

# TRAVEL ESSENCE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 6 • DECEMBER 2020



INSIDE AN  
ADULTS ONLY  
AFRICAN ISLAND  
PARADISE

.....  
**KRUGER  
SHALATI**  
*unveiled*

.....  
ASANTE  
TRAVEL ON  
GIRLS' TRIP  
DESTINATIONS

*White  
Desert:*  
From Cape Town  
to Antarctica

CEO OF KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA  
**LEE KELSALL**

ON BUILDING LEGACIES



TRAVEL MAGAZINE  
Essence

A NARRATIVES PR PUBLICATION



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# TravelEssence

MAGAZINE

Culture • Lifestyle • Taste-Making





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CEO of Ker & Downey® Africa  
LEE KELSALL

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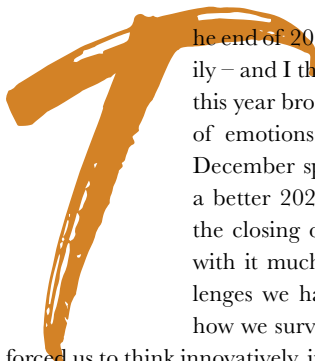
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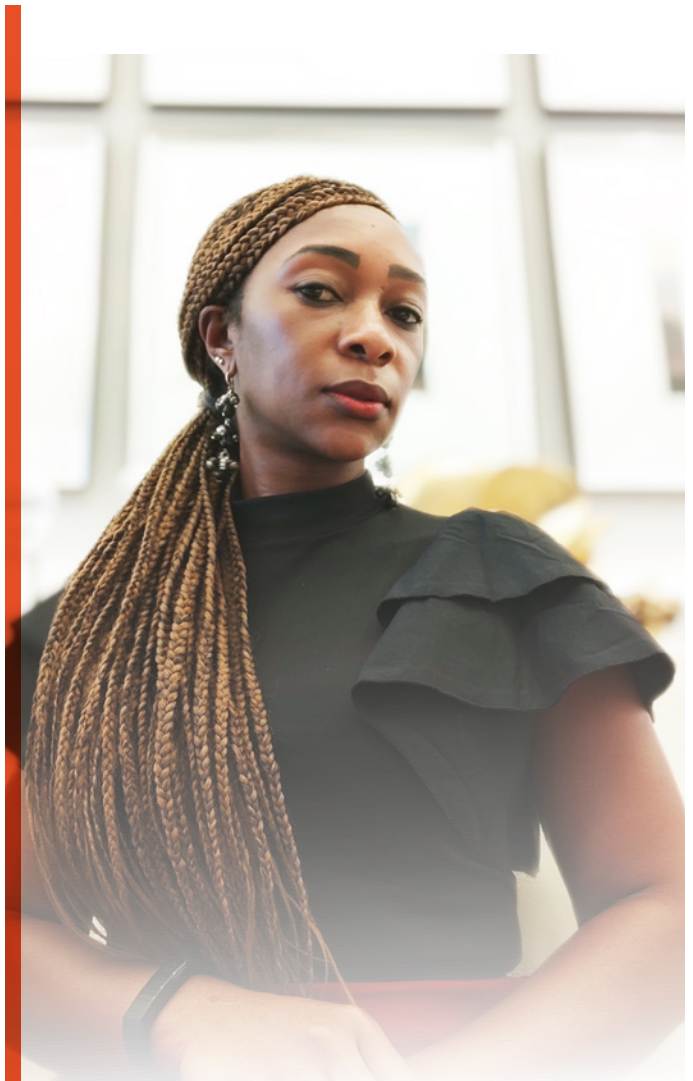


he end of 2020 is finally upon us family – and I think we can all agree that this year brought with it a mixed bag of emotions. For some, us reaching December spells relief and hope for a better 2021; while yet for others, the closing of this year has brought with it much reflection on the challenges we have all had to face, and how we survived! The year 2020 has

forced us to think innovatively, in a cross-section of environments where business is no longer business as usual. The travel and tourism landscape hasn't been spared of the impact of COVID-19. Living and producing this publication out of Dubai put us on the front lines of seeing just how much the industry has been affected, with countless jobs cut and borders that foster global travel closing to curb the spread of a global pandemic. Speaking to our friends in the industry across Africa has highlighted our reliance as a continent on international remittances. No tourists meant the entire industry's ecosystem has been affected; from proceeds that impact communities and conservation efforts in tourism areas, to revenues that contribute towards national industry growth.

But Africa is still Africa. It is still a continent endowed with so much in natural resources and expansive landscapes, and most importantly, a beautifully diverse people who boast a myriad of cultures and practices. We remain resilient and expectant that we will survive as we have always done, opening more doors for the rest of the world to experience what we have on offer from the fabulous Cape to the historic Cairo!

As we celebrate this Year's festive season in a way unlike we've ever done before, let us choose to view our glasses half full than empty. Yes, we may not be able



to gather with friends and family as we have done all through our lives, but we are alive and have the opportunity to reflect upon the lessons of this year. May we dare to dream again, even in this new era with COVID-19. May our minds take us on compelling adventures with the hopes that our dreams will manifest into a blooming reality!

With compliments of the season from our family to yours. We will be seeing you in the New Year, bigger, better and ready to showcase more of Africa's gems! Happy Holidays and a wishing you a New Year of promise and abundance! 🍷

*Gyovonne C. Mtengwa*

“It’s really beautiful. It feels like God visits everywhere else but lives in Africa.”

– WILL SMITH



Travel  
ESSENCE  
Getaways

YOUR CALL TO EXPLORING AFRICA

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LIFESTYLE EXPERIENCES • CONTENT CREATOR TRIPS INVESTOR  
TOURS TO KEY AFRICAN MARKETS AND MORE...

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*Meet*  
LEE KELSALL,  
CEO OF KER &  
DOWNEY® AFRICA



**BUILDING  
LEGACIES  
THROUGH  
*LUXURY*  
TRAVEL  
BUSINESS**

Great Migration safari  
in Tanzania



**1. DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN TWO SENTENCES.**

I am a budding entrepreneur and investor, former lawyer, happy husband, and father of two (Hi Susie, Hector and Bella)! I am passionate about travel, sport and culture and committed to life-long learning and leaving a positive legacy for my children and the communities I serve; that is Ker & Downey® Africa, my family and friends, the African travel landscape and so on...

**2. LEE KELSALL IS WELL RECOGNISED AS A BUSINESS LEADER IN THE SAFARI TOURISM LANDSCAPE AS THE CEO OF THE KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA GROUP. TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE COMPANY AND ITS UNIQUE SELLING POINTS?**

Ker & Downey® Africa is a luxury travel company founded with the mission to create personalised trips to Africa that challenge, connect and leave a legacy. Our tagline 'Pioneering African Travel' is a daily challenge to every member of the Ker & Downey® Africa team. We aim to push the boundaries of African travel with a spirit of quality, adventure, and exploration.

As a leading luxury travel company, we do not believe in a one-size-fits-all approach. Our LuxVenture® Designers take pride in creating one-of-a-kind luxury itineraries that not only promise a seamless travel experience but are tailored to meet each client's individual needs and preferences - with a few unexpected surprises along the way.

Headquartered in Cape Town, South Africa, and with a base in Arusha, Tanzania, our diverse team representing South Africa, Germa-

Hot air balloon safari in  
Tanzania





ny, Brazil, Australia, China, Tanzania and the UK have first-hand knowledge on planning African trips for luxury clients and connect our clients with the very best experiences, local communities and wildlife encounters throughout Africa.

Our team is trusted for our reliability and expertise and guests can feel safe in the knowledge that should anything go wrong; we are on the ground to assist. Our luxury concierge team, known as Customer Experience Coordinators, provide the next level of service to each trip. This includes personalizing activities such as arranging private dining options,

making bookings at the most exclusive restaurants, and setting up world-class spa experiences. Our Customer Experience Coordinators are available 24/7 throughout each client's stay and are available to assist with whatever the client needs.

Our clients get the benefit of our extensive network of accommodation suppliers and service providers receiving agent specific deals and value adds, as well as access to our local expert insights, expertise, and concierge services. In essence, it does not cost you more to book through a travel company as opposed to booking directly.

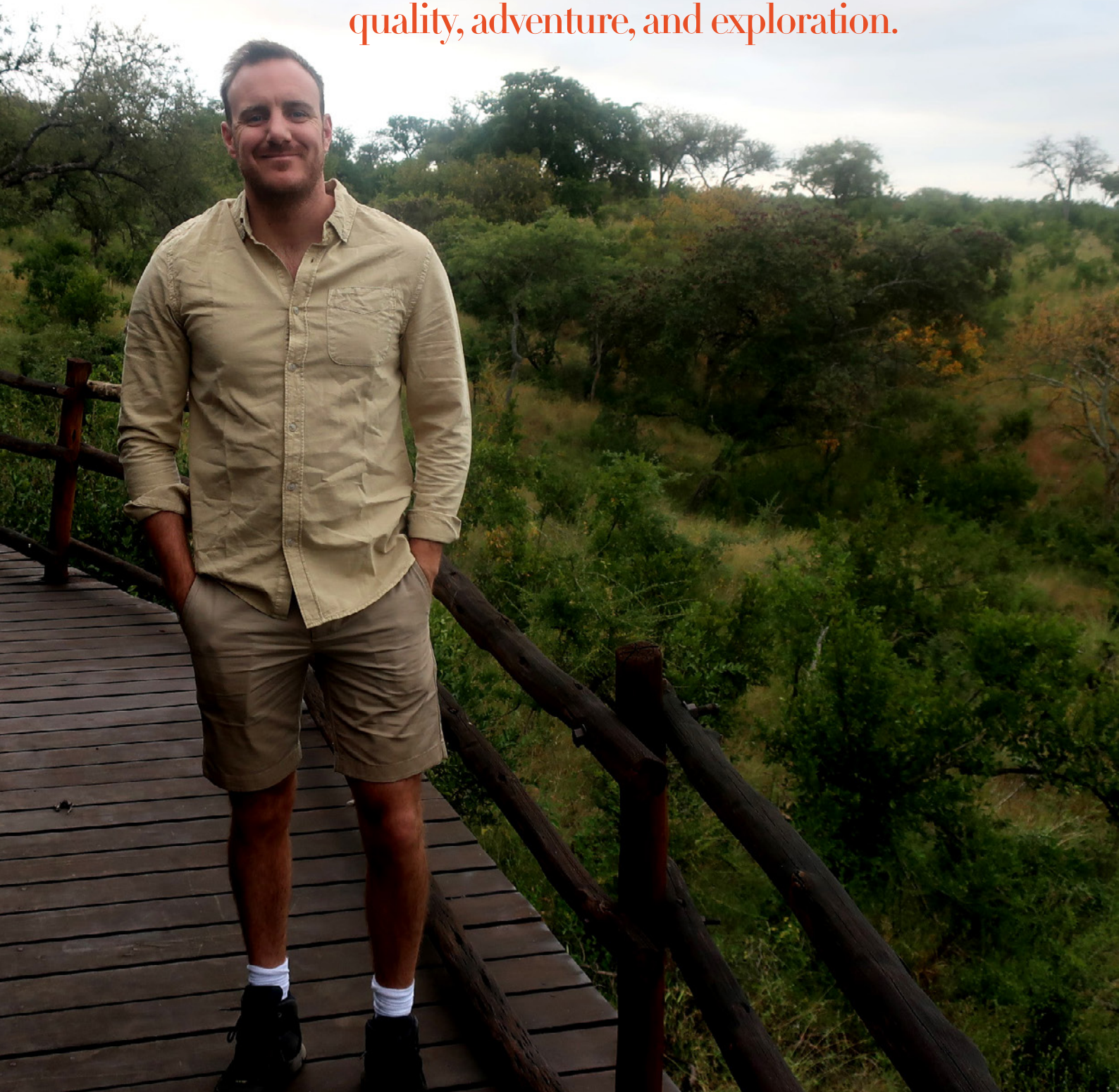
### 3. TAKE US THROUGH THE FOUNDATIONS THAT LED YOU TO EVENTUALLY STARTING AND RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS IN LUXURY AFRICA SAFARI TRAVEL? WHAT WAS THE SEASON OR MOMENT THAT BECAME CONFIRMATION THAT THIS WAS IN FACT WHAT YOU WANTED TO DO?

Prior to relocating to Cape Town, I was a corporate lawyer in London working for US law firm, Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy, and global law firm Norton Rose Fulbright. During the financial crisis, the firm offered a 3-month sabbatical to everyone, so I took the opportunity to travel to Kenya to live with a Masai tribe, which ignited my love for African travel and the bush. A few years down the line I jumped at the opportunity to move to Cape Town to head up the online retail division of Ker & Downey® Africa and I haven't looked back since!

Law taught me the value of building a service that focused on exceptional customer service and attention to the smallest of details. It required mindfulness and a commitment to excellence at all times. Law is also an industry based on the trust and integrity of the lawyer-client relationship. I think all these things are equally important to bespoke travel.



Our tagline ‘Pioneering African Travel’ is a daily challenge to every member of the Ker & Downey® Africa team. We aim to push the boundaries of African travel with a spirit of quality, adventure, and exploration.



**4. KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA GROUP'S MISSION IS TO "CREATE UNIQUE ADVENTURES THAT CHALLENGE, CONNECT AND BUILD LEGACIES." SHARE WITH US THE PROCESS THAT LED TO THIS BECOMING A PART OF YOUR MISSION STATEMENT. WHY IS THE ASPECT OF BUILDING LEGACIES IMPORTANT TO YOU AS AN ENTREPRENEUR AND TO THE TEAM YOU WORK WITH?**

Our team noticed a growing interest amongst luxury travelers seeking a more purposeful travel experience that fulfills the soul, particularly when traveling to Africa. This inspired our mission to create adventures that challenge our clients with the most unique experiences, connect them with the people, culture, and spirit of the destination that they visit and leave positive legacies in Africa.

Based in South Africa, our team is acutely aware of the impact of tourism (both good and bad) on the communities and wildlife of the different countries we operate in and aim to offer our clients with responsible travel experiences. Thankfully, we work with some incredible suppliers who are focused on the sustainability of African safaris and our product team works hard to vet the suppliers we work with.

There are several ways our clients can leave a positive legacy. Firstly, just by travelling with us to Africa they will be supporting a whole host of jobs and conservation projects across the whole tourism ecosystem. COVID-19 has highlighted the huge importance of tourism to the GDP of Africa and the absence of tourists is having a devastating impact on jobs, the economy and conservation projects that were supported by the funds raised through tourism. I think that international tourism contributed 8% to the GDP of South Africa in 2019 by the time you factor in the indirect spend on local businesses.

Our clients can also make a difference by donating to one of the NGOs we support or to a local project sponsored by one of the suppliers we work with. In some instances, we will at the client's request, set up experiences for our clients to get directly involved in local projects that they have heard about or that we recommend to them. We don't go out of our way to push any particular project but if the consultant gets to understand where the client's interests lie then we will of course seek to facilitate an introduction.

**5. "LUXVENTURE TRIPS" IS A TERM THAT'S BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA GROUP WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS YOUR UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION AS YOU CURATE TRIPS FOR TRAVELLERS OF DISCERNING TASTES?**

LuxVenture® is a product category inspired by the team's passion to create innovative African experiences that are nothing short of life changing. The only way we know how to do that is by creating original and thrilling adventures for our guests that challenge them, allow them to connect with the people and cultures they visit and leave a positive legacy in Africa.

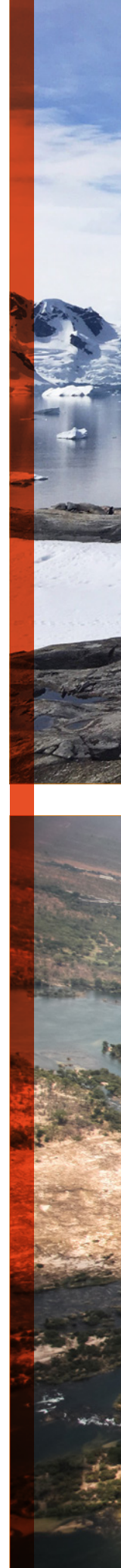
Take for example our 12-day Culinary Journey to Morocco where guests can discover the distinct flavours of Morocco alongside culinary expert and food journalist, Tara Stevens. Or our 10-day South Africa to Antarctica Expedition which combines a traditional safari experience in a private concession in the Kruger National Park with an exciting expedition to one of the last untouched wilderness areas in the world, Antarctica.

Each LuxVenture® journey combines exceptional, bucket list worthy experiences with world-class luxury to satisfy our clients' desire for adventure and cater to their needs for the finer things in life. Our team has invested decades of experience, passion, and creativity into our LuxVenture® experiences. This means that nothing in our trips is designed by accident, every transfer, lodge, and route has been crafted specifically for the best possible travel experience.

However, these luxury safaris are just a taste of what an Africa travel experience with Ker & Downey® Africa could look like. Once you make contact with us, you will be assigned a personal LuxVenture® Designer. They will combine your interests with their expert knowledge to curate your one-of-a-kind safari.

**6. YOUR PACKAGES COVER A GOOD BIT OF AFRICA - FROM MOROCCO TO RWANDA, MAURITIUS TO BOTSWANA. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ELEMENTS YOU LOOK FOR WHEN CURATING LUXURY EXPERIENCES FOR GUESTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE WELL TRAVELLED AND HUGELY CONNECTED?**

Being in the luxury travel industry means that compromises can't be made on the standard of service or luxury. This largely dictates the destinations that we are willing to sell confidently to our high-end clients.





Antarctica



Helicopter flight over the upper Zambezi



We strongly believe in specializing in areas that we know like the back of our hands where we have tried and tested all aspects of our offering. Our team travels extensively throughout the African continent and dedicates their time to uncovering unique products and experiences to ensure that we are always on the forefront of luxury travel to Africa.

With regards to our suppliers, we vet each property we sell to ensure that their offering meets the very best in world-class luxury. This encompasses exclusive locations, unparalleled wildlife encounters, unique experiences as well as a more privatized accommodation experience that can tailor their offering to meet each client's needs and preferences.

**7. KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA GROUP RECENTLY LAUNCHED AN EXCITING CONSERVATION FOCUSED TRIP IN COLLABORATION WITH THE TRACKER ACADEMY? OUTLINE THE KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS TRIP, AND WHY CONSERVATION IS A CRITICAL SUBJECT FOR BOTH THE TOURIST AND THE TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS OF AFRICA?**

Tourism in Africa plays an integral role in funding costly conservation projects and community upliftment programmes throughout the continent. In 2020, many African countries immediately closed their borders to reduce the spread of the COVID-19. As a result, the tourism industry, which is a vital employer in rural areas in Africa and employs 24.6 million people across the continent, was hit the hardest and the downturn in tourism revenue, as well as donations, posed a range of threats for the ongoing work needed to ensure the safety of Africa's endangered wildlife and people.

Reactivating tourism to Africa is crucial not just to protect livelihoods but also to help ensure the continued protection of its wildlife. Going forward, we believe that people will approach travel from a more sustainable perspective and will consider the environmental and social impact of their holidays, and as a result, provide revenue for much-needed cultural and environmental preservation.

Our 12-day Conservation Safari in South

Tracker Academy, students out on the field



Tracking experience at Londolozi







Africa was crafted alongside The Tracker Academy – a non-profit organization that serves to restore the ancient artform of wildlife tracking by offering a formal qualification to youth from disadvantaged backgrounds in South Africa. We created this itinerary to showcase the pivotal role trackers play in wildlife conservation and protection, as well as give back to the broader cause of funding the education of local trackers through a \$100 donation per trip sold.

The itinerary transports guests to the Tracker Academy’s base camps located at Tswalu Kalahari and Londoloz Private Game Reserve and allows them the opportunity to track some of South Africa’s most unique wildlife alongside the students and graduates of this life-altering programme.

The itinerary begins in Cape Town where guests will stay at the prestigious Ellerman House before flying directly to Tswalu Kalahari. Here, guests will have the opportunity to visit the Tracker Academy and explore Tswalu’s unique terrain as they practice their tracking and conservation skills as well as enjoy private game drives, horseback safaris and guided bush walks. The itinerary concludes in Lon-

dolozzi, where guests can enjoy Big 5 encounters and wildlife conservation experiences alongside expert guides and trackers.


**8. BESIDES TREKKING THE PLAINS OF AFRICA, WHICH WE IMAGINE IS PRETTY AWESOME IN ITSELF...WHAT IS LEE'S FAVOURITE PASS-TIME?**

Outside of travel, I love to spend time with my family, braai (South African barbecue), workout, listen to music and go for hikes on Table Mountain.

**9. AFRICA IS ENDOWED WITH 54 COUNTRIES WHICH IS A HUGE POOL TO CHOOSE FROM. WHAT ARE YOUR THREE FAVOURITE AFRICAN DESTINATIONS TO VISIT AND WHY?**

My favourite destination is South Africa. It’s been my home of seven years and continues to delight. I love the diversity of landscape, culture, and experiences on offer. Joint second would be Tanzania and Morocco. Tanzania for the wildlife experience of the Serengeti and the majesty of Ngorongoro Crater. Morocco for its cuisine, architecture, and nightlife!

**10. WHAT LEGACY DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE, AND ALSO THROUGH THE WORK YOU DO?**

I want to know that my time on this planet has been well spent. I seek that feeling that comes from knowing that I’ve had a hand in creating something of intrinsic excellence that makes a contribution to society. I want to raise a son and daughter who feel secure, optimistic, and inspired by the beauty of life. 



# TASTE-MAKERS |



**TJD TRAVEL  
ENTREPRENEURS  
MICHELLE KARAM AND  
DENNIS STEVER**  
*Take on Rwanda*

## CATCHING UP WITH CO-FOUNDER MICHELLE AS SHE DISCUSSED THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE FORMATION OF TJD AND THE OPPORTUNITIES 2020 BROUGHT FOR CURATING TRIPS BEYOND NORDIC DESTINATIONS AS THEY VISITED RWANDA FOR THE FIRST TIME.

### 1. WHO ARE MICHELLE AND DENNIS IN A FEW SENTENCES?

Michelle & Dennis are two best friends who share the same passion in travel, photography and exploring new adventures. Both of us come from a hospitality background with long years of experience in curating events. TJD is our first entrepreneurial business where we combined both our past expertise and created a travel company that caters to guests around the world in building group trips, personalized itineraries, corporate trips which includes team building activities.

### 2. MICHELLE, YOU ARE THE CO-FOUNDER OF TJD, AN ADVENTURE TRAVEL COMPANY THAT SPECIALISES IN CURATING TRIPS TO EUROPE'S NORDIC COUNTRIES. HOW DID YOUR JOURNEY TOWARDS BECOMING A TRAVEL ENTREPRENEUR BEGIN?

TJD is an adventure travel company. We take you on Polar Journeys to destinations that are filled with wonder, nature, legends, and wild landscapes; places where only few people have been. This year, we also opened our doors to our first East African country, Rwanda, the land of a thousand hills and we are honored to have added Rwanda to our portfolio.

TJD is expanding due to an increase in demand for travel to uncharted destinations filled with adventures. We created TJD by following our passion and taking a leap of faith into the unknown.

### 3. OCTOBER 2020 SAW YOU MAKING YOUR FIRST TRIP TO RWANDA. TALK TO US ABOUT WHAT INSPIRED THIS TRIP AND WHAT IT WAS ABOUT RWANDA THAT HAD YOU WANTING TO EXPERIENCE IT FOR YOURSELF.

Rwanda was always a bucket list destination. It was one of those places you read about on NatGeo or watch documentaries about it, especially with gorilla trekking, but we never imagined we would have the courage to go through it.

In 2020, an incredible opportunity arose, and Dennis and I decided to take a leap of faith and book with RwandAir from Dubai to Kigali and experience the gorilla trek and learn more about this magical East African country. We were blown away! We learned so much! It's no wonder that it is the number 1 safest place in Africa. We met the most

incredible people, and the hotels and partners were supportive of our mission from day 1 - which is to show the world how beautiful, safe and adventurous Rwanda is, in hopes to start selling group trips and private trips to this destination.

### 4. RWANDA TO KIGALI: HOW WAS YOUR TRIP AND SHARE WITH US THE FEELING OF TOUCHING DOWN IN EAST AFRICA?

The flight with RwandAir exceeded our expectations. I'll tell you a little secret, as a frequent traveler, I am afraid of flying. Upon boarding RwandAir, I felt very safe. The airline has ensured the guest of all the COVID19 measures they have taken in order to keep everything sanitized. Masks are worn at all times. The seating configuration in the business class surely did make the flight smoother with the flat bed! When landing in Rwanda, the strict protocols assured us that they have taken the situation very seriously. This definitely played a major role in making us feel safer.

### 5. YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY A FEW DAYS IN THE CAPITAL, KIGALI. WHAT WERE YOUR KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND WHAT WERE YOUR TAKE-AWAYS IN INTERACTING WITH THE PEOPLE AND EXPERIENCING THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF RWANDA'S CAPITAL?

Kigali is again, one of the many aspects of our trips that exceeded our expectations.

To learn more about Michelle,  
Dennis, and their travel business  
TJD – visit [www.travelwithtjd.com](http://www.travelwithtjd.com)

The cleanliness, the handwashing stations and the mandatory masks were a big sell. We had a chance to stop by a traditional African restaurant where I had the pleasure of devouring the food! We also took the opportunity to visit the Kigali Genocide Memorial, which was very heavy on my soul but also helped me feel connected in a way to the Rwandan people.

## 6. OFF TO RWANDA'S WILD-LIFE TERRITORY AND ONTO AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK YOU HEADED. WHERE DID YOU HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF STAYING AND WHAT WERE THE MOST CAPTIVATING PARTS FOR YOU ON THIS LEG OF YOUR JOURNEY?

The road trip was bumpy, but the landscape was incredible. The entrance to the main park again, exceeded my expectation on the precautionary measures taken to prevent the virus. The park itself is home to the Big 5 which was one of the best experiences! We managed to see 4 of them amongst others! We missed the black Rhino! Staying in different lodges from Ruzizi and Magashi, gave us a taste on both worlds, South & North!

## 7. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A TRAVEL ENTREPRENEUR, WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE RWANDA, AND THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA AS A WHOLE OFFERS TO YOUR CLIENTS THAT'S DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED BEFORE THROUGH TJD?

I do believe Rwanda offers a vast variety of choices and activities! We spent 7 nights and still, feel we have not conquered it all! From gorilla trekking to the big 5, coffee plantations, culinary experiences, and cul-







ture visits! I think Rwanda is under-rated and I do hope, thanks to the easy visa process on arrival and exceptional care during the pandemic, that Rwanda is surely an upcoming hit destination!

## **8. WHICH OTHER PLACES WERE YOU ABLE TO VISIT DURING YOUR TIME IN RWANDA?**

We visited Akagera National Park, Volcanoes Park and Kigali. I would love to explore more waterfalls, lakes, and coffee plantations too!

## **9. A GOOD NUMBER OF YOUR CLIENTS ARE EXPATS THAT LIVE AND WORK IN THE UAE. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THEM TO KNOW ABOUT WHY RWANDA SHOULD BE ADDED TO THEIR BUCKET LIST OF PLACES TO VISIT IN AFRICA?**

I would like to let the people know that Rwanda is the number one safest country in Africa. I would like them to get to know the Rwandan people more, learning about their history and the love for their country. Rwanda has everything to offer! From nature, to landscapes, to Gorilla Treks, Safaris, and culinary experiences. 🇷🇼

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CHAMPIONING TRAVEL BY LOCAL ETHNIC GROUPS



*Meet*

THE CEO OF BLACK  
TROTTERS AFRIKA,  
REFILOE KOBELI

“I am an African. I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.

- FORMER PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA THABO MBEKI

Thabo Mbeki’s quote speaks to the soul of Refiloe Kobeli, the big boss at Black Trotters Afrika, a travel company deeply steeped in its South African origins. Aptly called Black Trotters, the dream was and still remains to encourage and see more exploratory and leisure travel by the local ethnic groups, with Refiloe happily testifying the evolution of the travel landscape over the past few years. Key to note is the marked increase in the take up of holiday packages by the African market, with the graph definitely trending upwards year on year!

Big on family, cooking, hiking, and cycling, the Sebokeng-born ardent traveller began her career in 2009, while working on the cruise ships as an Executive Host. The combination of being at sea, meeting and working with different personalities and nationalities, while simultaneously performing the functions of marketer, Public Relations professional and Trainer, came together to create the “perfect storm” that would shortly thereafter, jumpstart her journey as a travel entrepreneur.

“Part of my job was to travel, and this in turn allowed me to see and explore over 40 countries in a space of 4 years and that was my favorite part of the job. I loved how travel made me feel, the lessons along the way and realized that this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life,” says Refiloe.

Her experiences became the impetus she needed to switch careers, and just like that Black Trotters Afrika was born! Refiloe’s brainchild is a travel company that specializes in corporate, leisure and groups travel, curating irresistible packages to the most amazing locations all over the world! Black Trotters Afrika’s tailor-made packages transport you on that trip, vacation, honeymoon, strategy session, girls’ or bachelors’ trip of your dreams to des-

tinations across South Africa and the greater Southern Africa region, Turkey, Italy and Greece in Europe, the Philippines, Thailand and Maldives in Asia and of course, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

### BUILDING THE BRAND AND GOING SOCIAL

Black Trotters Afrika celebrated reaching 10 000 followers on Instagram by running a competition - with a package prize worth R25 000! The competition winners were announced on the 18th of November 2020 and the lucky Mr. and Mrs. Monyai of Limpopo in South Africa, were slated to enjoy an all expenses trip to Cape Town. Pulling all the stops, the Black Trotters Afrika package covered return flights and accommodation in Cape Town, with the special add on of a private chef who delivered the most amazing breakfasts and four course dinners and their very own private photographer to capture memories throughout their getaway.

Tours form an integral part of most trips booked with the company, with personal guides or hosts being a win for group travel. This was the case for the winners, who too got to experience guided tours of Cape Point, the Castle of Good hope, Robben Island, the Atlantic Seaboard, a wine tour of the Cape Wine lands, the City Tour of Cape Town, hiking on Lions Head and finally sundowners at Signal Hill.

“We thought it would be a great gesture to giveaway a luxury romantic trip to one of our followers, seeing they never stopped supporting us even when there was zero travel happening due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Refiloe.

“It was heartwarming to note that our followers continued liking, sharing, and commenting on our

content till our numbers grew to 10k followers!”

When asked about her top African destinations, this travel enthusiast highlights her love for East Africa, mentioning Kenya specifically.

“From the famous Maasai Mara National Reserve with its abundant game, to the exquisite and mesmerizing white sandy beaches along the coast and of course, the vibrant night life of Nairobi, Kenya holds a special place on my heart. A close second are the humble, welcoming, and easygoing people of the beautiful country of Mozambique. They beckon me for a getaway repeatedly,” Refiloe she says.


“Also, what’s there not to love about the archipelago of Zanzibar with its clear blue waters, the history that is Stone Town, the culture and the seafood of Tanzania,” says Refiloe.

The travel entrepreneur also celebrates her love for her home country South Africa. The beautiful yet varied landscapes throughout the nation, the friendly people of diverse cultures, the wildlife in the world-renowned game parks and the wealth of history are all what make it “Mzansi!”

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a hot topic for the travel industry at large, challenging small business owners and bigger brands alike to reevaluate business practices and the how to redefine the future of travel.

“I believe the travel industry is the biggest casualty with this pandemic, and we still have a long way to go. For now the only way to come out winning is to follow the protocols as we know them, monitoring our health daily, while practicing the standard hygiene practices of constant cleaning and disinfecting, washing of hands, wearing of masks and of course – practicing social distancing. What we know is this – business is no longer business as usual and we all have a huge role to play in helping the industry pick back up by doing our part to curb the spread of the virus,” asserts Refiloe. 🇳🇵



To connect with Refiloe and Black Trotter Afrika on , check out [@Refiloe\\_thee\\_tourist](#) and [@blacktrottersafrika](#)





# CULINARY ESCAPADES



# *In the Kitchen with* **Chef Absalom Kotsokoane**

LAUNCHING MOENG SOUTH AFRICA AND  
CELEBRATING TRADITIONAL CUISINE

**C**hef Absalom Kotsokoane, who goes by the name “Chef Absa” – believes that the essence of all beautiful art; all great art - is gratitude. That’s in fact his approach to food exploration, not only as chef but as person living and working with people. To this culinary whizz, food preparation is always about a melody created through skills, passion, and art.

“I am a chef, restaurateur, content developer, food stylist and part-time lecturer,” Chef Absa says, adding that his humble beginnings as a landscaper are what paved way to experiencing a spectrum of different lights, energy and people, who then filtered into the heart of his kitchen in Rosebank.

#### **OF HUMBLE BEGINNINGS**

“I have always been delighted at the prospect of - a new day, fresh try, and one more start - with perhaps a bit of magic waiting somewhere in the morning.” Chef Absa weighs in as he narrates how his journey



towards exploring his gift began.

“It’s the love and patience of my grandmother that instilled the drive and desire for cooking and the spirit of entrepreneurship in a little boy from Kgalalatsane Village in the North West Province of South Africa,” he adds.

Chef Absa was always surrounded by family, largely his grandmother and aunts who were excellent cooks, and so his home was his first culinary school! Thereafter training filled the gaps, helping him explore things that he could not ordinarily explain from cooking at home, especially the science of it all. He does however credit his grandmother for the pivotal role she played in his career.

“My grandmother taught me to look at my talent as a business and my mother taught me my pastry skills,” cites Chef Absalom.

His first formal booking was for his sister Dr. Mpho Sehunoe. On this occasion, he was to cook for a group of women in Midrand, Johannesburg. With the help of his family, they successfully catered for this group and the snowball effect was more catering inquiries and bookings for weddings,



private parties, and corporate events.

**INSPIRATION BEING THE CATALYST TO CREATIVITY**

“I am inspired by everything and anything! From the odd and unusual, to the unpopular and small materials; be it art, a flower, a seed even! As long as it ignites that fire that gives birth to a concept, beautiful things happen,” Chef Absalom states enthusiastically. He describes his cooking style as a modern twist of African food, and often refers to it as ‘soul food’.

“I personally think our African ingredients are not celebrated enough in high profile gatherings or events and so I took it seriously to show off, celebrate and em-

brace our ingredients in a way that our food is respected and appreciated beyond normal cultural functions. Africa is beautiful inside out!”

“I love cooking indigenous chicken; the free-range fowls, sweet potato and lentil curry (anything curry I will eat or cook any day), and chicken gizzards. Duck L’Orange and Pangasius, a fish dish, are my other favorite meals I would gladly pick them off a menu when eating out,” he adds.

### **MOENG RESTAURANT – THE NEW ADDITION TO THE FAMILY**

Chef Absa believes enjoying peace is one of the beauties of life. It is in enjoying the sunshine, the smile of a child, the love of a mother, the joy of a father, and most important to him - the togetherness of a family. And so, it was no surprise that the next part of his journey would include creating a restaurant business that celebrates the essence of family.

“That is what we are, a family of exciting and innovative chefs, waiters and barmen. Moeng meaning ‘visitor’, is our coming together to create something beautiful for us all. To us, it’s a victory of truth hence why we started this project,” states Chef Absalom as he shares more on his latest project - Moeng South Africa.

“Moeng South Africa is a restaurant that prides itself in embodying the pride of African soul food. We primarily focus on celebrating the African ingredients in a traditional yet sophisticated manner,” he adds.

The restaurant is situated at 199 Oxford Park Shop 3 Ground floor Rosebank, Gauteng, the center of business and tourism. Every dish served is an experience waiting to be explored, a conversation waiting to be had and a memory to take home as a keepsake. Part of their service ethos is to tailor each event hosted to ensure that clients receive nothing but the best.

“It’s important to us that we ap-





preciate our guests, and they feel the love, hence our slogan ‘Moeng go roga re je ka wena’ meaning “we only share the best with our guest”.

“The restaurant is an African modern concept with different elements that symbolize the notion of home, culture and family spirit. Moeng was created to speak to its core name Moeng, which means “visitor”. It is a celebration of the diverse culture of South Africa, but starting with what we know from the Batswana home,” says Chef Absa

“The idea is inspired by our childhood experiences, and where we come from - the North West Province of South Africa. It is really about how we view our relationships between people, the fusion of cultures, festivals and events that touch and speak to visitors coming home after having been away for a long time. The food and décor elements spark conversations and create beautiful and memorable dialogue. It’s really about creating a warm welcome for our guests,” he adds.

### ON MOENG RESTAURANT’S PLANS

“As Moeng Restaurant our dream is to curate a new narrative for African cuisine. It is more than traditional event catering. We aim to provide a touch of class, plenty of flavour, vibrant colours and textures all while delighting taste buds. We want to be seen as a place for sharing experiences with clients locally and from all over the world, especially through food.”


Chef Absalom is of the view that the culinary world continues to evolve, which is why restaurateurs should ensure that they are on the pulse of trends



and food service and preparation techniques. He does however believe that while the landscape may be evolving, the role of the chef has not evolved much, as it is driven by the love of what chefs do, and fueled by passion, drive, and spirit.

“This thinking has also kept us going through different seasons. Cooking techniques will always change however, as chefs we are always geared at upgrading the final products. As culinary artists, we must adapt to trends in innovations, change and in the current times, especially considering the new phenomenon that is operating in the COVID 19 business environment,” Chef Absa chimes in.

But chefs aren’t limited to the love of cooking and entertaining only, and Chef Absa is no exception to this reality.

“I absolutely love collecting different spoons and collecting vintage cases! Strange to some but it’s one of my quirky little fixes. I am also into Netflix, largely for the documentaries! Because I love to travel and experience different cuisines, my top three African destinations are Ghana, Morocco, and Zanzibar – Tanzania. There’s so much to tap into for culinary inspiration in those countries, and it’s always exciting to see what new things I can learn!” 



A *Toast* TO  
THE WESTERN  
CAPE WINELANDS

SOUTH AFRICA IS HOME TO SOME OF THE BEST TRAVEL SPOTS IN THE CONTINENT, EACH REGION OFFERING A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE AND ACTIVITIES THAT WILL SWEEP YOU OFF YOUR FEET. A TRIP TO THE WINE REGION OF SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH SPREADS ACROSS THE NATION'S COASTAL REGION, MAKES AN UNFORGETTABLE VACATION, WITH GORGEOUS SCENERY AND DELECTABLE CUISINE ACCOMPANIED BY WORLD CLASS WINE.

**B**oasting 400 wineries dotted across the Western Cape, each town celebrates award-winning, globally renowned wine brands such as Nedenburg, Roodeburg, Vilafote which are just three of many wines that are manufactured for export beyond South Africa's borders. If you carry a penchant for exploring winelands and learning of the deep history of celebrated vineyards, then a trip to South Africa's wine country should be high on your list of travel experiences to add knock off your bucket list. Here's why...

### A FOODIE'S PARADISE

The region is laced with many food spots to indulge in some top-quality dishes after a wine tasting session. From cheap eats to fancy a la carte meals, natural and organic eating, with locally sourced ingredients and freshly caught sea food from the South Atlantic Ocean, one truly has countless bespoke experiences to choose from.

When in the Mother City of Cape Town, visit the famous V & A Waterfront Food Market in Cape Town, where you will find many vendors offering delicious food and snacks to sink your teeth into as you take in the refreshing view. With plentiful restaurants to pick from especially for those looking for a more elegant meal setting, you are sure to be handed a wine menu, with selections to pair with your dish of choice.

### HOME TO THE PINOTAGE

Pinotage is a red wine grape that is unique to South Africa only. Cultivated in 1925, it is a cross between Pinot Noir and Cinsaut and produces deep red variety of wines with smoky, earthy flavors and a sweetness. The wine became

famous for the first time, after it became the champion wine at a Cape Wine Show in 1959. Today, South Africa exports about 19 million litres a year, contributing billions in Rands to the South African economy. As you explore the wine lands, you will learn more about the origins of Pinotage while sipping a few sips along the way!

### UNIQUE WINE TASTINGS

Tourists can easily think that if they have had one wine tasting experience, they have had them all. But exploring South Africa's wine route tells a different story. Each wine tasting experience is quite different, giving wine connoisseurs exciting opportunities to try something new at each pitstop. Pairings will range from the sweets including an assortment of chocolates and macaroons, to more savory options that include wine paired with tapas or traditional options like flammkuchen, a pizza-like flatbread topped with cream, onions, and bacon.

At J.C. Le Roux, South Africa's leading winery of delicate bubbles, one can look forward to being treated to a stylish wine tasting experience with the breathtaking mountains as a backdrop. Your sparkling wine may be paired with some nougat, meringues and even marshmallows! Whichever winery you choose, you will be guaranteed an educational experience as you learn not only about the flavors of the wine, but also its history and why it tastes the way it does.

### DISCOVER THE WINE TOWNS OF WESTERN CAPE

Along the wine trail, you will find the most unique towns with a rich history based on wine making as each town boasts a premium wine list of internationally renowned





wines. Franschhoek is one of South Africa's oldest settlements, founded in 1688 by French Huguenots. This beautiful vineyard only an hour away from Cape Town, is the perfect escape from the city and place for wine, food, and stunning views.


Although there are other vineyards with more to offer, Franschhoek is loved by tourists for its vintage charm and scenery. The small village consists of Dutch style houses, quaint boutiques and gourmet spots offering delicious food which will undoubtedly make your trip so memorable. There are great places to stay in Franschhoek too, including high-quality boutique hotels that offer luxurious personalised service. Although costing a pretty penny, a stay at any one of these is worth the splurge.

The Wine tram is Franschhoek's most loved feature as tourists hop on to the tram and enjoy the views of the winelands without having to drive. Hop on and off as you explore the vineyards and indulge in some wine tasting and food pairings. Food and wine are always a great way to spend the day.

Stellenbosch, the university town of Western Cape is also popular for its Dutch architecture, rich history, with hundreds of wine estates with vineyards offering some of the best wine brands of South Africa. Stellenbosch is the second oldest town in South Africa, but one wouldn't think it, with its vibrant atmosphere as college students bring a sense of youthfulness to the town and the public art installations around the town, bring in a modern vibe.

The popular 'Bites and Sites' activity is a popular tour among tourists, which is a food tour that allows tourists to visit the town's most popular restaurants and food spots and enjoy a hearty meal, taste some biltong (dried and cured meat) and sip on some wine. If you are an art lover then you will also love exploring this town and discovering some unique locally made pieces.

These are just two examples of some of the best vineyard towns in the country. Each offers a unique experience and wine tasting adventure.

The Cape Winelands are beautiful, with breathtaking landscapes and endless coastlines. A trip to this region will be filled with rich history, culture, an exploration of wineries, a little relaxed adventure and expansive culinary experiences wines are paired with locally produced cheese, cured meats and so much more! 



# SPICES, FOOD, AND HISTORY

## The spice trade's influence East Africa's cuisine.

By Louisa Choruma

“PK” as he was fondly called by his peers, knew something about everything! As a seasoned safari and tour guide, he was well respected as a pool of knowledge on wildlife, vegetation, vast landscapes and of course - people! Always very conscious of detail, PK was the guy who made a good cup of coffee on the fire, often with an intriguing story to accompany the activity at hand.

"This coffee can never be as hot as the one I had in Morocco! See! This was how I burnt my top lip!" he chimed in on each occasion brewing his coffee was done over a fire. In his deep baritone voice, whilst we all furiously blew over our mugs to cool the hot beverage, PK was that guy that could switch from speaking English to Portuguese upon crossing the Mozambican border.

Being one to transition from one topic of discussion to the next, it was no surprise that one evening, a debate would ensue as the staff at our lodge huddled around each other to tackle the opinion that Africa's food was to an extent, influenced by parts of Asia. The Spice Route, which today is a popular cruise ship itinerary, was originally a trade route as Europe and the Americas sought the shortest and safest course to take

to Asia by sea in pursuit of new conquests in trade.

PK argued vehemently that our continent's food culture was greatly influenced by the spices brought in from parts of Asia, with flavours, preservation processes and textures being traced back to India, Persia, and Malaysian territories.

"To date, India still ranks as the world's top producer of the widest array of spices," PK chimed in, with a colleague quickly asking him to shed more light on the matter.

"Take for instance East Africa, where Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda had access to direct sailing routes from the tip of Asia to the most accessible African port of Tanzania," began PK....

### *The African spice trade story*

"Throughout history, there was significant migration of Indians and Arabs into Africa for trade purposes as they sought greener pastures and new territories for trade. The movement of these groups brought to Africa the introduction of new spices and cuisines of Asian influence," PK added.

Fast-forward to today, where destinations such as Tanza-



## CULINARY ESCAPADES • AFRICA SPICE TRADE HISTORY

nia's Zanzibar, have garnered acclaim for their positioning in Africa's spice trade history. Now known as the "Spice Island of Africa", Zanzibar's heritage for instance, is deeply steeped in it having been a trading hub that connected India, mainland East Africa, Malaysia and Portugal specifically, as explorers sought after cheaper prices for spices in huge quantities. It is in fact estimated that four centuries ago, spices from Western Asia made their way to the east coast of Africa by way of traders onboard traditional dhows.

The 16th and 17th centuries would result in Zanzibar gaining more popularity once Portuguese explorers and traders caught wind of opportunity and hatched a plan to control East Africa's trade routes. More migration, coupled with pursuit for occupation introduced foreign species in flora and spices, including more aromatic from India and as far as South America. In no time, the Omani Arabs set sail towards Zanzibar, later settling, and introducing spice farming.


### *The spicy eastern cuisine*

A trip to East Africa's coastal areas will certainly bring one to experience a fresh seafood catch, coupled with variations in curries, lentil dishes and pickled vegetables – all of which exhibit strong Indian and, in many cases, Arab influences. Sitting down for a meal at a restaurant or tea garden is almost always an invitation to try out staples such as chapati and curry, biryani rice dishes and meat stews, aromatic teas and snacks laden with cinnamon, cardamom, pepper, ginger, turmeric or saffron. Eat-

ery names such as Mystic India Restaurant or Mumbai Spices Restaurant, all bear testament to the tremendous influence of spice trade to the region many centuries ago.

Arabian influence is quite evident on the Swahili coast, with Kenya's capital city alone hosting well over 10 popular Middle Eastern restaurants, each offering unique Arabic cuisine, from Lebanese mezze platters to Arabic seafood and barbeque. The horn of Africa in Ethiopia and Somalia for instance, dinner can be served as late as 9pm, especially during special feast such as Ramadan. Adhering to the Muslim practice of halaal in food sourcing, preparation and production, it is no surprise to also see some religious materials showcased in the restaurants and eateries as an ode to the Arab origins of the cuisine being offered.

"Every culture has its own mixes and uses of spices and in Somalia they use a lot of fenugreek, coriander, cumin, cardamom, nutmeg, cinnamon sticks, bay leaf, black seed, turmeric, and ginger," the ever-so knowledgeable PK continued on with his storytelling.

"And in Somali culture it said that if you enter a restaurant, you don't order, but rather the waiter tells you what you're eating! So you see folks, the spice trade era was in fact some form of cross cultural exchange, as people from different continents were brought together by the desire to source and occupy trade routes, bringing along their influences which remains evident in today's east African food culture," PK continued on, much to the fascination of his curious audience. 







# ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA

ZANZIBAR WHITE SAND LUXURY  
VILLAS & SPA:  
AN INDULGENCE OF  
*tranquillity* AND OCEANSIDE  
*luxury*





**A**s the plane touches down in the Tanzanian archipelago of Zanzibar, we imagine any guest to this pristine destination would struggle to contain their excitement at the prospects of exploring the white sandy shores that would have enticed them to make their way to Zanzibar to begin with. Yes, you've heard about Zanzibar, but now you get the chance to enjoy a little travel inspiration, with the Zanzibar White Sand Luxury Villas & Spa beckoning you to come along and take in the serenity and picturesque views that await you. Imagine that! A whole beachfront villa to yourself and your loved ones, whether it's for a much-needed family coastal break or a romantic getaway to remind you of just how beautiful love is!

Located on Zanzibar's quiet south east coastline, with an ethos focused on complete seclusion, tranquillity and luxury, Zanzibar White Sand Luxury Villas & Spa overlooks the perfect unmatched sands and crystalline waters of Paje Beach, with 11 villas spread across 4 hectares of lush tropical gardens.

This award-winning Relais & Chateaux resort guarantees incredibly fresh, locally sourced ingredients in every dish served, with much of the fresh produce coming from the resort's own garden and small-scale farmers from surrounding villages. If you are one who sets a premium on a unique dining experience during your travels, you'll be delighted to know that the resort offers an array of dining options, including in the resort's main restaurant, a beach bar or meals served privately at your villa.





### **A DREAMY PRIVATE ESCAPE**

Zanzibar White Sand Luxury Villas are each on a 1500 square metre plot, allowing for adequate seclusion, social distancing and a surrounding garden that provides all the privacy needed. Having access to your own private pool, dining and living area, can make it a little hard to leave your little slice of homely paradise during your stay!

Should you be the adventurer who much prefers to enjoy the invitation of the coastal outdoors, you can take your pick from an abundance of activities, including kitesurfing and paddle-boarding. Paje Beach is well-renowned as one of the best kite-surfing locations off the coast of East Africa, not to mention that there is a flat, shallow lagoon directly in front of the Zanzibar White Sand Luxury Villa & Spa's kite school. Steady almost year-round winds provide an ideal setting for budding students and seasoned professionals alike to



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try their hand at kitesurfing and paddle boarding, snorkelling and diving trip about the island. Clear kayaks are available for all guests and always a win for those looking to really become one for a time with the water's marine life.

Then there is that unending call to a little relaxation and rejuvenation. A tranquil outdoor spa nestled amongst the gardens ticks all the boxes! Guests can enjoy an indulgence of massages, steam room sessions and various sauna treatments, all of which will have you earning for more self-care regimens when you do return to your everyday life. If wellness is the theme of the vacation, Zanzibar White Sand Luxury Villas & Spa will award you plenty of choice to partake of...

#### HELLO PAJE!

Just a short bike ride or walk away is the vibrant village of Paje. A leisurely cycle is sure to give you a chance to cover more ground as you explore the little nearby village, doing anything from watching villagers harvest seaweed, stopping for a refreshing drink at any one of the local juice bars or interacting with the locals as part of the hustle and bustle of the village.


Not-to-be missed is of course Stone Town - a UNESCO world heritage site steeped in history. The influence from other countries and cultures is seen clearly in the architecture here, with tourists often taking time to seek better understanding of Zanzibar's history by visiting the Old Slave Market and Museum. The vibrant spice markets will speak to the food connoisseur within,

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with its richness in colours and scents, and very much a reminder of Zanzibar's strategic importance as a trade centre throughout history. Tourists can explore further by booking a tour of the spice farms on the island or taking a walk on the wild side by touring the Jozani Forest, Zanzibar's largest protected area.

As a guest at Zanzibar White Sand Luxury Villas & Spa, there are countless reasons to treat yourself to such an enticing escape. As a visitor to the island destination of Zanzibar, there are so many activities on offer both on land and at sea, from immersive cultural experiences and journeys through history by interacting with the local community to an indulgence of a myriad of lifestyle temptations and culinary-themed escapades for every tastemaker! Whether you are an adventurer keen on taking to the ocean's waves or much prefer to enjoy the sea view from a lounge with a good book – Zanzibar White Sand Luxury Villas & Spa is a great place to begin your trip to Zanzibar. 



# Unpacking

Safari and beach retreats in perfect harmony with nature and surrounding communities

If the events of 2020 have taught us anything at all; it is how important it is to look after our local communities and the environment they call home. The travel industry has been under scrutiny in recent years over its environmental impact, however it is possible to make informed decisions on how your holiday choices can have a positive effect on people's lives and the surrounding habitats.

The Elewana Collection is a portfolio of 16 camps and lodges in some of the most beautiful locations across East Africa. Elewana means 'harmony' or 'under-

standing' in Kiswahili, and so from bush to beachfront, the one thing that all the properties have in common is a commitment to conservation and the community.

Every single guest night across the Elewana camps and lodges contributes to the "Land & Life Foundation",





# THE ELEWANA COLLECTION

the corporate social responsibility arm of the business that works with communities and conservation projects in the surrounding areas of the properties. One of the flagship projects is the Wildlife Warrior programme, established to ensure that future generations of local children understand the vital link between tourism, conservation and community. Activities include partnering with local conservationists and Elewana guides to deliver inspirational talks and educational visits to Elewana properties with game drives. For children that excel in the programme, there are scholarships on offer that can lead to future job opportunities within wildlife and conservation.

On an individual level, the properties are highly active in the field, working with the local people and wildlife protection projects. If guests are

passionate about rhino conservation, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy is one of the world's leading lights on how to successfully safeguard these precious animals. Lewa's innovative practices protect endangered and abundant wildlife existing in our landscape, often in partnership with neighbouring Borana Conservancy, which has resulted in a thriving black rhino population. This, in turn, creates a robust ecosystem for a multitude of other species including the endangered Grevy's zebra, elephant,

## ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA • ELEWANA COLLECTION

lion, cheetah and giraffe.

The Lewa-Borana Landscape is home to 14% of Kenya's rhino population and 11% of the world's population of endangered Grevy's zebra. The region is a critical landscape to northern Kenya's elephants and vital landscape connectivity for all migratory species. Together with partners, an elephant underpass has been established connecting Mount Kenya to the savannah landscapes of Lewa and further north. This innovative solution has helped reduce human-wildlife conflict and ensured that elephants can once again roam freely along their traditional migration routes.

### *Where to stay in East Africa's Elewana Collection*

Visitors can stay at Elewana Lewa Safari Camp or Elewana Kifaru House. Lewa Safari Camp offers luxury-tented accommodation, whereas Kifaru House offers beautifully appointed rooms in thatched cottages. Both offer refreshing pools and a homely atmosphere with log fires in communal areas and hearty meals made from local produce.

Also, in the Laikipia Plateau is the Loisaba Conservancy, home to three Elewana properties, Loisaba Tented Camp, Loisaba Lodo Springs and the Elewana Loisaba Star Beds. The properties are as varied as the three eco-systems that span the 58,000-acre conservancy. Elewana Loisaba Lodo Springs is the most recent addition to the Elewana portfolio, having opened in June 2019. Designed by renowned architects Chris Payne and Jan Allen with landscape architecture by Jo Silvester, Elewana Loisaba Lodo Springs offers an ultra-private experience with eight individual, spacious tented rooms, all located at least 30 to 50 meters apart. Each tented room has its own signature style.

An eclectic mix of antique and vintage pieces, which have been hand restored in Kenya, were selected to enhance the backdrop of clean, modern architectural design. Décor includes 17th century French walnut wardrobes, upcycled cedar fence posts used as paneling and 1950's Americana parlour bar stools. Guests in each room are assigned an Elewana Guest Ambassador, as well as a dedicated safari vehicle and driver and a highly qualified Elewana field guide who will accompany guests for the duration of their stay.

The opening of Elewana Lodo Springs was testament to the success of the Loisaba Conservancy, enabled by The Nature Conservancy funding the transition of the Conservancy to the Loisaba Community Trust in 2015. The transition secured the land to ensure that the Conservancy delivers vital benefits and support for neighboring communities, the wildlife, and all Kenyans

**MEH**  
MIDDLE EAST HARVESTERS

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for the foreseeable future, achieving optimal standards of sustainable conservation. It also ensured Loisaba's role as a critical sanctuary and corridor for elephants and other wildlife long into the future, as well as providing refuge for one of Kenya's most stable lion populations and an abundance of other wildlife including Grevy's zebra, wild dog, leopard and cheetah.

Another opulent tented camp in the collection is Elewana Sand River Masai Mara, situated on the banks of the river from which it has taken its name, on the most northerly route of the Great Migration and close to Serengeti National Park and the Tanzanian border. The camp was designed and styled to reflect the hey-days of exclusive, permanent tented camps in the 1920s and 1930s, with interior fixtures and furnishings creating a grandiose colonial mood that is reminiscent of the Hollywood movies that paid homage to this classic era of African adventure.

### *Commitment to community impact*

As well as supporting the Wildlife Warrior Programme, Elewana Sand River helps support the local Embiti Primary

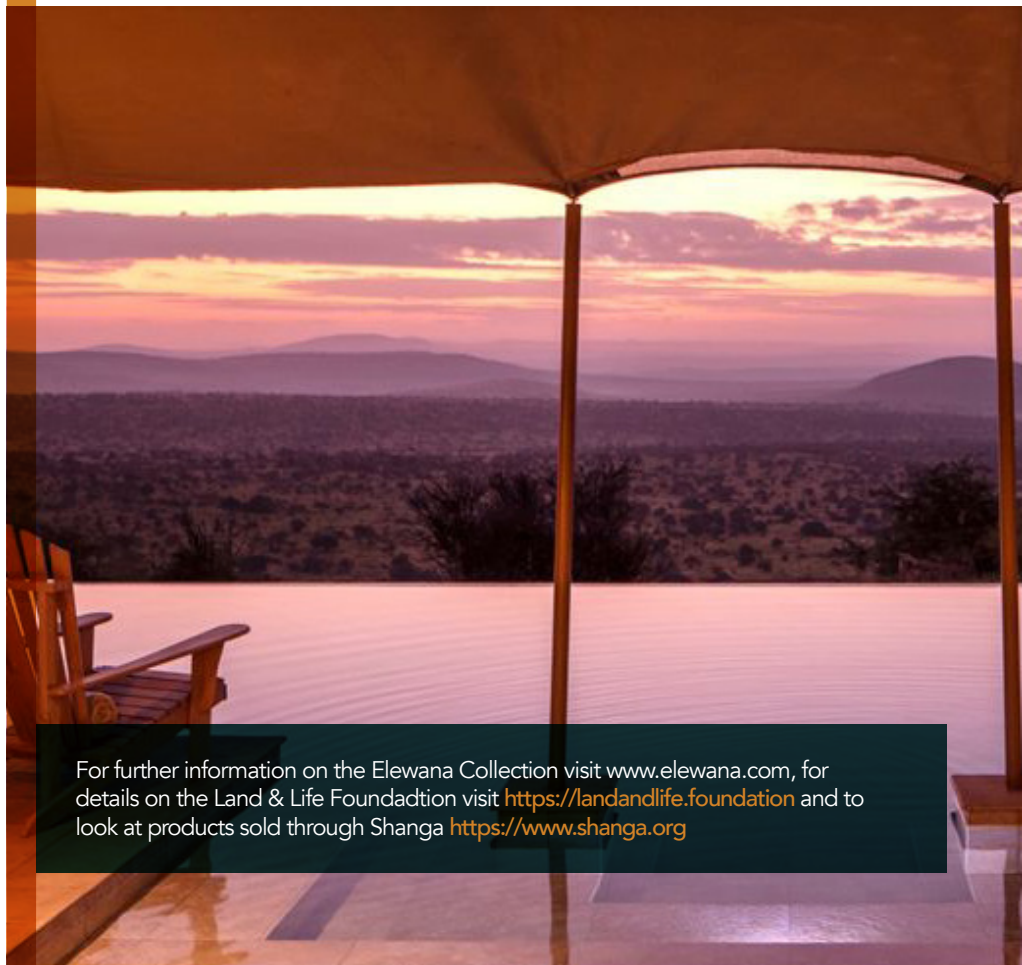


School, a school in the rural community near the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Funding has provided a staff quarters, a permanent classroom, a concrete water tank, the first ever block of toilets as well as supported on-going works for permanent staff quarters. Conservation themed talks and videos, together with school stationery, supplies and footballs have also been provided, along with digital training for all teachers.

Education also plays an important role at Elewana Tortilis Camp in Amboseli School through their support of Esiteti Primary School. Recent projects have included construction of new classrooms, a new modern kitchen equipped with large, fuel efficient stoves, a school garden that provides fresh vegetables for the school, a new library, a boy's dormitory equipped with bunk beds, a playground, computers, school supplies and education bursaries for students.

Elewana is also supporting the Shamba Project. A successful shamba ("farm" in Swahili) is an outdoor classroom, which teaches students to grow their own produce as well as supplying the school with much needed food. This project aims to achieve a sustainable solution to a number of problems. The project will serve to educate this predominantly pastoralist community in ways of supporting themselves above and beyond their traditional means. The introduction of simple yet effective crop growing provides a way to improve community drought resilience and self-sustainability. As they are learning, the garden will also provide basic vegetables to the school for consumption, improving food security for the school.

In Tanzania, Elewana Arusha Coffee Lodge is ideally situated in the outskirts of the bustling town of Arusha, offering the perfect location to start or end a safari adventure. Located at the base of the volcanic



For further information on the Elewana Collection visit [www.elewana.com](http://www.elewana.com), for details on the Land & Life Foundation visit <https://landandlife.foundation> and to look at products sold through Shanga <https://www.shanga.org>




Mount Meru, this stylish lodge, set in one of the country's largest coffee plantations, allows guests a glimpse into the region's bygone coffee rituals. It would be remiss to stay here without a visit to Shanga. This successful social enterprise employs Tanzanians with disabilities to create unique, high quality and handmade jewellery, glassware and homeware, incorporating recycled materials. The purpose-built, open workshop is located on the grounds of Elewana Arusha Coffee Lodge and is a wonderful experience for visitors to meet the inspirational staff and to view and participate in the creative process behind Shanga products as well as purchase some very special gifts.

Further into the bush Elewana Tarangire Treetops is located in a private Wildlife Management Area (WMA) called Randilen and is one of the largest contributors to the conservation projects of Randilen WMA, administered by the Honeyguide Foundation. In 2019, Land & Life Foundation and Elewana Tarangire Treetops helped Randilen WMA achieve a Tanzanian first of installing an underground hide and adjoining waterhole to attract increased numbers of wildlife, which in turn, it is hoped will increase visitor numbers and additional funds for the area which can be used to continue to protect and conserve this natural habitat.

### *Elewana's waterfront escapes*

Away from the bush, the Elewana beach properties are a sunny haven to relax and enjoy exceptional seafood and warm hospitality. Lying adjacent to the clear turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean, the stylish Kilindi Zanzibar is located on the north-west coast of Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous archipelago off Tanzania's coast. The property was originally designed for Benny Andersson, one of the members of pop sensation ABBA. The concept behind the extraordinary design is that of Scandinavian minimalism mixed with the dramatic overtones evident in Middle Eastern architecture. Elewana Kilindi Zanzibar supports the local fishing village next to the hotel, having built a structure for their operations. They also buy all fish and seafood from local fishermen, underpinning Elewana's commitment to the SLOW (seasonal, local, organic and wild) movement.

South of Mombasa on Kenya's coast, one of the world's most beautiful beaches is graced by Elewana AfroChic Diani Beach, an intimate but welcoming hotel with only ten rooms. The graceful curve of the Diani shoreline allows guests to walk in the warm shallows along the edge of the African continent. AfroChic donates to Diani Turtle Watch, to aid the conservation and protection of turtles and their natural habitats in order to maintain the balance of the ocean's vast ecosystem, including maintaining productivity of coral reefs, which in turn lend to the overall cleanliness of marine life.

Volunteers at Diani Turtle Watch, since 2012, have been working to protect nesting turtles and their eggs in order to carefully relocate nests to safer areas and ensure eggs have the best chance of hatching and hatchlings can make it to the ocean unharmed. The team also collects valuable data to provide a wider picture of nesting activities and turtle success rates in Kenya. Elewana AfroChic also maintains and takes care of its own turtle hatchery, which has been successful in hatching nests. In 2019 nearly two thousand tiny turtles made it to the ocean, thereby directly contributing to the rehabilitation and rejuvenation of turtles along the southern coast of Kenya and lending to the worldwide project to protect turtles. 



ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA • THE GREAT ZIMBABWE MONUMENT

# ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE AND THE ICONIC HISTORY OF THE SHONA PEOPLE

By Munyaradzi Elton Sagiya

Curator of Archaeology, the Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site.



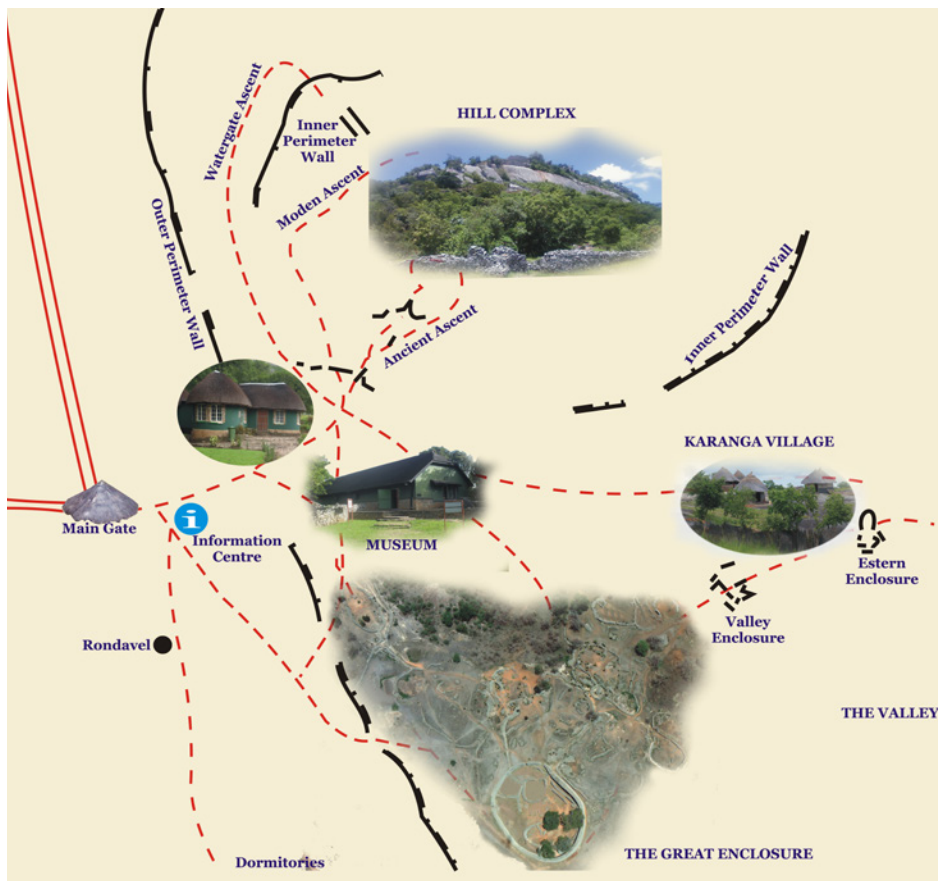
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symbol of distinct, powerful and successful culture that existed in Zimbabwe centuries ago; the “Stone City” palace; - commonly known as the Great Zimbabwe Monument, stands out as the grandest of all extraordinary remnants of civilizations by-gone. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is the second largest man-made stone structure in Africa after the Egyptian Pyramids. What an awe-inspiring experience to stand at the base of the Hill overlooking the sprawling granite stonework of this Medieval Palace! The stonework is testament to

the ingenuity, resilience and strength of the people who lived here centuries ago, a symbol of strength and of the spirit of the Zimbabwean people.

Built in dry-stone walling architecture, Great Zimbabwe is one of the most intriguing and famous archaeological heritage sites in Africa and beyond. At independence in 1980, the country formerly known as Rhodesia was renamed - Zimbabwe after this grand archaeological heritage site. So Zimbabwe is probably the only country in the world to be named after an archaeological heritage site. The ancient city of Great Zimbabwe, located 27km south-east of the modern city of Masvingo was built and occupied between the 11th and 16th centuries. In 1937 this archaeological heritage site was gazetted as a National Monument and in 1986, it was enlisted on the UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Today, Great Zimbabwe emerges as a popular tourist destination.

The people who built and occupied Great Zimbabwe did not leave behind any written historical record detailing their social, economic and political organisation as



well as their daily activities. What they managed to pass on to our generation was the archaeological imprint in the form of architecture, movable objects and the sacred cultural landscape. In order to understand, re-construct and narrate the history of Great Zimbabwe different research approaches, and sources have been consulted by the professional writers and amateurs. Consequently, a large corpus of literature has been generated about this ancient city. However, there has never been a consensus on who built Great Zimbabwe, how it was built, when it was built, why it was built and why the state collapsed around the 16th century.

**HOW WAS GREAT ZIMBABWE BUILT?**

Architecturally, Great Zimbabwe has been mainly categorised into three main zones named the Hill Complex,





are predominately found in Zimbabwe, with some from the neighbouring country of Mozambique. These claims on whether Great Zimbabwe was of foreign or local origins are both supported with evidence that was recovered from the site. As the debate became global and fierce, renowned archaeologists were seconded from Europe to closely examine Great Zimbabwe.

Basing on their research findings, the early archaeologists to investigate Great Zimbabwe such as David Randall-MacIver (1905) and Gertrude Caton-Thompson (1929) proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the settlement had been built and occupied by none other than the ancestors of the Shona people. Remains of house floors and other material culture recovered from Great Zimbabwe relate closely with Shona people who

consist of a number of sub-ethnic or linguistic groups such as the Karanga, Zezuru, Korekore, Ndau and Man'yika. Among the Shona people, Great Zimbabwe is not a monument but a shrine. Time and again, different Shona groups converge at Great Zimbabwe to appease their ancestral spirits.

Valley Enclosures and Great Enclosure. Constituting these different components are dry-stone walls built from biotite granite and quarried from the surrounding bedrock outcrops. These walls which varies in height between 1 and 11m and width of 1 – 4m were constructed without mortar or cement. This masonry technique in which the stone blocks were interlocked enabled the stability of the dry-stone walls.

One of the striking technique of the Great Zimbabwe builders was their skill to in-cooperate natural granite boulders within the matrix of their man-made structures in formulating a symbiotic landscape.


Architectural studies at Great Zimbabwe have revealed that the dry-stone built structures were constructed without any preconceived plan but walls were constructed and altered over many years to suit the needs and taste of the original builders.

There are two types of walls at Great Zimbabwe, the free-standing and retaining walls. The free-standing walls were constructed with two facades tied in-between with skilfully packed undressed stone blocks, known as core material. Walls built in free standing typology demarcated space into enclosures of varying sizes. Retaining or platform walls were built with one outer face of coursed blocks behind which core material was packed as backfill material.

### WHO BUILT GREAT ZIMBABWE?

The debate on who built Great Zimbabwe culminated in what is best known as the 'Zimbabwe controversy'. Central to this controversy is the question on whether Great Zimbabwe had been built by the Phoenicians, Arabs or Egyptians among other foreigners or it was the 'civilisation' of the indigenous Shona-speaking people whose descendants

### CONCLUSION

The existence of large amount of hard copies and online literature on Great Zimbabwe may provide a false impression that every aspect about this archaeological heritage site has been extensively researched and published. However, there are still gaps in knowledge. Other historical narratives are marred with speculations. To this day, the burial grounds for the people who built and occupied Great Zimbabwe are yet to be discovered. 

# KRUGER NATIONAL PARK'S NEWEST LUXURY HOTEL KRUGER SHALATI *unveiled*

An iconic build set in train  
carriages on Selati Bridge.





**K**

ruger Shalati: The Train on the Bridge is one of Africa's most anticipated hotel openings. Located in the heart of the Kruger National Park in South Africa, this luxury hotel is something exceptionally special and makes for a memorable occasion and stay for all who visit.

### *Built on history*

This luxury experience incorporates the iconic and still original Selati railway bridge at Skukuza Camp where the Park's first warden, James Stevenson-Hamilton, welcomed visitors nearly 100 years ago. These guests would retire to the train in the evenings before it moved to the next part of its journey.

As part of the process to develop this new hospitality offering, Thebe Tourism Group through its subsidiary Kruger Shalati Pty Ltd - the company spearheading this project - sourced 13 railway carriages circa the 40s and 50s through their contractor from a location in Ladysmith and commenced work on modifying and engineering them to form the shell and turn the carriages into what is now a stunning hotel.

### *Sustainable building has been key*

The technical and maintenance team behind the build of the new Kruger Shalati Train on the Bridge Hotel were adamant that elements of the build should pay tribute to the history of the Park and the structures that were there before them. This luxury train hotel uses many reclaimed items salvaged from the surrounding area and the demolition of previous structures to use as building materials, features and decor.

"From concept through to construction of the site, we always knew that we had to celebrate what was there before," says Judiet Barnes, Brand, Sales and Marketing Executive Manager for Kruger Shalati.

"The Kruger Shalati Train on the Bridge Hotel is a very special hospitality development. Not only are we using a historical bridge on the old Selati line over the Sabie River that is no longer being used, but our train carriages themselves are recycled carriages used in the 1950s which were scrapped years ago and have been converted into a luxurious hotel and positioned on the disused Selati railway line above the Sabie River in the Kruger National Park," shares Barnes.

### *A name fit for a queen*

The train name is inspired by Shalati, an African warrior queen. Shalati warrior hosikati (queen) was no ordinary woman. While most queens wanted a brave king to come and save them, she wanted a bayonet war axe so she could save her clan.

She was a warrior for her clan as well as humanity. During her chieftainship, she learnt how the world worked, but had a vision





of a perfect world, one without crime, war, and inequality.

The origins of Shalati's rule go back to the 19th century. According to oral tradition, Shalati was one of the first female warrior chiefs of the small Tebula clan, part of the Tsonga tribe that lived in the bush around the Murchison Range in the present-day Limpopo Province.

### *Something for everyone*

This exclusive hotel consists of 24 train rooms stationed on the Selati Bridge, spanning the gorgeous Sabie River from bank to bank. There is also a spectacular bespoke lounge carriage with an opulent bar and deck offering a stunning pool for relaxing and game viewing opportunities from the vista atop the river. At a later stage, seven land-based rooms will be available in what will be

## ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA • KRUGER SHALATI

known as Bridge House; positioned next to the bridge, also overlooking the river and the Train on the Bridge.


When booking, the rates are inclusive of all meals, house-drinks, and two game drives daily so that guests can take in all the beauty of the Park. Once open, the Bridge House Restaurant will offer African-inspired fare complemented by breathtaking views of the majestic Sabie River. Out on the game drives, however, guests can see these stunning creatures up close. A professional ranger will share in-depth knowledge and stories of the fascinating wildlife and the surroundings.

For those guests wanting to leave with a little memento or two, there is a Kruger Shalati gift store to do some shopping.

### *Location, location, location*

There is perhaps no accommodation better positioned within the Park. This unique hotel sits on the iconic Selati Bridge. When staying here, visitors will have unparalleled and

unrivalled views of the Kruger National Park and the Sabie River below - a popular watering hole for animals within the Park. Imagine sitting in your room or on the pool deck and you see some of the world's most majestic creatures sip from the river below you!

Getting to The Train on the Bridge is easy. Situated as a gateway to the Kruger National Park with the Big 5 roaming freely, adjacent to the Skukuza Camp, Kruger Shalati offers an express entryway to freedom, relaxation, and meaningful connection. Kruger Shalati guests have convenient access to all that the Park has to offer and a diverse range of other major attractions in the area such as the Stevenson-Hamilton Memorial Library, Skukuza Golf Course, Skukuza Airport, and two hours away from Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport. Access to the hotel is through the Paul Kruger Gate. Airport Transfers to/from Skukuza Airport are included in the rate. 

To learn more about Kruger Shalati, visit the hotel's website at [www.krugershalati.com/](http://www.krugershalati.com/)





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# Romantic Exclusivity

## IN AN ADULTS-ONLY AFRICAN ISLAND PARADISE

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**E**nsconced on a tiny private island in the remote Quirimbas Archipelago off the northern coast of Mozambique, Anantara Medjumbe Island Resort takes full advantage of its idyllic location with the romantic allure of welcoming adults only.

Untouched and authentic, paradise is naturally intimate. Medjumbe Island is a mere one kilometre long and 300 metres wide. Lush vegetation frames the softest of white powdery sands, lapped gently by the azure waves of the Indian Ocean. Tranquil seclusion reigns supreme. Yet the feeling of being in a world of one's own is conveniently accessible with a 45-minute air transfer from Pemba International Airport, which can be reached from Mozambique's capital Maputo or international flights from Johannesburg or Dar es Salaam. Bird's eye views flying over the Quirimbas Archipelago conjure images of escaping to a deserted beach, plunging into warm crystal-clear water and exploring the hidden charms of island life.

*Intimate luxury has a distinctive African island identity*

Showcasing incredible tropical nature, the resort has a distinctive African island identity with customised

furniture, textiles, and accessories, including traditional wax printed capulana fabrics that were scoured from local markets.

A boutique collection of just 12 Beach Pool Villas all open onto a pure white shoreline. Elegant rusticity of thatching, stone and wood is matched by understated luxury. Charming interiors feature colourful patterns depicting vibrant local culture, and aqua shades reflect the ocean. Modern amenities ensure comfortable indulgence. Bliss in the tropics extends to an al fresco deck. Sun worshippers can bask on loungers and cool off in the aqua mosaic splash pool, which boasts an ocean-facing champagne step to toast a sparkling blue expanse, and later on, sunset with bubbles.

*Exclusive experiences refresh perspectives*

The ultimate destination for couples, honeymooners, and divers, Anantara Medjumbe's remoteness assures untouched beauty and absolute privacy. Naturally breathtaking, every experience feels extraordinary. The ocean's hues are dazzling, and powdery white sands stretch for over a mile when the tide goes out. Couples can stroll straight from their villa onto the beach and swim or snorkel without distraction or intrusion – the



only other passersby being local fishermen sailing their dhow boats to and from the mainland.

Reclusive allures are balanced by the genuine hospitality of resort team members, who go out of their way to create memorable experiences. The oceanfront pool sets the scene for lazy, sun-kissed days. Sensual pampering awaits at Anantara Spa's intimate beachfront villa. Starry nights are a dream come true, with the Robinson Crusoe-style Star Bed Experience inviting couples to sleep outside in a four-poster bed surrounded by lanterns, all alone on Quissanga Island.

For a unique bird's eye perspective of the Quirimbas Archipelago, helicopter sightseeing tours soar over a breathtaking tapestry of jewel-coloured waters and verdant primeval forest. Authentic tours of Ibo Island offer two fascinating guided itineraries, both beginning with a helicopter adventure. The historical experience offers an inspirational walk through Stone

Town's important heritage buildings, learning about the turbulent history of the ancient Fort of São João Baptista and observing silversmiths handcrafting exquisite jewellery using ancient Arab techniques and tools found nowhere else in the world, with opportunities to purchase unique gifts. The cultural experience introduces visitors to charismatic Ibo locals and the island's thriving tribal customs, after which a guided village walk reveals the daily life of the Kimwani people, how Muslim and African traditions have blended to create a unique way of life, as well as a visit to the local witch doctor and an island face mask to take home.

### *Destination inspired dining with gourmet flair*

Culinary experiences are tailored to guests' liking and served with extraordinary views. At Jahazi Restaurant, guests create their own breakfast from international and island flavours. Casual luncheons and elegant dinners present gourmet Mozambican, seafood and western dishes in Chef's signature three-



course set menus, which vary daily. For a change of scene, signature mocktails and cocktails at the Bahari Lounge Bar come with one of the most incredible views in the Quirimbas. Dining by Design customises romance with a personal chef crafting the ideal menu, savoured in villa privacy or on a quiet stretch of beach, at sunset or under the stars. Offshore escapism is deliciously alluring. Explorers can picnic on a deserted island and sparkling wine is served with finger foods aboard a dhow sunset cruise that sails across the bay.

### *Encounter extraordinary diving and giants of the ocean*

The Quirimbas Archipelago boasts some of the world's most spectacular and undiscovered scuba diving opportunities. The



underwater conditions here are excellent. Warm year round, the water temperature hovers between 25 and 29 degrees Celsius, and an average visibility of 20 metres reaches as far as 50 metres in summer. The vibrant coral reefs and bountiful marine life in this part of the Indian Ocean are only accessible from Anantara Medjumbe Island, and as the resort only takes out small groups of divers at a time, these sites remain pristine for future generations to enjoy.

Above the surface, boat trips set out in search of turtles and dolphins. Giants of the ocean also visit seasonally. Humpback whales from the Antarctic migrate to the Quirimbas Archipelago between July and September to mate and give birth. These colossal creatures often swim peacefully alongside passing boats, arch gracefully over the waves and expel air from their blowholes, thrilling Anantara Medjumbe guests with a truly majestic experience. 🌿

For more information visit [www.anantara.com/en/medjumbe-island](http://www.anantara.com/en/medjumbe-island)





A photograph of an expedition team in Antarctica. Three people are seen from behind, walking across a vast, white, snow-covered landscape. They are wearing heavy winter gear, including jackets, hats, and large backpacks. The terrain is uneven with some ice patches. The sky is bright and overcast. The overall mood is one of adventure and exploration in a harsh, cold environment.

# FROM CAPE TOWN'S COAST TO THE SOUTH POLE:

## THE *unforgettable* WHITE DESERT ANTARCTICA *Experience*

Luxury on Ice at Whichaway Oasis





**J**oin White Desert on an incredible adventure to one of nature's rarest sights - an immense colony of 28,000 Emperor Penguins.

The trip starts in Cape town, South Africa, where White Desert will host a safety briefing the day before your scheduled flight, explaining all kit requirements, assist with any last-minute preparations and update you on the latest weather forecasts for Antarctica. After a five-hour flight from Cape Town, you will arrive at the heart of Antarctica, a place that is both surreal and majestic. From iridescent ice tunnels to vertical spires of rock, from endless uninhabited horizons to oceans scattered with icebergs, this is a place unlike anywhere else on Planet Earth.

### GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE ANTARCTICA

You travel in uncompromising comfort across the mighty Southern Ocean in a Gulfstream 550. During the five-hour flight, the African night turns to the Antarctic day as you soar over thousands of icebergs and pass into 24 hours of continuous sunshine. You will land on Wolf's Fang runway, by one of the most magnificent and iconic mountains on the entire continent, named 'Wolf's Fang' by the early Norwegian explorers. After landing on the ancient blue ice, you will be surrounded by massive monoliths of rock that rise vertically from the glacier. Once in Antarctica, you will be transferred by a Basler BT-67 to White Desert's luxury camp at Whichaway Oasis. Flight time: 30 minutes.

On the edge of the Great White Continent lies the Schirmacher

Oasis, an ice-free area that contains over 100 freshwater lakes. This is the site of our unique camp - Whichaway Oasis.

### WHAT TO EXPECT AT WHICHAWAY OASIS

Whichaway consists of a collection of hi-tech polar domes set on the shores of a frozen lake and encircled by a magnificent 60-metre (200-foot) icefall. It is warm and comfortable, and the perfect home base for daily activities or when you simply want to relax.

The camp consists of seven heated and state-of-the-art bedroom pods that are designed for two guests in each. At just over 6m (20ft) in diameter, you'll find they are also spacious, with a writing desk, wash area and toilet.

For guests travelling separately, the pod can be partitioned for privacy.

The rest of the camp comprises a shower pod, kitchen and three centralised pods that make up the reception, lounge, and dining room. This is where an experienced team of chefs, hosts and guides will take care of every detail for you, allowing you to focus on enjoying your adventure.

While the exterior of our pods is made from cutting-edge materials, the interiors have a relaxed, old-world feel that harks back to the golden age of Antarctic exploration.

After a busy day of activities, you'll be sure to work up



an appetite. From hearty breakfasts, elegant lunches, and three-course dinners, you'll be without a doubt well fed whilst staying at the end of the world.

The Whichaway chefs use the best South African produce to create meals that are full of flavour and sophisticated without being fussy. The wines come from a selection of the finest Cape vineyards, whilst the bread is freshly baked, and the coffee freshly ground.

### A KEY HIGHLIGHT: EMPEROR PENGUIN TRIP

Your visit to the penguins begins with a 2.5-hour flight to Atka Bay, the site of the first episode of Sir David Attenborough's ground-breaking documentary *Seven Worlds, One Planet*. Here you'll see over 14,000 breeding pairs and their newly hatched chicks, a spectacle full of noise and energy that is a favourite with wildlife watchers and photographers.

There are so few visitors to this colony that the chicks are unafraid of humans and often waddle close by. Mindful of the responsibility to the Antarctic environment and of IAATO guidelines, guests to the utmost ends of the earth keep at least 25m (80ft) from the penguins while taking in all the sights and sounds of this rare wildlife spectacle, which remains one of the greatest thrills on Earth! During the long dark winter, the mothers hunt for food while the fathers look after the egg. When spring returns, the egg hatches, and the chick sits on its parents' feet to stay warm. With only 12 guests on each adventure, White Desert's professional guides will ensure that you are always safe and well looked after, and that you get the most out of your time.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES TO GET UP TO

Your activities can be as adrenaline-fuelled or relaxed as you like. Not keen on climbing, fat biking or abseiling? Then perhaps a picnic followed by a sauna and a massage would suit. The choice is yours. A trip to Antarctica is the perfect opportunity to rest, recharge and recover from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Not only is the White Desert team ready to lead you through the landscapes of Antarctica, but they are also on hand to guide you in relaxation and meditation techniques.

Newly added for the 2021/22 season, is the sauna and wellness pod, perched beside a serene freshwater lake, whose views will inspire you during daily meditation and yoga sessions.

### ENSURING EXPLORER HEALTH AND SAFETY

All mountain guides have completed the strenuous 5-year UIAGM qualification, while each camp has its own fully qualified trauma doctor and accompanying medical kits. The chief pilot has 10 years of experience flying in Antarctica with over 18,000 hours of logged flight time.

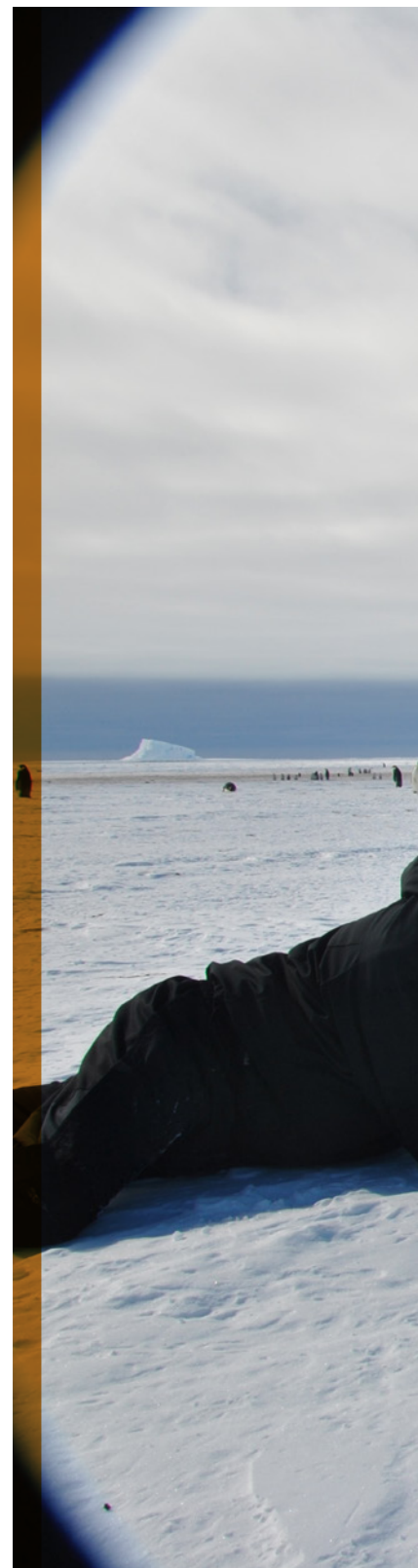
Tracking, satellite communications and mutual Search & Rescue agreements are all part of White Desert's comprehensive safety policies. Furthermore, by operating an owned aircraft, also have the speed and flexibility to arrange an evacuation back to Cape Town in the unlikely event that one should become necessary.

### AN ALL-IMPORTANT COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

White Desert believes that responsible tourism is a genuine force for good and supports Sir David Attenborough's stance on the transformative power of wilderness travel: "No one will protect what they don't care about, and no one will care about what they have never experienced". As a temporary eco-camp, the whole operation was created in such a way that it can be dismantled and removed without a trace.

**Carbon Neutral: White Desert was the first aviation operator in Antarctica to be entirely Carbon Neutral, a status the company has held since 2007.**

In terms of waste management, the White Desert team keeps waste to a minimum by repackaging all consumables before bringing them to Antarctica and then, at the end of the season, shipping all solid waste back to South Africa for recycling or responsible disposal. 



To learn more about how you can join a White Desert Experience to the Antarctica, visit [www.white-desert.com](http://www.white-desert.com)





# WILD OVER WILDLIFE:

## Behold the Wonderful *Water Buck*

By Louisa Choruma

Photos by: Leroy Busani Bango

T

he debate of the top five Antelope in Africa took us from gin and tonics on the deck as the sun set, to the immaculately displayed dinner table with my favourite hearty lentil stew, and back to Amarula Cream on crushed ice round the fire! Busani stuck to his Top five list of the Eland, the Kudu, Roan Antelope, the mountain Nyala and what he fondly coined the “Wonderful Waterbuck!” We were not surprised by the first four, as they fell into each of our own Top Five. My list was made complete with the Gemsbok, with its striking and incredibly straight horns and the bold patch work faces. Our guide for the day and talented photographer Busani however, kept referring to the water buck as “Wonderful” .....and we all wanted to know why.

Belonging to the Bovidae family animals which are the category of hooved four-legged animals with unbranched horns,

the water buck’s scientific name is *Kobus Ellipsiprymnus*. This antelope has a shaggy and rough coat, which is a predominately grey with white grizzly hairs but can range from light grey to reddish–brown and turning darker with age. The long shaggy hair can be found under its throat and they have a mane on their necks. Water bucks have large round ears, and their faces are covered by beautiful white markings above the eyes, nose area and even on the neck!

There are two species of the water buck; the *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* which is the common waterbuck and the *defassa* waterbuck or *kobus ellipsiprymnus defassa*. The former is found in South East Africa and is famous for the target-like white ring on his backside, whilst the latter is found in East Africa and has instead two solid ring patches on either side of its rump. The largest of the kob antelopes in the Bovidae family, the water buck have long bodies, long necks with short legs. This makes them stocky-looking and only the male waterbucks carry horns which can be as long a metre in length. The male



waterbucks are generally bigger and taller than the females, with weights of an average of 250kg and standing as high as 1.7m!

### *The waterbuck in its natural environment*

True to its name, this large and thickset antelope is always found near and around permanent water bodies in the African savannahs. Mainly grazers, and as the name would suggest, the waterbuck are often spotted in floodplains, veils, woodlands, and rocky terrain, and are usually seen in groups of up to 12 individual animals. When there are young in the group, the female waterbuck forms a nursery group which is guarded jealously from predators by the male waterbuck. It is believed that the female waterbucks eat their own afterbirth to get rid of the smell of new-borns from the predators.

The perfectly curved and ringed horns of the male waterbuck are what they use to protect their territories, through a variety of displays. By extending their necks and shaking their heads and horns, male waterbuck threatens, repel and attack intruders.

Busani's description of the waterbuck was indeed informative and interesting and he could tell by the undivided attention from all six of us that we were fully engaged. With an easy smile he asked "I guess you want to know why I call them wonderful?"

Without waiting for a response, Busani raised two fingers

and said, "There are two things I truly find fascinating about the waterbuck. This antelope, appears shabby, lazy, and laid back – almost sedentary in nature, and some say it looks like a domestic cow! I have come to know that it is both unique and very smart!"

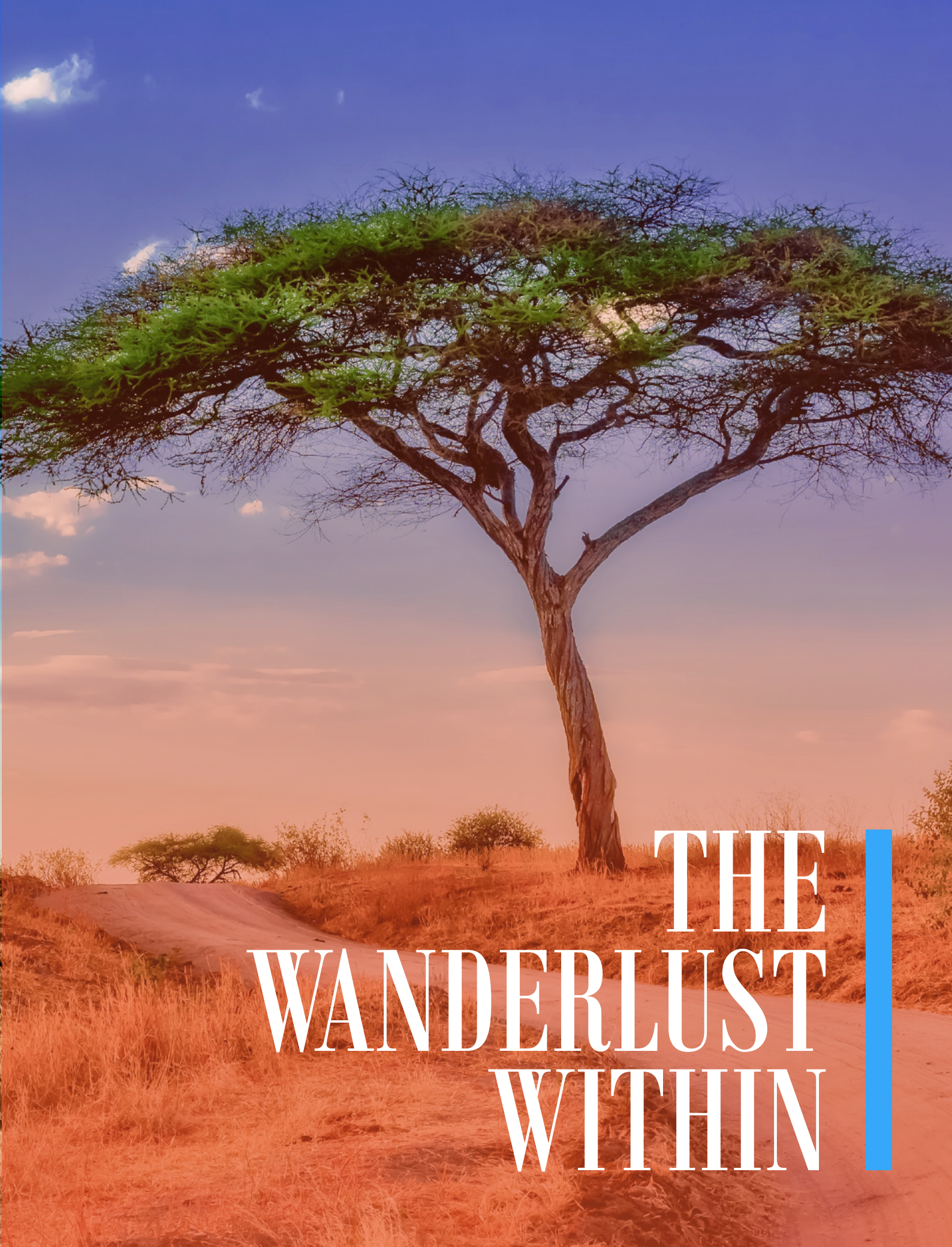
Busani went on to explain: "Firstly, their preference for water is a result of the waterbuck having remarkably high water requirements. They must drink water often and that is why they are seen and found at fixed water bodies all the time, be it a river, pool or floodplain," he stated.

"These marvellous swimmers use the same water to escape danger in the form of predators, and can move in water so fast that more often than not, they run into the water to escape being attacked by hyenas, wild dogs, leopards and lions. Another interesting fact is that sweat glands in their coats emit an oil which acts as a water repellent," Busan showed off his knowledge with a coy smile.

He went on to share more on the white ring marking on their rump. This conspicuous circle on the common waterbuck is known to scare off predators due to the flashing of the distinct white ring. In addition, this ring also acts as a guiding signal to other waterbucks in the event that they are to suddenly flee from danger.

"Do we now have a final list of our Top five Antelope then?" Busani asks with his easy smile. We all, lost in our own thoughts, give him a reflective nod of approval as he tops up our glasses of Amarula Cream. Perhaps these antelope are indeed pretty wonderful in their own way!!!





# THE WANDERLUST WITHIN



# THE SISTERHOOD OF *wanderlusts*

Asante Travel Founder Zephne Weston's take on best destinations for your next Girls' Trip



**A**sante Travel curates some majestic itineraries, a real treat for anyone looking to explore Africa through the lens of the highly personalised, luxurious experiences. For a Girls' Trip, share with us 5 destinations you know make a great trip for a group of women looking to get together for some traveling fun?

Most African destinations are ideal for the perfect girls' trip adventure! For the ideal sized group of six to eight women, there are some unbelievable personalised packages that Asante Travel can put together. I'll share with you destinations and experiences that I know will speak to the soul of a sisterhood looking to get away for some much-needed bonding time, laughs and discovery of self and each other...

## *1. South Africa and Mozambique Combo:*

Combine Cape Town, South Africa's beautiful mother city with the Cape Winelands. To get the best that the Cape can offer, you must experience the vibe and the Atlantic seaboard of the city, as well as the magnificent mountains of the winelands. Enjoy some of the best food and wine options that our country has to offer in the Franschhoek area with its interesting shops and art galleries.

Next stop is the best wildlife experience in South Africa – the Kruger National Park in Mpumalanga. A safari at a beautiful modern lodge in one of the private game reserves in the Kruger National Park is a wonderful experience. From there, fly directly to Vilanculos in Mozam-





bique to be whisked off to a luxury island escape, enjoying the incredible seafood and other dishes prepared by accomplished chefs.

## *2. Botswana Safari:*

If you could choose only one safari destination, choose Botswana! From its natural beauty to the true African hospitality, many of the lodges are boutique with only between three and six rooms. Travelling with a group of girlfriends mean that you can have the entire lodge to yourself. We suggest visiting three different areas while in Botswana, with the Okavango Delta an absolute must-experience!

## *3. Kenya Safari and Coastal Villa:*

Kenya is the origin of the African safari and they do it so incredibly. Think Hemingway and the romantic way in which he fell in love with Africa. Kenya is all of that and more. We would recommend staying at smaller, private, and more personal lodges in Amboseli, Maasai Mara and the Kenyan highlands. Horseback safari is a unique activity in this area. From there, travel to a private villa on the beautiful Kenyan coast where every desire is met. Ultimate luxury includes butlers, chefs, and amazing teams focused on making your stay the most memorable ever.

## *4. Gorilla Trekking and Primate Safari:*

For an unparalleled wildlife experience of a lifetime, made even more special if

shared with your closest friends. Whether you decide to go to Uganda or Rwanda purely depends on your budget. Due to Covid-19 regulations, the maximum size of a group is six people, which makes it ideal to arrange an exclusive trek for your party. The accommodation options are incredible, but both Rwanda and Uganda are about so much more than just gorillas. We would love to introduce you to the amazing safari and adventure options and incredible vistas.

## *5. Tanzania and Zanzibar Combo:*

Enjoy Arusha, Tarangire, Ngorongoro Crater and the famous Serengeti where you would have the most incredible safari experiences. Next stop is exquisite Zanzibar for remarkable island retreat. East Africa is an extraordinary location for awe-inspiring safaris. Nowhere else are animals as visible as on the high plains of the Maasai Mara and

Serengeti, and the land itself is quite something. To look down into the immense bowl of the Ngorongoro Crater is we imagine, almost like standing at the gates of heaven.

But we really cannot just choose five! Africa is incredibly diverse and there are so many destinations to choose from. Namibia with its crimson deserts and the breath-taking Sossusvlei and Skeleton Coast. Mauritius for relaxing next to white beaches and crystal-clear oceans. Reunion Island offers beautiful surroundings for superb adventure activities. The multiple islands, natural reefs and nature reserves of the Seychelles have some of the most magnificent beaches in the world. There is also Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe which offer incredible authentic safari experiences with the added value of experiencing the majestic Victoria Falls.

### WHY THOSE DESTINATIONS AND WHY ASANTE TRAVEL TO FACILITATE THOSE TRIPS?

At Asante Travel, we understand the unique requirements of every request and we take time to truly understand what your group enjoys, expects, would like to do and even what your dislikes are before we curate a trip. I love taking time out with my girlfriends, so when I plan your trip, I make sure that it is something I would love to do myself!

A lot of planning goes into curating each of our experiences, but a trip for a close-knit group of women is something truly special and there is so much to consider. From female game rangers to be with them while on safari, to experiences with local women seeing how they live, cook, make jewellery, all the small details and additional considerations that makes a first-rate getaway will be considered in our planning.

We consider all the finer details, every minute of the experiences to ensure that everyone is catered for, feeling comfortable, relaxed, and secure.

### YOU TRAVEL WITH YOUR GIRLS OFTEN? WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE YOUR CIRCLE'S BIGGEST REASONS FOR WANTING TO GET TOGETHER OVER SOME TIME THAT INVOLVES PACKING SUITCASES AND GOING OVER ITINERARIES?

I travel with my tribe and my girl trips are essential. Whether it is with my mom, sister and cousins or my closest girlfriends, the time we spend together on these trips, the conversations we have and the unforgettable experiences we have together stays with us for years to come.

Every trip is unique and special. Every day is extraordinary. Every moment is treasured – and when I am 80 years old, we will still talk about some of the experiences we had together.

### IN THE DESTINATIONS YOU'VE SHARED, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST SELLS IN YOUR PICKS AND WHY?

Traditional girl trips have changed. It is not so much about shopping and spas anymore, but escaping from the daily grind and sharing authentic, heart-warming experiences and not having to be concerned about responsibilities. At Asante Travel, we go the extra mile to create life changing and enriching experiences. But you don't have to abandon spa treatments all together! There are some exceptional spa experiences in many of the lodges and hotels that can be included in your retreat. Our best-sellers for girls trips definitely include Cape Town and the Winelands and the Kruger National Park Safari experiences in smaller, intimate lodges are always popular. The islands are also firm favourites as it offers more than just lovely beach experiences but also amazing activities, food, and cocktails on demand.

### YOU HAVE HAD THE GREAT PRIVILEGE OF STAYING AT SOME OF THE MOST ICONIC HOTELS, LODGES, AND BUSH CAMPS AS PART OF YOUR LINE OF BUSINESS? WHEN ASANTE TRAVEL PARTNERS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS, WHAT CRITERIA DO YOU LOOK FOR IN CURATING THE PERFECT GETAWAY FOR GROUP TRAVEL?

Firstly, location is fundamental. If you stay in a city such as Cape Town, you want to be close to where the action is. Ideally, if located in the V&A Waterfront you don't need to take additional transfers, taxis or ubers to get to restaurants.

Secondly, levels of service are vitally important, communication and also working with partners that we know will go the extra mile for our clients. For safari getaways, it is an unforgettable experience for a group to take a lodge exclusively. Where possible, we try to match the amount of rooms available at the lodge with the amount of people in the group.

The gastronomical experience is another important component of a great trip, so we consider food and wine offerings, as well as other added values such as bush brunches, boma dinners unique entertainment and so on.

The age, energy and fitness levels of the individuals is the next factor as it's essential understand the client's expectations. What would they want to do, see, or experience? Do they have a bucket list or something that has significant meaning to them?

Ultimately, we focus on quality. We want to offer an exceptional experience so that you want to return to Africa again and again.



LET'S SWITCH TO A LITTLE R&R TALK, ESPECIALLY FOR THE LADIES. WELLNESS RETREATS HAVE BECOME SOME SORT OF A HIT OVER THE YEARS AS WOMEN, SEEK TO TAKE SOME TIME OUT TO DISCOVER OR RECONNECT WITH THEMSELVES. WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT AND WHY SHOULD TRAVELLERS COMING OUT OF THE UAE CONSIDER ASANTE TRAVEL TO CURATE A SPECIALISED ITINERARY THAT TICKS ALL THEIR BOXES - BE IT FOR A PRE-WEDDING/ BRIDAL GETAWAY, YOGA RETREAT, A TRIP THAT FOCUSES ON CULINARY EXPERIENCES AND SO ON?

Anyone can plan a trip, but what makes Asante Travel stand out is our personal attention and attention to detail. We are with your group, every step of the way. While you are travelling, we are in constant contact with you to ensure that everything works and is exactly as planned. But more than that, is our passion. We prepare every itinerary as if it is for a loved one or for ourselves. We want you to compare every other travel experience you have ever had with the one we plan and execute for you. We have excellent relationships

with the suppliers and are very often able to provide experiences and private offerings that cannot be arranged by anyone else.

It's personal for us. Your experience with Asante Travel is personal and our staff's dedication to your group's experience is unmatched.

But regardless of who you book through, have that ladies' trip! It's incredible for the soul and we all need to spend some unique and quality time with our tribe. 🌍

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Head on over to [www.Travelessencemag.com](http://www.Travelessencemag.com) to book one of our specially curated Travel Essence Getaways in partnership with Asante Travel for your friends or family!





# Let's SAFARI!

Your quick guide to exploring Africa's wild-scapes

By Daphine Mabhiza



**G**

oing on safari in Africa is at the top of the bucket list for many travelers given how it is an experience unlike any other. From wildlife encounters on game drives, sunrise breakfasts, majestic elephants grazing or wildcats hunting their prey, stunning sceneries, and breathtaking sunsets, being on safari is an unadulterated call to an action-packed adventure in the motherland. But for many, planning such a trip can be a daunting task. So here are a few things you need to consider when planning your safari trip to the any one of Africa's prolific safari territories...

### WHERE TO SAFARI?

Southern and Eastern Africa are the most popular spots for safari experiences, with a variety of accommodations offering authentic safari experiences in their own special way. These regions which boast hundreds of National Parks that safeguard wildlife, one will have the unique opportunity to get up close with wildlife such as lions, elephants, rhinos and so much more; all in their natural habitat.

Tanzania for instance is popular for the Serengeti, home to the annual migration of thousands of wildebeest - a breathtaking scene of thousands of these mammals crossing the crocodile infested rivers and flat plains. A wonder to be seen, this annual event in the Serengeti draws many photographers and tourists from around the world. On the other hand, if gorilla trekking is of interest, then Eastern Africa is the best choice. Uganda and Rwanda are popular for their safari experiences that involve gorilla trekking and getting close to various primate species.

### THE BEST TIME TO SAFARI

The experience you have when you go on safari is largely dependent on which time of the year you visit. The best time to visit Africa for a safari is anywhere between the dry and wet seasons. The dry season often promises extremely hot temperatures while the rains results in muddy experiences and the presence of mosquitoes.

For Southern Africa, the perfect time would be April/May and September. The weather is perfect, which means dry and warm days, and cool nights. If you are interested in watching the migration of the Zebra herd at Makgadikgadi National Park in South Africa, November/December is the best time to go.

For East Africa, the best time would be June to October. This is the most popular time to visit the Serengeti due to the wildebeest migration. March to May are usually the months for the heaviest rains, but they are also when you can get the best travel deals. If you plan to do some backpacking, then the dry season is perfect, also giving you an opportunity to stargaze under Africa's stunning skies.

### WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO

Your experience will be undoubtedly unforgettable. For one, the great outdoors will deliver adventures that you cannot find in any city, neither do they compare with purchasing yourself a ticket to a zoo. Wild Africa scream freedom, as you take in flora and fauna uninterrupted.

One of the many reasons tourists travel halfway across the world to Africa is to enjoy an authentic camping experience in the wilderness. With the abundance of luxury bush camps for those looking for a high-end adventure in the



wild, to the cheaper camping facilities available in most National Parks, one can take their pick on what sort of experience they would like as they get up close to wildlife. Camping sites are protected from dangerous animals to ensure your safety.

You also don't want to miss an opportunity to go on a Walking Safari, as is the case in Zambia's South Luangwa National Park for example. Going on foot really opens the world for you as you become one with nature and its inhabitants, including some rare sighting of animals such as leopards and elephant herds. Guides are always by your side to ensure your safety while providing an informative experience that tells of wildlife's secrets.

#### STANDARD ELEMENT TO PACK FOR SAFARI

**Summer clothing:** shorts or cargo pants and t-shirts/vests

**Scarf:** to protect you from dust and for those cool nights.

**Closed shoes:** for safety and for those long walks

**Sunscreen:** to stay protected from a sun burn.

**Mosquito repellent:** a lotion or spray repellent and absolute necessity when out in the wild.

So now that you've decided upon your next safari destination, get packing as the motherland's savannah plains and eastern forests await! Whichever country you choose for your safari adventure, you are guaranteed an epic experience! 🦁





AFRICA TO  
THE WORLD



# FROM runway TO runway

Meet Thando Magumise, Owner and Designer of Ntombi Couture and Co-Founder of The Ethnic Group

**A** proud wife and mother of two very energetic toddlers, Zimbabwean born and bred Thando has made a name for herself as a Dubai-based fashion designer and entrepreneurs. She chronicles her journey to wearing multiple hats and growing a fashion brand in a vibrant global landscape...

“Ntombi Couture originates from the Ndebele/ Zulu word “ntombi” meaning lady. We have recently launched our men’s collection JAHA by Ntombi; “jaha” meaning man.

Growing up, I had a slightly different story from many designers. Although I had been exposed to Needlework as a subject in high school, I did not cut up my clothes, play with fabrics, or dress up to the tee. I discovered my personal style much later in life,” shares Thando.

As a little girl and teenager, Thando spent most of her afternoons after school on the sports field. She was obsessed with playing sport as it gave her not only physical strength, but impeccable mental drive. Sport challenged Thando to push herself further repeatedly, resulting in uncontested self-belief. Looking back, she credits this prowess on the sports field as something she leans into and draws energy from as an entrepreneur because it taught her never to never give up. For Thando, the formula is quite simple: what you put into your craft is what you get out of it.





This is a principle she believes stays true in all spheres of life, and particularly for her as woman in business, living and working in the UAE.

“I remember sitting in a Commerce class for the first time in third form in High School and feeling an indescribable excitement. The concept of pooling resources to make a profit fascinated me. I felt the same about the creative side of me. Art was an outlet that made my world beautiful,” cites Thando, as she



describes what became her inspiration to pursue entrepreneurship in adulthood.

“It was then that I knew my future career would be a blend of business and creativity. Ntombi Couture was informally started in 2003 when I designed my first piece for our African themed leavers/prom dance. I had the honour of winning best dressed and began to explore this newly discovered skill over time,” she adds.

The skills she later developed in Art and Design, Business, Selling, Marketing, and Finance, have over the years come together to create what is now the Ntombi Couture brand. Thando formerly established the business when she moved to Dubai in 2013 and has since had the pleasure of being a part of some of Dubai’s top fashion shows, including Fashion Week Middle East. Her experiences have afforded Thando exposure to some of the best event planners, choreographers, make-up artists, photographers, and stylists the

For appointments contact Thando and the Ntombi Couture team via  /  @ntombicouture  
Email: [info@ntombicouture.com](mailto:info@ntombicouture.com)  
Ethnic Store location: Shop 65 Gate Avenue Mall, DIFC, Dubai



Middle East has to offer, an absolute dream for any budding designer and entrepreneur.

### *The driving force: A love for Africa*

Driven by a love for Africa and her people, Ntombi Couture draws its aesthetic from the beautiful continent and its vibrant mix of people and cultures. Clean lines and classic cuts are the Ntombi Couture blueprint. At the heart of the brand though, is something much deeper than beautiful silhouettes and fabrics.

“Growing up surrounded by all boys at home, and all girls at school, I began to pick up on distinct differences. At impressionable ages, I came across girls struggling with body image, low self-esteem and depression; and having faced similar challenges myself, and also having lost people close to me to depression, over the years the focus of the brand has developed to encourage positive mental health,” shares the fashion entrepreneur.

“Our mission at Ntombi is to dress our clients to dress their bodies to highlight what they love about themselves. For example, if a client loves their arms, we will custom design a piece to highlight that, so he/she walks tall when in their Ntombi piece. I truly believe fashion has the power to ignite a paradigm shift in one’s mind regarding how they perceive themselves, if utilised positively. There is nothing as rewarding as seeing a client’s walk change or them telling you how amazing they feel when they wear one of our pieces,” Thando adds.

The Ntombi Woman is classic, elegant, and... breathtaking.

The JAHA man is sophisticated, powerful and ...extraordinary

Growing this brand has inspired the formation of other business ventures, including co-founding The Ethnic Group which operates businesses in food, flower delivery, home decor and art. Particularly close to Thando’s heart is their creative business where they have partnered with over 600 self-empowered artisans in rural Zimbabwe to assist in the introduction of their products to the diaspora. Thando believes they are self-empowered because they use their natural talents to better the lives of their families back home. 

# A CALL FOR *Contributors*

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

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

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

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

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

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