything changes. Nothing stays the same. This too shall pass." — Happy Positivity

To book your Asante-Travel adventure, contact Zephne Weston

WEBSITE:

[www.asante-travel.com](http://www.asante-travel.com)

EMAIL:

[info@asante-travel.com](mailto:info@asante-travel.com)

PHONE / WHATSAPP:

+27 82 682 4343

FACEBOOK:

<https://www.facebook.com/AsanteTravel/>

INSTAGRAM:

[https://www.instagram.com/asante\\_travel/](https://www.instagram.com/asante_travel/)

LINKEDIN:


<https://www.linkedin.com/company/asante-travel/>

SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER: [http://eepurl.com/gFb\\_oz](http://eepurl.com/gFb_oz)

# *Pioneering In Niche Territory*

A spotlight on Mosi Wines  
founder Tongai Dhafana





Tongai, whose name means ‘to rule’ in the Shona language, is doing just that with his wine and gin brand, while also flying the flag high for his country as an award-winning sommelier. His story is truly inspirational, having been born and raised in the small communal area of Churumhanzu, Zimbabwe, before later moving to South Africa with his wife, in search of a better economic prospects.

He worked as a gardener in Riebeeck Kasteel, a vineyard in Cape Town, while also studying. This is where it all began; his fascination for vines and their life cycle as well as the process of turning grapes into wine. Tongai used any opportunity he would get to taste wine and before he knew it, his palette was sharp enough to taste the difference in standards from each vineyard.

After spending time with various winemakers, particularly Chris Mullineux of Mullineux Family Wines, Tongai supervised his first vintage in 2014. His passion for wine tasting and experience in the winemaking business set the path for his creation of Mosi Wines, a wines and gin selection named after Mosi-O-Tunya, which means “the smoke that thunders” when describing the majestic Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.



Cape Town is home to some of the best wines in the world and with big brands such as Steenberg and Eagle’s Nest dominating the industry, it’s no wonder the Mother City is viewed as the wine tasting destination of Africa. But among giants, one Zimbabwean man has managed to create a reputation for himself in this very niche sector of winemaking. Tongai Joseph Dhafana is the founder of Mosi Wines, a wine and gin label from Cape Town, that has caused a frenzy among the restaurants in the area since its launch

## From humble beginnings to an industry trailblazer

What makes his story so intriguing, is that Tongai tenaciously worked himself into being recognized as a winemaking mastermind, having penetrated a white-dominated market as a black man with humble beginnings as a migrant worker in South Africa. Tongai's unique product quickly spoke to the middle class wine connoisseur, and with his becoming a part of the Black Cellar Club (BLACC), a South African Association that supports black winemakers in an industry where they are in the strong minority, Tongai is quick to chime in on the importance of hard work. "Working hard is the recipe for success", he says, and his story is a true testament to that. Tongai entered the winemaking business as a black Zimbabwean man in South Africa and is trailblazing in his own right today.





# FROM THE MOSI CELLER

## **Mosi Tinashe Chenin Blanc 2019**

A white wine made with grapes from 2 Swartland vineyards, one on granite, and the other on shale, the Mosi Tinashe Chenin Blanc 2019 is spontaneously fermented and matured for 12 months in older oak and is flavored with a note of potpourri and nartjie, apple and stone fruit plus spice, and some yeasty character in the background. It's a perfect mix of fruit concentration matched by zesty acidity on the palate.

## **Mosi Flavian Syrah 2018**

A full-bodied red wine made with grapes from a vineyard planted on shale near Riebeek Kasteel. The wine is fermented and matured for 18 months in first-, second- and third fill barrels. This wine has a very intense flavor, made with plenty of red and blackberries plus a little floral perfume and white pepper. While the palate is fairly bursting with fruit, the tannins are quite soft.

## **Mosi Wamambo Gin**

This signature Mosi Gin is made with botanicals mostly from Zimbabwe in Churumhanzu, combined with and some from South Africa. It carries notes of Eucalyptus, lemon verbena, citrus, offering a good balance in acidity.

## Tongai – the Award-winning Sommelier

He is also the Head Sommelier at La Colombe, one of the best fine dining establishments in Cape Town, and is a part of the South African Sommelier team.

In 2015, the team won the SA Wine Tasting Championships and went on to participate in the world championships in France. Fast forward to just last year, where Tongai was awarded the “Eat Out Wine Service Award” for his role as Head Sommelier at La Colombe.

When it came to building his brand, Tongai spares no expense, putting in the hours to ensure that Mosi Wines truly stands out among the best of them. The special attention to detail in creating the ultimate wine tasting experience, while also paying homage to his homeland are all important elements of the Mosi Wine brand.

When you buy a Mosi bottle of wine, you are also taken on a virtual tour of the roaring Victoria Falls, through a label scan feature on the bottle! Mosi Wines are made from 100% South African grapes with minimal chemical additives, heightening the taste and quality in each glass served.



To learn more about Mosi Wines visit:  
<https://www.mosiwinesandspirits.com/>



A  
fireside  
chat with  
**Luke Brown:**  
**BUILDING THE  
VAYENI DREAM**

*Vayeni*

Luke Brown, Founder and Managing Director of Vayeni Safaris, couldn't help but answer his call to tourism entrepreneurship, having leveraged an extensive career in tourism operations across Southern Africa and the Middle East. It was in 2012 that he, together with his wife Suzanne, decided it was time to move back home to Southern Africa from Abu Dhabi, with the ambitious goal of starting Vayeni, an entrepreneurial venture that sought to offer a refined approach to destination management in the region. Having travelled the world during their tenure in the Middle East, and of course enjoying the privilege of working in one of the fastest evolving travel destinations in that part of the world, the couple felt strongly that they had something new to offer travellers looking to experience Africa. With bags packed, it was time to begin building their dream – Vayeni.



## THE YOUNGER YEARS

From humble beginnings as a young man growing up in Zimbabwe, Luke was no stranger to the outdoors, so much that when his high school chapter ended and he braced for new beginnings as a university student in neighbouring South Africa, he had already opted to pursue a degree in Zoology from Eastern Cape's Rhodes University in Grahamstown.

Luke had heard much about the campus's reputation for having the best Zoology department to grace the continent of Africa,

and so where to go pursue his tertiary studies was a no-brainer. Little did he know that this season would equip him with the technical knowledge he needed to truly flourish in Safari Tourism later.

His post undergraduate study career choice, socially gregarious demeanor, and genuine love for meeting people of diverse cultures, ushered in a growing desire to explore opportunities for exposure in his field beyond the continent of Africa. After all, adventurers like Luke know just how much exposure is a catalyst for self-discovery. Luke in time landed a job in the UAE as a safari guide at Al Maha Desert Resort, after having

spent a few years working with his brother in Victoria Falls before his relocation to the Middle East.

Experiencing the dynamism of the UAE's travel and hospitality landscape when Luke moved on to Al Ain to manage a local Zoo owned by the Abu Dhabi government, rekindled thoughts of embarking on a safari-focused business venture in Africa. Except this time, he was going to go at it differently, hinging on the critical learnings he had taken away from not only working in the UAE, but having previously run an upmarket camp in Bumi Hills on Lake Kariba, Zimbabwe, as well as a large ground handling enterprise in Chobe, Botswana.



## **BUILDING THE VAYENI DREAM**

Today, Luke speaks proudly of Vayeni, a dream come true yet still evolving for him and his wife Suzanne. Their aim is to become renowned as the trusted and authoritative source for luxury travel in Southern Africa, but Luke is quick to say though, that the road to entrepreneurship isn't for the faint of heart. It has been a challenge for Luke and his team as much as it has been for other industry players in the region's hospitality and tourism landscape, especially now, with the huge hit that the global pandemic has taken on the industry. But the business is his baby, and one doesn't quit on something they have so passionately built from the ground-up. Vayeni has over the years garnered acclaim for its reputation as the go-to African luxury travel business for curating extraordinary Safari experiences

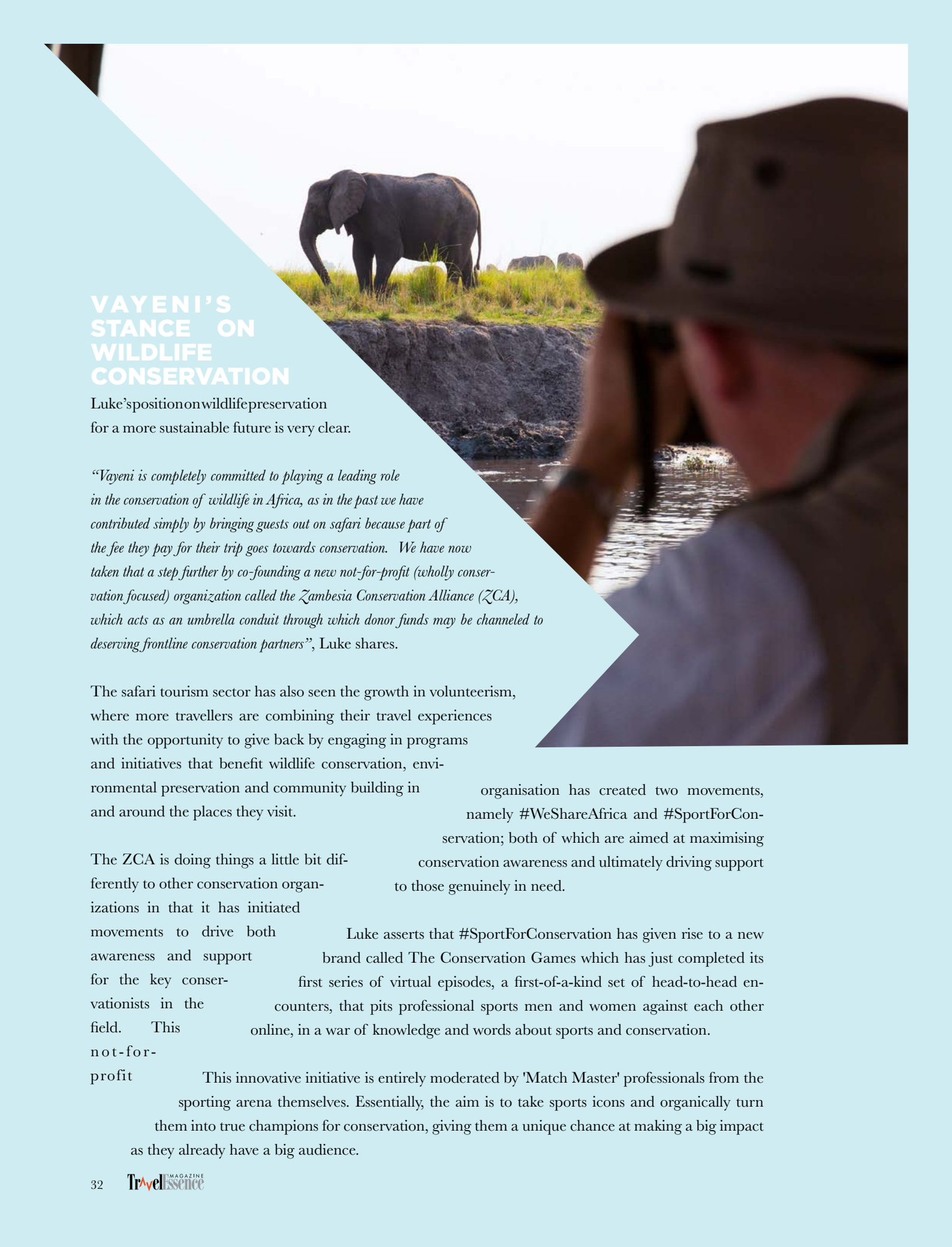
in Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Luke and Suzanne credit their success to a passionate and hardworking team that sets a premium in showcasing the best of Southern Africa's natural landscapes and wildlife to tourists from all over the globe. When asked what Vayeni's product differentiator is, Luke chimes in:

*"Today more than ever, it would seem that to do well in the luxury industry you need to walk the talk in terms of knowledge, but also ensure you have the contacts and skills required to make the impossible happen. People spend a lot of money to stay in some incredible camps and lodges in Africa and you cannot ignore the detail that goes with planning these transformational and often life changing trips."*



The luxury travel landscape has become increasingly competitive, with more travellers from across the world keen on experiencing Africa's people, wildlife, and landscapes for themselves. For the tourism stakeholder, running a successful business is all about creating a unique product that combines industry knowledge and exceptional service provision. Also, according to Luke, it never feels like work when you are truly passionate about what you do and the people that surround you.

*“ You cannot ignore the detail that goes with planning these transformational and often life changing trips.”*



## VAYENI'S STANCE ON WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Luke's position on wildlife preservation for a more sustainable future is very clear.

*"Vayeni is completely committed to playing a leading role in the conservation of wildlife in Africa, as in the past we have contributed simply by bringing guests out on safari because part of the fee they pay for their trip goes towards conservation. We have now taken that a step further by co-founding a new not-for-profit (wholly conservation focused) organization called the Zambia Conservation Alliance (ZCA), which acts as an umbrella conduit through which donor funds may be channeled to deserving frontline conservation partners",* Luke shares.

The safari tourism sector has also seen the growth in volunteerism, where more travellers are combining their travel experiences with the opportunity to give back by engaging in programs and initiatives that benefit wildlife conservation, environmental preservation and community building in and around the places they visit.

The ZCA is doing things a little bit differently to other conservation organizations in that it has initiated movements to drive both awareness and support for the key conservationists in the field. This not-for-profit

organisation has created two movements, namely #WeShareAfrica and #SportForConservation; both of which are aimed at maximising conservation awareness and ultimately driving support to those genuinely in need.

Luke asserts that #SportForConservation has given rise to a new brand called The Conservation Games which has just completed its first series of virtual episodes, a first-of-a-kind set of head-to-head encounters, that pits professional sports men and women against each other online, in a war of knowledge and words about sports and conservation.

This innovative initiative is entirely moderated by 'Match Master' professionals from the sporting arena themselves. Essentially, the aim is to take sports icons and organically turn them into true champions for conservation, giving them a unique chance at making a big impact as they already have a big audience.



## CAN THE TRAVELLER GET INVOLVED IN EFFORTS TOWARDS CONSERVATION?

Vayeni's owner believes that there are many ways in which travellers, particularly the millennial demographic that visits Southern Africa, can contribute towards conservation. For one, Africa has so much by way of lasting memories to offer guests, and just by visiting this area, travellers make a tremendous difference as part of their fees are ploughed straight back into frontline conservation, which is made up of both wildlife preservation and community upliftment.

"The conservation field is a complex one and there are so many wonderful initiatives and players involved - from

education and outreach programmes to anti-poaching outfits, research and veterinary institutes. Safari goers that come out for a few weeks may opt to visit and interact with some of our conservation partners, and we really encourage this because it gives our guests a greater appreciation of what the fight for Africa's wildlife really entails and what the complexities involved are to ensure long term success" cites Luke.

"We also offer the opportunity to be guided on our safari trips by acclaimed guides and conservationists who are extremely knowledgeable about the wild and have had a long-time experience in the field. Imagine walking up to a pack of wild dogs in the morning, followed in the afternoon by an interaction with the communities who live

on the boundary of a national park in the afternoon - listening to what they have to say so as to grow your appreciation for the situation on the ground. In the evening, you get to sit around the campfire under the incredible African night skies to discuss your findings with your guide and conservation experts.

The future of humanity and our very existence depends on these sorts of encounters because without them, we can easily get lost and forget the true meaning of wildlife importance and our own important connection to it", he adds, seemingly to remind us of the very reason why he came back to Africa so he too could welcome guests from the world over for their distinctive African encounters.



To learn more about how you can enjoy a tailor-made luxury experience in Southern Africa through Vayeni, visit: [www.vayeni.com](http://www.vayeni.com) or follow Luke and Suzanne on IG @vayenisafaris. To learn more about Zambesia Conservation Alliance and The Conservation Games, visit: [www.zambesia.com](http://www.zambesia.com) and [www.theconservationgames.com](http://www.theconservationgames.com) respectively.



FROM  
*Blissful Bushveld*  
 TO SHIMMERING SANDS

Set off on a 4 day safari to one of *South Africa's* most exclusive private game reserves and home to Africa's Big Five. Be guided through the Panorama Route and enjoy the most magnificent vistas South Africa has to offer before heading off for the shimmering sands of *Mozambique*. Here you'll be whisked away by helicopter to the tranquil island of Azura Benguerra.

Day 1 - 4 : Sabi Sand Private Game Reserve  
 Day 5 : Hazyview

South Africa

Day 6 - 12 : Bazaruto Archipelago

Mozambique



\*Excludes international flights & taxes. Terms & conditions apply.



FOR MORE INFO VISIT  
[asante-travel.com/essence](http://asante-travel.com/essence)



ASANTE  
 TRAVEL

*"My team and I are standing by to assist you with all your travel needs"*  
**Zephné Weston** || Director, Asante Travel

Exploring **AFRICA TOGETHER**  
 Your partner for creating unique travel experiences



CALL US TODAY: +27 82 682 4343 | [info@asante-travel.com](mailto:info@asante-travel.com) | [asante-travel.com](http://asante-travel.com)



# Culinary Escapades





# Mr. B's Gourmet Emporium

## INSIDE SINDISO NCUBE'S DELICATE DESSERT CULTURE

### WHO IS MR B?

I am Sindiso Bryan Ncube, a Chef trainer who is also incredibly passionate about making desserts. Mr. B is what I've gone by with people closest to me in the industry. It stemmed from my earlier years as a Food Manager. Effectively, I am a manager turned Chef of Zimbabwean origin.

### TELL US MORE...

I studied Hospitality and during this season, led a team of friends

in our own informal catering business. What started off as a weekend hobby – became a serious venture for the group of budding Hoteliers. In a way this enterprising streak formed the basis for the brand Mr B's Gourmet Emporium.

Over the years, my inspiration has been drawn from culinary greats like Adrian Zimbo, Bruno Albouze and David Vidal who are well accomplished in their craft.

## CULINARY ESCAPADES

### **YOU ARE BUILT LIKE A RUGBY PLAYER YET YOU LOVE MAKING DESSERTS. DESSERTS ARE SO DELICATE AND REQUIRE A GOOD BIT OF PATIENCE TO MAKE. WHY DESSERTS FOR YOU?**

I have always loved desserts. Yes, I am known for cooking, but I am loved for my desserts! Dessert-making for me is an open playground that allows me to express myself - drawing inspirations from art, fashion and music.

I am never too tired to make a dessert. I love creating. I incorporate different methods of cooking and science to produce tasteful combinations. This art requires an understanding of textures, flavour pairings and knowledge of an array of techniques, especially as it relates to pastry work.

Keeping up with trends, my work has evolved to into a 3-dimensional approach, incorporating visual appeal which makes it perfect for social media posting! I believe I am a representation of the future in dessert-making, bringing innovative techniques to those who are eager to try something different; you know, the new experimentalists.

My combinations, recreations and fusions of colour, flavour, texture and presentations are both cutting edge and definitely delicious.



### **YOU'VE BECOME A BIT OF A MEDIA PERSONALITY OVER THE YEARS. TALK TO US ABOUT YOUR EXPLOITS IN THIS SPACE.**

I did not know I had a radio voice until I was on Metro FM! An enjoyable experience, the exposure following a Metro FM interview grew my following and client base. It was also pleasing to know that then, I had been the only dessert chef on Metro

FM's "Chow Down with Pearl" – a show in which different Chefs and their speciality dishes are showcased weekly.

With Metro FM's listenership at over 4 million - it was a huge ego boost! Since then, my work has been featured three times on the same show – with different chefs! It's been good fun!



**OVER THE YEARS WE'VE SEEN AN UPWARD TRAJECTORY IN COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN CREATIVES. ARE THERE ANY YOU HAVE BEEN A PART OF THAT PROVED TO BE QUITE INVALUABLE TO YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES AS YOU GROW THE MR. B BRAND?**

I have collaborated both directly and indirectly with acclaimed local chefs who have a “culinary footprint” in South Africa. A major highlight in 2019 for me was working on a restaurant dessert menu. I not only designed their urban dessert menu, but devoted time to train both the front and back-of-house teams. It filled me with a huge sense of accomplishment and fulfilment during launch period, as I witnessed smooth service flow and excellent guest feedback on the spot!

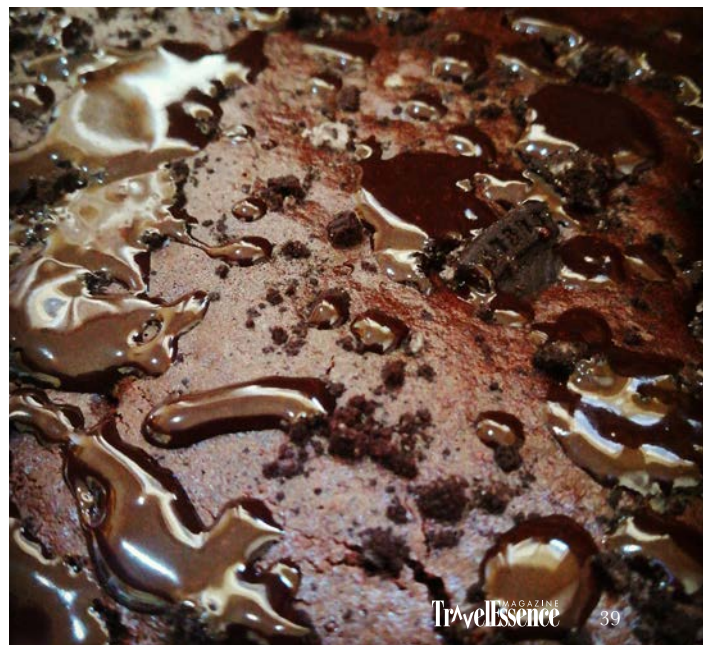


**OFF-THE-CUFF THOUGHTS ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS?**

The industry has evolved since I was a student many years ago. Things have become more visual, especially with the advent of social media usage. I am finding more so than ever before that integrity is demanded of professionals. A negative online reputation can lead to downfall and subsequent failure of one’s business. It’s important that there is alignment between our service delivery and what we portray visually online, especially for us as creatives.

My sights are on growing the brand further and collaborating with Chefs and Creatives from other countries. I think there is much we can all learn from working together on unique projects. I’d like to see Mr. B grow into a household name as my desserts appeal to more and more dessert lovers. Dessert makes people happy. It’s the last item on the menu and the seal to a great meal!

**Follow Mr B on  
Instagram @mr\_b\_sa  
Facebook @theRealgourmetb**



FROM THE

# Black Chef's Kitchen

Ghana-based Chef Kudakwashe Makoni, affectionately known as “The Black Chef” brings us yet another culinary delight from his kitchen with a slow cooked afro-inspired lamb in tomato sauce dish, paired with a sumptuous, cheesy pasta.

Currently working for one of Ghana’s leading hospitality groups as a Group Executive Chef, Kuda thrives on his passion for creating contemporary afro-fusion cuisine from his kitchen, celebrating the diverse cultures and regions of Africa.

And so, for the next time you are feeling a hearty macaroni dish, try out the Black Chef’s Slow-cooked Afro lamb in Tomato Sauce with three-cheese macaroni



**SLOW COOKED**

# Afro Lamb in Tomato Sauce with Three-Cheese Macaroni



ingredients

**FOR THE LAMB STEW**

- 1kg diced stewing lamb
- 1 brown onion, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 kpakposhito peppers (scotch bonnet)
- 1/2 teaspoon each of the following;
  - rosemary, ginger powder, aniseed, cloves, cinnamon powder, cloves, dried coriander leaf
- 1 can diced peeled tomatoes
- 4 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 large sized bay leaves
- 1lt lamb or beef stock
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch

**FOR THE MACARONI**

- 1 packet (500g) elbow macaroni
- 6 tablespoons butter, cubed
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups half and half, warmed
- 4 cups shredded mozzarella cheese (or you can use Gruyere)
- 2 cups shredded yellow cheddar cheese
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
- 1-1/2 cups panko breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

method

**1** Pre-cook lamb till tender with salt and pepper seasoning (cook in tonnes of water so you can have a liter of stock at the end.

Sauté your cooked lamb, with onions and garlic. Add your corn starch herbs, spice till all browned; then add the can of tomatoes (you can blend these before too), tomato paste, bay leaves and your stock.

Reduce the heat to low and allow to simmer till sauce is thick (approx. 2hrs)

**2**

**3** Preheat oven to 180°C. Cook macaroni in a pot till al dente according to package directions. Drain and set aside.

In a saucepan, melt 6 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Stir in flour until smooth; whisk in the half & half. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly; cook and stir for 2-3 minutes or until thickened.

**4**

**5** Remove from heat; stir in mozzarella and cheddar cheeses, salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Add to macaroni, tossing to coat.

Transfer to a greased skillet pan or baking dish leaving space in the center for the lamb stew. Toss the panko crumbs with Parmesan cheese and melted butter; sprinkle over macaroni only

**6**

Bake uncovered or about 30-40 minutes or until bubbly and top is golden brown. Serve with chunks of bread or salad... or both.

# Tapiwa Guzha's 'Tapi-Tapi' Ice-Cream

**A SWEET CELEBRATION  
OF TRADITIONAL  
FLAVOURS AND  
TEXTURES.**

---

In a quaint little cafe in Observatory, Cape Town is an ice cream shop with a special story behind it. Tapi Tapi Ice Cream is stealthily garnering acclaim as a dessert establishment that was created in celebration of afro culture by exploring flavors you wouldn't find in your usual household brands of ice-cream.

In a quaint little cafe in Observatory, Cape Town is an ice cream shop with a special story behind it. Tapi Tapi Ice Cream is stealthily garnering acclaim as a dessert establishment that was created in celebration of afro culture by exploring flavors you wouldn't find in your usual household brands of ice-cream. This ice-cream is specially made by infusing flavors synonymous with the more traditional food culture and flora of the continent.

With each spoonful is a unique experience of the flavours that are reminiscent of an upbringing in an African home; creating some sort of nostalgia from one's childhood. Each scoop is a reminder of the days of climbing trees and picking wild fruit during the summer, along with other sweet memories. A Tapi Tapi experience is much like a time machine, taking one back to the days of visiting their family in the rural areas or for some, an adventure into the wilderness of Africa.

Tapiwa Guzha, the owner of Tapi Tapi, is a Zimbabwean born and raised food mastermind, who learnt to cook from his grandmother and developed a passion for food in his youth. He later moved to Cape Town to study, which for a time, took him away from cooking. However, his love for playing around with flavours in the kitchen soon made its return during his postgraduate years at the University of Cape Town. It is here where he further developed his interest in cooking, carrying this on during his postdoctoral years at Stellenbosch University.

"Over time, cooking evolved for me and became a tool to entertain people and to unwind after a long day", Tapiwa cites as he speaks of his passion for cooking, and how during his

studies in plant biotechnology, he decided to leave the traditional academic life and pursue his passion for education through the medium of food.

"I was never the best and brightest scientist and I found it more and more problematic that my research and some of that of my peers, was focused on plant life that is not from the continent. And so, the decision to leave and follow my passion was an easy one", Tapiwa adds.

This season signalled the beginning of Tapi Tapi, – an ideophone that directly translates from the Chikorekore dialect of the Shona language in Zimbabwe, meaning 'sweet sweet'. Initially, Tapiwa focused on making European, Asian, and American inspired ice creams because it was something that he was extremely comfortable with. While his creations were highly experimental and used unusual ingredients and flavor combinations, Tapiwa felt that they still did not reflect the continent's unique flavours, textures and aromas, leaving him feeling uninspired and desiring to further explore his craft in making high quality desserts.

Then one day, while in a Zimbabwean cuisine restaurant, and he saw a few snacks from home being sold and wondered how they would taste in ice-cream form. This became Tapiwa's figurative light bulb moment.

"I wondered why after 8+ years of making ice cream for myself I had never dared to make ice cream that speaks to my childhood food palate. It was at that moment when everything clicked and the word 'flavourite' came into being. Every single flavour is my favourite because every single one means that much to me and other Africans," Tapiwa recounts.

## TAPI TAPI'S INFUSION OF AFRICA'S WILD FLAVOURS AND TEXTURES

Tapi Tapi is an exploration of distinctive African flavors – many of which carry huge symbolism particularly to sons and daughters of the soil. A visit to Tapi Tapi offers one a chance to taste flavors like 'Rondo', made from vanilla and edible clay. Edible clay is often eaten by pregnant women or anemic people, who carry a craving for edible clay often attributed to an iron or calcium deficiency.

Nhopi is another unique flavor on the menu, made from roasted pumpkin and dark chocolate. This flavour is inspired by the

pumpkin peanut butter puree of some Zimbabwean cuisines, a delicious snack or sometimes a whole meal and enjoyed sweet or savoury any time of the day. Tapiwa experiments with ingredients such as wild roots, avocados, and okra, creating the most unique flavors and textures in Tapi Tapi's ice creams and sorbets. This goes beyond just the ice cream "flavourites", as Tapi Tapi's sugar cones are made with millet, cassava, sorghum, maize, and plantain flour.

But Tapi Tapi is more than just an ice-cream and dessert shop. What started as fun little probe into the food space in Cape Town, has

evolved into somewhat of a greater purpose. "We encourage you to look at the familiar and come up with new and exciting ways to enjoy your morsels of nostalgia. We challenge Africans to add value to our cuisines and food journeys," asserts Tapiwa. Tapi Tapi has expanded their menu beyond ice cream and desserts by creating a range of products and recipes, adding to a wholesome customer experience through using African names on their menu.

"We need to consider even the language choices we make around our food and at Tapi Tapi we insist on using African languages for our creations, ingredients,

and concepts as much as possible and when those words don't exist, we don't shy away from neologism. Even our loyalty cards utilize over 50 African languages," he adds.

Tapi Tapi has become a popular sensation, not only in Cape Town but across the Southern region. With pop-up tasting experiences in different cities, Tapi Tapi has attracted not only authentic ice cream lovers and fans of the brand but also the curious. Those chasing the next best 'exotic' thing to tantalise their taste buds, often marvel at the results of Tapiwa's witty experiments, commenting on how adventurous, bizarre, exotic, interesting, and different his creations are.







## **PUSHING THE ICE-CREAM MAKING ENVELOPE**

But creating a line of dessert products that are an ode to traditional African cuisine hasn't been easy for Tapiwa. His journey has led to him interacting the sceptics with internalized Afrophobia, who immediately question the quality of his products and scoffs at the price because they are made by a black person.

"I enjoy meeting this person because it is an opportunity to expand the narrative in their mind and if I can get them to try a free tasting course, they always leave with a different opinion to the one they carried on arrival" says Tapiwa.

"My journey has been eventful in that I encounter a wide range of sentiments from people who interact with Tapi Tapi. I have experienced tear-jerking moments, when people who finally feel seen by a menu, by a business, by a fellow African, who have gone their whole life feeling like they were being ignored all along - the ooh and ah and gasp at every flavourite with an inquisitive excitement is really heartwarming!"



Tapiwa shares at length about the people who are seemingly learning about their own food for the first time or remembering some things they had lost along the way. He speaks on those with a genuine interest in learning more about the black African experience without any judgement or preconceived notions. He has also been as fortunate as to interact with the wildly curious who value diversity and an appreciation of something far removed from the conventional.

Tapiwa's ice cream brand appeals to everyone young and old, with a growing number of fans genuinely interested in the evolving story the brand carries. After one tries out some unique flavourites and discovers that it is an entirely different kind of ice cream, from its textures and flavours, the complexity in making them, the educational process behind them, and the story as a whole, it is clear to see that this is not just a simple scoop, but is an experience that's tempting across the spectrum of curiosity

So next time you find yourself exploring Cape Town, consider venturing across its tourist spots with an ice cream in hand. Head over to Tapi Tapi or order yourself a tub online and get a taste of something that will leave you with a story to tell! And don't forget to connect with Tapi Tapi on social media @TapiTapi on Instagram!



# DISCOVER MALAWI & ZAMBIA



[www.malawianstyle.com](http://www.malawianstyle.com)

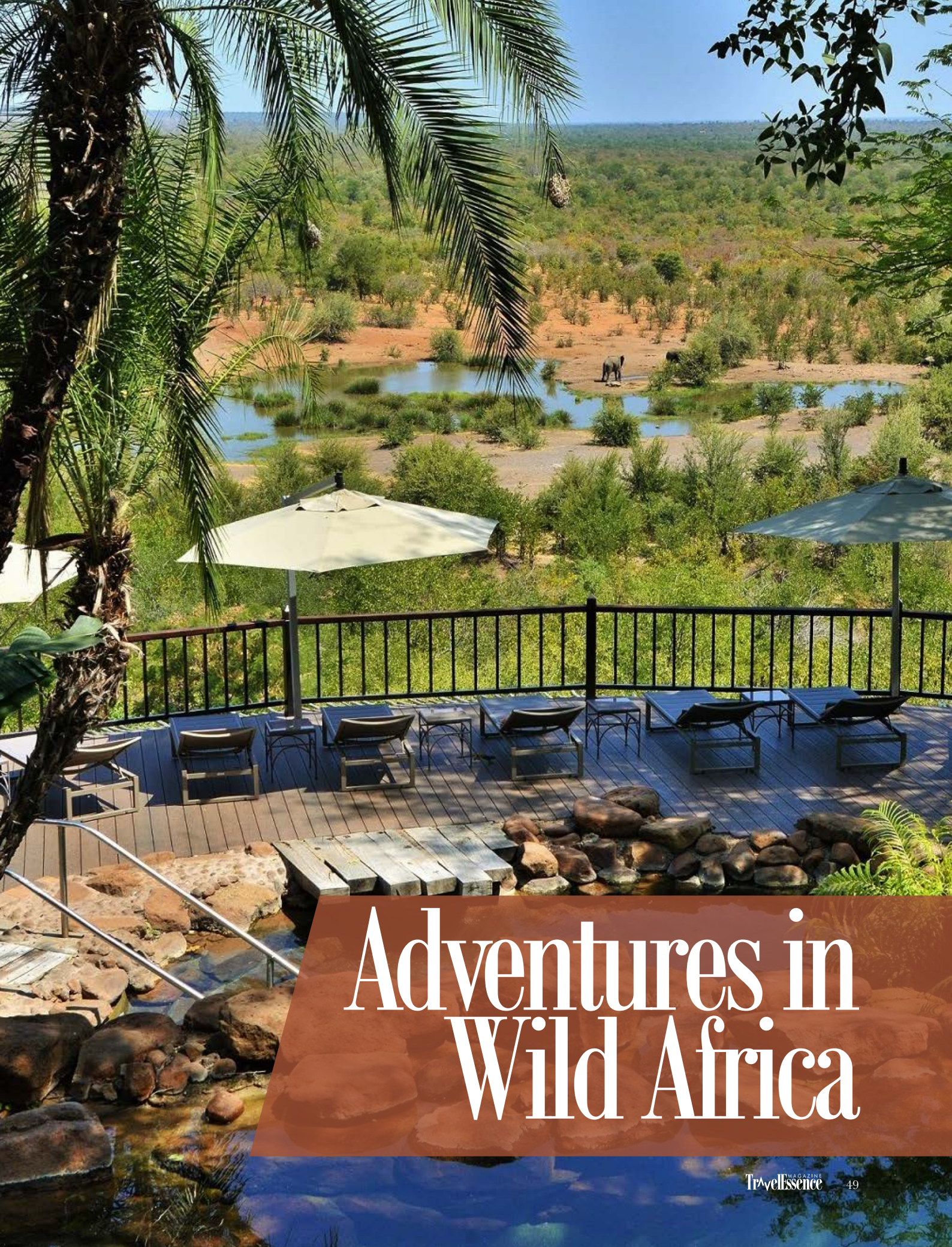
[www.zambia-in-style.com](http://www.zambia-in-style.com)

[info@malawianstyle.com](mailto:info@malawianstyle.com)

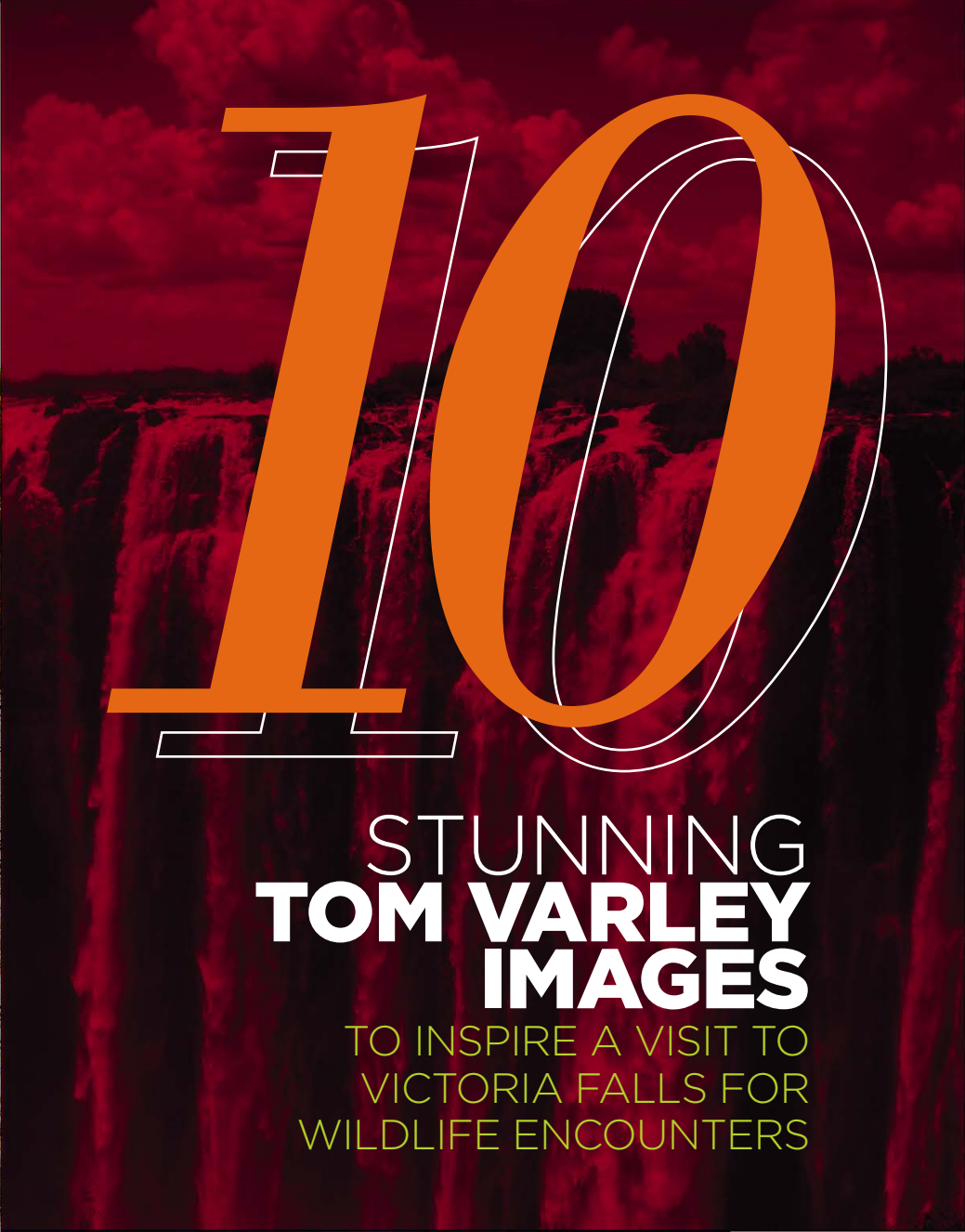
Malawi Office: +265 1 771789







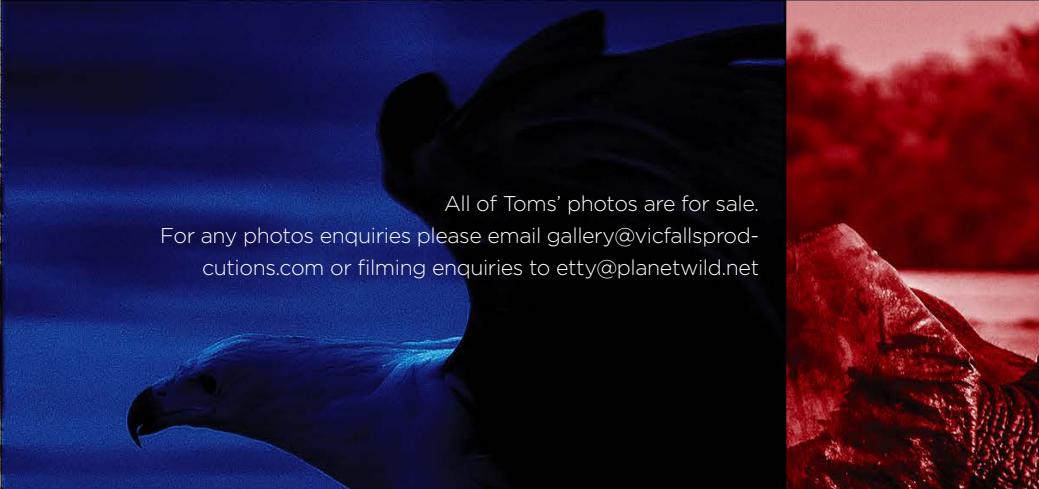
# Adventures in Wild Africa



# STUNNING TOM VARLEY IMAGES

TO INSPIRE A VISIT TO  
VICTORIA FALLS FOR  
WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS

All of Toms' photos are for sale.  
For any photos enquiries please email [gallery@vicfallsproductions.com](mailto:gallery@vicfallsproductions.com) or filming enquiries to [etty@planetwild.net](mailto:etty@planetwild.net)





Tom Varley, a renowned cinematographer and photographer by default, was born in South Africa and raised in the Zimbabwean bush. At the age of ten he moved to Victoria Falls where he started spending time on the Zambezi river.

With a professional guide as a father, Tom obtained his learner guides license at the age of 16. His earlier years saw him work as a safety kayaker and raft guide, and finally a videographer.

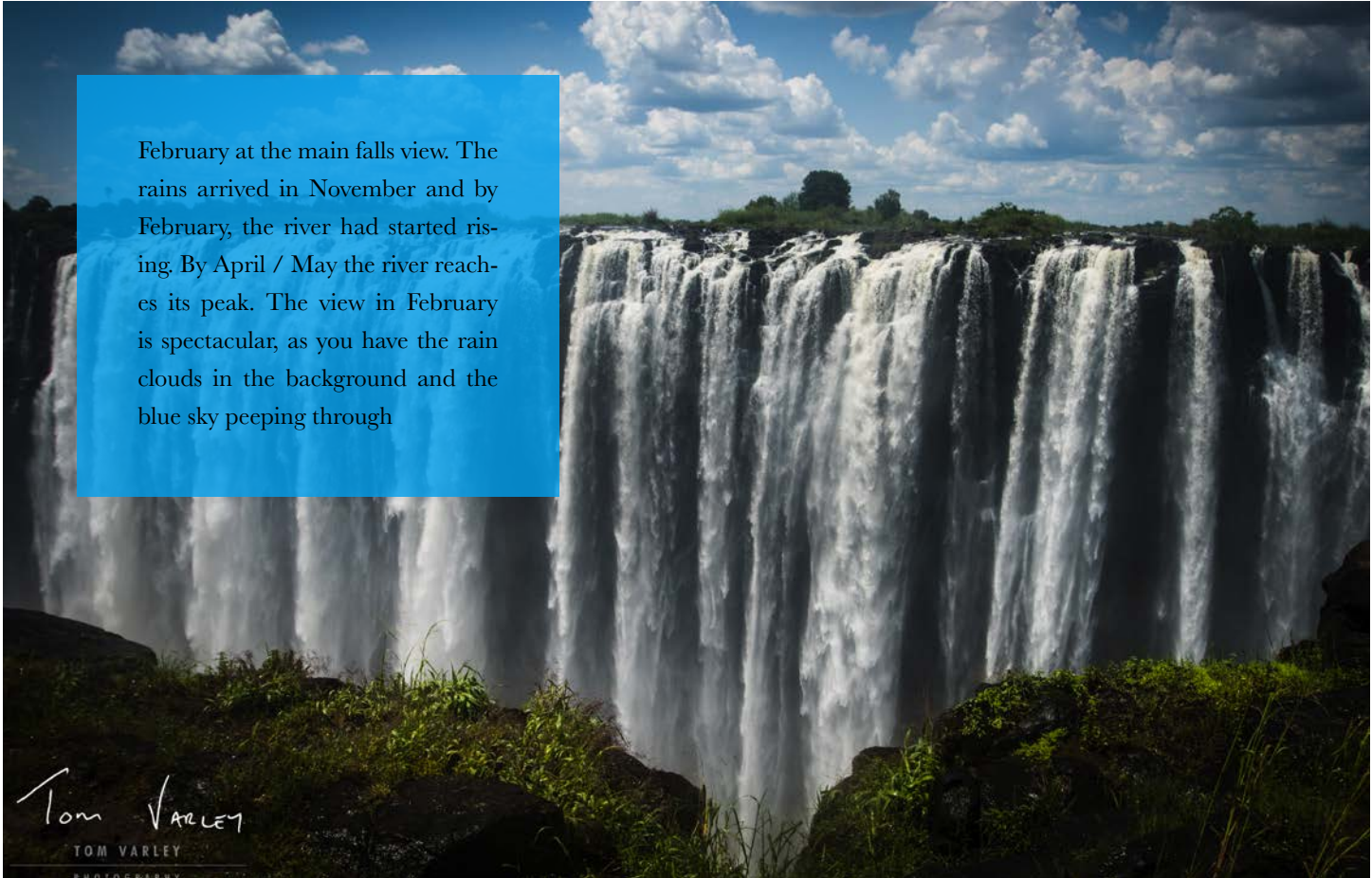
He continued river guiding on the Zambezi and Tugela rivers in South Africa before joining the British army, where he served in The Royal Green Jackets Recce Platoon for three and a half years. During his service in Bosnia, Tom was responsible for some of NATO's aerial reconnaissance photography.

But his love for the outdoors and for videography never left him. In 2002 Tom left the British Army and came back to Victoria Falls to pursue his true passions – kayaking and rafting. It was then that he embarked on the journey to introducing his own style of filming to the rafting industry, and after a couple of years of video production he progressed to filming and photographing wildlife and landscapes all over Zimbabwe, South Africa and Israel.

In the words of the late great Nelson Mandela, "There is no passion to be found playing small--in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living." Tom's love for filming wildlife and the Africa story has brought him to an innate ability to take viewers of his work on a sensory journey that highlights every aspect of nature's ecosystems; from the smell of the bush, the sounds and the bird calls; all of which carry great meaning. These are signals for Tom (or anyone raised in the African bush) to read what's happening in the environment around him.

Today, Tom is a co-founder of PlanetWild and is currently busy filming and producing wildlife documentaries. He owns a well-established production company, Victoria Falls Productions, which has worked with several international TV channels including the BBC, Discovery & National Geographic. His coffee table book "The Magnificent Victoria Falls" is available at local book shops.

To give you a snippet of some of Tom's work and love for the Victoria Falls, the bush, wildlife and the Zambezi, check out a selection of 10 images from his portfolio, a gallery specially curated to inspire you to add Victoria Falls to your bucket list of adventures in Africa.



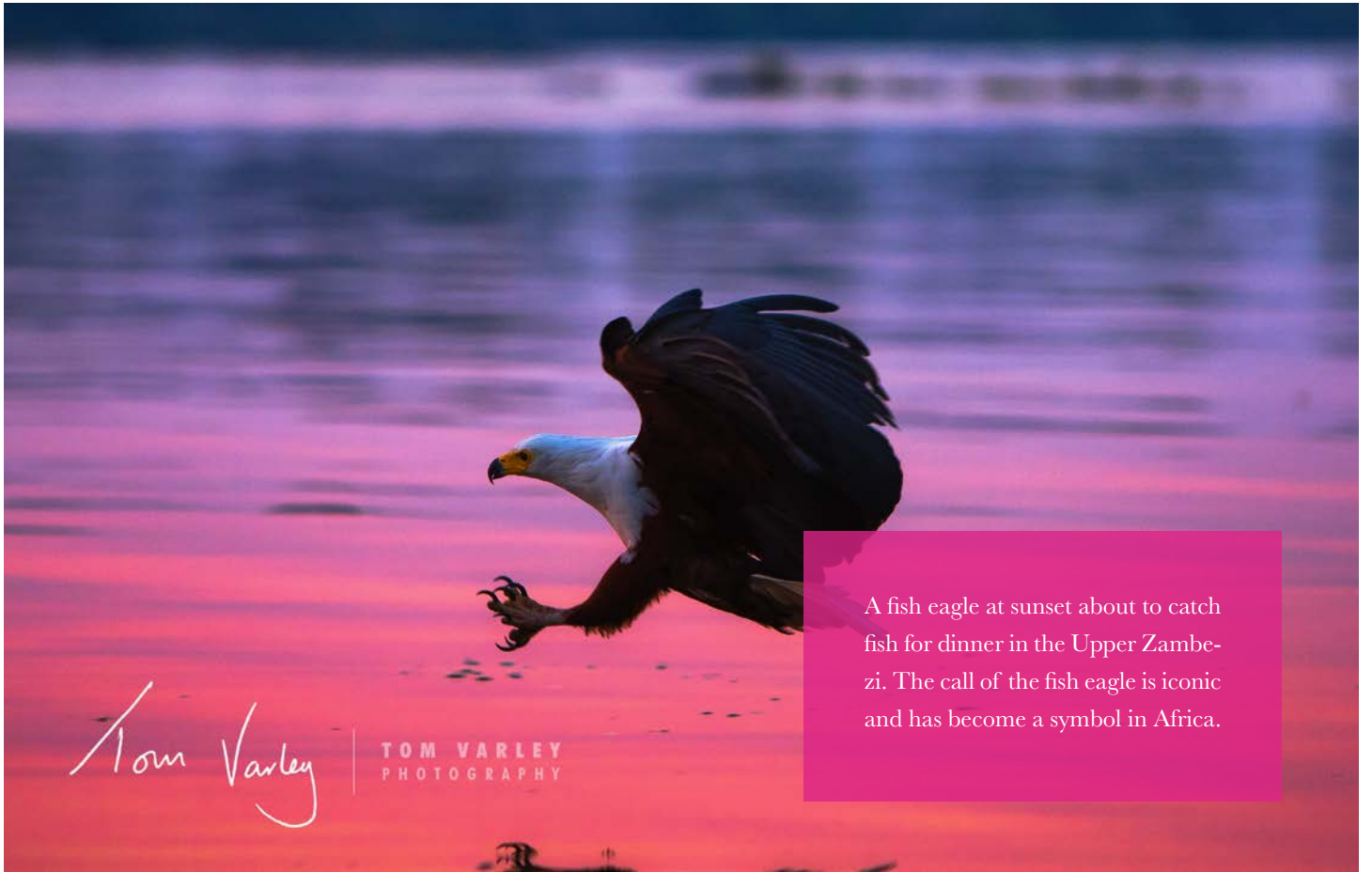
February at the main falls view. The rains arrived in November and by February, the river had started rising. By April / May the river reaches its peak. The view in February is spectacular, as you have the rain clouds in the background and the blue sky peeping through

Tom Varley  
TOM VARLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY



Island Elephants – these 2 elephants have stopped to play in Zambezi River whilst they are crossing from one side to the other. It is exhilarating to watch them as they throw themselves around the cool water, almost like dolphins.

Tom Varley  
TOM VARLEY  
52 TRAVELSSSENCE  
PHOTOGRAPHY



Tom Varley

TOM VARLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY

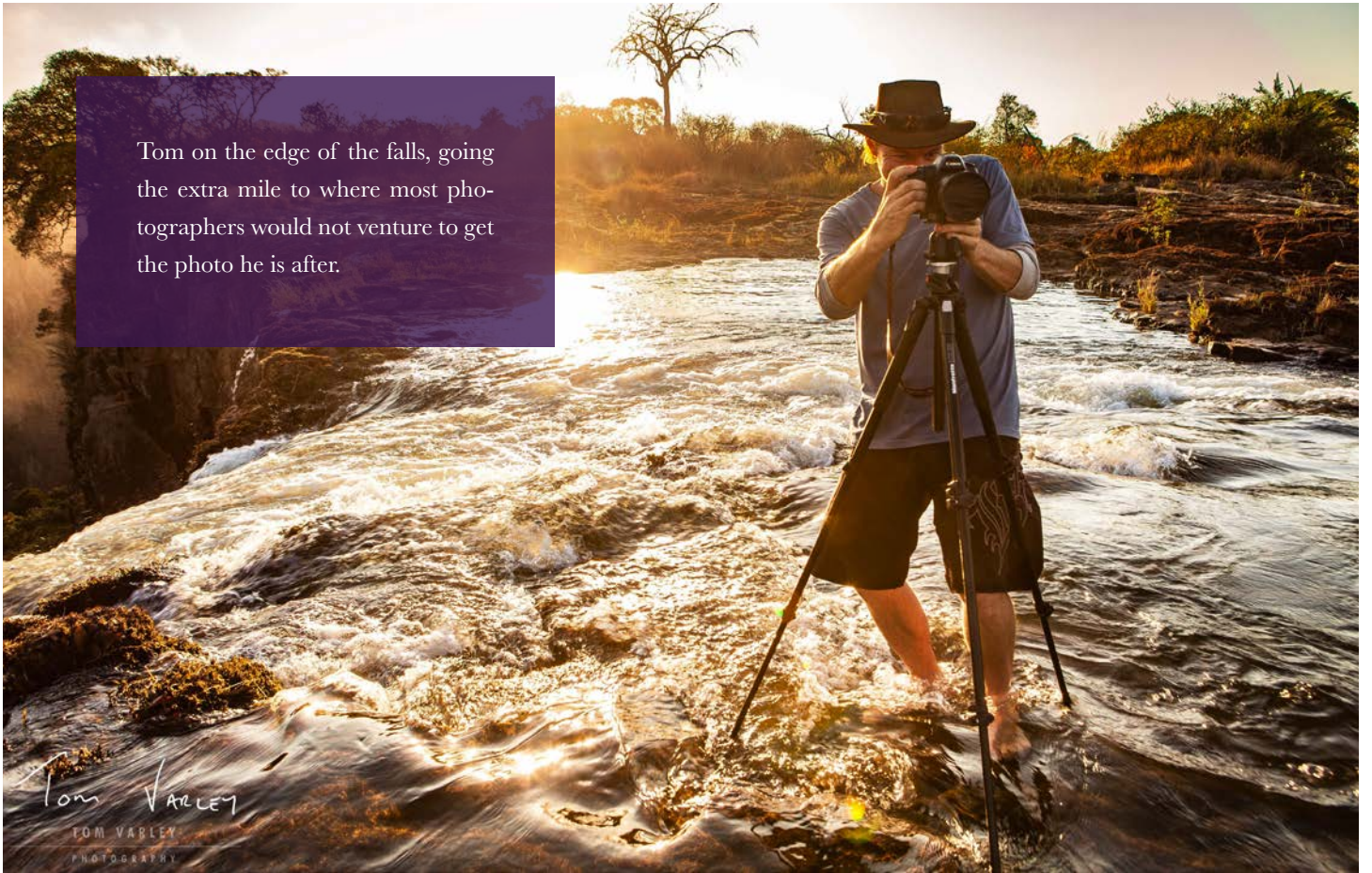
A fish eagle at sunset about to catch fish for dinner in the Upper Zambezi. The call of the fish eagle is iconic and has become a symbol in Africa.



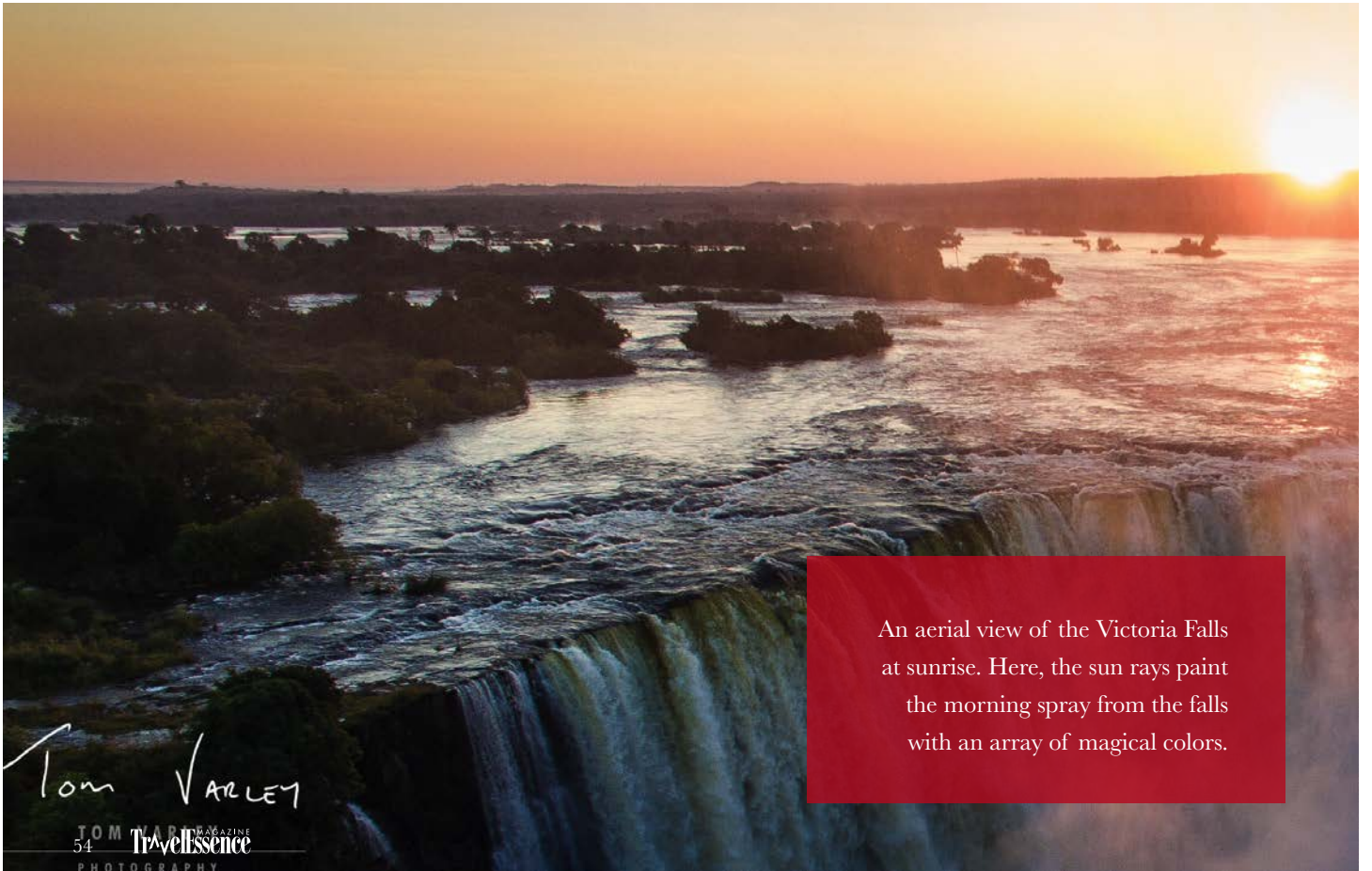
One of the Hwange National Park's male lions looking intensely at Tom as he is taking the photo.

Tom Varley

TOM VARLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY

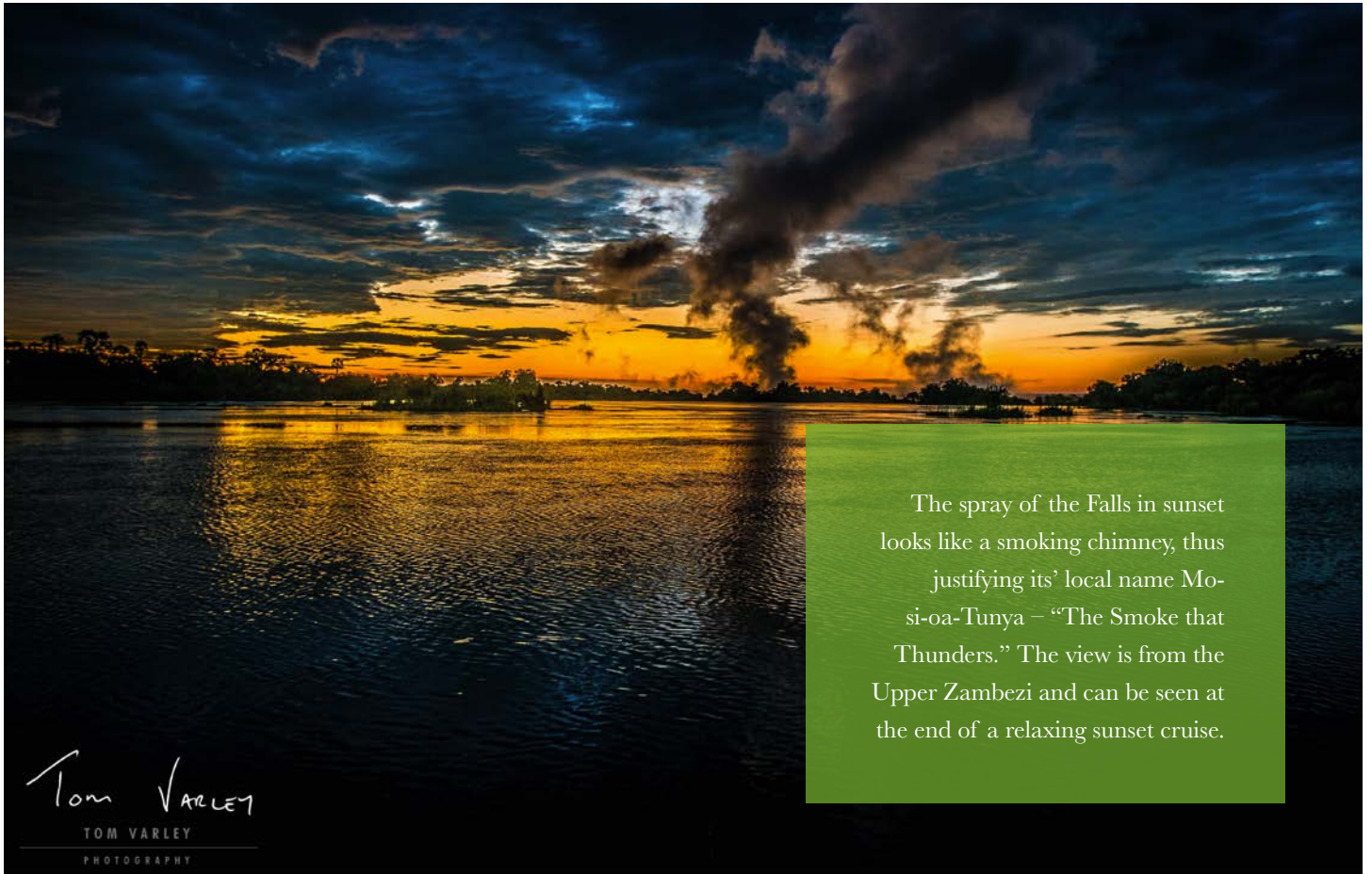


Tom on the edge of the falls, going the extra mile to where most photographers would not venture to get the photo he is after.



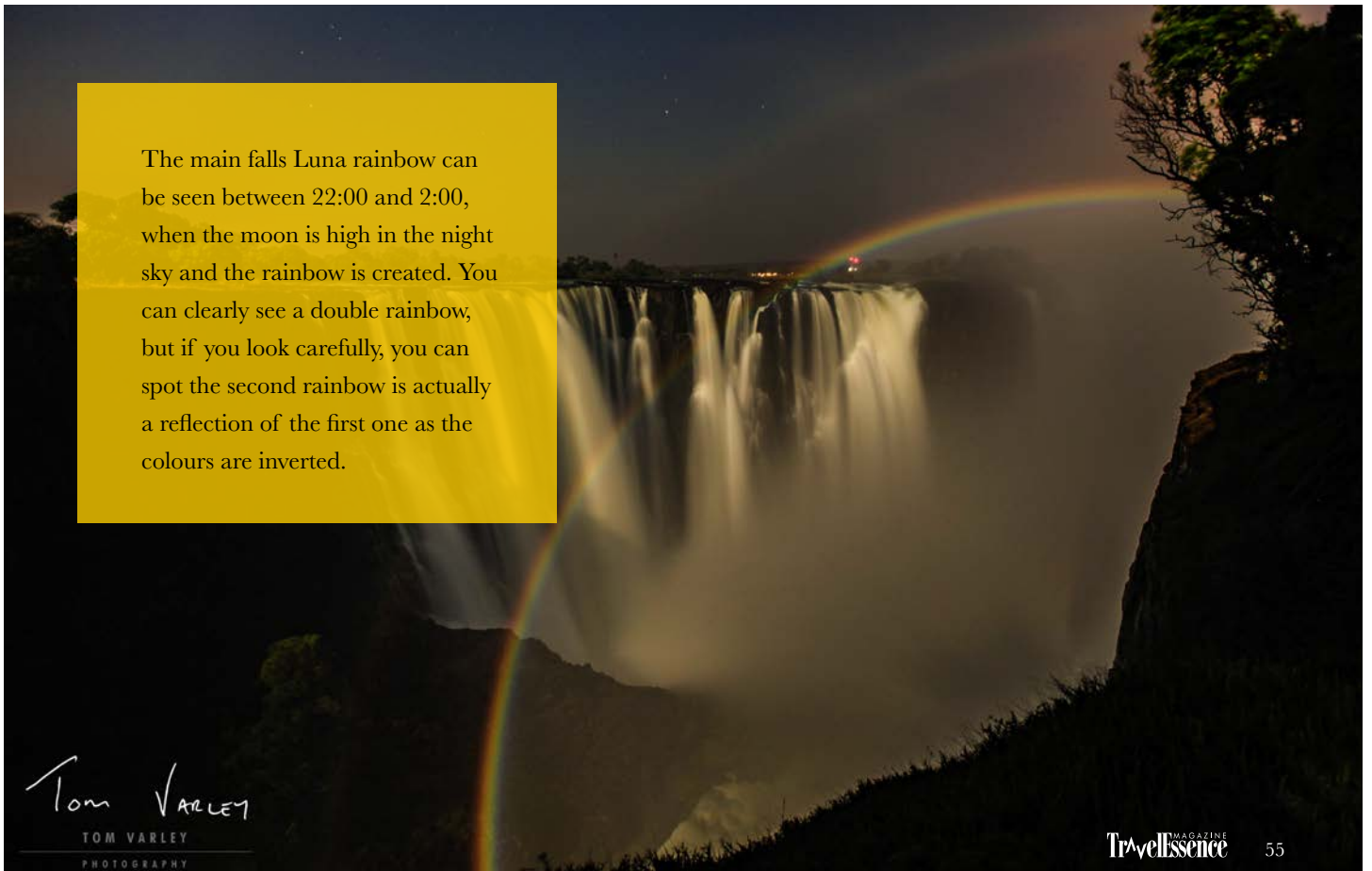
An aerial view of the Victoria Falls at sunrise. Here, the sun rays paint the morning spray from the falls with an array of magical colors.

Tom Varley  
TOM VARLEY MAGAZINE  
54  
TRAVELSENSE  
PHOTOGRAPHY



The spray of the Falls in sunset looks like a smoking chimney, thus justifying its' local name Mo-si-oa-Tunya – “The Smoke that Thunders.” The view is from the Upper Zambezi and can be seen at the end of a relaxing sunset cruise.

Tom VARLEY  
TOM VARLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY



The main falls Luna rainbow can be seen between 22:00 and 2:00, when the moon is high in the night sky and the rainbow is created. You can clearly see a double rainbow, but if you look carefully, you can spot the second rainbow is actually a reflection of the first one as the colours are inverted.

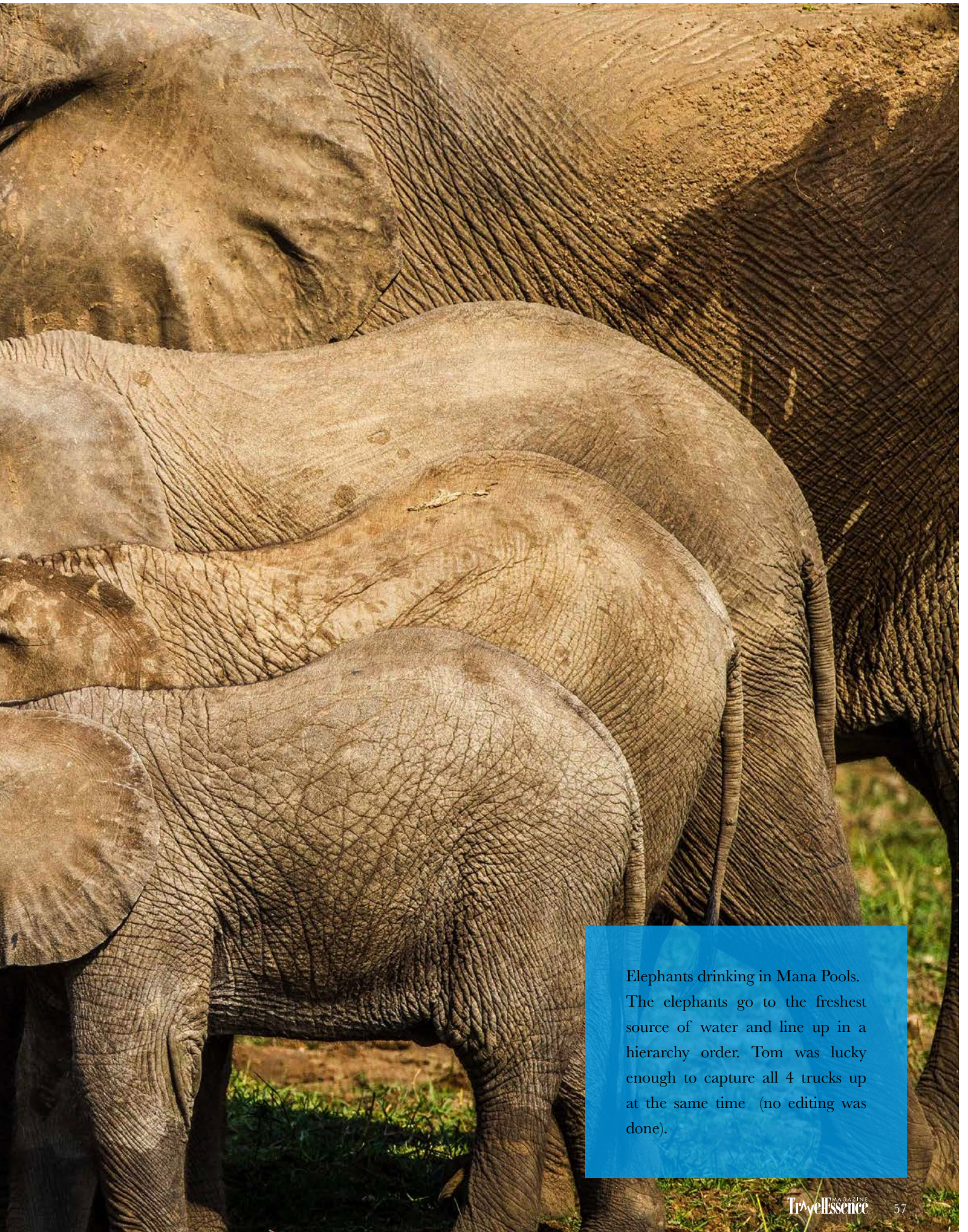
Tom VARLEY  
TOM VARLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY



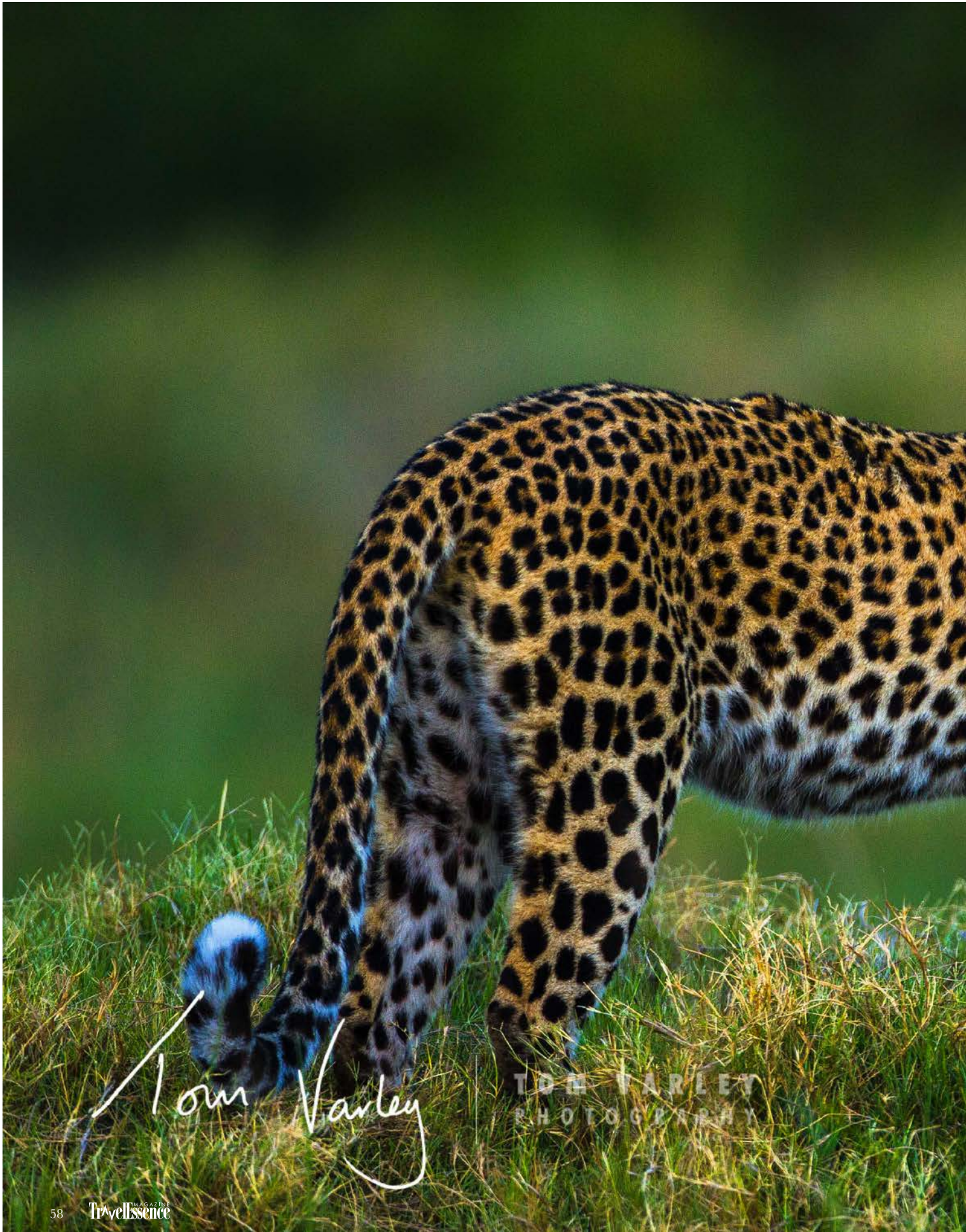
Tom Varley

TOM VARLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Elephants drinking in Mana Pools. The elephants go to the freshest source of water and line up in a hierarchy order. Tom was lucky enough to capture all 4 trucks up at the same time (no editing was done).



*Tom Varley*

TOM VARLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY



A female leopard looking onward.  
Her stunning markings are vivid  
against the green background.

All of Toms' photos are for sale.  
For any photos enquiries please email  
[gallery@vicfallsprodcutions.com](mailto:gallery@vicfallsprodcutions.com) or filming enquiries to  
[etty@planetwild.net](mailto:etty@planetwild.net)

# Conquering Peaks: *5 days of hiking up* MALAWI'S MOUNT MULANJE



Being Scottish, the idea of climbing a mountain isn't a new one to me, in fact it's something I quite enjoy! However, Lilongwe is rather flat and so I haven't been able to practise my mountain bagging for a while. Having read up on Mulanje several times and been talked through it by Mike (who was now on his 5th time up the mountain and 2nd Sapitwa summit), I decided it was long overdue and gave it a chance myself on what would be a 5-day hike.

Not one to shy away from a challenge I convinced a friend to join me and upped my cardio at the gym. After all, Mike had done this several times and warned us what an

athlete he was! The 3 of us spent the night at Game Haven before the climb. It may come as a surprise, but it does get cold really cold! Not Scottish cold but enough to warrant a jacket in the evening and a fire to be lit! We had a tasty hot meal, made the most of the hot showers, lit the fire in our room and retired for an early night.

The next day we headed to the mountain. Filled with a mixture of excitement and nervous energy we met up with our guide George, our team, and Comstar who co-owns Mulanje Outdoors, our partners on the ground. We went through a quick briefing and a historical summary and we were shown our routing on a 3D map in the gardens of the lodge!



Walking through a local village to the starting point, our guide and porters all showed us their houses, saying hi to various family members as we embarked. It is an incredible site for most of the mountain to see villagers carrying firewood, and lots of it. Although deforestation is a problem in these areas and it was sad to see the wood being used, when it comes to living day-to-day, you can see why the villagers use any resources available to them. It is also quite incredible to see the strength of the women much smaller than me, carrying massive loads of wood and certainly putting me to shame!



## MULANJE AND HER HUTS

To put Mulanje in a little context, its highest peak is 3,002m above sea level, and rather than 1 mountain, it is more of a group of mountains together forming an old extinct volcano, where you can visibly see where the crater was. There are several peaks but Sapitwa is the highest and somewhat cruelly named as it translates to 'don't go there'; something I may have agreed with later on. Around the mountain there are 10 mountain huts you can sleep in, all of which have mattresses, cooking equipment, fire places and hut guards who can help you with collecting water, fire

wood etc (it is necessary to bring up a bit of cash for tips). Each hut has no electricity, with hole-in-the-floor-loos, so do not expect 5-star suites, but a bucket of hot water can be prepared and fresh water for cooking, cleaning and drinking is available.

To put it mildly, don't expect to shower when you are up here! There are freshwater pools and waterfalls if you feel the need but depending on the time of year, these can be very chilly! The huts are perfectly comfortable and can be cosy when the fire is lit, but it is necessary to prepare properly and bring your own sleeping bag, snacks etc. which we have detailed later! This is exploration at its best, wild and free, and it's camping with comfort!



## “MBUZIS” AND THE “KAMPA”

With no time to spare (we had started off a little later than anticipated), we set off towards the village at the base of the mountain ready to try and race up in 6 hours to catch the sunset at the first hut. A piece of advice I will give anyone is, much like a car, if there is no fuel it won't travel far - eat up and carb load. There is no time here for diet cokes and salads!! When the cook offers to make you lunch or a snack – take it!

The first day for me was the hardest, the mountain is steep and there are a few false peaks, which can be a little disappointing when you think you have reached the end. However, it was a glorious day. The sun was shining, the flowers were abundant and just a few hours hiking gave us a stunning view of the villages below. We managed to race up in good time, sprinting a little to the first hut, CCAP, in order to go just beyond for sunset. Grabbing our classy boxed wine and a few mugs we ran around the corner into fields of golden grasses on the top, making good references to Gladiator and congratulated ourselves on a great first day. Well, 2 of us did!

Our nicknames along the trip were the ‘Mbusis’ and the ‘Kampa’, which translates to the goats and the tortoise; we managed a few sundowners before

our ambling photographer Mike, joined us! Burton, our chef extraordinaire had rustled up a spaghetti Bolognese for all 3 of us - Mike arriving just in time and we wolfed it down before heading to bed. CCAP is the largest of the huts and one of the oldest. In fact, it used to be a church. With a few rooms and some bunk beds it is the most equipped of the huts with mattresses and thick blankets.

There are outside changing rooms/loos (as mentioned, are a hole in the floor), I am more a fan of a bush-wee myself so I can't say I have much experience of these loos, preferring to mark my territory outdoors. We had been worried about the cold at night but with sufficient layers and the blankets we were absolutely fine, to the point where we actually felt quite hot!

There are a few ‘villages’ on the mountains. The fields of gold we saw were in fact harvested by a small group of people that live at CCAP. It used to be a church so life up the mountain is abundant and we managed a “Hello, how are you?” to several groups of people who lived up the mountain as we went about our adventure. Malawi is surprisingly fertile and Mulanje is no different, the cooler weather and fresh water steams mean farming up here is good and some have taken advantage of that. As well as those involved in looking after the huts who live up here permanently.





## CHISEPO

Day 2, we were promised, was a bit gentler and we would be stopping along the way to see another hut and have lunch. It filled me with a little dread to see us go downhill (the other side to the one we had come up) for approximately 40 minutes, knowing full well we would have to make the ascent again, however it was at a much steadier pace and was really pleasant to be able to not have to carefully watch where we put our feet and rather start to soak in the views.

We stopped to see Lichenya Hut, approximately 40 minutes from CCAP, which was much newer, smaller and

just above some beautiful pools of water. For those in smaller groups and who set off in time, I think we would recommend this hut as the first stop as it's nicer and quieter. It was along this path we learnt about the Mulanje Diamonds (at least that's what we named them). The quartz in the rock had formed into small crystals and made for shiny paths through the mountains. I'm not sure how wise it was to tell 2 excitable women about the shiny rocks, as I'm pretty sure we increased the backpack by about 3kg in the first hour.

About half way, we stumbled upon the porters and the chef who had run on ahead (expert klipspringers and advanced level, who we aimed to catch up with) who had set up a

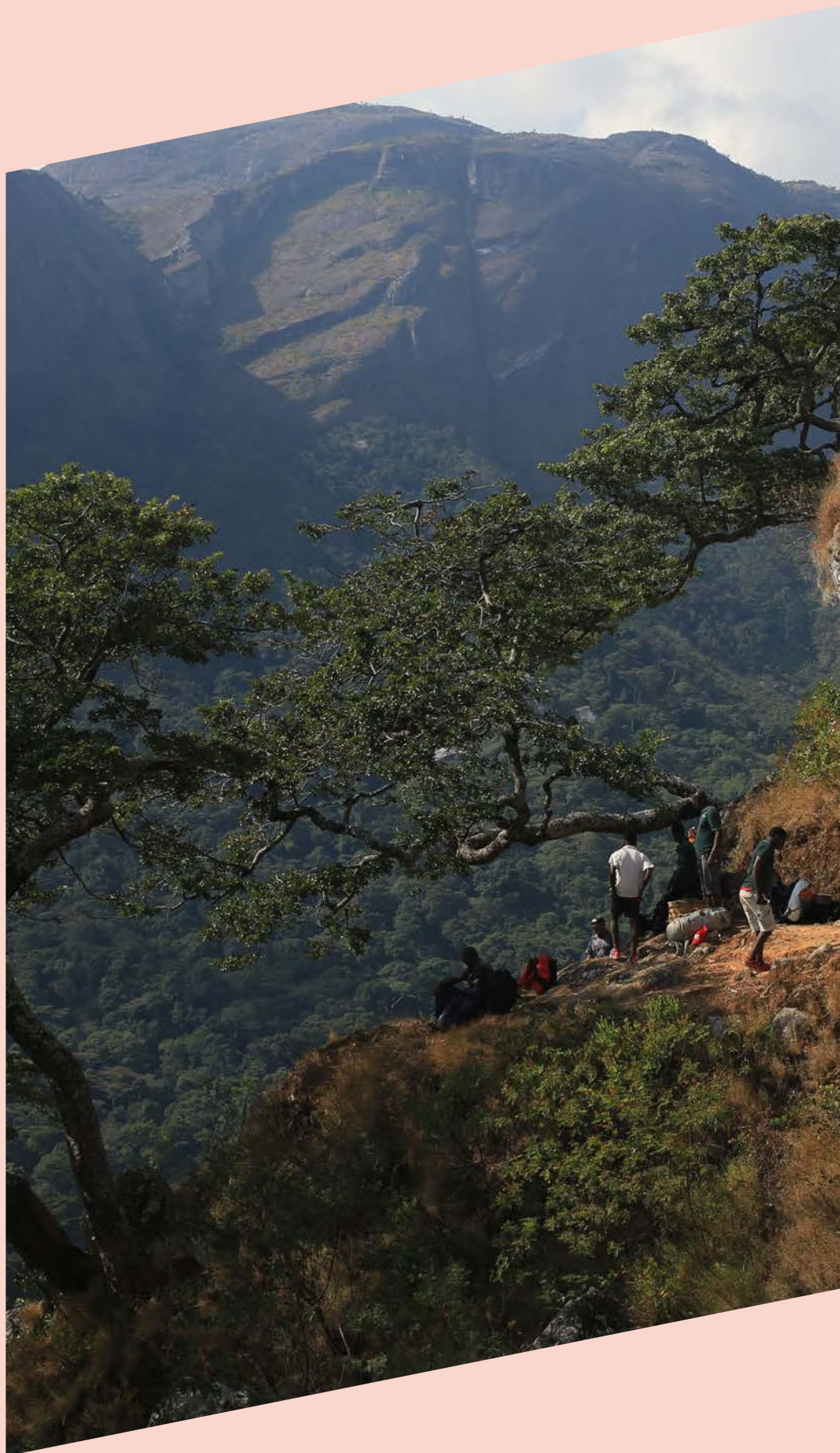
picnic lunch at a waterfall site. Some tasty sandwiches and fruit and a few leg-stretches and we set off to find our hut for the night. We were told the final section would be a steep uphill so myself and Nicolle left Mike to take the photos and set upon our next hut.

About 90 minutes in we worried we may have missed a turning point and so waited for the guide and Kamba to catch up. Worrying about the silence, we reminded ourselves that Mike was on a photographic mission and so would be a bit slower and thought we may as well take a rest in the tall grasses behind a rock and wait for the group. Unfortunately for the boys there is nothing more dangerous than 2 ladies on a mountain looking for wine and I think we gave them quite a fright as we shouted at them as they stumbled upon us! Onward and upward we sprang up the last part to find the most beautiful sunset and prime real estate.

Chisepo is the hut nearest the base of Sapatwa and the only hut to stay at if you intend to summit it. With a mountain range to our left and views down the hill in front of us it really is a beautiful place for a sun-downer as well as a great spot to rest before the summit. It too has some crystal-clear pools surrounding it for those that need a good wash in the hotter months after the climb. Just one large room as it's an open plan kitchen, lounge and bedroom!

## SAPITWA

An early alarm got us up at 01.30am, ready to prepare for our night-time hike up Sapitwa. Promised by Mike that the sunrise would be worth it, we layered up and got ready to go! Sadly, Kampa said he predicted bad weather and would be safe guarding the hut and mattresses for us rather than joining! No worry as we were eager to hop up the mountain and he had done it twice before! We grabbed our guide and porter and set off just after 2am. The climb is strenuous, the first 90 minutes really is a steep rocky scramble, not difficult but will require your hands and feet so try and obtain a head torch rather than holding it in your teeth! In the dark we clung to branches and climbed what we thought were sheer cliff







faces, although we had an almost full moon and good light. In the morning we realised we were not quite as daring as we'd thought and many of the rock faces we traversed along had a drop of about a meter and not off the mountain!

Once over the 'hard bit' we were able to klipspringer it through the rocks. There are 2 false peaks to Sapitwa and you really can't see the Sapitwa peak until much closer to the end of the hike. Scrambling under rocks, through caves and tunnels through little isolated woodlands that made us think we were in Fern Gully and then finally with the aid of a rope (just for me, Nicolle is expert Mbuzi) we got past the final hurdle and onto the top. It's hard to take in just how high you are. Perhaps that's because we made excellent time and it was still dark or that it's so cold you go a bit insane! However, the view is endless and on a clear day you can see straight over to Mozambique and the tiny twinkling lights of the cities below - just breath-taking.



## PENGUINS IN THE SUNSHINE

Finding a little cove in the rock we made a little shelter huddled like penguins until the sun started to come up. It is fair to say the temperatures at the top are icy at best. Poor Nicolle, a Zimbabwean by heart does NOT like the cold and suggested the sun wouldn't rise and we should leave!! Sadly for her, 2 minutes later that amber fiery ball started to rise, we took our pictures, ran around a little and started to descend. The decent took a little longer, the steep rock we traversed like crabs on hands, feet and bum!! Safety first, as we like to say, and we were now happy to stop to soak in the views, the sun's warm rays and some snacks taking it Kamba style down.

We were back for 8am and a celebratory drink! Or rather 3, breakfast to follow and a short hike to our next spot! Somewhat fuelled by adrenaline, fatigue and wine we raced the porters up and down the valleys to Tuchila on Elephant's head, an aptly named mountain peak. Leaving Kamba and George to take pictures we ran ahead and managed to successfully keep up with our porters and challenge them a little on their pace. We came to Tuchila around 3pm and decided to have a rest as we had been climbing since 2am! We bumped into some Lilongwe friends, which was a real unplanned treat and made sure we shared some food and

drinks whilst watching the most beautiful sunset we had seen all trip! An early dinner and an early bedtime, Nicolle was asleep before her head hit the pillow at 8pm. The mountain had finally tired us out!

## SOMBANI

Our final full day on the mountain was lovely, we went into what I think must have been the volcano crater - a few up and downs! However, the scenery is well worth it and the views were spectacular! Our final lunch was in Chinzama, a hut on the way. Burton is a pasta expert and whipped up another winner, which was welcome as it was slightly overcast, and it wasn't the warmest. Snuggled up on the veranda of that hut with some music playing and a warm plate of pasta, may just be my new happy place!

Beats on full force and on much flatter terrain we headed to our final hut for the night in what can only be described as a mountain madness conga line. We drank the last of our red wine with a sunset over the mountain, colourful sunbirds fluttering outside the hut and the last of our batteries charging before our final night in front of the fire! As we reflected on our time, it's safe to say both myself and Nicolle understood why Mike has been up a few times, despite normally avoiding this level of activity!





## WHY VISIT MULANJE?

The escapism of not having signal, the views, the mental and physical challenge of climbing the peaks and the joy at completing it is unparalleled. The fresh air and mountain springs, the amazing mountains of food we were served each day, colourful flowers, beautiful birds, the promise of a serval around each corner from signs of the night before! The conversations, the songs, the dances, laughs and the stars!! The beautiful lit up skies devoid of any light pollution, the cosy fires and campsite coffees, the abundance of space! It's safe to say we were full converts and we were

a little sad to head down and back to normality. Thankfully we didn't see ALL of the huts, nor climb all of the peaks so there is a good excuse to come back and challenge ourselves once again. Although I may try a warmer month for research purposes!

For those who are very adventurous one of the final huts Madzeka is only a 4-hour walk onward but has a much steeper 4-5-hour climb down so is definitely for those looking to extend the challenge. You can also start at Chambe, which is one of the bigger huts and the only one to have 2 toilets! It's about a 3-hour hike from the base and 3 hours from Chisepo so

an alternative starting point to CCAP or Lichenya.

If you're wondering where to stay on Mulanje, there are many routes and places to stay, challenges and decisions to be made. So drop us a message so we can plan your perfect routing for you, tell you the tips and tricks to hike Mulanje, get you the best mountain guide, best chef and most entertaining porters and pick the best pre and post spots for those aching feet and necessary hot showers! Mulanje should be on everyone's bucket list and definitely a must do for anyone living in Malawi but don't take our word for it, let us show you!

### ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR:

Chloe McCormack has lived and worked in Malawi for a ground operator for the last 3 years. Having worked in the safari industry for almost 10 years and initially trained as a safari guide, her love of nature led her to Malawi to explore the area for clients. Falling in love with the up and coming destination, she packed her bags and moved across in order to sell Malawi to the rest of the world. The huge range of activities suited her endless enthusiasm and she now happily calls Lilongwe home."

# *Safari on Foot*

Take on South Luangwa National Park  
with Zambian Ground Handlers





Simply the best safari experience in Africa. Quite a statement eh? Indeed it is and at *Zambian Ground Handlers*, they are more than happy to stand behind it. South Luangwa National Park lies within the Luangwa Valley in Eastern Zambia which is actually the farthest tip of the famed Great East African Rift. It is teeming with wildlife and has been heralded as one of Africa's last un-spilt wildernesses. Once home to the world's largest populations of both Elephant and Black Rhino the

Valley has always been regarded as a sanctuary for wildlife, a place where humans are the visitors and that is as true today as it has even been.

The safari industry has lauded the Luangwa Valley as prime game-viewing territory since the 1940's when hunter turned conservationist Norman Carr first started taking people into the bush with cameras rather than guns and the photographic safari was first conceived. Today there is a cluster of camps around the

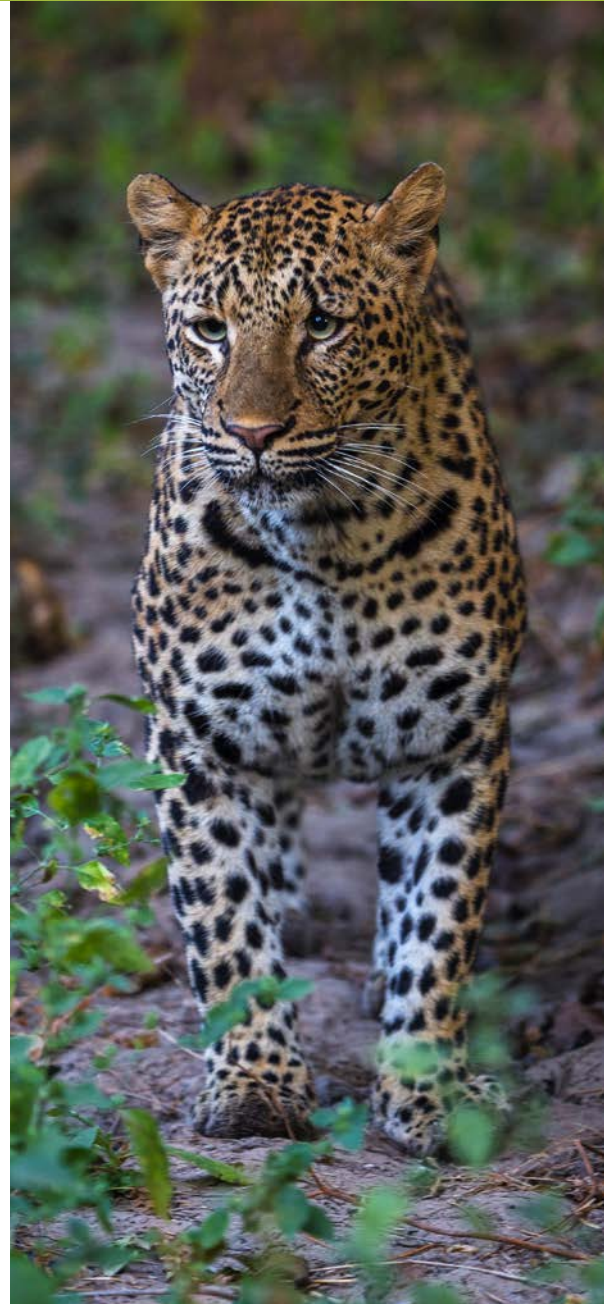
ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA





main entrance of the National Park and a good number of small intimate bush-camps, most with only 4 rooms, spread out across the Valley floor. Most of the game-viewing is carried out from open 4x4 safari vehicles but there is still a lot of emphasis placed on the more traditional style of tracking and viewing game on foot. All visitors to this National Park will be encouraged to go out on foot and, the *Zambian Ground Handlers* team endorses that trend wholeheartedly. “From a vehicle you see Africa. On foot you feel, hear and smell Africa”.

It is probably true that you won't see as many animals on a walking safari as you would from a vehicle and almost certain that you won't get as close to them. This said, there's nothing that can compare with the thrill of glimpsing a lion through the trees, 50 meters away, when you have been tracking him for the past hour. That brief moment when you watch him, unaware of your presence, is reward enough. And then, when a gust of breeze takes your scent to him, he sniffs, then snorts and growls and turns on his heel, disappearing in an instant, leaving your thumping heart as the only proof of what has passed. Now that is an experience that will live with you for a lifetime.



## ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA



And it's an experience that is rare in this modern, sanitized world. In most safari destinations of Southern and East Africa, guests will be offered a tamed-down version of a walking safari where the smaller things are brought to life. Termite mounds will be discussed at length and the life-cycle of an ant-lion will be broken down. All very interesting, don't get me wrong but one goes to the bush to see big game and there is no more exciting way of seeing it than on foot.

The South Luangwa is easily accessed from Zambia's capital Lusaka (a direct flight on Emirates Airlines from Dubai if coming in from the Middle East). The flight time is an hour and there are several scheduled flights each day. Once there all tastes, styles and budgets are catered for, the larger and more reasonably priced camps tend to be close to the Park entrance with smaller, typically more high-end bush-camps, hidden in remote corners of the Park. But a restricted budget should never preclude one from experiencing the best of what the South Luangwa has to offer. Zambian Ground Handlers are able to tailor an itinerary to suit







the demands and expectations of all clients, whether you have just a couple of days to spare or are looking for two weeks immersed in some really remote wilderness. So if the African savannah beckons, believe us when we tell you, the South Luangwa will provide you with experiences and memories to cherish, and Zambian Ground Handlers can very well be your trusted partner in making your next safari on foot a reality!



# Taking to the skies

## WITH VUYO THE BUSH PILOT

Making our way through the tables to the poolside, my twin brother and I chuckled at the prospect of meeting our pre-school friend. From age 4, we were the Terrific Trio; Sugar, Lou and Vuyo! Now a Captain with an International Airline – I had last seen Vuyo as a “young and restless” Bush Pilot in Victoria Falls.

After a loud exchange of pleasantries, we settled down for refreshing Malawi Shandies, a refreshing mocktail, popular in Southern Africa and made from orange juice on ice, ginger ale, lemonade, and a touch of bitters.

Vuyo had always wanted to fly! His eyes lit up today as they did then - when he spoke of soaring the skies! His first role in Aviation was as a Gibbe or Office Anchor.

Based in the office, he handled all the administration work, from answering calls, responding to emails, to sending out quotations and managing the Flight schedule. Focused on his goal, he made the most of every opportunity to fly, in order to build his flying hours as he needed these to obtain a Commercial Pilot's licence!

Vuyo's face lights up again as he sits up to repeat the story we have heard many times before – his first flight! He had finally got his Commercial Pilots Licence and his boss walked into the office and said “Alright V-man, it's your lucky day. Your first flight, flight over the Falls, 4 passengers from Australia the McKinley Party....1400hours. Good Luck!”

Giving us his characteristic “Yoh, yoh, yoh!” Vuyo clasped his hands, expressing the thrill of preparing for his first flight ever as a Commercial pilot! Time flew by as he confirmed the pickups with the driver and of course checking his machine – The Cessna 206. Vuyo knew full well that he would be the Captain, Pi-



lot, Co-pilot, steward, technician, and porter; and so he exercised due diligence and was very thorough.

“The flight I will never forget!” Of all the hundreds of flights Vuyo has made, transporting passengers from point A to point B; this still stands as the most special! After introducing himself, conducting his safety briefing, guests embarking and the final check, Vuyo as Pilot-in-command, shared with the guests the route they would be taking. The entire flight would be approximately 25 minutes. “I shall fly toward the falls, do left and right hand circuits over the Victoria Falls in both directions for best views, fly down the Zambezi River and then a final swoop over the Zambezi National Park,” he said.

When David Livingstone saw the Mosi-Oa-Tunya for the first time – the glorious

“Smoke that Thunders” – better known the world over as the glorious Victoria Falls, it is said he remarked: “Scenes slovenly must have been gazed upon by Angels in their flight”. And so, this is where the activity of flying over the falls derived its name – The Flight of Angels. The scenes are indeed nothing short of awesome!

The best way to see the 1700m expanse of falling water is from above!! The gorges, the meandering river, the spray of the mist, the vegetation! Vuyo recounts how excited he was to make this flight - but the look on the McKinley family as they flew over the Victoria Falls was priceless!!! At this point I remember my first “Flight of Angels”! It was another Vuyo masterplan. Mid-morning on a Thursday, whilst working as a hotel manager – I was summoned by the General Manager to her office.

Yes, we were friends, but the authoritative tone in her voice scared me a little. Peering through her door I asked if everything was ok. She immediately got up and stated “You and I are taking a quick break. Vuyo has just called and 2 of his guests have cancelled, so you and I are the replacements. Our pickup is 5 minutes away!” Heels and all, we were whisked to the helipad and joined two siblings for a Flight of our lives!”

My thoughts are interrupted by the arrival of Tawanda and he too was a Bush Pilot. Always serious – he describes Bush Pilots as soldiers, making a million decisions every time they are in the flying as if they were in a battlefield.

ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA



*“Are the guest happy and comfortable?”*

*“Is the weather good for landing? Hope the weather holds up so we can pick up the ill guest in the next camp?”*

*“When will the herd of elephants leave the airstrip?”*

*“Hope there is a good lunch at the next camp?”*

He further adds, it’s an ongoing struggle striking the balance between compliance to regulation and commercial demands of flying in the untamed parts of Africa. He wittingly draws an analogy of the bush pilot being like a cigarette in this case - one end in the mouth and the other end burning!

### THE MANY ADVENTURES OF BUSH PILOTS

Vuyo quickly reminds us all of the “Pilots Mess” or “Triple Two” as it was fondly called. These are the pilots’ residences where the best parties were hosted! They both shared on the joys of taking the aircraft to Maun in Botswana for service, and the lunches and shopping in the neighbouring country which were

the highlight of most trips. Other favourite bush strips when flying hunters and guests going out on Safari included Bumi Hills, Linkwasha, Mwanga and Mana Pools! At times they would overnight at the camps and this was a great opportunity to explore the neighbouring countries or regions and meet new people.

Then there is cloud seeding, which in simple terms is “rainmaking”. This is when silver iodide particles are released into the clouds by a plane flying underneath them. This aids in the formation of ice crystals and as they get too heavy to remain in the air, they melt on their way down forming rain. Both Vuyo and Tawanda performed this service – when they were not flying passengers.

Game Counting, yet another adventure for pilots in the wild nature reserves of Africa, involves flying environmentalists on research missions, to check and count game and study migration patterns from

above. Areas such as the Save Conservancy, one of the largest private game reserves in Africa, the Okavango Delta and the Kruger National Park are some areas where environmentalists track and count game

As we wound up the afternoon, both Vuyo and Tawanda marvel at how bold women are. Dropping sky divers is one of the interesting roles some pilots have performed. Sharing facts, they simultaneously confirmed that they have always dropped more female than male sky divers. Flying the Cessna 182, pilots have enjoyed flying a groups of excited adrenalin junkies and hearing their screams fade, as they jumped out of the stationary aircraft, down 10 000 feet!

From flying first time visitors to Africa, to taking food supplies to remote locations and spending a day with the Photographer working on a photo-shoot for a lodge- the Bush Pilots are indeed airborne captains of the wild!



# *Gonarezhou National Park*

## **A wild marvel to explore.**

There are few places left in this world where adventure seekers are truly able to unplug, even if just for a few days, and to escape into the vastness of a wilderness so untamed that the same wild animals painted by our ancient ancestors, still today roam freely, unhindered and free of man-made impediments. Far too few such wild spaces still exist today. Zimbabwe has long celebrated its natural heritage through the creation and protection of its National Parks. Gonarezhou National Park, in the South-East of the country is one such refuge for Africa's wild animals and a place of escape unlike

any other. Once you enter the Park, there are no tarred roads, barriers or fences; elephants have right of way and the roars of lions claim the night for themselves.

Gonarezhou is a unique and special place of varied and scenic, rugged beauty, that contains hidden secrets for those who know where to look. The ethos of the Park's tourism is to tread as softly on this landscape as possible, whilst fully immersing oneself in the experience of being in this vast, wild space. Camping in the Park gives the traveler the sense of adventure, of freedom and discovery

of times past - an experience to relish from the comfort of the Gonarezhou Bush Camp, a seasonal tented camp overlooking the Runde River and framed by the Chilojo Cliffs. Or one can take in their surroundings from one of Gonarezhou's three rustic, but beautifully appointed mud-and-thatch self-catering Mananga camps, each celebrating traditional design concepts of the local Tsonga people. With sustainability at the fore of design, all of Gonarezhou's camps are created to have as minimal a footprint as possible and all materials that adorn the camps are locally sourced wherever possible.



### WILDLIFE AND SPECTACULAR CLIFFS

Named for its elephants, Gonarezhou ('a place for elephants' in the local language) has an estimated 11,000 elephants within its boundaries. These living icons are almost out of place in today's world, and to spend time in the presence of these animals is an experience that is not easily forgotten. In addition to a flourishing elephant population, the park has good numbers of the majority of larger mammal species. On a visit to the park a visitor may see a variety of wild animal species such as lion, leopard, wild dog, spotted hyena, impala, kudu, buffalo, zebra, wildebeest, eland, giraffe and nyala. Gonarezhou is home to a total of 89 species of mammals, over 400 species of birds

and a unique variety of reptiles such as crocodiles and the beautiful African rock python.

Gonarezhou National Park truly is one of the great refuges for Africa's wild animals and a marvel for the adventurous traveler to explore. The spectacular Chilojo Cliffs, at more than 180m high, and stretching some 16 kilometers along the Runde River lies at the heart of the Park and are a must see. The Save and Runde, two great perennial rivers characterised by steep, rocky gorges with falls and rapids in parts, and wide, sweeping sandy beds in others, run through the Park, providing a backdrop to many of Gonarezhou's most dramatic sceneries.

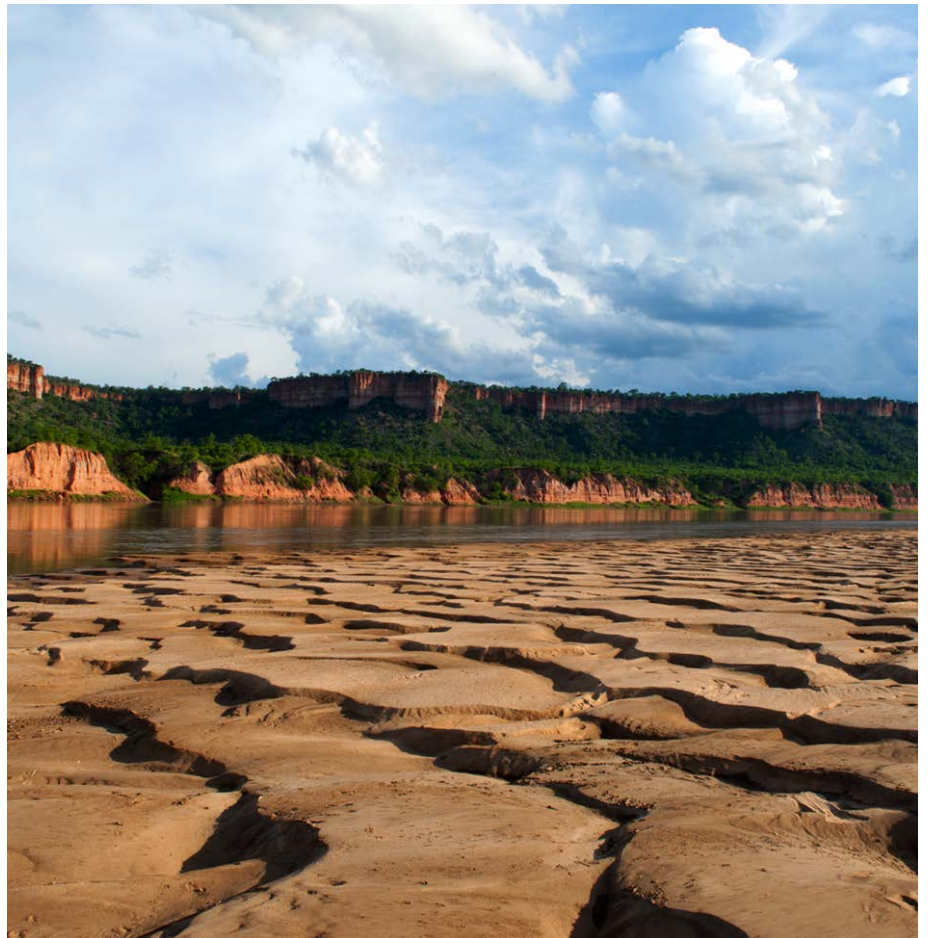


## ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA

### GETTING TO GONAREZHOU

The park experiences a mild winter season from May to August with day-time temperatures below 30°C, and a hot summer season from November to April when temperatures can exceed 40°C. The most ideal time to visit is from May to September, with October providing a real wildlife spectacle for those who know where to look and can withstand the heat.

There are two main dirt airstrips in Gonarezhou National Park where charter flights may land (after doing the obligatory swoop to clear the airstrip of antelope and elephant of course). Alternatively, the Park can be accessed by self-drive adventurers through two entry points, one to the North of the Park near the town of Chiredzi and one to the South near the Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor, joining Gonarezhou National Park to the Kruger National Park in South Africa.





**A TRUE ESCAPE**

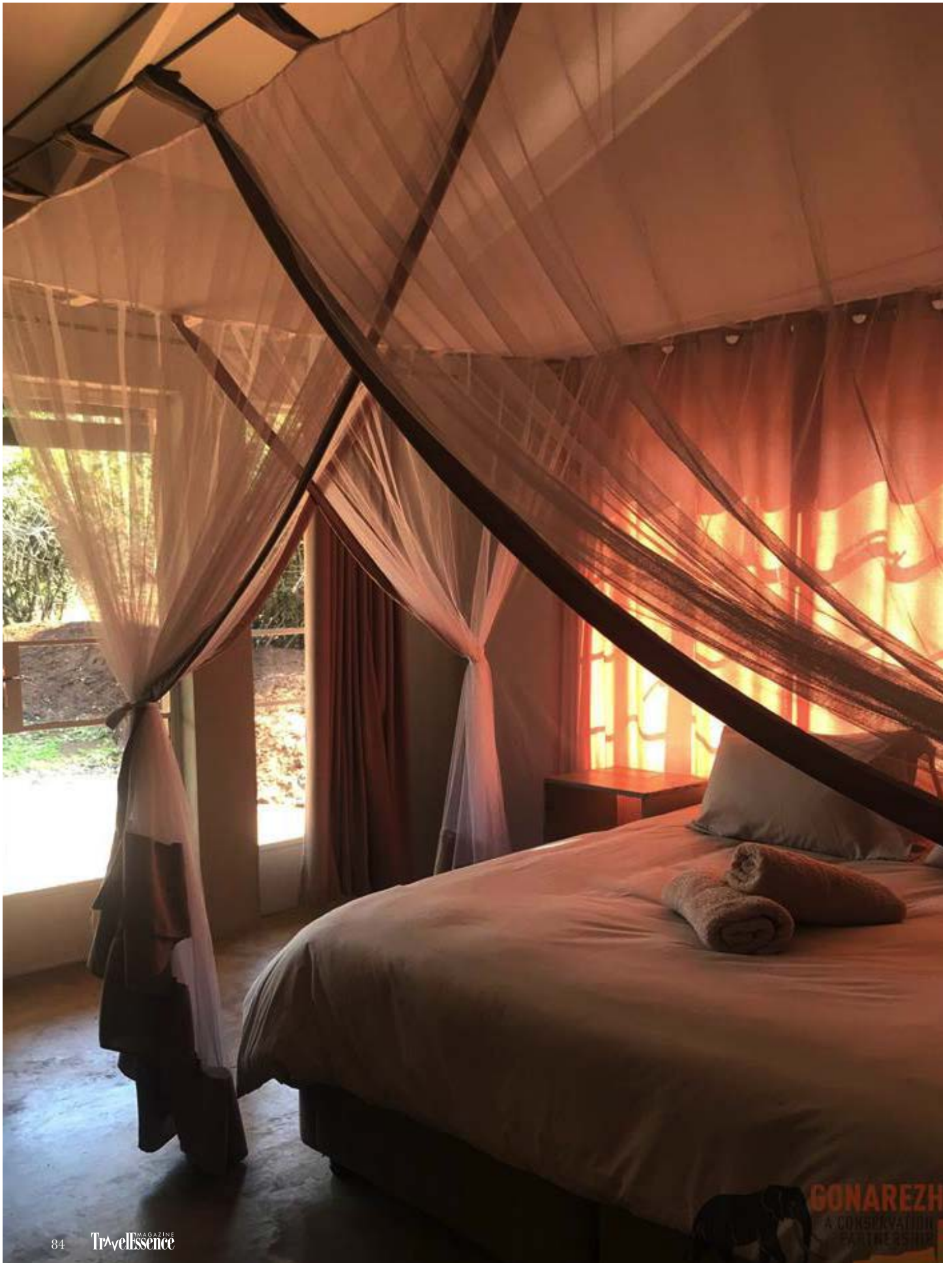
There is no cell signal, no televisions or WiFi connections inside the Park. The wilderness of Gonarezhou offers a rare and truly, very special experience for the adventurous of heart. There are few truly wild places in Africa that remain unspoiled by mass tourism, and Gonarezhou is one of them. Wild in the truest of terms, Gonarezhou National Park is a vast, untouched wilderness, a marvel to explore.

The Park may also be explored from the luxurious Singita Pamushana Lodge, located on the private Malilangwe Wildlife Reserve adjacent to the Gonarezhou National Park or from the renowned Chilo Gorge Safari lodge nestled on the banks of the Runde River, within the Jamanda Community Conservancy and sharing a 20 kilometer boundary with the National Park.





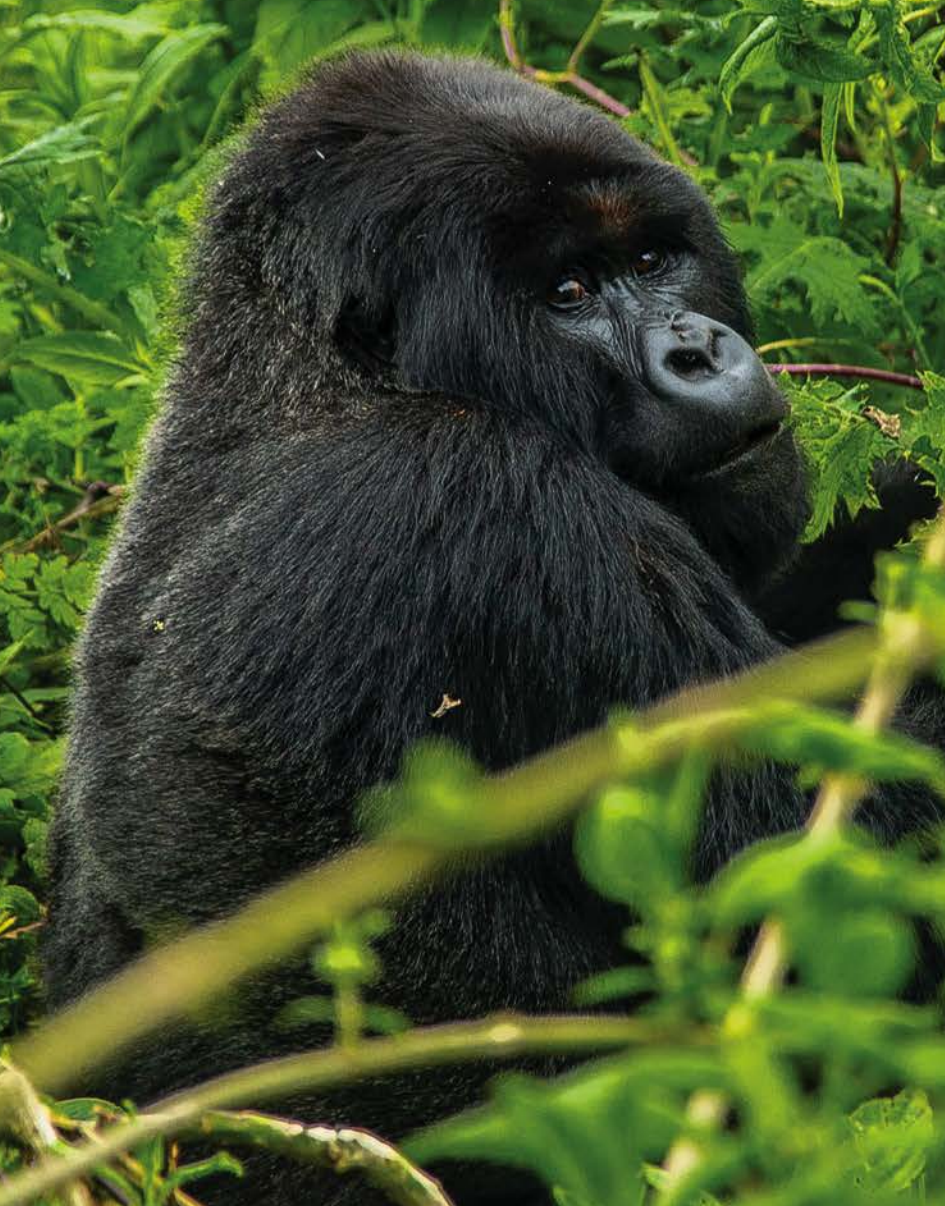






All bookings for Gonarezhou visits are done through a reception team based in Gonarezhou. They can be contacted on:  
reservations@gonarezhou.org  
WhatsApp/telephone: + 263 779 788 811

Please note that telephone signal does offer challenges at times – so, contact by email or WhatsApp is more reliable



# A WALK ON the Wild Side

Explore the rich wildlife set against the natural beauty of **Tanzania** and untamed wilderness of exotic **Rwanda** in this 9 day / 8 night tour. Package highlights include safari and sundowners through the famous Serengeti as well as a face to face encounter with Rwanda's rare mountain gorillas.

- Day 1 : Arusha
- Day 2 : Ngorongoro Crater
- Day 3 : Ngorongoro Crater
- Day 4 : Eastern Serengeti
- Day 5 : Eastern Serengeti
- Day 6 : Kigali
- Day 7 : Volcanoes National Park
- Day 8 : Volcanoes National Park
- Day 9 : End of Itinerary

\*Excludes international flights & taxes. Terms & conditions apply.



FOR MORE INFO VISIT  
[asante-travel.com/essence](http://asante-travel.com/essence)

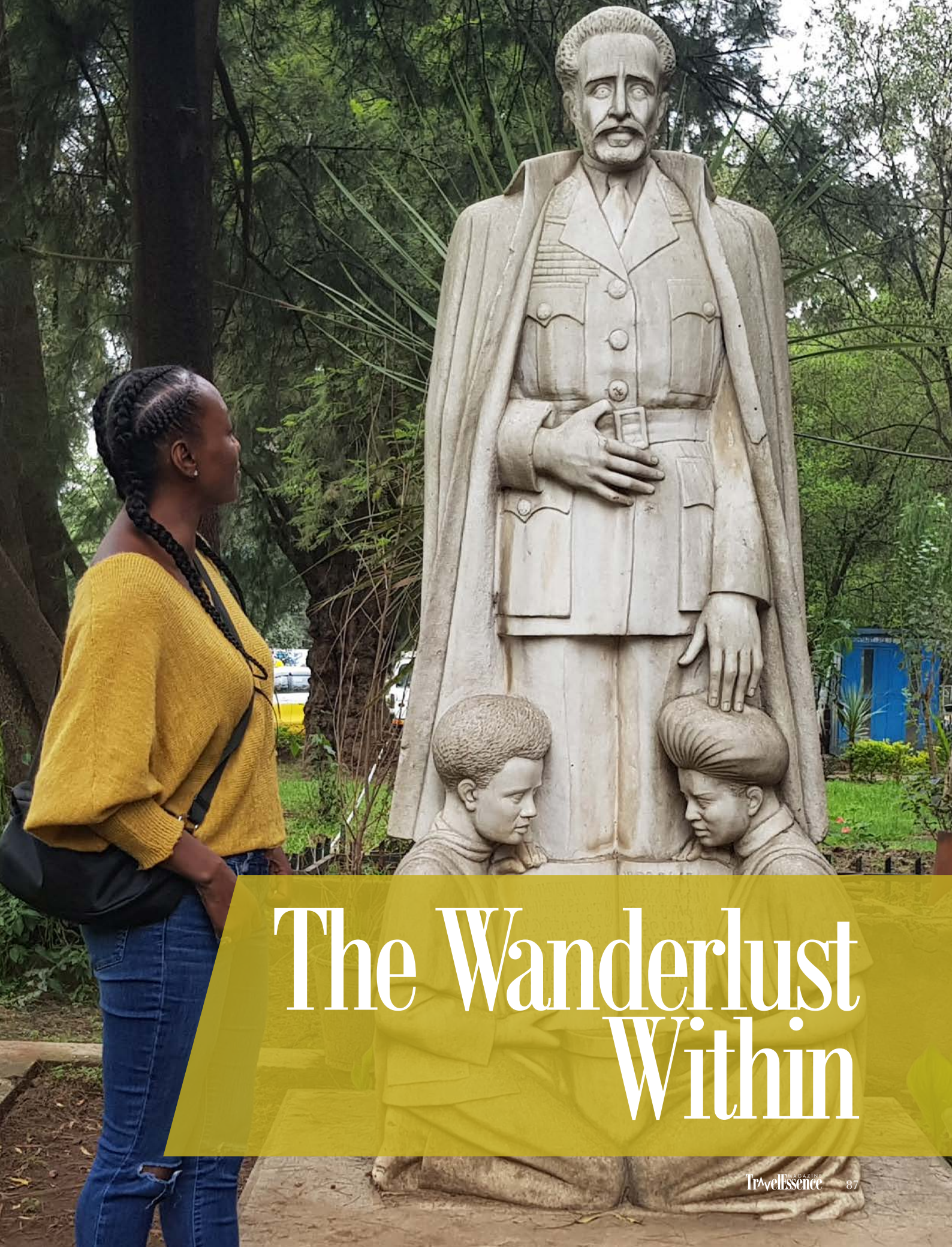


*"My team and I are standing by to assist you with all your travel needs"*  
**Zephné Weston** || Director, Asante Travel

Exploring **AFRICA TOGETHER**  
Your partner for creating unique travel experiences



CALL US TODAY: +27 82 682 4343 | [info@asante-travel.com](mailto:info@asante-travel.com) | [asante-travel.com](http://asante-travel.com)



# The Wanderlust Within

THE WANDERLUST WITHIN

# Travelicious

## Beyond Boundaries with Theresa Powell.

Ethiopia: An awakening journey from Addis Abba to the Omo Valley



When you travel extensively people often ask, “what’s your favourite country?”, and up until most recently I’ve always had differing responses. This is because I’m constantly discovering new places that blow my mind and literally take my breath away. My emotions become so heightened when I think about the experience of being up close and personal with indigenous tribes from Myanmar to Djibouti, and the whole new cultural perspective I gain. When I encounter spec-


tacular nature that I’ve never even thought existed on this planet, and when I’ve been exposed to ancient monuments of unprecedented cultural historical significance, that has immediately transported me back to biblical times. For this reason, I’ve struggled to name one place I favour more than others, however, that was until recently when I visited a country that encompassed all the things mentioned above and more; Ethiopia!




the community, someone who was able to get me inside access. Teddy, my guide from Addis with his connections in the Omo community, was that person!

After an early morning arrival into Addis's international airport, I had just under 24 hours in which to visit Trinity Cathedral, the burial place of Emperor Haile Selassie, the National Museum, home to Lucy, the world's oldest skeleton at 3.8 million years old, and the Ethnological Museum, former palace of Emperor Haile Selassie now home to ancient artefacts that date back to the Akumsumite period (AD 1st – 8th Century). This whistle stop tour also included a short hike up Mount Entoto, the highest peak in Addis, where I took in the breathtaking views of the city and surrounding forests. On the way back to the city I asked for an unscheduled stop to experience the sights and sounds of a local street market, bartering my way through a purchase.

Next, it was time for some sustenance (a girl's gotta eat), and Ethiopia is known for its unique, flavorful, colourful and delicious cuisine. I sat down at a local restaurant with Teddy and our driver Amadi, where we set out on a communal culinary experience. Dishes came served on a large round tray known as a *gebeta*. No meal is complete without the Ethiopian staple *injera*, which some now consider a superfood. *Injera* is unique in texture and flavor. One may describe its texture as a giant light-greyish flat spongy pancake. Despite its unusual look, it's the perfect accompaniment to the bowls of rich spicy stews, curries, and vegetables. There's no room for cutlery, as that's the role of the *injera*. Pieces of *injera* are torn off with your hands and used to scoop up the delicious dishes. Eating Ethiopian cuisine is definitely an amazing experience to be shared amongst family and friends.



Despite only visiting Ethiopia for the first time a couple of years ago, it was the first African country that I was exposed to as a youngster. My uncle, a Jamaican immigrant, has been a Rastafarian for as long as I can remember, probably even before I was born. I grew up in a Jamaican community in the UK where Rastafarianism was part of the culture. This religious and spiritual movement of Jamaican origin regarded Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, the Messiah, and saw Ethiopia as the 'Promised Land', and a rite of passage back to Africa.



Living in the UAE just a 4-hour flight from the capital Addis Abba, my birthday was the perfect time to venture off the beaten track and immerse myself in a cultural experience like no other. For me, this trip was all about authenticity, with no large tour groups; in fact, no tour groups at all. I wanted to go remote, real remote and was willing to sacrifice all my creature comforts for a once in a lifetime experience. So, it dawned on me that I wouldn't be able to do this alone and just rock up at a village and say 'Hi, my name is Theresa, nice to meet you'. I needed to source a local guide who was part of

## OMO VALLEY – HERE WE COME!

Early the next morning after a good night's sleep it was time to head to the airport to catch a flight for a 3-day tour of the Omo Valley. Located in southern Ethiopia, the Omo Valley is about as remote as you can get. This distant region is accessed by a 1-hour flight to what I consider a basic airstrip in Jinka, the provisional town of the Omo Valley tribes' people. With Teddy and a local driver at the ready we embarked on a 4-hour journey deep into the Omo Valley passing mainly through dry sandy plains. As for other vehicles, the roads were completely empty, although local traffic consisted of young shepherds herding their goats.



After a long hot drive, we finally arrived at the home of the Hamar tribe. This was it, I was on my own National Geographic assignment, and this was to be such a surreal experience. A local community guide we had picked up a mile away or so from the village, led the way making a path through a small herd of lambs, continuing on until we reached a small cluster of mud and wood huts with thatched style roofs. We were greeted by one of the tribesmen who we followed into the village.





What I recall most about the Hamer people were the women. They are absolutely beautiful, and their hair is so distinctive and striking. Coated with cow fat and ochre powder, their red-dyed hair is twisted into perfectly tight coils, and their bodies adorned with colorful beaded jewelry. Dressed in traditional leather skirts decorated with beads, these women are simply stunning. From here we headed to the market town of Dimeka and

were lucky to arrive on market day. The Hamer people travel a whole day to sell their wares at the market where the atmosphere is lively and loud. Despite the rain, the market was brimming with locals and Hamer people, as well as a handful of tourists eyeing the jewelry, wood carvings and masks. Just a 10-minute drive through a shallow river was perhaps what I thought would be the pinnacle of my Ethiopian experience - witnessing the bull jumping cere-



mony. I had only ever seen this on travel documentaries and was somewhat excited, yet apprehensive to experience this ancient Hamer tribe ritual where a young boy becomes a man. We arrived at the river ready to make the crossing only to hear that the rains had made the crossing too dangerous. I was gutted!



The next morning (my birthday) after sleeping at a very basic lodge, it was time to meet the people of the Daasanech tribe. There was a noticeable difference in the landscape when compared to the Hamar people, and I got a sense that life was much harder here. The landscape appeared semi-arid with so little opportunity to grow crops. I quickly understood why cattle are central to their survival, i.e. milk, meat, and hides. The Daasanech people are really endearing and hospitable, and I was even invited into one of the huts. These semi-nomadic people live in circular huts, with weaved branches that are covered mainly with animal skin and/or metal sheets. It was here that I had an experience like no other. I was invited to join a small group of girls who performed a traditional tribal dance for my birthday. Pinch me, did it really happen? I get goosebumps just thinking about it, a memory that will last a lifetime.



My final day in the valley quickly approached, with just one last tribe left to visit, the Mursi tribe. This was truly national geo level, and I have to be honest, a little scary. The Mursi are warriors who carry AK47s and believe me they are very intimidating. The women on the other hand are known for their lower lip and ear-lobe plates. As they get older, the holes are increased over time until they can reach the size of a side plate! A truly remarkable and powerful experience that bought my travels to the Omo Valley to a close.

The Omo Valley is a place where time stands still, and traditions hold true; a place like no other. The uniqueness of the people and landscape is truly unforgettable, but it doesn't end there. Known as the cradle of mankind, Ethiopia is in my opinion one of the most culturally stimulating countries in the world. That's why I returned last year, for another epic adventure in the north....

#### ABOUT THERESA POWELL

Theresa Powell (aka Akua Boahemaa), is a 40-something black female of Jamaican parentage with an addiction to travel! She's a curious soul, seeking out travel experiences that take her off the beaten track to unique places across the globe. Her passion for travel ignited when Theresa moved from the UK to the United Arab Emirates in 2012. Living in this great hub allows for weekends where she can visit temples in India, climb mountains in Oman or simply hike in Tajikistan. Theresa loves authentic up close and personal travel experiences where she's stripped of the usual luxuries.

So far, Theresa's travelled to 61 countries and has no plans to stop any time soon!

Want to know where she's heading next? Follow Theresa on Instagram [@travelicious2020](#).

# Basket Weaving

A GLIMPSE OF  
BOTSWANA'S  
CULTURAL  
ARTFORM

Basket weaving in Botswana has garnered wide acclaim as a form of art as much as it is also a source of income for women mostly in resident in the country's rural communities. Traditionally, baskets were made to either store or prepare food but today, it's commonplace to see them embellish an office space or part of home décor.

Each region in the country boasts its own distinctive pattern. The baskets are mostly made from palm strands and are pounded and boiled in a solution of natural dyes taken from the bark and roots of different plants.

This special technique is then used to create delicate patterns, with the final product carrying stunning earth toned or neutral hues. However, because Batswana are generally a very eco-conscious nation, in most recent years the artform of basket weaving has brought with it the introduction of a wider variation of flamboyant and striking patterns, largely as a result of also incorporating materials like recycled plastic waste material.

This has been a great move to say the least because there has always been a challenge for the basket weavers when it comes to harvesting the palm strands used in making the baskets. On account of the impact of such environmental issues as climate change, coupled with ongoing human and wildlife conflict especially with Botswana's huge elephant population – the largest on the continent – today, fewer Batswana venture into the wild to harvest the reeds.





## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BASKET WEAVING

An integral part of Botswana's history, and undoubtedly the most renowned and widely used of craft products made in Botswana, weaving baskets from palm strands is deemed a slow and complex work. A large basket can take more than two weeks to complete if not a month! All original traditional baskets are made from the leaf fibers of the young real fan palm, or mokolwane in Setswana. The leaves are stripped into strings before being woven into intricate patterns by master Weavers.



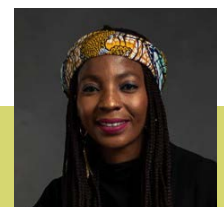
In their uniqueness and distinctive pattern, is a display of the traditional designs portraying the natural world, with Weavers going as far as to give their finished handiwork poetic names such as “Flight of the Swallows”, “Tears of the Giraffe”, “Knees of the Tortoise” and “Forehead of the Zebra”, to name but a few examples.

Some of the oldest baskets ever woven are over a hundred years old, and safely stored at the Botswana National Museum & Art Gallery in the capital city Gaborone. Special preservation measures have been taken to ensure that these ancient baskets are not further adversely impacted by any living organisms, especially considering how they are often showcased at special national

events across the country. Botswana baskets are in abundance in curio shops across the country, as this artform contributes towards the sustenance of livelihoods in Botswana’s rural communities.

And so, should you find yourself in Botswana and in the nation’s capital, the National Museum & Art Gallery is a good place to start with immersing yourself with the rich cultural heritage of Botswana’s arts and crafts industry.

You will catch multiple glimpses into the just how unique Botswana is through the stories showcased here. If its souvenirs you are looking for, crafts markets and curio shops are a sure bet to get yourself a piece of Botswana’s artistry.



**Cynthia Botshelo Mothelesi**

Cynthia Botshelo Mothelesi is the Founder and owner of Happy Soul Adventures, a local tourism company that seeks to showcase the best of Botswana and part of Africa through the eyes of locals. Cynthia is also the proud owner of @Mmomontle, a platform that supports home-grown business in Botswana. To learn more about experiences available during your next trip to Botswana, follow Happy Soul Adventures under the same handle.

# Namibia

## 7 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD VISIT THIS PARADISE OF CONTRASTING LANDSCAPES.

Savannah vegetation with wandering wildlife in the Etosha Pan, the Kalahari and Namib Deserts with captivating orange sand dunes angled against striking blue skies, and of course, the pristine waters that hit the shores of Skeleton Coast and Walvis bay; there are countless reasons why one would want to venture across Namibia, a paradise of contrasting landscapes. With so much of the outdoors and the power of nature to embellish, historical

paths to journey through, and semi-nomadic indigenous people of the Herero and Himba tribes that you may be so fortunate to learn a little more about, Namibia offers much by way of a destination that truly invokes the spirit of untainted Africa. There's so much to talk about, but for now, we bring you our 7 reasons why you should consider Namibia for a trip that offers much to do and see! Here's what we've got...

**CONTRASTING LANDSCAPES LIKE NOWHERE ELSE.**

You've seen those shots of the supermodel with her dress blowing in the wind, with the ocean or sand dunes as the backdrop and wondered where those could have been taken. Listen, if you are looking for a place to connect you with God's artistry and the processes of nature in every form, Namibia has got you covered!

Located on the southwestern coast of Africa, Namibia is bordered in its north by Angola, Zambia to the northeast, Botswana in the east, South Africa to the southeast and south, and the stunning Atlantic Ocean to the west. Namibia is a remarkable showcase of arid temperatures, deserts, canyons, flat salt pans and savanna landscapes, all of which invoke a sense of wonderment of nature, geography, and life!



**YOU CAN SEE THE WORLD'S OLDEST DESERT.**

The great Namib desert is indeed a vast expanse approximately 1,900 km in length. Believed to be in the region of 55 million years old, its name is derived from the Nama language, meaning "a place where there is nothing". You won't see nothing though, but rather the world's highest sand dunes in the world, with the Namibia Ministry of Environment and Tourism citing that Dune 7, a 1,256-foot dune past the Tsauchab River, which runs through part of the Namib Desert - is in fact the highest dune ever recorded!



### **BEHOLD THE ETOSHA PAN.**

The natural mineral pan coined the Etosha Pan, is believed to have first formed over 100 million years ago after the drying up a lake there. So vast that it can be seen from space, the Etosha Pan covers 25% of Etosha National Park, which in itself offers very little by way of vegetation, save for some drought resistant grasses and wildlife that are well accustomed to the arid temperatures of this region. Also, if birdwatching is your thing, did you know that the Etosha Pan boasts the only mass breeding ground for flamingos in Namibia?

### **HAUNTING, YET INSTGRAM-WORTHY REMNANTS OF LONG-GONE LIFE-FORMS**

Where the desert meets the sea, Skeleton Coast could very well be called by its name because of the presence of animal skeletons everywhere along the coastline, juxtaposed with the recurring cool coastal air that creates ominous mists which drift ashore at varied intervals. From elephant rib cages, turtle shells, whale vertebrae and remnants of old ships, doesn't sound like something one would like to encounter while on holiday, so we would leave it to you to decide whether this scene is something that would peak your interest. It's scenic as it is provocative, and because we've given it as a reason to visit – we say go for it!





**COSMOPOLITAN  
NAMIBIA MEETS HISTORICAL  
CHARM IN SWAKOPMUND.**

Looking to contrast a modern adventure with a journey into history. Swakopmund is still very much the coastal adventure central that carries an intriguing charm with all the colonial architecture splashed across the city. From boardwalks, restaurants, ocean-front bistros and the beckoning call for exploration into the Namib desert and Skeleton Coast, Swakopmund feels very much like a holiday town in Germany or Denmark - except it's on the coast of Africa, which is a whole different vibe! For solo-travellers and groups alike – we can guarantee you that it won't disappoint.



## **TRIBES AND CULTURES TO BEHOLD.**

Nothing speaks of culture than learning more about the indigenous groups of any one destination. Namibia's Himba people are inhabitants of northern Kaokoveld region while the Herero call the central Okavango area their home. Interesting are the women, who have garnered much acclaim for the uniqueness in grooming, with their signature lying in the red ochre skin and hair styles. Let's just say, you won't see anything like the Himba and Herero semi-nomadic way of life unless you make your way to Namibia!



### **ROAD TRIP FOR DAYS.**

The distances from one destination in Namibia to another – are long! – with unforgiving temperatures to contend with. But, that’s not to say that taking a few days to drive across the country wouldn’t make for a great family adventure or time out with friends. If a road trip is on the cards for you, try starting in Namibia’s capital, Windhoek, before venturing across the vast terrain into the wildlife sanctuaries of the Etosha National Park, before heading on south towards Spitzkoppe, arguably one of the most unique rock formations in the world.

From then on head onto the coastal city of Swakopmund, tackle the famous red dunes of Sossusvlei, spend a day or two viewing the world’s second largest canyon - Fish River Canyon, before driving back to Windhoek.

We estimate a 10-day trip to cover each stop-over effectively, so pack up your camping gear or getting your accommodation bookings in order, load up that 4x4 and conquer Namibia by road! You’ll be back with plenty of stories to share!

So, before you consider going where you’ve already been before, do consider Namibia! But before you do that, you can begin with following @TravelEssenceMagazine on Instagram to get a glimpse of what an experience in the land of contrasting landscapes could look like!



# *Soweto's Vilakazi Street:*

**From the base of the freedom fighting to a hub of black entrepreneurship**

Soweto, an infamous township situated in the Gauteng Province of South Africa, has evolved from what was once a temporary neighborhood for gold mine workers in the late 19th century, into one of the most popular tourist spots in Johannesburg today. Take a trip to Soweto and experience the history of South Africa and the beauty of its culture in its most authentic form.

---

## **THE HISTORY OF VILIKAZI**

Soweto, an acronym for South Western Township, became a ghetto where black people were forced to live during the apartheid, as they were not allowed to live anywhere else. Soweto's Vilikazi Street is one of the most popular neighborhoods in South Africa and is known as the former home of the two 'bulls', the great Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu, both of whom are Nobel Peace Prize winners.



According to a Zulu saying, two bulls cannot be found in the same kraal, yet these two icons defied the odds as they were at one point both living in this humble neighborhood of Soweto while fighting apartheid side by side. Today Soweto, though still home to many poor South Africans, has become a hub of tourism, luring thousands of tourists from around the world every year.

“

*This humble abode is now a world heritage site and museum*

”

This street, named after Dr. Vilakazi, the first black person to be a lecturer at Vitz University which is a popular institution of higher learning in the heart of Johannesburg's central business district, has come to epitomise black excellence, particularly because of the manner in which it takes visitors on a journey through significant history. Situated right by the corner of Vilikazi Street, is the home of Nelson Mandela, now known as the Mandela Family Museum.



## THE WANDERLUST WITHIN

This humble abode is now a world heritage site and museum for people to explore and revel in the history of Nelson Mandela, who he was as a father, husband, community leader, and ultimately the first black President of South Africa.

But before he became a world-famous figure, he lived in this humble 3-roomed home with his wife Winnie Mandela and their two daughters. Winne also played an important part in the struggle against the apartheid by keeping her husband's legacy alive while he was in jail, while also facing imprisonment and torture. In this home, two iconic figures emerged and took apartheid head-on, and won.

As you move around the house, you really feel the history of the home, as your imagination sees the shadows of this beautiful family moving around, enjoying the good times, and enduring the bad. The home looks untouched, with Nelson and Winnie's bed still in its place, covered with a special animal hide that belonged to Nelson, which symbolized royalty, as he was the son of a chief. From that to the marks on the ground in the living room that show signs of a wall that once stood, built by Winnie for protection from bullets. One gets goosebumps as they move around the house with the tour guide who describes each event meticulously and each feature in the house. One leaves the house with even greater respect for the

Mandela family and what they endured during the fight for freedom – not only for them but for the black people of South Africa.

The Creative Hub of Vilikazi Vilikazi Street, what was once the focal point for the uprising against apartheid, is now a hub for black-owned businesses as well as job opportunities for locals. As you arrive in Vilikazi street, you are greeted by vendors selling fashionable hats and other clothing items that are handmade in colorful African materials. The entire street is lined with restaurants and bars that bring an uber authentic vibe to the area.

“  
*The entire street is lined with restaurants and bars that bring an uber authentic vibe to the area.*  
”

Enjoy a heartwarming meal of pap (a local staple meal made from maize flour) and shisa nyama (barbecued meat) and more unique African dishes. These establishments are owned by the locals and showcase South African culture at its best.

Moving closer towards the Mandela home, you'll find a market inundated with colourful bangles, necklaces, and other fashion items made from African beads and material in the most creative way. The market is truly a treat for the lover of curios and handmade pieces, as anything from wooden crafted pieces and beautiful artwork can be found, made by creative entrepreneurs who sell to tourists as a keepsake. What's a trip anywhere without something you can take back to your home country to help you a story.

In touring the Mandela House, you will notice that the guides are young black locals who tell the story so passionately, as if they were telling one of their own family. They guide you through the house strategically, explaining the significance and symbolism of part of the house, thus giving you a greater appreciation of the home. Outside the Mandela Family Museum, you will find traditional dancers putting on an authentic show and entertaining tourists for money, presenting you an opportunity to support local talent while learning a little about their culture.

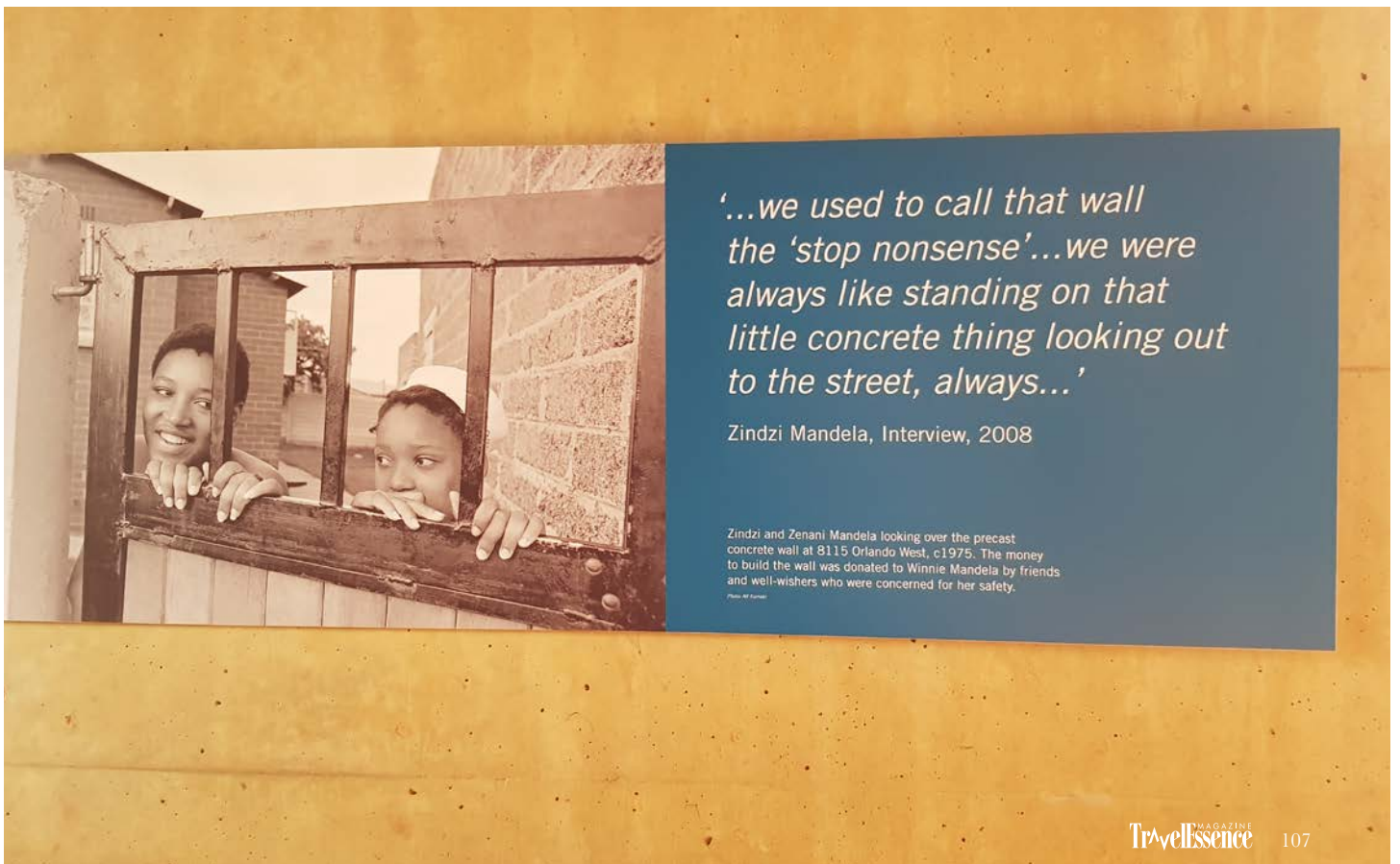
Travelling through Soweto is an emotional yet humbling experience. Seeing young black creatives showcasing their products and dancers showcasing their talent is a real treat. As you wander around the township and see the different sites

*When you Visit Vilakazi Street, you feel like you are home, as the locals are so welcoming and ready to entertain you, feed you, sell you their handmade wears,*

and art pieces situated all around the area, there's an air of sadness of what apartheid was that captures you unexpectedly. By visiting sites such as the Apartheid Museum and the Hector Peterson Memorial, you can hear the untold stories that have been passed down from generation to generation. But then Soweto offers a little adrenaline too! Once you have taken in all the history you

can muster, experience the fun and thrill of Soweto by bungee jumping at the Orlando Towers. The former coal-fired power station was repurposed into an extreme sports site. Experience adrenaline-pumping activities such as rock climbing, indoor skydiving, and of course, bungee jumping. When you Visit Vilakazi Street, you feel like you are home, as the

locals are so welcoming and ready to entertain you, feed you, sell you their handmade wears, give you a lesson in history and so much more; leaving an imprint of 'ubuntu' on one's soul. After tasting the food, visiting the sites, and dancing in the street, you'll take home memories of a time well spent in South Africa to last a lifetime.



*'...we used to call that wall the 'stop nonsense'...we were always like standing on that little concrete thing looking out to the street, always...'*

Zindzi Mandela, Interview, 2008

Zindzi and Zenani Mandela looking over the precast concrete wall at 8115 Orlando West, c1975. The money to build the wall was donated to Winnie Mandela by friends and well-wishers who were concerned for her safety.

# Solo travelling

## IS THE NEW 'IN'

Solo travelling is a sensation that has hit the globe, with individuals embarking on an adventure alone each year. Interestingly, there has been a rise in the number of women who are daring themselves to conquer the world alone, perhaps as a call to self-discovery or mere escapism from the day-to-day way of life or rut for some. To many, solo travel has become a way of staring one's fears in the face and pushing the envelope in life. Although the thought of travelling alone may seem daunting to some, others find it to be a great adventure and an ode to their independence,

while getting to know yourself in a way you never thought was possible.

Ayanda, a South African ex-pat based in the United Arab Emirates, is an avid traveller and adventurer. As a professional working long hours every day, she loves travelling and getting away from it all to discover a new part of the globe. She has travelled with friends and family, in a group tour of Europe as well as on her own, and she shares her personal experiences especially as a black woman, to help other women who wish to travel solo.

### AYANDA'S STORY

In 2017 I decided to go to Russia - Moscow on my own. I know right? Why Russia? Firstly, I was happy that my South African Passport did not require me to have a visa, so that was minus one problem. I have always wanted to see the Kremlin and the Red Square and experience the Moscow subway that has almost 206 stations but still so efficient and clean. This was such an insightful trip, from my flight being rescheduled, catching a connection flight the next morning instead of a direct one, having a 30min window, of course, my luggage would not make it to Moscow in time.





## THE WANDERLUST WITHIN

### TRAVELLING WHILE BLACK

Traveling as a black female can become uncomfortable in most countries, especially if you don't have thick skin to withstand the stares. Travelling to places like Thailand, Russia, and Singapore, we tend to stick out like a sore thumb which draws attention to us. Could be good or bad, but in my experience, people gravitate to try and figure you out, as you are unfamiliar to them. Our features are striking, our braids unique and our afros defying gravity, and so that can truly be something to wonder to others if they are not used to it.

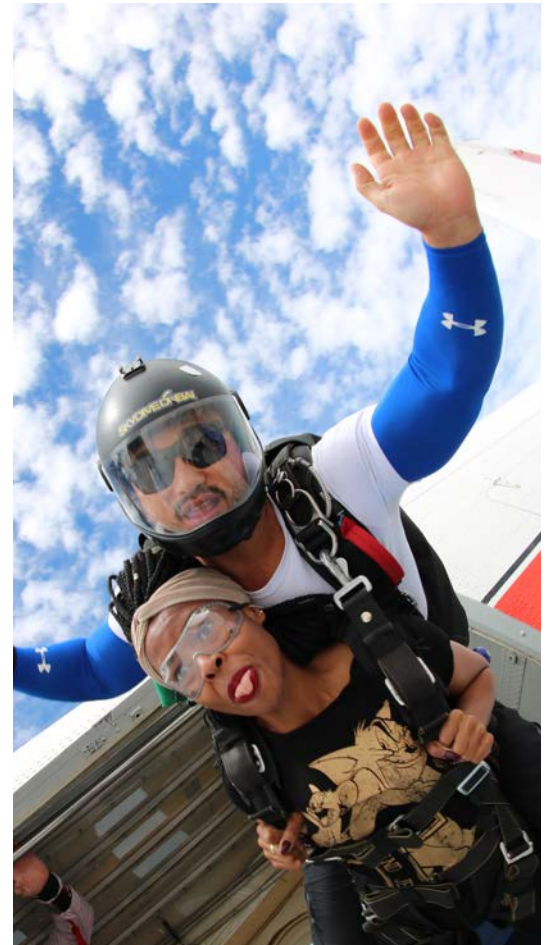
Not to my surprise, individuals in Moscow weren't familiar with a black girl with a big afro walking the streets alone, so I would say it was an experience for us all. But being stopped almost every 10 min where people would want to take a picture of me because I was so unfamiliar to them made me uncomfortable to a point where I left the Kremlin and went back to my accommodation. Nightlife, however, was better, with the Russian vodka in everyone's system I seemed to have blended in with the night. It was a great experience for me. I also tried a black burger which was great!

## THE WANDERLUST WITHIN



Safety is very important, as we are mostly a minority already. During my travels, I try to choose what are typically viewed as safe destinations, with many options for solo travellers or when travelling as part of a small group. As females, we generally always need to take precautions when it comes to our surroundings in order to stay safe and so this shouldn't be the exception, especially when you leave the familiarity of home to venture into lands unknown.

In summary, Russia was great. The food and the clean and peaceful environment allowed me to walk in the evenings and enjoy the summer night as it was the warm month of September.



## TRAVELLING WITH OTHERS VS TRAVELLING SOLO

For me having done all three – going solo, with family or with friends - I believe many would agree that travelling with friends wins hands down. The laughter you share, the connections you share, and the fact that you always have a photographer available. You can be vulnerable at times and knowing that you are with familiar people, gives you a strong sense of comfort.

Unlike with family, with friends, you can be yourself and be spontaneous when needed. Which-ever way you look at it, exploring new territories with a group of people has a fair share of advantages. No one imagines that an emergency may present itself, but, should you get ill or need help, your friends or family are there to help you and you don't feel totally alone in a foreign country, which is not only risky but scary. As with

group travel, there are also some great benefits to travelling alone. The fact that you can decide your own itinerary without consulting anyone is quite liberating. You can discover new places and really immerse yourself in the culture and food at your own pace.

The budget for your trip is all on you, with no influence from others, which usually happens when you travel with friends. Some want a fancier experience while others may be total spend-thrifts which obviously has a funny little way of getting on people's nerves sometimes! My biggest take away from travelling solo has been the strong sense of independence in a foreign place and a chance to advance my skills in figuring things out on your own.





## AND NOW FOR THE SOLO TRAVEL TIPS

Research! Research and more research! Learn about the weather, the culture and customs, the currency, crime rate and any threatening political issues. Know where you are going so you are equipped to navigate your destination without unwarranted drama. Secondly, make a copy of your documents, should you lose or misplace your original passport and any other important documents because it does happen! Also a standard; make sure you take any vaccines needed prior to travelling to the country if applicable. You don't want to arrive at the airport and be asked to provide proof of having taken some sort of shot – and you don't have that.



This goes without saying, but it really is important to pre-plan and pay for activities online if possible. I use an app called (Get Your Guide). It saves time and shows you the tourist attractions for that country so I can clearly map out my “must-see/do” list and see if I have any extra time to spend doing other mundane stuff like trying out cafes, taking pictures at iconic landmarks and so on.







## THE WANDERLUST WITHIN

Also, download Google Translate to help you communicate with the locals easily. Uber is also an important app to have in your phone. You get to your destination without having to explain anything.

Always try to choose your accommodation in a central location so that your hotel or guest house is not too far off when you go exploring during the day. Always have updated emergency phone numbers written just in case your phone dies or gets lost. Have sufficient money as you will not have anyone to assist you, should you run out of funds. Most importantly, choose a destination where you will not need anyone but your mind, body, and soul, to have a good rich experience as a solo traveler. Basically – don't pick a destination on the news for all the wrong reasons to try and enjoy your solo travelling experience. It may prove more stressful than not.

And now, to round it all up – my Top 10 must bring items

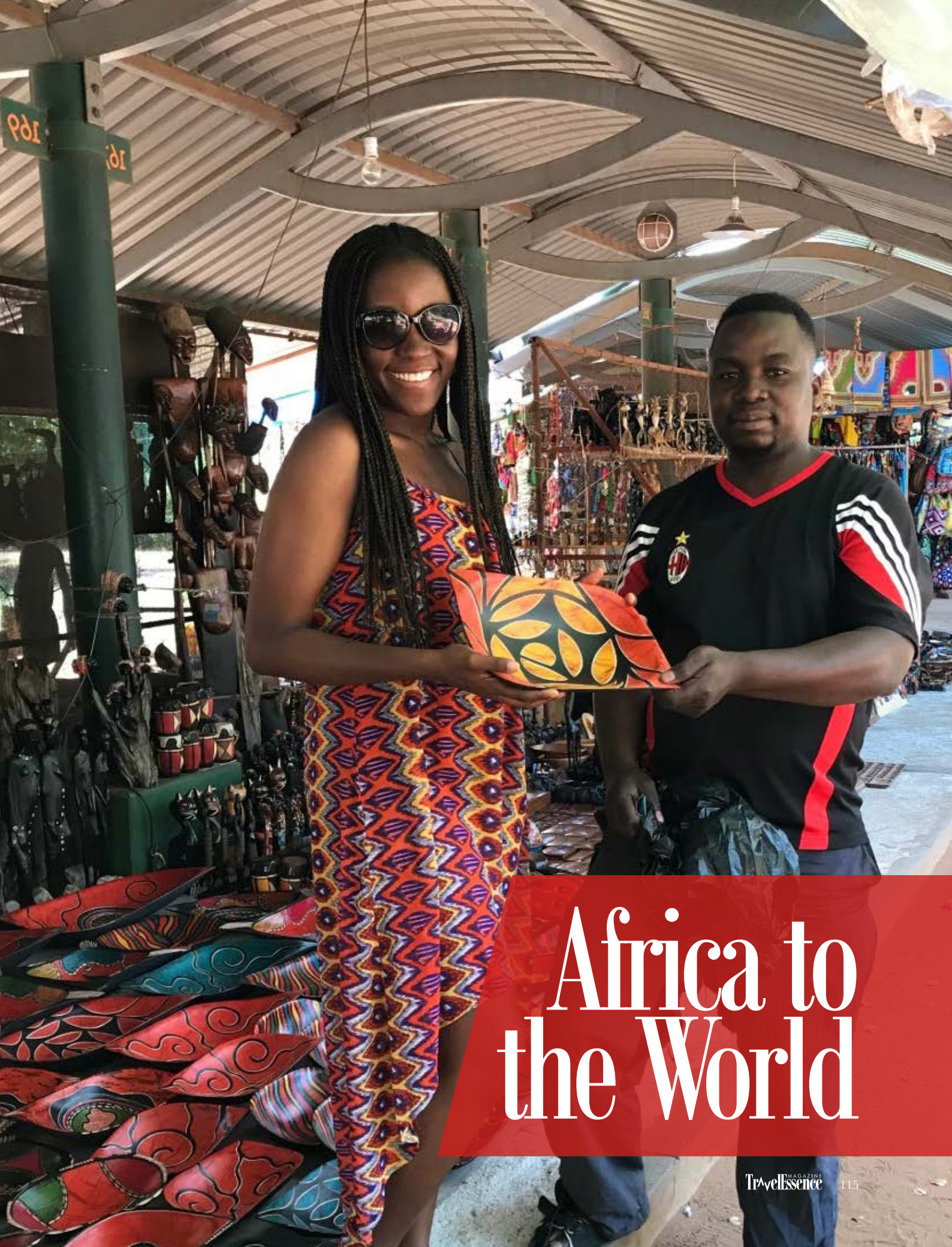
1. Portable Medical Bag  
– Painkillers, plasters, allergy meds etc.
2. Travel Insurance. Never leave home without it. It's really affordable and can prevent a lot of complications should something happen.
3. Cash Passport – This is a card that loads multiple currencies and will save you from having to use your personal debit or credit cards that may expose you to fraudulent activities.
4. Universal Plug and Power bank.
5. Cute but versatile jacket, for example a windbreaker. This comes in handy should it rain, or if weather should change from an anticipated summer day or night.
6. Little Black Dress – Ladies, you can thank me later.
7. Comfortable Sneakers – Ready for a hike, gym, comfort during a day of touring the city.
8. Pack of Nuts – Non-perishable snack is advised as you don't know how long the waiting time for check ins or transport between places can be, or even if you are unable to get proper food before your next destinations.
9. Google translate and Uber App on your phone  
– This will save you transactions and confusing conversations.
10. An open mind, smile, ready itinerary and curiosity!

Visit  
**Zimbabwe**  
*A World of Wonders*

For an unforgettable safari experience...



@tourismzimbabwe

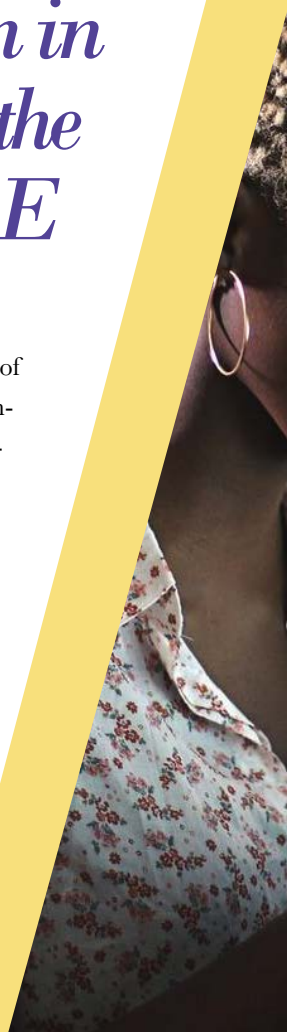


# Africa to the World



## *5 Reasons to Support 100+ Black Owned Businesses when in Dubai and the greater UAE*

With the UAE's diverse melting pot of over 200 nationalities and multiple languages, just living and working here offers a beautiful opportunity to meet so many people from all walks of life. The same holds true when you visit. Dubai and the UAE capital Abu Dhabi have positioned themselves greatly as global hubs for tourism and commercial enterprise, welcoming visitors in their millions for a combination of shopping, exploring and a taste of Arab influences in culture and tradition. However, with the fast-paced lifestyle available for all in the Middle East's most cosmopolitan cities, it can be easy to get lost in the mix and go unseen by the masses

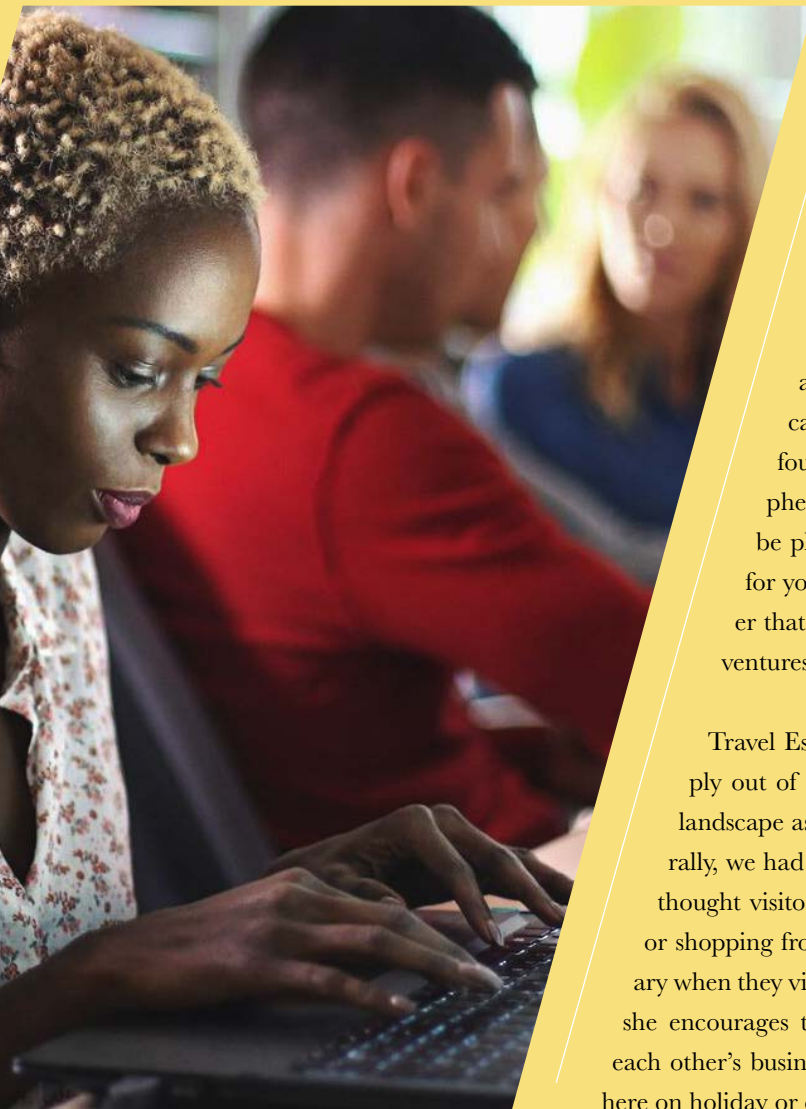


without exposure and lasting connections, especially should you be setting up a small business .

Since its inception in 2019, Black Girl in Dubai has curated over 100+ business listings and relations in Dubai and across the UAE, making it easier for visitors and residents to find, share and shop with black-owned businesses offering truly authentic goods and services. Founded by Entertainment Entrepreneur Leanne “Kai” Brackett, this platform was created with the passion and mission to bring the community together after many struggles with finding the right hair and skin products for women of colour when she first

relocated to Dubai from the United Kingdom. Leanne was also looking to create a sisterhood with likeminded people who could relate to, or empathise with, all the associated hiccups that come with relocating to a new country, especially as resident of African descent.

Today, Black Girl in Dubai continues to promote the increasing numbers of black-owned business in Dubai and the greater UAE, a feat that comes hugely embraced by many. Leanne believes that be it food, music, art, sports or medicine, inventions and everyday culture, there are abundant influences from black culture however, mainstream use oftentimes undervalues the creators.



#### **HOW ABOUT BLACK-OWNED IN DUBAI...**

There is much to experience when visiting Dubai, including the rich opulence and extravagant nature of shopping, dining and nightlife experiences to residents and visitors alike, but as with every travel mecca, there are always opportunities to experience the rich culture of minority groups. With a unique mix of African expat, Afro-British, Afro-American and residents of Caribbean heritage choosing to call the UAE their home as they explore opportunities for self-actualisation and career development, a good number of creatives have found inspiration in the innovative, progressive atmosphere they now call home. Best believe it, should you be planning to migrate to the UAE or come through for your next holiday, you may be surprised to discover that there are a lot of black-owned entrepreneurial ventures you can find and support while in Dubai.

Travel Essence caught up with Leanne recently, simply out of wanting to tap into her knowledge of the landscape as an entrepreneur in entertainment. Naturally, we had to ask what her five top reasons why she thought visitors to the UAE should add experiencing or shopping from “black-owned UAE” to their itinerary when they visit. Here are Leanne’s top reasons why she encourages that more people of colour support each other’s businesses in the UAE, whether they are here on holiday or call themselves residents...

# 1

## **AUTHENTIC CULTURE FROM AUTHENTIC PEOPLE**

There is such a wide array of culture, tradition, flavours and customs when it comes to food and fashion from black people. And that is just the tip of the iceberg. Overall, we have such a beautiful array of talent and gifts right here in the UAE alone. Often though, due to lack of exposure and misconceptions about black businesses being non-existent or having bad service in general, the culture can often be appropriated by others which does not give a true accurate reflection of the culture, or it is completely missing from the marketplace all together.

So I believe that by indulging in the choices of what black businesses have to offer, you can experience and support authenticity, spoil yourself and find that you discover many amazing products and services to enhance your life. Just like you would expect great Italian food made by Italians, or amazing Indian food by Indians, let's support and enjoy the real flavours of Jamaican food cooked by Jamaicans and African food cooked by Africans.



# 2

## **BLACK BUSINESSES ARE UNDEREXPOSED IN SOCIETY**

Starting a business can be a great but challenging task for anyone. As with many, some black businesses may be smaller in size and thus be limited in terms of funding, connections or manpower to have the exposure needed to attract regular clients. Coupled with the stigmas and what I view to be lack of community support from those who need or want the service, I've found black businesses seem to struggle more than others to gain visibility and be heard above the larger or more mainstream businesses who may be more exposed or accepted in society. There is no greater marketing than word-of-mouth marketing, and I believe as people of colour, if we are more vocal about the talent in our midst, our brands can truly garner the traction and visibility they need to grow, while giving other nationalities or cultural groups an opportunity to experience what we have on offer.



### **AS PEOPLE OF COLOUR, WE NEED TO BUILD OUR ECONOMY**

As the year has shaken up with many unexpected and unprecedented economic crises due to Covid-19, it has never been a more important time to practice supporting local black businesses who serve the economy. In addition, many communities such as the Jewish or Asian community successfully practice group economics which can be defined as a group of people who have a common economic interest. That group agrees and actively supports and pursues that economic interest for themselves to create a sustainable and secure economy for themselves.

As the African diaspora, we have been scattered and segregated across the globe, and so the long term effects have meant that on a whole, our group in society spends the most outside of our community (in most industries across the world) and have no stable ecosystem of sustainability. We need to start looking at ourselves as the perfect community of consumers for products and services for ourselves first.

### **CREATES JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The more successful businesses are in the economy, the more jobs and opportunities there are for collaboration and exposure to the marketplace. Our tenacity reveals our desire to have growth opportunities as do other cultural and ethnic groups. As I mentioned before, we ought to view ourselves as a community that can support each other's business ventures, resulting in added growth which naturally creates more jobs and opportunities for us all as a people.

### **JOIN THE CURRENT CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY**

Having diverse businesses, products and services brings about diversity in the economy, as well as diverse voices, talent and skills in the workplace. I believe supporting black businesses can be done in a variety of ways, whether it's sharing their content, buying, hiring and giving feedback for improvement.

The way I look at it, it's not about being against or 'anti' any other culture. If you are black, my sense is that it's simply about maintaining and strengthening the local community and taking care of home first, much like many other cultures do and successfully practice to build their communities, wealth, leverage, foundations and legacy for their families. If you are non-black, it is simply about enjoying and supporting authentic products and services from black businesses who you may not have otherwise considered or discovered from mainstream choices you are used to.



# *Black Girl in Dubai's picks*

## **ON 5+5 BLACK OWNED BUSINESSES TO CHECK OUT IN THE UAE**



### **1. BITE CLUB**

Dubai's most dynamic social club bringing you some of the city's best dinner deals whilst meeting new and interesting people several times a week. Serving you the best food and authentic cuisines from some of Dubai's top restaurants with clients such as Palazzo Versace, Ting Irie, Wakame, Kiza and more, joining Bite Club allows you to meet, meet and repeat as you dine at some of the city's hidden gems and beautiful locations. Check out [www.biteclubdubai.com](http://www.biteclubdubai.com) for exclusive invitations.

### **2. BOVORY**

BOVORY is a premium leather bags brand of (eBOny and iVORY) made in Italy. With shipping worldwide, choose from a beautiful collection of quality bags and even have one custom painted with your portrait or other designs!





### 3. **FADE AND PLAY BARBERS**

Fade and Play are reviving the brotherhood concept of a good vibes barber shop! Enjoy a good haircut with some fun...music, a pool table and video games, a great spot for guys to hang, chill and chat whilst they are groomed! Book online or simply turn up, chill out and have a good time!



### 4. **CHINEDU ENEOGWE**

Chinedu Eneogwe is an artist creating fine art oil paintings which will leave you in awe with their vibrant colours, detail and overall finish.

### 5. **GBEMBI'S KITCHEN**

Urban African Soul Food is officially here in Dubai at Gbemi's Kitchen. Serving food from Catfish and Salad Loco in a cosy, intimate, kente cloth covered spot in Dubai's Jumeirah Lakes Towers district (JLT), you'll find your taste buds jumping for joy with authentic African food and a beautiful mix of flavours with worldly inspiration and wholesome ingredients. Mention Black Girl in Dubai for 20% discount off when dining in.



## 6. SHADES SALON

A chic, classy and affordable salon with friendly staff located in Al Barsha in Dubai. Shades salon specialises in all textures of hair, extensions, braids and nail services. If you mention Black Girl in Dubai for 15% discount off selected service.

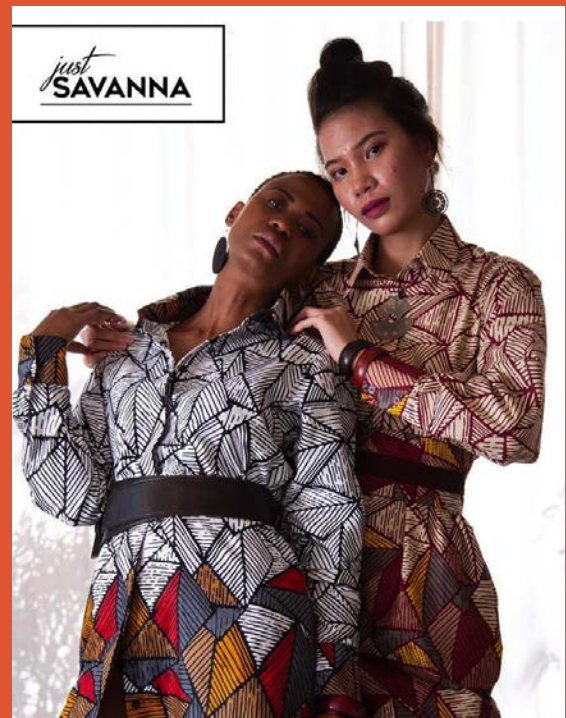


## 7. MOKHA 1450

Mokha 1450 is the Heart of Coffee. A beautiful place for serious coffee connoisseurs, where you can even enjoy some Caribbean flavors with Jamaica Blue Mountain coffee. Visit one of the two locations, Palm Jumeirah or Al Was Road.

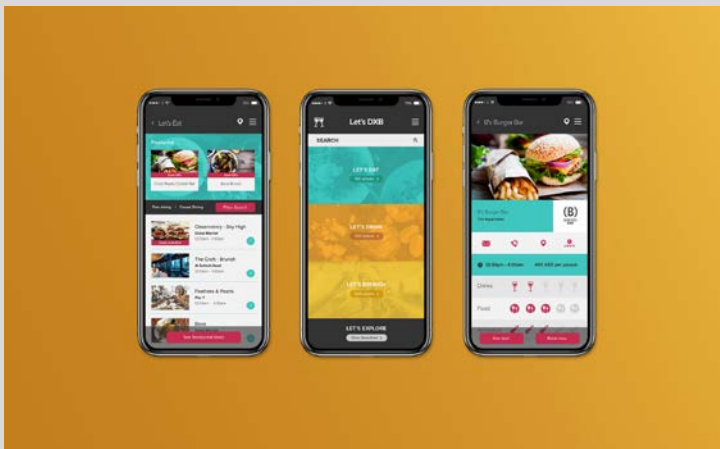
## 8. JUST SAVANNA

JUST SAVANNA was created with the spirit of freedom, ethnicity and confidence. Their designs are contemporary, strong and anchored in African heritage.



## 9. SIMPLE CAFÉ

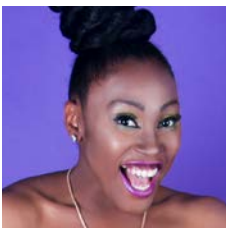
Are you in Abu Dhabi? Snap up vegan, gluten free, nourishing, satisfying daily meals, snacks, juices and smoothies combined with a personalised service at Simple Café. This cute spot offers a truly unique service in the UAE to help individuals replenish their body and mind and kick start a nourishing, healthy and tasty eating pattern.



## 10. LET'S DXB -

Launched by Mr. and Mrs. Brunch, Let's DXB is the app with over 200 tried, tested, honest reviews, 100+ discounts of up to 50% on Brunches, Food & Drinks and FREE after brunch beverages!

And of course, should you be looking to see what other businesses are available for your patronage, dive into 100+ businesses here in the UAE by visiting [www.Blackgirlindubai.com](http://www.Blackgirlindubai.com)



### ABOUT BLACK GIRL IN DUBAI

Black Girl in Dubai is the number one community hub & directory with over 100+ black businesses listed in the UAE. Celebrating, enhancing and uniting the black experience from the African diaspora and now across the UAE, Black Girl in Dubai showcases the things we need but cannot find when away from home and empowers the community to flourish together. Starting in early 2019, the hub and directory reaches a wider audience to allow residents and tourists to support and shop within the community whilst staying connected to authenticity and roots from home.

Use the hashtag **#BlackBusinessUAE** to easily find featured businesses on Instagram.

**Founder Leanne 'Kai' Brackett**  
**Motivational Author and Creative Entrepreneur**

Tel: +971 52 881 6494

Email: [hey@blackgirlindubai.com](mailto:hey@blackgirlindubai.com)

Online: [www.blackgirlindubai.com](http://www.blackgirlindubai.com)

Connect: Instagram | Facebook -

[@BlackGirlInDubai](https://www.instagram.com/BlackGirlInDubai)

# A call for contributors

- Are you a hotel, tour operator 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?
- Are you rolling out a new long-haul offer travellers post COVID-19?

Do register your interest in becoming a contributor or send across your content (press release, feature article, listing guides or reviews) to **info@travelessencemag.com** accompanied by relevant hi-resolution images or video content, facts sheets and bio for personality profile pieces – and a member of our editorial team will be in touch with you.



MAGAZINE  
**Travel**Essence

A NARRATIVES PR PUBLICATION

# Vayeni

*Creating Escapes for the Soul*

Extraordinary Safari Experts in Africa



- ZAMBIA • ZIMBABWE • BOTSWANA • MOZAMBIQUE •
- KENYA • TANZANIA • MALAWI • NAMIBIA • SOUTH AFRICA •
- UGANDA • RWANDA •

[www.vayeni.com](http://www.vayeni.com) • [info@vayeni.com](mailto:info@vayeni.com) • +263 77 764 7740

founding member of  
*Zambesia*  
CONSERVATION ALLIANCE