

TRAVEL ESSENCE MAGAZINE

1st
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE

A taste of
SWISS
HOSPITALITY
IN DUBAI

THE SCIENCE OF
SUNSCREEN
AND IMPACT ON
CORAL REEFS

Inside
LUSAKA'S
LATITUDE 15°
BOUTIQUE HOTEL

SOPHISTICATED
SIMPLICITY
at Canopy by Hilton
Dubai Al Seef

ZAMBEZI-SIDE
PARADISE AT PALM
RIVER LODGE

JOE OSAWAYE

CREATING VALUE AND THE
PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS



“ With KIZA, there was a need and we decided to fill it. There was a need to create a place of our own where we could gather as Africans, tell our story, and have a great time, sharing our culture, beauty, diversity, and energy with the rest of the 200+ nationalities based in the UAE. It’s been quite a journey. We have been able to tell our story and continue doing so, but the main part out of KIZA is not so much the entertainment value but the strong sense of community. It’s a safe space to get information, and to connect with other Africans who can help you get the answers you need on doing life in Dubai. That’s the KIZA story; it’s about community, food, and showcasing the best of African cultures and tastes. ”

- Joe Osawaye, Owner & CEO,
KIZA Dubai Restaurant & Lounge

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TOMORROW AFRICA

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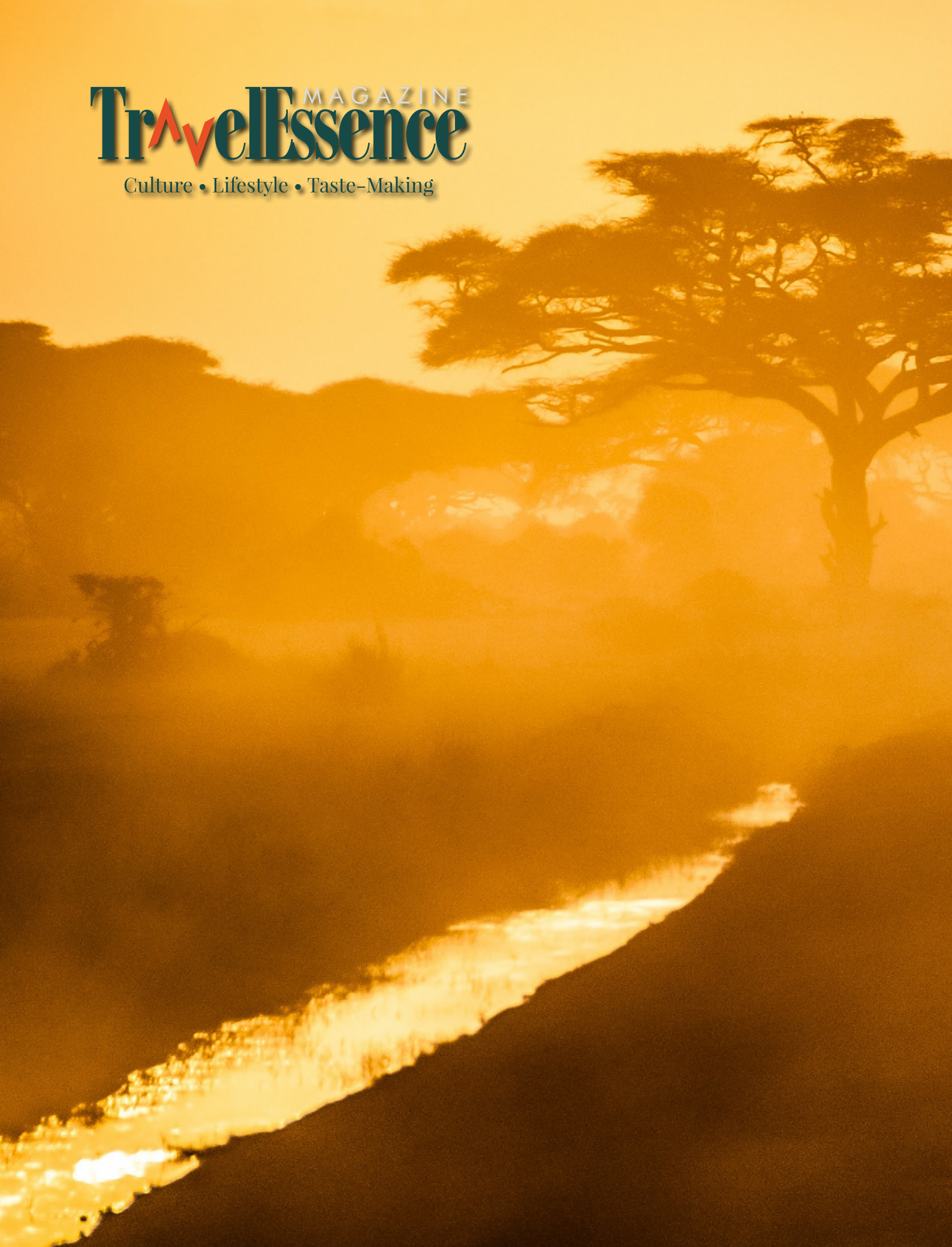


Culture • Lifestyle • Taste-Making

TravelEssence

MAGAZINE

Culture • Lifestyle • Taste-Making





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A

ugust - the month of new beginnings! We've just marked our 1-year anniversary and are so incredibly humbled by all the support we have received since launching a little over a year ago. What a journey it's been as we connect our readers with the innovative entrepreneurs and operators who are fully vested in show-

casings the best of Africa through their welcoming hospitality, community-based initiatives, and conservation efforts!

It's been equally thrilling to learn of higher occupancies with the busiest season yet for many lodges and hotels across the African continent. "Staycations", "slow travel" and "local tourism" have become buzzwords of sorts, especially as they relate to travel in the age of a global pandemic. With more tourism entities focusing on vaccinating their teams and developing mechanisms to ensure the safety and wellbeing of guests, we are witnessing a continued build up on traveller confidence. We want to get out more and look forward to more flight restrictions being lifted even as the world grapples with new waves of the pan-

ture, and lifestyle through the lenses of our people.

Journey with us as we share messages of hope through curated storytelling and inspiring you our readers to discover more of what awaits beyond your walls and comfort zones. Thank you all for supporting us through our growth so far and for connecting with us across all our platforms. There are some incredible evergreen itineraries you can take advantage off through our Travel Essence Getaways programme, viewable on www.travelessencemag.com. Let's plug in together, let's share, let's grow and let's come together to tell the impeccable stories of Africa and her people – across the continent and in the Middle East! 🌍

Your truly,

Gyovonne C. Mtengwa

Nothing but breathing the air of Africa, and actually walking through it, can communicate the indescribable sensations.

— WILLIAM BURCHELL

demic. We as humanity have been challenged, yet we remain hopeful because to not do is to deny ourselves the opportunity to overcome.

The UAE is abuzz with preparations for hosting Expo 2021, and with the hospitality sector making a steady recovery from the impact of last year's lockdowns, and more inbound travellers visiting Dubai in pursuit of business and leisure opportunities, our team has been busy connecting with a wide variety of properties that offer a unique value proposition for African travellers to the UAE. As we enter our second year of existence, our mandate remains the same: to connect residents and expats with exceptional places to stay locally, while simultaneously showcasing the best of Africa's hidden gems in travel, cul-





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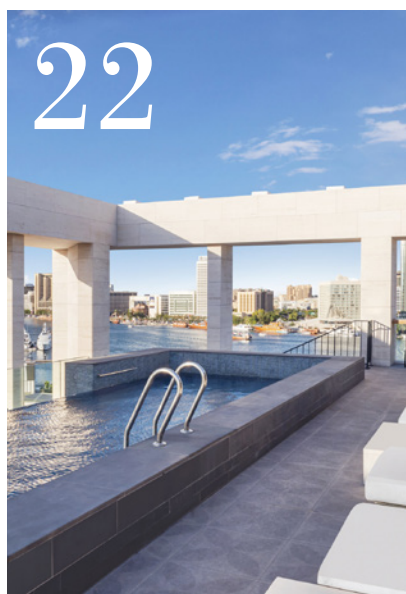
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Creating Value And The Pursuit Of Excellence In Business

Meet Joe Osawaye, Nigerian-born UAE-based serial entrepreneur, best recognized as a pioneer in the evolution of Dubai's pan-African dining and entertainment scene as the Owner/CEO of KIZA Dubai Restaurant & Lounge. But having grown his businesses from humble beginnings working in his mother's bakery in Nigeria, washing dishes in restaurants of London to make a living, to eventually building award-winning businesses back home in Managed Services in Telecoms, later relocating to Dubai 8 years ago to expand his portfolio in other sectors, including the upcoming launch of a luxury lifestyle and fashion brand DavidBowler - we chat with him on the importance of establishing a people-focused culture and commitment to excellence in business...

1. JOE OSAWAYE, SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR AND BEST KNOWN ACROSS DUBAI AND THE UAE AS THE OWNER OF KIZA RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE. BUT WE THINK WE'D HEAR IT BEST FROM YOU? WHO IS JOE?

I am Nigerian born and African in my system. I am a husband, a father, an uncle and lover of life, a recipient of God's mercy and grace, and I love to bring out the best in the people that I come across in my life. It's important to be me that I do my best in all that I put my hands on, be it in business or on the golf course, and I'm blessed to have the opportunity to add value to the people that have crossed my path over the years. This is really important to me, especially in mentor and prodigy relationship. I live my life fully intentional about building a legacy through giving back. I've been so blessed all throughout my life; God has really blessed me, and so I think I owe the world and my source – GOD - to give back from what He has given me.

2. SO, JOE IS ON A QUEST TO CREATE LEGACY, AND THIS IS QUITE EVIDENT AS YOU ARE A NOTABLE NAME ACROSS VARIOUS SPHERES AND LANDSCAPES. WHAT FUELS YOUR SOUL? WHEN YOU WAKE UP IN THE MORNING, WHAT GETS YOU REARING TO GO?

I think it's about my understanding of purpose. I don't think it's about me just waking up and saying I'm going to do this and that. What drives me is the knowledge and acceptance of what has been deposited within me from birth, right to this day, and so when I wake up in the morning, the first thing that pushes me is a strong sense of gratitude and the need to fulfill my purpose in the time that has been allotted to me. I thank GOD for my life, and I don't take it for granted at all. It is a privilege to be alive and it is what pushes me to ask myself how I can be of value to the people I am going to meet during my day. Gratitude and the quest to be of great value I would say are the two things that drive me.





3. NATURALLY YOU HAVE BUILT A NAME FOR YOUR BUSINESS IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY – NIGERIA – BEFORE YOU TOOK THE STEPS TO RELOCATE TO DUBAI. TALK TO US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT GROWING UP IN NIGERIA TAUGHT YOU AND WHAT LESSONS LED YOU ON THE PATH TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

It's quite tough to do business in Nigeria to say the least. If you can cut your teeth in Nigeria as they say, it's not that it will automatically be easier elsewhere, but it can certainly give you an edge where things work better; things like infrastructure, systems, policies, and all that.

I was raised in a business-minded family. My mom owned a bakery which I worked at in my early years while my dad was a chartered accountant, running an automobile business as his entrepreneurial venture. During my university days I became the GM of this business. From a very young age our parents taught us the dignity of labour. They wanted us to understand that nothing in life worth having comes easy, and that one must not only be willing to work hard to achieve their goals, but also be smart with the decisions they make. You simply cannot wait around for a free meal. So that was the culture engrained in me as a young child growing up in Nigeria, and as I went on into adulthood and running my own businesses.

My mom also taught me how to get on with people. She is a super extrovert. From her, I quickly learned that business is all about people - people serving people. Business is also about creating solutions to problems, either through products or services or a combination of both. The ability to get on with people along the way is a trait I have developed and am blessed with.



4. WHAT BUSINESS DECISIONS SUBSEQUENTLY LED YOU TO MOVING TO THE UAE?

I started a managed services in telecoms business in Nigeria, leveraging the experience I had working with and for my parents. My focus also became people, given that this is a trait I had developed watching my mother and how she navigated personal and business relationships. I viewed my employees as my biggest customers – my primary customers. I made sure they were happy and motivated all the time, and that they found joy in what they were doing, because that would then make it easy to serve our secondary customer or external parties who came looking for our products and services. I've lived in Dubai for 8 years now and my company still wins awards in Nigeria. People ask me how this is so. I believe it's because there is employee and customer buy-in already. It's about them and not me.

I first came to Dubai in 2005. My wife had been visiting the city since 2002 and back then, I was a London boy and more inclined to spend my time there than in Dubai. The moment I arrived in Dubai; my spirit told me I would live here. I just knew it. After 2005 we

would come here at least twice a year until we finally relocated here in 2013. We had moved our children to Canada and so it was our time to start a new chapter of our lives in Dubai.

But at the end of it all, as I said earlier, I believe it's about your purpose. My faith tells me that everything has already been written and that we are to trust GOD to lead us to our various destinations on life's journey. This is the same even in business. I'm into diverse sectors in business – oil and gas, telecoms, hospitality and now fashion. To me, it's all about understanding your purpose in the spaces you occupy and being people-focused every step of the way.

5. YOU SET FOOT IN DUBAI. TALK TO US ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY TO MAKING THE DECISION TO VENTURE IN DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT? WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START KIZA DUBAI AND WHAT HAS THE JOURNEY BEEN LIKE FOR YOU SO FAR?

I moved here 8 years ago to semi-retire. I arrived, played golf all over the UAE for 6 months, and became bored. So, I asked myself what was next, as I believed there had to be more to life. Before I started KIZA Dubai, I went ahead and formed a real estate brokerage firm. I'm big on lifestyle, I love beautiful things, houses, clothes and so I had connected with two gentlemen who had sold me pieces of real estate during a roadshow in Nigeria. I did this for 3 years after which we parted ways to explore different opportunities.

Unbeknownst to some, KIZA Dubai wasn't originally formed by me. It was started by a childhood friend of mine who had been in Dubai well before me and started it because there was no place where Africans could go and have a good time in a space, they call their own. Nobody at the time knew much about African culture or music and so on when he moved here. I encouraged him to take it to the next level by moving it to a different location. That's how KIZA Dubai ended moving from Oud Metha to DIFC. A year later my friend

moved to Canada, and I took over the business fully.

There was a need and we decided to fill it. There was a need to create a place of our own where we could gather as Africans, tell our story, and have a great time, sharing our culture, beauty and diversity and energy with the rest of the 200+ nationalities based in the UAE. It's been quite a journey as we have been able to tell our story and continue doing so; something of which I am incredibly proud of. But the main thing about KIZA Dubai isn't so much the entertainment value of our venue, but the strong sense of community. It's a safe space to get information, to connect with other Africans who are either living here or passing through. That's in summary what the KIZA Dubai story is; it's about community, food, and showcasing the best of African cultures and tastes.

6. SO, IF SOMEONE IS NEW TO DUBAI, AND HAS HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT THIS PLACE CALLED KIZA DUBAI, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU HAVE CREATED AT KIZA DUBAI THAT YOU BELIEVE PIQUES PEOPLES CURIOSITY ON THE DESTINATION?

Well, most of the time the best form of advertising is word of mouth. I'm sure somewhere somehow someone who has been to KIZA has shared a tale about their experience with someone else. In our marketing, we target a lot of pan-African groups but also do a lot by way of social media promotion, telling our story daily.

We don't go after success; we go after value creation. We are constantly looking at ways we can improve on the guest experience by adding value to our patrons, and when we do this, there is a

natural attraction towards our offer. I'm of the belief that people, and money will seek you out **ONLY** if you add value. KIZA Dubai is an experience as much as it is a dining and entertainment destination at a premium address. It warms my heart to see that many people have met in KIZA Dubai and gone on to get married, start families or partner in on business ventures together. This is simply amazing to me. That community piece is very much at work and it's what keeps us growing from strength to strength.

7. LET'S CIRCLE BACK TO JOE AND HIS PASSION FOR CREATING LEGACY. YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF ROLLING OUT A NEW LUXURY LIFESTYLE BRAND TO ADD TO YOUR PORTFOLIO OF BUSINESSES. THE BRAND DAVIDBOWLER BOASTS AN IMPRESSIVE PRODUCT LINE WHICH INCLUDES HIGH FASHION APPAREL, LEATHER GOODS, ACCESSORIES, AND INTERIOR DESIGN SERVICES. TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THIS NEW VENTURE AND WHAT YOUR CLIENTS CAN EXPECT FROM INTERACTING WITH THIS BRAND.

DAVIDBOWLER is one of my biggest business investments to date as we really aim to make a massive statement in the global luxury lifestyle and high fashion space once we launch. There was no better city to set up our atelier and HQ, which is an expression of everything I believe in as it relates to the pursuit of excellence. Gone are the days of mediocrity, and we are seeking clients who set a premium on excellence in service and product design on account of their global exposure.



As I said before, I love nice things and am a lover of lifestyle experiences that denote the essence of abundance and so DavidBowler is an embodiment of my collective passions. Whether you are wearing a DavidBowler suit or carrying one of our leather bags, we aim for you to make a statement. We look forward to being able to show our clients exactly what we mean in the coming weeks, months and years. Exciting things are getting ready to take place with the launch of DavidBowler.

8. YOU MENTIONED EARLIER HOW MENTOR AND PRODIGY RELATIONSHIP ARE BOTH ELEMENTS YOU FEEL VERY STRONGLY ABOUT, ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO BUILDING LEGACY AND ADDING VALUE TO THE LIVES OF OTHERS. TALK TO US ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS YOU ARE DOING IN THIS AREA.

Leadership is by example. Simply put, it's what you do even when people are not watching and it's about changing the narrative of how we are perceived. Unfortunately, there is a dearth in leadership in a lot of countries we come from which results in us having to deal with certain stigmas about us. I believe it is important for people, especially the younger generations, to not fall prey to the narratives that have long been peddled about themselves, whether from a nationality perspective or as Africans as a whole working hard to occupy global spaces. As Africans, we need to own the fact that we are people of excellence and so for me, I work hard to put that stamp of excellence in everything I do, encouraging others especially young people to do the same.

In terms of mentorship, I like to focus on the Gen Y and Gen Z. I'm from the Gen X raised by Baby Boomers and some of us are so set in our ways its difficult to change us. The Baby Boomers have done their part and the world has changed so much. Gen X are already set in their ways and don't want to learn new things, while the Baby Boomers can give advice but some of it is quite archaic now.

For some of Africa's Gen Y's and Gen Z's, I think their challenge is such that they grew up with limited support systems, so they often carry an inferiority complex, not by their fault but by the environment they grew up in. But when they see a bigger brother or sister doing something on a certain level, it gives them that courage and audacity to give it a shot because they see possibilities. And so, I'm passionate about creating platforms to reach out to these generations so I can share nuggets from my experiences, my truth, with the hopes that it will impact them.

9. HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE YOU ENCOUNTER EITHER LOCALLY OR IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD IF AT ALL?

That's the beauty of the internet, isn't it? Once you put your message out there, it can connect with people from different parts of the world while soliciting different responses. I recently started dabbling with Tik Tok and am having fun sharing my day-to-day experiences and seeing what speaks to the younger people. Some people aren't called for business. Some carry the ambitions of working for companies and doing well at it. I hope that through my messages and the platforms in which I'm a part, that they find nuggets that will be applicable to their pursuits and life goals. My message is really about the entrepreneurship journey, highlighting that running a business is the ability to bear pain for a long time and remain focused on the mandate. It's important for my mentees to understand who they are in relation to their purpose as this will guide what they do and how they go about doing it.

10. WHAT WOULD YOU WANT AFRICANS LIVING IN DUBAI OR THOSE ASPIRING TO LIVE IN DUBAI TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE IT IN THIS MIDDLE EASTERN MECCA?

If you look at the UAE, it's a place of vision. The bar is set very high here so if you are coming from the private sector with ambitions to climb high on the corporate ladder, you'll struggle if you don't carry a fighter's or winner's mentality. In a nation where 200+ nationalities, reside, everyone is putting their best foot forward.

If you are an employee, you must understand the space you are coming into. Become a person of value and be aggressive about developing yourself. Understand the importance of practicing delayed gratification. I say this to our team of employees and the people I mentor – do not waste your time and money on frivolities and commodities that add no real value to your life. It is more about the content than the container. If you are average in disposition with solid content, you will be embraced here. Understand the industry in which you play and aim to be the best at what you do. Go in there with the aim to solve problems. Going into any environment and becoming recognized for your efforts is about understanding what the pain points are where you are operating from. Seek to become the problem solver.

Another thing that I believe is important to one's success in Dubai, the greater UAE, or any other destination for that matter, is to have a clearly defined vision for yourself. Have a vision that's so big that you'll need your source to accomplish it. In my case my completeness is in GOD as my source, and so I can't separate myself from GOD for He is my source.

The third point is to look for a mentor that is already doing. There are a lot of people saying they are coaches, but they have not done anything. Talk to someone who has failed, or gone without food, not because he's fasting, but because he can't afford it and through the struggle, they have been able to figure out how to get out of the difficult times. Speak to people you can trace where they made their first bit of money from. Look for real people with credentials and be willing to learn, to grow, to be of value, to invest in yourself, to aim higher for yourself. After all you can only be taken seriously if you are serious about what you do.

Lastly, I'll say one must understand the power of grace. Everything is about grace and appreciating the gift of life, the gift of breath. Appreciate that GOD is orchestrating things behind the scenes. Faith works like a radio. You can't see the radio waves but when you tune in, you begin to hear the message! Lean on your faith in the good times and the tough times. The

DavidBowler is one of my biggest business investments to date, as we really aim to make a massive statement in the global luxury lifestyle and high fashion space once we launch. There was no better city to set up our atelier and HQ, which is an expression of everything I believe in as it relates to the pursuit of excellence. Gone are the days of mediocrity, and we are seeing clients who set a premium on excellence in service and product design on account of their global exposure.

– JOE OSAWAYE





UAE has made successes and failures of many people, and this was all founded on the decisions they took and the mentality they carried along the way. It's an environment that gives back what you put into it!

11. WHAT DOES THE NOTION OF HAVING AN IDENTITY MEAN TO YOU – AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND IN BUSINESS? WHAT SORT OF HABITS DO YOU THINK ONE MUST ADOPT AS THEY BUILD ON THEIR IDENTITY?

The talk about identity is multi-faceted. I feel like it's important to understand agendas. Identity is who, what and how you identify with something. Because I operate in the realm of the unusual, I only find my identity in what GOD says about me. That was settled within me years ago, so every space I enter, I come in with a confidence in GOD and what He has placed in me. I'm a partaker of grace and that brings out the energy in me that allows me to achieve.

I also don't get wrapped up in the low talk. If you are a Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods – you are simply good at what you do, so it doesn't matter your background but rather what you bring to the table and how much time you spend building on your craft or developing your talent.

It's important that we always have the right perspective and motivation. We need to get it right, even as we dissect the notion of identity. We must steer away from entitlement and be willing to put in the work that will result in excellence and bringing value to people, society, our families. Let's not get caught up with distractions but rather focus on our reasons for being here and how we can be people of impact.

12. JOE ON TRAVEL ACROSS AFRICA. WHICH PLACES IN AFRICA WOULD YOU ONE DAY WANT TO VISIT?

Egypt – they say it's the cradle of civilization. I want to see what sort of technology or mathematical deduction was employed to

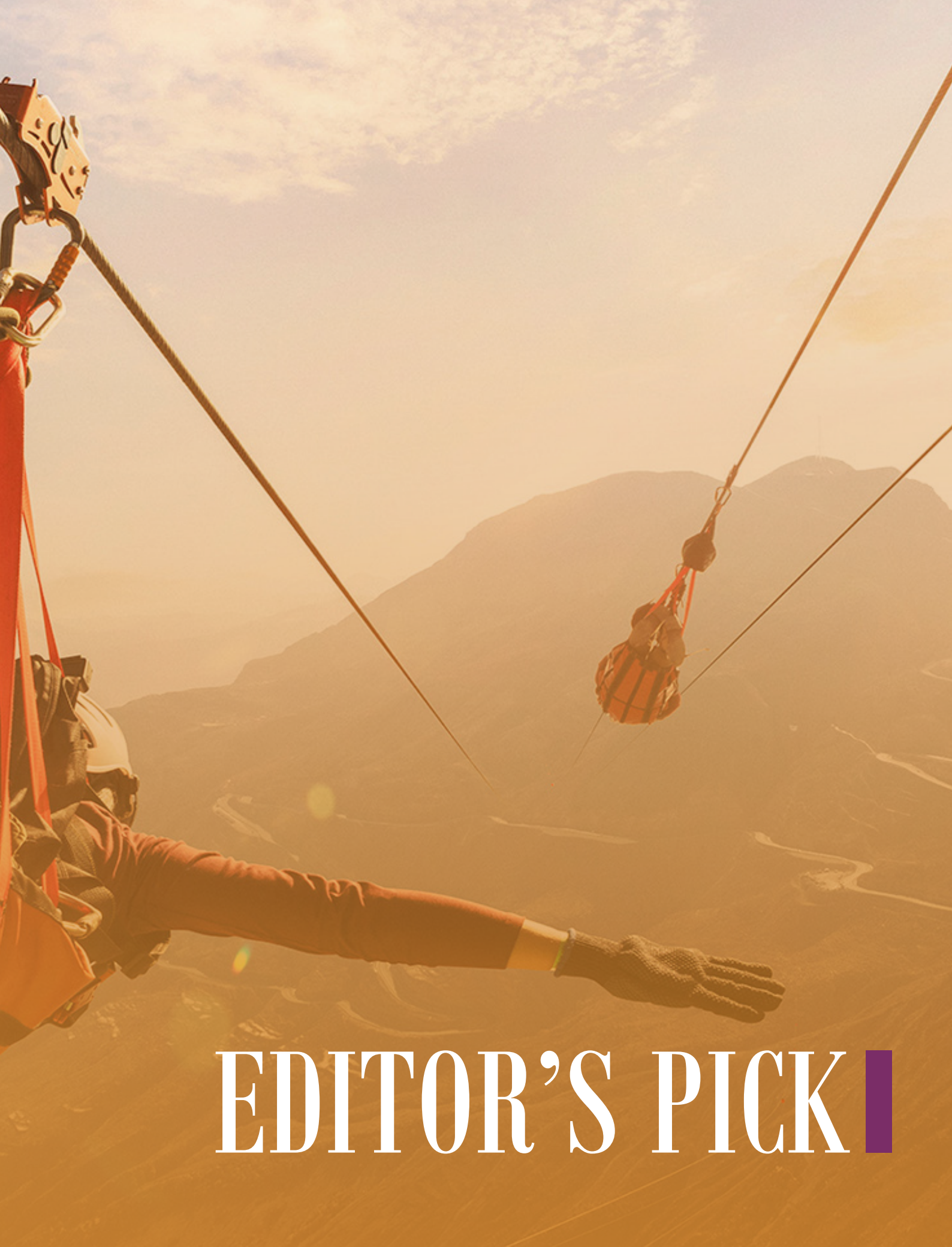
build the pyramids at the time they were built. Simply amazing!

Rwanda and its leadership hugely fascinate me. I think it takes a certain level of leadership style to achieve what they have despite the history they have experienced. So impressive.

Ethiopia is one of the only African countries that were never colonized. I'd be keen to understand how that has impacted their sense of pride and identity because of this fact – that they weren't colonized.

13. ANY LAST WORDS FROM JOE OSAWAYE TO OUR READERS?

We must stop making excuses and understand we are playing against people in different parts of the world and landscapes, which means more is required from us. These are the same views I carry in business – ensuring that we do the work so we can stand out, so that we are exemplary to each other as a team and to the customers who interact with us in business. Let's be diligent about activating great ideas and being bold about shifting the African narrative, especially as Africans living in global environments. God bless you all 🙏



EDITOR'S PICK |

Swissotel Al Murooj Dubai:
The allure of Swiss hospitality in
the heart of Dubai



A stay at Swissotel Al Murooj is undoubtedly an opportunity to discover tranquil moments paired with Swiss passion for hospitality. From the moment one drives up the steep ascent to the entrance lobby, to the check-in experience by courteous staff into a resort-style hotel a few minutes from some of Dubai's most iconic landmarks, as a guest, the taste of luxury as soon as you enter the property's revolving doors sets the tone for what will be your memorable time at the property.

By Yvonne C Mtengwa

Welcomed by a gracious valet attendant, what stood out was his friendly demeanour as our belongings were offloaded onto the luggage trolley before he alerted the welcoming team that we had arrived for our weekend staycation at the hotel. Heart-warming hospitality would prove to be the standard, as every interaction throughout the duration of our stay was characterised by gracious service and avid attention to the details that make for an unforgettable retreat away from home. To begin, the express check in process was completed on the 12th floor's private Club lounge, where we were offered fresh juices and snacks in the comfort of a palatial space with views of skyscrapers within the vicinity of the 5-star hotel.

Swissotel Al Murooj Dubai is a massive complex of imposing architecture; unmissable should you find yourself in the Dubai Mall area of Downtown Dubai. The resort-style property cleverly combines hotel and apartment-style accommodations at the heart of Dubai's city centre, and is literally a short walk from the plethora of nearby shopping, dining and business districts including the world's tallest skyscraper, the Burj Khalifa; Souk Al Bahar, home to distinctive culinary experiences of international influence, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), a globally recognised economic hub and World Trade Centre, best known for hosting sectorial conventions and mega events.

A LIMITLESS EXPERIENCE IN SWISS INSPIRED EXCELLENCE

The hotel's 251 contemporary rooms and suites are equipped with state-of-the-art technology: making for a combination of convenience and connectivity in a luxurious setting. Opening the doors to our apartment-style suite ushered us into grand accommodations for our weekend staycation, with the suite housing 2 en-suite bedrooms, a modern take on a majlis style seating area, a separate TV lounge, dining room, and fully equipped kitchenette. Bathrooms were splendid, complete with stand-alone showers and tubs and the bedrooms and adjacent dressing areas were spacious enough to easily fit a small bed and came fully plugged into wide screen Smart TVs.

Furnishings throughout the entire suite were reminiscent of classic European décor, with drapes to cover the big bay windows, plush cushions on the couches to match the earth toned colour palettes accentuated by turquoise and ruby red lavish fabrics. Balcony doors led us to a massive outdoor patio, complete with a temperature controlled jacuzzi built under a domed gazebo to shelter us from the sun above. The sun beds and seating areas were an invitation to consider dinner outside our suite or later enjoy a night cap while watching the evening's skies (which I made sure I did on every evening of our stay!) Views from the balcony were magnificent, capturing the hive of activity by the pools and restaurants down below and the hum of Dubai's city life in adjacent shopping and entertainment complexes.

CULINARY JOURNEYS AROUND THE WORLD

Swissotel Al Murooj offers six dining options and bars on site; making it that much easier to enjoy our social and culinary experiences without having to venture beyond the resort. We had friends visiting Dubai join us on one afternoon for lunch and a pool day, much to the delight of both sets of children whose ages ranged from 7 to 12. International cuisines are served from Pergolas Restaurant on the ground floor, the hotel's all-day dining restaurant located at the hotel's lobby level. The concept is designed around several buffet and cooking stations and calls for a relaxed family-friendly dining experience with a myriad of choices for cold selections at the salad bars, hot plates and grills, pizza and pasta options



which come as a favourite for the younger diners, and tantalising deserts to round off a delectable dinner. Every preference is truly catered for as guests also choose between indoor and outdoor seating areas overlooking the resort.

Surrounded by palm trees and the water lagoon that adds to the resort ambience is Tabule Restaurant, the cosy outdoor venue and perfect place to unwind, offering authentic Middle Eastern specialties such as a cold mezze, saj and a selection of shisha flavours and beverages.

The Double Decker, a British themed pub offers traditional pub grub, and is well known for hosting one of the best party brunches in town, while Anees, surrounded by gardens and water fountains, is a popular al fresco venue to enjoy a refreshing drink while taking a dip at the pool or simply to get together with friends.

For a quick bite of cup of coffee, the centrally located Circle Café in the heart of the hotel lobby commands the most idyllic


spot to unwind. Here you can grab coffee on the go or stay a while and linger over a delicious menu of pastries, cake slices and sandwiches.

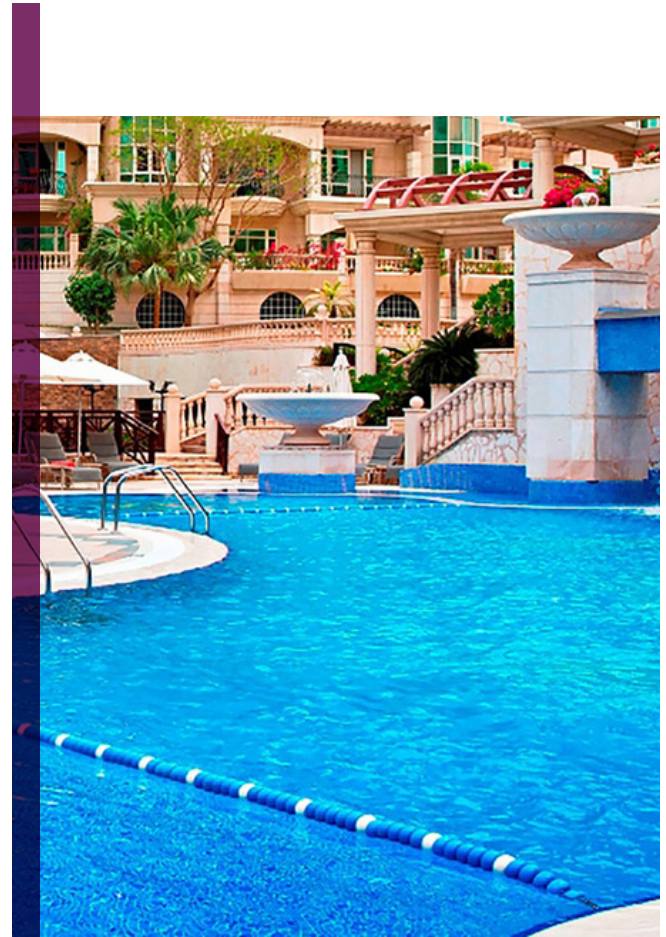
WELLNESS AND RELAXATION FOR THE LIFESTYLE ENTHUSIAST

No summer staycation is ever complete without pool days, an absolute must-include on the itinerary of any couple staying with kids. The temperature-controlled outdoor pools became the ultimate day out as both availed the perfect atmosphere to beat the summer sun right into the evening. Fitness enthusiasts can also easily take advantage of a state-of-the-art gym, tennis and squash courts, steam rooms and sauna, as well as a range of treatment rooms to provide the perfect place to unwind for a little self-care. Relax and rejuvenate at Swissotel Spa and enjoy the opportunity to revive your senses at this tranquil spa, which houses three treatment rooms with a highly trained team of therapist, offering a wide selection of treatments.

MEETING SPACES FOR EVERY OCCASION

While the utmost leisure experience is a given at Swissotel Al Murooj, space is abundant for businesspeople looking to host a conference or families needing a unique destination to host a family event. If you are looking to host an event, a variety of meeting and event facilities can cater up to 1000 delegates including a spacious ballroom with its private entrance, an elegant pre-function area and a Majlis room perfectly designed for social, weddings or business events.

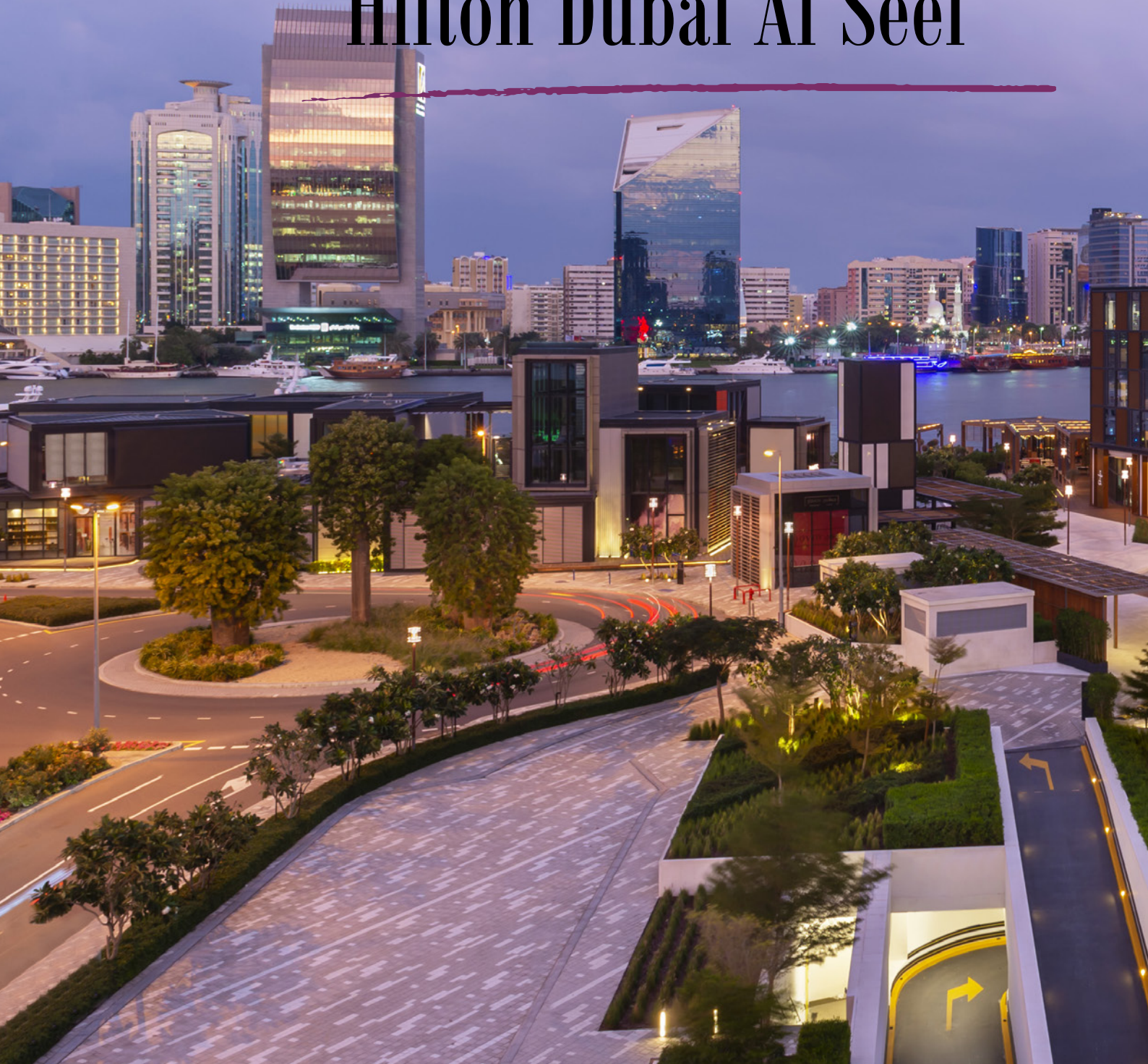
Swissotel Al Murooj Dubai is part of Accor Hotels, and guests can become a member of ALL Accor Live Limitless, to earn points and enjoy exclusive benefits each time they stay in one of the corporation's hotels. 



To book your summer staycation at Swissotel Al Murooj visit <https://all.accor.com/middle-east/index.en.shtml>



*Sophisticated simplicity
meets art deco at*
**The Canopy by
Hilton Dubai Al Seef**





Situated at the heart of Dubai's Al Seef neighbourhood is the unmissable Canopy by Hilton Dubai Al Seef, a vibrantly welcoming destination which seamlessly showcases the city's modern appeal and stand-out style through its design, Arabian hospitality, and unique experiences within the vicinity. Located at the top end of the Al Seef by Meraas promenade, a 2km-long Creekside retail and dining destination that blends old and new architecture, a stay at The Canopy by Hilton Dubai Al Seef is an experience that promises sophisticated simplicity that inspires through service excellence and art deco aesthetic.

By Yvonne C Mtengwa

You are ushered in by man-sized stone sculptures, each holding out their hands as if to welcome you into the hotel's lobby. This property, with captivating views of Dubai Creek, is unmistakably contemporary in design aesthetic, from the geometric shapes that form the exterior façade, to the unique light fixtures in the lobby seating areas that resemble cranes on a construction site. The lobby's art décor inspired furniture of vibrant colours, is set against the interior greys and fine lines of what feels like a library themed lounge area behind the check in counters. The concierge team is on standby to ensure you feel welcome upon arrival, serving you a mocktail as an immediate refreshment from the outdoor temperatures.

Ours was slated to be an overnight stay in two adjacent rooms that were well suited for my family of four, with one poster king size bed and two twin beds in the other, rooms of which were connected by an interleading door. Rooms are compact as much as they are cosy, embellished with quirky, decorative accessories that award one a sense of refined simplicity. The Canopy by Hilton Dubai Al Seef



houses a total of 200 well-appointed guestrooms, 19 Premium rooms, 9 Suites, and ours were two of the 42 connecting rooms which all feature comfortable beds draped in plush organic cotton linen. There's a cool little Retro fridge, Nespresso coffeemaker and glass bottled complimentary water for your in-room refreshment or coffee fix.

Dining selections to satisfy every palette

Upon checking in, we opted for lunch at the stylish 7th floor roof top restaurant SOL, which served us a delightful array of floral, fruity, and fresh mocktails to accompany the wide selection of hearty snacks on the menu. From loaded nachos to barbeque wings, our meal added to the super chilled ambience, an experience which also availed panoramic views of super yachts docked in the Dubai Creek below and Al Seef Promenade across from the hotel.

Dinner was a chic Greek Mediterranean gastronomic experience, in which we indulged in fresh seafood platters, grilled steaks and roasted vegetables at SKAFOS Restaurant, the perfect dinner and drinks spot to enjoy incredible vistas of Dubai Creek by dusk to the sound of live jazz music and quiet rumbles of dhow boats passing by as you dine. SKAFOS is a must try for friends and family looking to enjoy a casual yet sophisticated dining experience or for couples looking to connect over dinner with a view.

An artisanal quality breakfast made from fresh local ingredients ushered us into the start of a new day, served in buffet style from NYON on the ground floor. In adherence to crucially observed social distancing protocols at the hotel, the friendly staff directed us to our seating in a nook in Chapters, near the imposing ceiling high bookshelves, carefully adorned with memorabilia that depicts the eras of modern design, UAE history, a selection of books and magazine to match the lobby's décor aesthetic.

Meetings and events at Canopy by Hilton Dubai Al Seef

The stylish meeting spaces are equipped with the latest technology complimented by a dedicated pantry



To learn more about The Canopy by Hilton Dubai Al Seef visit www.canopybyhilton.com



for refreshing snacks and beverages to cater to the needs of guests on business. From training workshops to team meetings in an inspiring set up away from the office atmosphere, the hotel's meeting rooms form perfect co-working spaces to get work done and business deals sealed for the day.

Out and about Al Seef District

The vibrant Al Seef neighborhood is one of Dubai's best hidden gems, and a destination of many contrasts that merges Al Seef's cosmopolitan appeal with the rich historical charm of nearby museums, monuments, and souks. A day out at Al Seef compels you to explore the city through unique experiences that are a magical showcase of the many sides of Dubai. From catching a glimpse of the 18th century Al Fahidi Fort which houses Dubai Museum, to navigating the many pathways within the historical Bastakiya District, home to the renowned Coffee Museum, experiencing the hustle and bustle of the Gold Souk or catching a ferry across Dubai Creek to the Pearl Museum, there are countless activities one can get up to in filling their itinerary when staying at the Canopy by Hilton Dubai Al Seef.

There are daily shuttles from the hotel that can also take guests further into Dubai City, to experience more shopping, seaside fun and beach dining at La Mer Dubai by Meraas. Guest can also venture out to discover more of the iconic monuments such as the Dubai Frame, the Burj Khalifa, and countless shopping malls and entertainment destinations that dot the city. 







Al Quoz: An oasis of inspired creative beginnings

O

ver the past years, Al Quoz has successfully transformed from an industrial area to the beating heart of the creative scene in Dubai, contributing to enriching the cultural scene in the emirate with creativity and innovation. It achieved this by embracing modern art galleries and film, photography and music studios as well as the best cafes,



among others, forming its own unique identity that blends the modernity of the city with its heritage.

Today, Al Quoz is widely viewed as an oasis of culture and creativity as well as a magnet for tourists and investors alike, thanks to the visions of the innovative entrepreneurs who foresaw the future and paved the path to realising it with their pioneering ideas to achieve their dreams and reflect the present and future of the area.

Courtyard

The Courtyard in Al Quoz, designed by the architect Dariush Zandi and inaugurated in 1998, is a unique landmark in the region, embodying the splendour of Arab architecture. In a short period of time, this project became home to a group of the most prominent galleries and companies associated with art in Dubai, such as the Courtyard Gallery and Total Arts Gallery, as well as high-end art shops, photography studios, and artistic design centres.

Beginnings

When recollecting the early days of The Courtyard, Zandi, owner of Total Arts Gallery, said: “When we inaugurated the building in March 1998, our goal was to transform it into an oasis of art and culture. We fulfilled our dream and were able

to not only attract people working in this field but also introduce Dubai’s residents to distinct forms of creativity. We established something different from what was existent in the industrial zone, with a clear mission to progress upon the idea of creating a society in which all aspects of art and creativity could flourish and thrive in the neighbourhood.”

Shared determination and aspirations

Regarding the secret behind the success of the project, Zandi said: “I believe that emphasising my goal, ambition, and respect for the creative community members, who share these aspirations, helped establish the neighbourhood as it is today. Our ambitions have expanded and flourished in tandem with the growth of the city, and, in one way or another, we became fundamental elements of the creative direction of the arts in the emirate, while also spread awareness among the public.”

The Creative Zone: the fruit of tireless efforts

Zandi stressed that the continuous growth and prosperity of creative businesses in Al Quoz, and the continuous development that entrepreneurs there sought — whose work spanned various areas of creativity, including photography, visual arts, installations, music, theatre and others — resulted in the development of Al Quoz Creative Zone. It is projected that over the next five years, Dubai’s residents and visitors will witness rapid growth comparable to the growth that the area had witnessed over the past 25 years. It is believed that there will be a creative economy that is richer and more integrated than what has been witnessed in Dubai so far, thanks to the Creative Zone that will elevate the creative industry to more advanced, innovative and prosperous



levels. Investing and establishing a presence in Al Quoz today presents a host of advantages as it has become a solid destination for creative projects.

Creative Economy Strategy: comprehensive benefits

The creative economy strategy, launched recently by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, will reflect its benefits on everyone. The fruits of a creative economy strategy will be harvested by all stakeholders in the creative community, and even by stakeholders in other fields of work in the region. The ambition is that prosperity will prevail for everyone, and this will reflect on the city as a whole, and even from a regional perspective.

Sima Dance Company

At Alserkal Avenue in Al Quoz, there are other success stories worth highlighting, including Sima Dance Company, which was founded by the renowned director and choreographer,

Alaa Krimed. It is an experience that confirms the creative energy present at Alserkal Avenue and in Dubai in general.

Launch and prosperity

Alaa Krimed initially founded Sima Dance Company in 2003 in the Syrian capital of Damascus, having noticed a void in the Arab contemporary dance landscape. Krimed took the first steps towards filling that gap to expose the Middle Eastern audience to the art of contemporary dance, and in 2012, the company moved to Beirut, founding a dance studio that focused on promoting Arab contemporary dance in Lebanon. In 2015, the company relocated to Dubai in 2017 and opened its own art space under the name Sima Performing Arts at Alserkal Avenue, leading to the formation of successful cooperation initiatives between Sima Dance Company and the most prominent cultural institutions in the UAE. Since 2016, several artistic performances have been presented at the Quoz Arts Fest in Alserkal Avenue, and in 2017, the company was commissioned to present a performance for 'Art Dubai' exhibition as well as for many other events across the country.

The Luxury Hive

The art schools in Al Quoz are varied. From visual and performing arts, we move to the luxury arts and luxury brands that shined in The Luxury Hive Consultancy, which was established in the area in 2019. One of the company's core services is facilitating collaboration between luxury brands and GCC cultural and heritage organisations

On choosing Al Quoz as the company's headquarters, Maya Darian, Managing Director of The Luxury Hive, explains: "Far from being a purely industrial area, Al Quoz is home to a thriving community of innovative creative industries, which makes it a natural choice for our business. For example, we are situated in proximity to Alserkal Avenue — Dubai's most influential creative enclave — and we are in the centre of Dubai, close to major business and creative hubs, such as Dubai Media City, Dubai Design District, DIFC, and others. Not only that, most of our suppliers for our event curations are based nearby."

Strategy, reassurance, optimism


Looking to the future over the next five years, Darian said: "The strategy to transform Dubai into the world's creative economic capital shed light on what is in store for our industries going forward, and there are great things on the horizon for Al Quoz in this respect. Entrepreneurs in this sector feel that the government has our backs — that we are a priority. Given this reassurance, and the stimulating ecosystem that is developing around us and that we are a part of, I am very optimistic about the future of my business and the evolution of our neighbourhood, which is providing the ideal environment for us to transform our creative aspirations into a sustainable economic resource."

Darian added: "The Dubai Creative Economy Strategy will open the door to a large and unexplored pool of talent from around the world, providing tremendous opportunities for collaboration with local entities in the UAE. All these initiatives in the area will provide significant added value and support to the community of entrepreneurs and talented individuals, who will increasingly converge in Al Quoz to exchange ideas and express their creativity. This will also introduce a new level of competition that will serve as a powerful motivator for the development of innovative creative industries in Dubai."

On the prospects for expanding Al Quoz Creative Zone to other areas of Dubai, Darian believes that ideally, Al Quoz should remain the sole creative zone in the emirate for at least the next five years, explaining that it will allow sufficient time for the infrastructure to develop and the extent to which the creative-related services and flexible legal framework in place would be evaluated to establish if it would incentivise artists, designers, and emerging creative entrepreneurs to live and work in the zone.

Expo 2020 is an ideal opportunity

Expo 2020 will be an ideal opportunity for cultural exchange and knowledge sharing; it will also provide new interactions and collaborations. Stakeholders believe that if the zone is properly introduced and tactically promoted via this global platform, it will surely attract creative individuals and companies from all over the world while also supporting the Dubai Creative Economy Strategy.

There is no doubt that Al Quoz, like many other industrial areas in cities around the world, has played an important role in the cultural and social development of the city and its society. It has been the driving force of the artistic and cultural scene in Dubai since 2000, and it has become a hub where artists and craftsmen showcase and develop their talents and creativity. Through the development of Al Quoz Creative Zone, Dubai Culture seeks to nurture and develop the area to make it an integrated community for creative entrepreneurs and a platform for them as they aspire towards a brighter and more creative tomorrow. 



A Sneak Peek Inside The Arts Club Dubai

INSIDE THE PRIVATE MEMBER'S CLUB BEHIND THE
WALLS OF ICD BROOKFIELD PLACE IN DFC



It is the first international outpost of the historic private members' club, established in 1863 by Charles Dickens, among others, in London, celebrating the Arts, Sciences and Literature. Opened in late 2020 and set over four floors with 65,000 square feet dedicated to the club, the space is a spectacular showcase of three meeting rooms, three private dining rooms and five lounges, seven craft cocktail bars, three restaurants including the much-loved Brasserie from London and two new home-grown concepts - Alveare and Rohen: a library, cigar and late-night lounge and roof top terrace with views of the landmark Burj Khalifa.



imorestudio, a design firm from Milan was commissioned to design The Arts Club's interiors, terraces, and rooftop. Rich and sophisticated in colour palette, expressed with strong textures and

playful patterns, resulting in seamless elegance and decadence, the Club's décor is the ultimate blend of the past and present, boasting a unique collection of art-deco and historical pieces of furniture and lighting, while sumptuous fabrics throughout add layers of luxurious comfort. Rooms vary in size with grander lounges and restaurants for entertaining and socialising, and smaller more intimate spaces for discreet business meetings or quiet contemplation.

MORE THAN A PLATE AT THE ARTS CLUB DUBAI

The Brasserie pays homage to the London Club, and is the engine room of The Arts Club. Emulating some of Europe's grandest dining rooms, it welcomes Members throughout the day, for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and drinks. The menu is modern European, faithful to the Brasserie concept, filled with classic and beloved dishes – brought to life in part via the gueridon.



EDITOR'S PICK • THE ARTS CLUB DUBAI

Alveare is the first of the two new home-grown concepts, and an intimate, elegant, and refined concept, defined by the exceptional produce and culinary simplicity of Italy, delivered to the table with passion and classic Italian style service. Alveare explores some of Italy's long-lost regional dishes, taking Members and their guests on a journey, inspired by the golden era of the 60s and 70s. The charm and spirit of Italy is accentuated in every aspect, with an emphasis on attentive and charismatic table-side service.

Röhen, the second homegrown concept, utilizes intricate and exhilarating cooking techniques and distinct flavours. The Nikkei concept is bold, lively, and loud and is the beating heart of the Club, welcoming guests to a dining destination everyone will want to be seen hanging out in.

Inspired by the legacy and heritage of the original club in London, The Arts Club Dubai maintains the classic service members would expect from a famed private club. From charming and charismatic service that is both intuitive to guest's needs and wants, and yet also modern enough to be mindful of new habits when dining or in meetings, service is a key priority for The Arts Club





ALWAYS A SPECTACULAR VIEW FROM THE ROOFTOP TERRACE

A 23,000 sq. ft rooftop with uninterrupted views of the iconic Burj Khalifa, invites guests to enjoy the Club's late-night lounge that offers progressive music, with international DJs headlining intimate sets. It is also home to the famed cigar lounge from London - Oscuro - which comes well-stocked with an excellent selection of smokes by a master of habanos and extends onto the terrace with adjoining private cabanas. The outdoor terrace lounge runs the length of the building, with fantastic views of Downtown, perfect for sundowners, and set to an eclectic and international soundtrack.

UNVEILING A WHOLE NEW CULTURE

The cultural programme pulses life into each member's experience of the Club, as much or as little as they desire, as and when they wish, adapting and reflecting the seasons, social calendar and changing times.

The Arts Club Dubai aims to cultivate regional and international creative discourse in the visual arts, the literary arts, the culinary arts, the performances arts, and sciences. With an annual agenda of events, the cultural

Membership for The Arts Club Dubai is split into four categories: Full, Second* (for married couples), Under 30s and International, carries varied price points and can be applied for by contacting membership@theartsclub.ae

To learn more about The Arts Club visit:
www.theartsclub.ae

 www.instagram.com/theartsclubdubai

 www.facebook.com/theartsclubdubai

 www.linkedin.com/company/the-arts-club-dubai

programme's mandate strives to collaborate and engage with institutions and cultural practitioners to further support innovation and creative thinking in the arts. From hosting talks, debates, exhibitions, workshops, live performances, and original content all around, the cultural programme embodies the spirit of The Arts Club Dubai, one that is rooted in the local cultural landscape and its world-wide network.

BECOMING A PART OF THE ARTS CLUB

The Arts Club Dubai is owned and operated entirely by the Waney and the Landesberg

families, and being a member forms an exciting new community of like-minded, diverse, and dynamic people, all hailing from different cultures and sectors, from the region and further afield. The Club welcomes applications from all individuals who are interested in the arts, music, literature, design, science, technology, health and wellbeing, entrepreneurship, business, philanthropy, law, finance, and fashion. 

Jebel Jais – Pushing Ras Al Khaimah’s Tourist Sector To New Heights

Ensuring the future of the Hajar Mountains’ native flora and fauna is a key consideration as the Emirate launches new and exciting adventure attractions at the UAE’s highest peak



Photo by: Visit Ras Al Khaimah



There can be no better symbol for the tourism aspirations of the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah than Jebel

Jais, the tallest mountain in the UAE. Reaching almost two kilometers in height, this imposing feature stands out against the impressive contours of the Hajar Mountains and - thanks to a new focus in tourism - has come to represent Ras Al Khaimah's ambitions in this sector, both literally and figuratively.

In a literal sense, the mountain is the center of a new tourism paradigm for Ras Al Khaimah based on adventure, sustainability and eco-tourism, while metaphorically, its elevation as the UAE's tallest point represents the heights that Ras Al Khaimah's new tourism strategy aims to reach.

The new direction can be traced to the decision of His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, to unlock the potential of the Emirate's most stunning natural feature. The plan, as it evolved, was to exploit Ras Al Khaimah's outstandingly beautiful and rugged topography and its cooler mountain climes to create a unique tourist offering far removed from the rolling dunes that are synonymous with the region. With temperatures at the summit of Jebel Jais often 100C cooler than those at sea level, the aim was to create a new center of tourism that would be attractive to visitors year-round, even during the otherwise inhospitable outdoor months of the UAE summer.

Sustainability a key focus for Ras Al Khaimah

Central to the strategy is sustainability, which is a key priority for Ras Al

Khaimah and encompasses the ongoing development of renewable energy sources, recycling and protecting the Emirate's ecology. The commitment to this can be seen in the work to proliferate native flora at the summit of Jebel Jais and its surrounding areas, through to the policy being the underlying principle guiding the development of the mountain's public areas.

One vital aspect of this direction is to ensure accurate documentation of Jebel Jais' native plant species to create a database that will help assist with conservation measures, as well as provide information for nature lovers visiting the mountain. To this end, the Emirate is drawing on the expertise of Dr. Marina Tsaliki, Plant Conservationist and Research Specialist at Ras Al Khaimah Public Services Department's Landscape Agency, who is tasked with identifying Jebel Jais' variety of wild plants and making recommendations on how they can be protected and even utilized for the benefit of the community. As she explained:

"When I started working on Jebel Jais, the first thing I did was document the plants found there. I have now mapped them all and have established that the mountain has more than 100 different species, meaning that there is rich diversity. As far as we know, some species - such as its lily and iris - are unique to Jebel Jais and are not found anywhere else in the UAE. I've also found an abundance of herbal plants, aromatic plants and plants that are used for medicinal purposes. I'm currently looking at other mountaintops in the region just to confirm how unique Jebel Jais's flora truly is."

The expert botanist described how the plants and shrubs with medicinal properties that she has documented may have pharmaceutical applications and explained that she is currently assessing their viability for use in this area. She also discussed

the wild types of popular fruit and nut she had found on the mountain, saying that these are very different to the cultivated versions grown for consumers.

"There are wild figs growing on the mountain, but not like the sweet ones that you would buy in the shops. They're not really meant for human consumption but they support wasp communities that pollinate them and insects and animals that feed on them. This makes them an important part of the mountain's ecosystem. We also have Arabian almonds and these are currently undergoing laboratory analysis to determine their exact chemical composition and type. Although most of the plants on Jebel Jais are not a food source for humans, many of them could have important medicinal uses - that's something I'm currently looking into," she added.

An exciting mountain destination to explore

By opening Jebel Jais and promoting it to a new segment of traveler, it was envisaged that Ras Al Khaimah would develop a reputation as an exciting new destination that would appeal to adventurers, day-trippers, hikers and nature lovers. It was decided that one of its first attractions would be a zipline from Jebel Jais - not just any zipline, but the world's longest and a feature that would serve to attract thrill-seekers from around the world.

But first a road needed to be built and this was a tall order. Until as recently as 2013, the only way to ascend the mountain was by foot or by helicopter, so to allow for proper access and ongoing development, a road that would enable visitors to easily and efficiently traverse the imposing peak road had





to be constructed. And building a road up such a precipitous feature, with its severe inclinations and dizzying drops, was not without significant challenges.

It is thanks to the incredible efforts of both the contractors involved and Ras Al Khaimah Public Services Department that oversaw the operations that Jebel Jais now has a high-quality access road taking visitors from the base of the mountain to the UAE's highest point. Such has been the scale of this work that the Public Services Department is currently pursuing a Guinness World Record title for the construction of the road's retaining walls, which are likely to be the longest in the world. Adding to its list of impressive engineering achievements, the road has already been mentioned as among the world's best driving experiences, offering charming panoramic views of the mountain range.

When the road construction was nearing completion, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) looked at how to build a zipline that would capture the headlines and help Jebel Jais make its name. After extensive research and due diligence, RAKTDA entered into a partnership in 2017 with Toro Verde, operators of 'El Munstruo' ('The Monster') – the then world's longest zipline located in Puerto Rico in the Caribbean. Toro Verde's zipline experts



were brought in to manage and operate Jebel Jais Flight, the development of which entailed some substantial engineering feats, such as a glass-floor platform and a landing area suspended in mid-air.

Jebel Jais - An adrenaline lovers delight

A new Guinness World Record of 2.83km for a zipline was set. With participants hurtling over the mountain landscape

head-first at speeds of up to 150kph, Jebel Jais Flight is an adrenaline addict's delight and is on course to becoming a hugely popular 'bucket list' attraction. The establishment of the zipline marked the beginning of Jebel Jais' positioning as a new and exciting adventure tourism destination, with further elements soon following to create a comprehensive adventure hub.

Ras Al Khaimah's diverse landscape is perfectly suited to an array of outdoor

activities, and this has enabled it to make a name for itself by offering a range of invigorating pursuits that include hiking, biking, climbing, trekking, abseiling and canyoning, all with the help of adventure tour companies that provide certified and knowledgeable guides.

Ras Al Khaimah has expanded on the exciting appeal of Jebel Jais by launching the all-encompassing Jais Adventure Peak that provides access to the Emirate's series of exciting adventure activities. This spans the Jebel Jais Flight; Jais Sky Tour, featuring seven ziplines and a 15-meter-long sky bridge - the highest in the UAE; Bear Grylls Explorers Camp, which also includes the world's first Bear Grylls branded accommodation; Jebel Jais Viewing Deck Park - with its seven viewing decks offering stunning 360-degree vistas of the spectacular Hajar Mountains and the Jais Sky Maze - a suspended obstacle course comprising two levels of rope swings, wobbly bridges, swinging loops and more.

It is anticipated that growing numbers of adventure and eco tourists will increase overall visitor figures to Ras Al Khaimah by a significant margin, thereby contributing considerably to the Emirate's economy. The partnerships it is striking up to deliver new offerings in the adventure tourism sphere are also attracting private investment and proving instrumental in Ras Al Khaimah's efforts to expand its name as the region's premium adventure hub.

When H.H. Sheikh Saud first conceived the idea of developing Jebel Jais, no one could have imagined how the dream of developing a previously inaccessible, imposing feature would transform a little-known mountainous area in the north of the UAE into the spectacular tourism hub it is today. The UAE public and visitors alike can be thankful that the beautiful vistas of Jebel Jais are now accessible to all. 🌄



TASTE-MAKERS |



Building The Iganyana Tented Camp Dream

1. TERRY AND SHEONA ANDERS - WE ARE THRILLED TO CONNECT WITH YOU AND YOUR STORY. TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELVES, WHERE YOU GREW UP AND WHAT INSPIRES YOUR LOVE FOR ZIMBABWE AND AFRICA AT LARGE?

We were born and raised in Zimbabwe and grew up as typical bush kids. We played simple games and lived with boundless energy, barefoot, carefree, outdoors and free to chase our dreams. Our parents say we were mischievous but we rather think that the freedom to wander, explore, create, imagine, dream without restraint is precisely why as adults we are so at one with nature and comfortable in Africa.

Ours is an enviable, healthy, adventure-rich lifestyle and the lust for the great outdoors has never left us. It is rare these days to grow up and remain in your country of birth and so we treasure the fact that our parents, grandparents and great grandparents all lived in Africa. Terry's parents still stay in the small town in the middle of Zimbabwe where they were married and where they raised their kids. My mum lives nearby and frequents the camp with us. She is known as 'The Storyteller' and she still mesmerises guests with tales of her childhood in Africa during evenings around our fire. I'm so thrilled that my dad, recently laid to rest right next to our tented home at Iganyana Tented Camp, also got to see and feel this place. Their legacy is now ours and lives on in this place.

2. HAS BECOMING A LUXURY TENTED CAMP OWNER ALWAYS BEEN AT THE FRONT OF YOUR MIND COMING UP AND IF SO, WHAT KEPT YOU WORKING TOWARDS ATTAINING THAT GOAL ESPECIALLY IN A CHALLENGING ECONOMY?

Our love affair with the wild lived in us since we were children and we've yearned life-long to share this heritage with the world. But luxury tented camp, you ask? Not so much. We began with simple tents and mobile safari camps, and we still operate these private tented bush camps throughout Zimbabwe. It is an incredible way to engage the wild and reminisce explorer days of old in the traditional style. Those were glory days of courage and entrepreneurship, but bravery and hardship too. Because of this some folks imagine the private bush camps are rough and uncomfortable. This couldn't be further from the truth, but we recognised the need to create a place

full of the character and charm of yesteryear, dually purposed and distinguished as a luxury, comfort camp so that ALL our guests, particularly first-time guests who may feel anxious about a mobile tented bush camp, can feel confident, comfortable, safe and welcome in more familiar surrounds. And so Iganyana Tented Camp was born.

It has taken pioneer spirit, grit and conviction to conquer the nay-sayers, to stay in tourism, to build our dream amidst heavy competition and heavier economic constraints. But we have proved that when it is a calling, when it comes from the soul, then heart and hard work will win out. We will never stop giving and sharing this multi-faceted Africa in a mosaic of safari experiences, with guests from all over the world.

3. IGANYANA TENTED CAMP HAS BEEN OPEN FOR ABOUT 2 YEARS. WHY IGANYANA? WHAT WAS THE IMPETUS FOR SETTING UP THIS LUXURY TENTED CAMP IN THE HEART OF HWANGE NATIONAL PARK AND HOW HAS THIS MILESTONE TRANSFORMED YOUR LIVES?

Iganyana Tented Camp was conceived in us long ago. Years of dreaming and planning went into creating something unique without detracting from the sincere embodiment of the colour, culture, texture, history and heritage that is Zimbabwe. 'Iganyana' means 'Wild Dog'. They are a remarkable species and are our namesake because as a pack, Wild Dogs are an extraordinary display of effective teamwork, community and camaraderie. A small animal with massive collective impact. We have always believed in 'together'. Standing alone is not the African way. We share and we work together. Alone we are a filler of a space and vulnerable. Together we are strong, a family, a mosaic, a living artwork, a grand performance.



4. WHAT WERE SOME OF THE KEY LESSONS YOU TOOK AWAY DURING THE PROCESS OF BUILDING IGANYANA AHEAD OF OPENING, AND FINALLY WELCOMING GUESTS TO YOUR CAMP?

Conservation is at the heart of all we do. As a safari operator, we have learned how critical it is to be present. During COVID-19 when many shut their doors, we determined to stay open, to keep our team fed, to keep our patch of paradise cared for and managed so that poaching didn't escalate and so that the animals and their environment and the communities that depend on this place for a livelihood could survive a tough time. We've also learned that people make a place come alive. Iganyana Tented Camp sure is an unbelievable escape here in Hwange National Park, but a place is but another space when it has no soul. Like a house that should be a home. Hospitality is people-driven. The right people, with the right heart for conservation and for sharing it with the world - THAT lights up a space and ordinary place becomes extraordinary experience to treasure for all time.

5. TALK TO US A LITTLE ABOUT THE IGANYANA EXPERIENCE - ROOMS, LOCATION, WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS, HOW TO GET THERE ETC.? WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE DRAWS GUESTS TO THIS INCREDIBLE CAMP IN THE WILDERNESS, AND HOW DO YOU BELIEVE A STAY AT IGANYANA CAN BE VIEWED AS 'SOULFOOD' FOR ONE LOOKING TO RECONNECT WITH NATURE?

Guests are the best testament to who we are. We've asked our guests what they love about this place and resoundingly they say that Iganyana carries a unique vibe, an instant warmth that resonates in everything in the welcome, the stay, our facilities and decor. This is heart-warming for us because we want our guests to feel right at home here, to belong.

Iganyana is a window on the wild in comfort and safety, a pocket of privacy, and is understated, simple luxury. You can look forward to curling up with a great story on the couch in the living room, or request a private meal on the star deck, or spend the day about camp in the soft, pillowy dressing gowns that are provided. The point is to be completely at ease as you immerse in the healing, perspective giving power of nature and revel rich in Africa-reward.

Iganyana comprises of 20 fully furnished, simply appointed, en-suite safari tents, all facing a game-rich, long-dry riverbed that is known as the famed Dete Vlei. The tents are attractively arched around a main area with dining deck, leisure deck, fire boma, start deck and swimming pool. Nothing about this camp detracts from the sanctuary of the wildlife surrounds and care has been taken to design Iganyana so as not to disturb any of the natural elephant pathways that have transversed the area for hundreds of years.

Guests can game drive, night drive, enjoy a walking safari, or even a horseback safari (for experienced riders) but it is not necessary to leave the deck for excellent wildlife and photographic opportunity. Elephants frequently drink from the swimming pool and buffalo walk in impressive herds down the vlei. The bird life is spectacular with over 400 species and people come from all over the world to see their bucket list rarities. Families are welcome here too which is unusual for safari camps. We believe conservation begins in young hearts, so we've prepared a plethora of Africa-rich, fun activities to engage kids whilst their guardians get some rest and relaxation. And we're easy to reach too! Just a 25 min flight from World Wonder Victoria Falls to Hwange Main Airport, or a 2-hour drive on good road - and just like that you are on our deck with a good cup of tea or a G&T in hand and immediately immersed in the wilds of Hwange. Truly amazing.





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6. A BIG DEAL FOR MOST TRAVELLERS INTO AFRICA, IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY A SAFARI EXPERIENCE. IGANYANA IS LOCATED FRONT AND CENTER OF SOUTHERN AFRICA'S BIG 5 TERRITORY. WHAT ANIMALS SURROUND YOUR CAMP AND WHEN IS THE BEST TIME DURING THE YEAR TO VISIT?

Year-round guests get great game viewing but each season stages dramatic change and wildlife diversity as nature transforms. Wildlife and birdlife around our planet migrate or merge depending on their species and Hwange is no exception. The wet season or emerald season is fragrant and green from November through to March. Exciting migratory birds arrive such as the Yellow-billed Kite from Russia in August for breeding in the warmer temperatures. Just as first rains begin around November the Broad-Billed Rollers, European Bee Eaters, Carmine Bee Eaters, Woolly Necked-Storks and many Eagle species arrive for the termite feeding frenzy. Quite spectacular! Guests can also look forward to new life all around as plains game species give birth to little ones. It is a precious, life-giving time as the rains replenish the earth. The bush is thick, and it is less about the big herds, and more about stunning scenery, light-play on the landscape and smaller, well-fed, healthy pockets of game. Temperatures are temperate and it is a time of plenty.

In stark contrast however in the dry season from about June though to October the bush dries up and thins out. June and July are our Winter months, and it is colder than one might expect with temperatures dropping sub-zero in places in the dead of night. Mornings and evenings are cold, but the days are warm. Game viewing is more dramatic with bigger herds competing for food and water sources. There are dust-driven, fire-red sunsets at this time of year. Temperatures get increasingly hotter and up to around 36 degrees Celsius in October in the middle of the day. Nights are balmy and pleasant. It is exciting time to visit for those interested in the predators because we often get to witness lions and hyena and wild dog making the most of herds in big numbers. This is a high-adrenaline and dangerous hunting time for them.

There isn't a time when the wild does not produce fantastic sensory reward and we encourage guests to return to witness all the seasons and 'Shades of Iganyana' at Hwange National Park.

7. WHAT SORT OF EXPERIENCE FROM A GUEST SATISFACTION PERSPECTIVE DO YOU AIM FOR YOUR GUESTS TO TAKE AWAY AFTER A STAY AT IGANYANA?

If guests stay with us and say it was 'nice' we've failed. We are only interested in 'extraordinary', and our guest can expect that. This is not just another place to stay and view Zimbabwe, nor to tick a box and see the great Hwange National Park on another safari. No. This is your chance to EXPERIENCE Africa, to FEEL, to see life-changing things, to discover, to unwind, to sense, to be free, to abandon your comfort zone, to dare to 'be' in this place. Leave sedentary behind and engage with us. You're safe with us, surrounded and yet perfectly private. You'll find this way of living inspiring, awakening, joyful, wistful, restful, adventurous, recreational, rejuvenating, healing. Rewarding in every way. THAT is what memories are made of. Our guests are forever a part of this place, and a part of our story and we are a part of theirs. And the story lives on as they take with them rich memories of their personal encounter with Africa, a memory bank to draw on and treasure forever.

8. TERRY, YOU HAVE WORKED IN THE AREA WITH MANY COMMUNITIES CLOSELY AND VIEW HWANGE NATIONAL PARK AND DETE AS YOUR PLAYGROUND. TALK TO US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT SOME OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDING INITIATIVES IGANYANA FOSTERS AND WHAT THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IS IN YOUR VIEW?

It is our founding ethos to make the lives of Zimbabweans better through everything we endeavour in hospitality. Conservation requires community. Although Iganyana Tented Camp is the new kid on the block we have worked in the Hwange area since 2002 and enjoyed valuable relationships with our surrounding communities and the Chiefs. They are very much a part of the existence of Iganyana Tented Camp. Raw materials for camp-build came from our local villages and our safari team has been recruited largely from these surrounding communities too. In addition to hand-in-hand work with Hwange residents it has always been our passion to reach out to the disabled community. We have a great working relationship with several outreaches that provide skills development programs for disability employees, some of whom were involved in



building aspects of our camp. We are guardians of a physically disabled young man and so this is close to our hearts. We're also providing skills development for our staff to host and train physically and emotionally abused young adults so that they are able to progress into work in hospitality should they choose to do so. Nature is a therapy, and we cannot think of a better place to welcome people in promotion of health and well-being.

We are also involved in arranging funding for development and management of projects that provide solutions for Human Wildlife Conflict which is common amongst our communities where wildlife often destroys vital crops and imposes on rural life. We as Forever African are determined to drive the concept of Community Commercial wildlife ranches where the communities become direct beneficiaries of the program.

Last but not least we host many kids' programs at Iganyana Tented Camp where kids get hands-on hospitality and mini-guiding experience. We want to instil passion and value in our children for the wild and for what hospitality can do to preserve it. It is simple: kids today - conservation tomorrow. Children are the



future, and we use a mosaic of safari and lifestyle events and programs to entertain and intrigue the young minds that will mould our wildlife programs and conservation tomorrow.

9. 2020 BROUGHT WITH IT THE PERILS OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC AFTER YOU HAD JUST RECENTLY OPENED. WHAT HAS SUSTAINED YOUR BUSINESS AND WHAT DO YOU FEEL TOURISM PLAYERS IN ZIMBABWE SHOULD BE DOING TO PIVOT FOR GROWTH AS THEY WELCOME MORE LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS WITH THE OPENING OF BORDERS GOING FORWARD?


2020 proved catastrophic all over our planet. The isolation has been a stark reminder of the blessing that we took for granted when we could be together and give to each other. I think this is what we missed the most - not being able to give to our guests and to share this place. During lockdown we were able to host our countrymen in Zimbabwe and ashamedly, many had not been to see Hwange National Park. It has been a privilege to get to know our local market and we fully intend to be here for Zimbabweans forever and make this place a haven and cost effective for local travel.

It has also been an awakening for us, to know how to be flexible and to reach out to people who have different values and perceptions of pleasure and leisure. Iganyana has become a great retreat for families with children over this time and for specialist safaris like horseback safaris or walking / birding / photographic safaris. Despite lockdown our quieter time has been profitable in making us stronger as a team and we've used the time to grow. We have a beautiful new pool and

pool deck at Iganyana Tented Camp and have extended that camp to include a private section with 4 new tents. This private section is called Iganyana Wild, and it features an independent dining and lounge deck area, a private kitchen and a pool. This means guests traveling in smaller groups can enjoy all the luxury of Iganyana in total privacy.

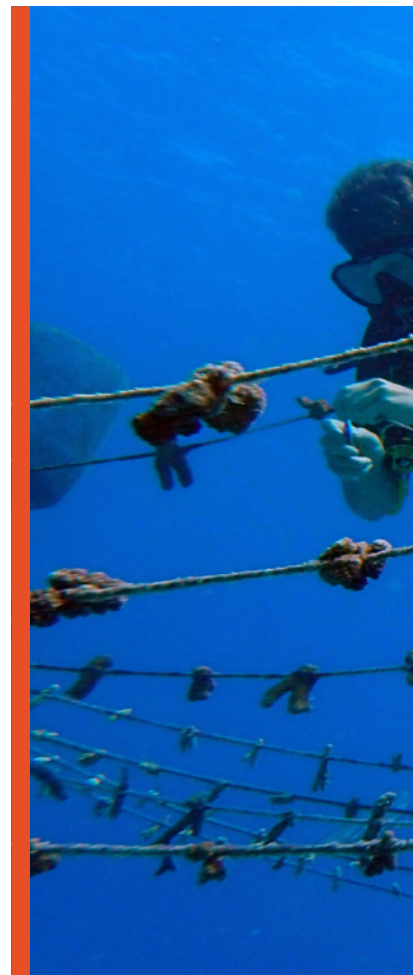
10. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TRAVELLERS FROM OVERSEAS MARKETS LOOKING TO RECONNECT WITH NATURE TO KNOW ABOUT VISITING ZIMBABWE?

Zimbabwe is rich in scenic splendour, cultural and historical heritage and pristine wildlife areas making it an outstanding safari destination. Guests can look forward to extraordinary explorer and luxury places to stay across the country. Our Zimbabwean hospitality is par excellence, transport routes around the country are well established and the people of Zimbabwe are ready to welcome the world. It is staged for great post-Covid come-back and a bucket-list must for safari travel.

This is the place to be for guests looking for a non-commercial, original African experience and Iganyana Tented Camp will deliver that. For guests concerned about their health & safety during travel here, we are proud to announce that the roll-out of vaccinations around Zimbabwe sets us apart from other African countries and all our team members in camp have been vaccinated. Our team is trained to uphold safety measures that comply with WHO COVID travel regulations and we have the safety of our guests at heart on all fronts. 

The Science Of Sunscreen And Impact On Global Coral Reefs

How a stint in the Seychelles for Austin Laing-Herbert and Louise Laing challenged the couple to fight for coral reefs



Did you know that 97% of sun cream is in fact damaging to marine life? We talk to husband-and-wife team and founders of People4Ocean to find out how they are playing their part in helping combat this problem.



People4Ocean (P4O) is an Australian-based company working at fighting the global coral crisis through innovative strategies and is now branching into both the UK and Europe. P4O offers sustainable consultancy services in coral reef management and expertise in coral reef rehabilitation. Their founders are a Franco-Australian couple – Louise Laing and Austin Laing-Herbert - who lived at Amitié in Praslin, on the Island of Seychelles for over two years, leading the coral restoration program for the NGO Nature Seychelles. Fighting for Seychelles’ coral reefs became their way-of-life. They believe Seychelles has a privileged chance to be a leader in the preservation of coral reefs, by focusing on mitigating impacts from climate change, and now, sunscreen pollution. With products now available in stores and hotel across the Seychelles, we talk with them about their range and their incredible global work.

1. WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO LAUNCH PEOPLE4OCEAN, AND CAN YOU GIVE SOME INSIGHT INTO THE WORK YOU DO?

I co-founded People4Ocean Sun Care with my husband Austin Laing-Herbert a couple years ago. Austin and I met in 2012 on the Great Barrier Reef while studying coral reefs and tropical ecosystems at James Cook University in Townsville. In 2015 with our Master Degree in hand, we travelled to the Indian Ocean to coordinate a USAID funded, large-scale reef rehabilitation project in Seychelles with a local non-for-profit organisation. In 2016, we witnessed the devastating impacts of climate change, as our restored reef (about 24,000 corals transplanted over a football field size area) was nearly wiped out by mass coral bleaching. We dedicated the following year to “growing our reef” back to life, by propagating corals that had survived the heat wave. Already back then, we were determined to do all we could to protect these ecosystems most at risk and raise awareness on the coral reef crisis. We made the protection of coral reefs our “way-of-life”.

The idea for People4Ocean Sun Care followed scientific findings on the impacts of sunscreen ingredients on marine ecosystems and coral reefs. As sunscreen leaches off your skin – in the shower or swimming in the ocean – and washes off into rivers, lakes and oceans, the chemicals interact in insidious ways on aquatic life. Experiments performed by the University of Hawaii found that common UV-filters have lethal impacts on coral reefs, from DNA damage to increased sensitivity to bleaching.

These findings revealed the toxic nature of 97% of sunscreens on the market, but they also shown the light on yet another source of stress inflicted on reef ecosystems already threatened globally by climate change, land use, predator invasions and overfishing.

We were not sunscreen lovers to start with. All the sunscreens we could find were filled with toxic ingredients, unpleasant to use and harsh on the skin. And so, in 2018, we returned to Australia, determined to raise awareness on this issue and set out on a journey to create sun care solutions genuinely good for us and harmless to ocean life.

We created People4Ocean Sun Care with a simple intention: to end sunscreen pollution in our oceans and within our bodies. Most of all, we wanted to bring pleasure back in applying sunscreen! In Australia, a country where rates of skin cancer and coral bleaching are at record high, we took the challenge of addressing skin and oceanic wellness hand-in-hand. We joined forces with skincare brand LaGaia Unedited to create a one-of-a-kind sun system eco-consciously formulated to protect the most sensitive skin and while preserving natural ecosystems. The P4O range offers a true skin & ocean-conscious experience, by combining the best ingredients from the spa industry and excluding all toxins found in mainstream sunscreens. We also don't dilute our sunscreens with water or synthetic fillers, resulting in a concentrated and long-lasting protection.

Since its origins, People4Ocean has committed to its fundamental core – Protect More Than Your Skin™ - by donating a percentage of all sales towards reef conservation initiatives. We believe our sun care products - and the people that use them - can be a driving force to help preserve reefs worldwide. With P4O, applying sunscreen goes beyond personal care, it is a promise to your long-term health and to the future of our oceans.

2. WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO DEVELOP THE P4O REEF SAFE SUNSCREEN RANGE? HOW EXACTLY DO NORMAL SUNSCREENS ADVERSELY AFFECT CORAL AND MARINE LIFE?

We just couldn't understand how an everyday product that is supposed to protect people could have so many health and environmental drawbacks. Ingredients in sunscreens should not be irritating or cause skin allergies, nor should they enter the bloodstream or harm coral reefs. For example, Oxybenzone and Octinoxate are common UV-filters characterized as 'Hazardous to the aquatic environment, with long-term hazard by the United Nations Global Harmonized System (GHS). And yet, 97% of sunscreens and cosmetics on the market contain these ingredients. What if something as simple as making the switch to healthy sun protection could solve the problem?

In 2018, the state of Hawaii was first in history to ban the sale of sunscreens containing Oxybenzone and Octinoxate to protect its coral reefs. This state-wide bill was voted following a study by Downs et al. (2015) quantifying sunscreen impacts on coral fragments and coral polyps, showing death at certain concentrations. Their testing showed that exposure to Oxybenzone can inhibit and alter the growth of baby corals, is toxic to seven coral species and is likely to induce coral bleaching in the wild, further increasing our reefs sensitivity to threats like climate change.

Oxybenzone and Octinoxate may also bio-accumulate and be biomagnified in organisms. Biomagnification means they may increase in concentration in the tissues of organisms as it travels up the food chain. A number of aquatic and marine species have been discovered to be contaminated, from carp, catfish, eel, white fish, trout, barb, chub, perch and mussels to coral, mahi-mahi, dolphins, sea turtle eggs, and migratory bird eggs. Finally, additional testings have revealed Oxybenzone also acts as an endocrine disruptor on marine invertebrates such as shrimps and bivalves. Other ingredients commonly found in cosmetics – such as butylparaben, octocrylene and a chemical called 4MBC – have proven highly toxic to marine life. You can find the full list at www.haereticus-lab.org. These findings show that sunscreen pollution should be addressed as an environmental hazard.

Humans are not exempt from these impacts. In recent FDA testings, all non-mineral sunscreen chemicals [oxybenzone, octinoxate, octisalate, octocrylene, homosalate and avobenzone] absorbed into the body and could be measured in blood after just a single use. Previous studies detected several sunscreen ingredients in breast milk and urine samples. By penetrating the skin and entering our bloodstream, these chemicals trigger a cascade of reactions from increased free radicals in the skin, endocrine disruptive properties in the body and, ironically, enhanced risk of melanoma in cases of sunscreen abuse for intentional sun exposure.

3. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REEF SAFE FORMULATIONS AND NORMAL SUNSCREENS?

Chemical sunscreens contain ingredients that wash off our skins (or down the drain) to harm coral reefs. Using a 'reef safe sunscreen' means that no ingredients in that product will cause detrimental effects to marine life. There are no government-regulated certifications



for reef-safe sunscreens yet (the research is quite new) so certain brands falsely claim to be "Reef-Safe" despite containing harmful chemicals. It is up to the consumer to read sunscreen labels for toxic ingredients. A reef-safe sunscreen should not include ingredients such as Oxybenzone, Avobenzone, Octinoxate, Octocrylene, Parabens, etc. An easier way to identify reef-safe sunscreens is to choose ones that exclusively use mineral UV-blockers as their active ingredients, such as zinc oxide.

People4Ocean sunscreens exclusively use zinc oxide as the active ingredient for several reasons:

Zinc oxide provides excellent broad-spectrum protection and has several advantages over synthetic actives. Zinc particles are photo-stable (they don't degrade in sunlight) and sit on top of your skin to act as a reflective barrier (exactly like a mirror), blocking both UVAs & UVBs from penetrating your skin and causing damage and ageing.

It is the only FDA (Food & Drug Administration) and TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration) approved broad-spectrum sun protection ingredient, and unlike any other active ingredient, its concentration in a product has no limitation. It is also the EWG (Environmental Working Group) n°1 ingredient for sun protection.

Dermatologists recommend zinc oxide sunscreens on children (6 months and over), pregnant women and people with sensitive skin.

It is the only reef-safe UV filter available.

4. WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE BENEFITS AND THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF USING REEF SAFE FORMULATIONS LIKE P4O?

There are many benefits in making the switch to reef-safe/ mineral sunscreens.

Firstly, they are better for the skin. That is because reef-safe sunscreens generally exclude harsh chemicals such as benzophenones, parabens, and other skin irritants that are also environmental pollutants. It is no coincidence that baby sunscreens are mineral based, as they are safer for sensitive skin, have cleaner formulations and offer excellent sun protection.

Secondly, they are a good long-term investment in your health. Natural sunscreens offer excellent broad-spectrum protection without the side effects of chemical sunscreens. According to dermatologists, applying mineral SPF30 sunscreen daily can significantly reduce your chances of developing skin cancer (particularly if you live in Australia) and is the #1 routine you should adopt to effectively



prevent premature ageing. Your skin is your largest organ, so it is important to invest on a good sunscreen to protect it.

5. IN ADDITION TO REEF SAFE SUNSCREEN, WHAT CAN PEOPLE DO TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR OCEANS AND MARINE LIFE?

Making the switch to reef-safe sunscreen is a good first step towards helping our oceans and raising awareness for their protection. However, sunscreen pollution is only a very small part of the problem.

Climate change is undeniably the biggest threat to our Oceans. Not many people know this, but our oceans are the true lungs of the Earth as they generate most of the oxygen we breathe. They are also great carbon sink, as they absorb CO₂ through photosynthetic processes (by marine plants, such as phytoplankton, kelp and algal planktons). Since the start of the industrial age, our oceans have absorbed over a third of the anthropogenic CO₂ released into the atmosphere. But there is a limit to the amount of CO₂ and heat our oceans can absorb. From polar regions to kelp forests and coral reefs, the rise in atmospheric CO₂ is increasing sea surface temperatures, affecting the dynamic of ocean currents and disrupting ocean chemistry (ocean acidification is one example) with consequences on food chains and more.

Governments and industries are often given full responsibility to mitigate climate change, but there are many things individuals can do to make a difference in reducing their own carbon footprint in the way they consume, travel and eat. Simple lifestyle changes such as buying locally made goods, eating locally grown foods, reducing plane travels and cutting your intake of meat and dairy can contribute to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

Plastic Pollution comes second on the list of threats compromising the future of marine life. According to a report from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, plastic in the oceans will outweigh fish by 2050. We can all help by refusing single-use plastics such as straws, cutlery, and food containers (Styrofoam trays, coffee cups, etc.). These are in our lives for seconds, but can then spend centuries circulating in our oceans, causing significant damage to marine life. Promoting recycling and circular economies can also keep plastic from entering our oceans.


Overfishing and poor fisheries management

is also high on the list of threats. Almost a third of global fish stocks are overfished. Fish that were once extremely abundant, such as bluefin tuna, are now approaching extinction. Restaurants and seafood markets routinely serve endangered seafood species that are the underwater equivalent of a rhino or a panda. New apps, including Seafood Watch (US) and Goodfish (AUS), can help us steer clear of these endangered species, and select sustainable and healthy seafood choices instead. Cutting down on our consumption of seafood is an even better way to take pressure off fish stocks.

6. CAN SHED LIGHT ON SOME OF THE CORAL RESTORATION PROJECTS YOU ARE SUPPORTING?

Over the years working for different non-for-profit organizations, we noticed most projects were starving for funding. This in turn affected their long-term feasibility. With People4Ocean Sun Care, we contribute up to a dollar of all sales towards supporting projects we know have a positive impact in preserving coral reefs. Since our launch, we have been able to support great community-based projects in Fiji and the Seychelles. These projects practice coral gardening by propagating corals that show tolerance to temperature-induced bleaching. This strategy aims to assist coral reefs in their adaptation to climate change.

In addition to sale-based donations, Austin and I continue to provide consultancy services to NGOs and resorts who are undertaking reef conservation and restoration actions. In 2019, we travelled to Fiji and later French Polynesia to donate our time and expertise in designing a community-based restoration strategies with local non-for-profits.

As People4Ocean Sun Care grows internationally, we hope to support a growing number of initiatives in Australia, Africa and around the world. 





CULINARY ESCAPADES





5 minutes with Chef Freedom Nxele

Scaling food planning and meal presentation in 5-star settings.

South African born Chef Freedom Nxele, a highly skilled, self-motivating and results-oriented culinary professional is well recognised by his peers as possessing an outstanding prowess in food and beverage management as well as banquet execution. Holding a Diploma in Professional Cookery, he went on to pursue numerous certifications including Food Handling, Guest Relations and Environment Standard. He currently works as the Food Experience Manager at a 5-star Wilderness Safaris property in Botswana where he shares his love for culinary arts with countless guests staying at the luxury bush camp he works at.

“I am thoroughly conversant in planning meals, while paying special attention to seasonal availability, training staff to effect good portion control and

presentation of meals, banquet management and maintaining good customer relations,” says Chef Freedom when asked to share a little bit about what his day-to-day responsibilities entail.

He also carries excellent proficiency in mentoring subordinates and is passionate about the recruitment process that goes into hiring executives and food and beverage managers, showcasing his quick wit in problem solving and strategic thinking, especially given the needed comprehension of key functional principles, procedures and practices to excel at this position.

Inside the Kitchen

But being a Food Experience Manager isn't limited to experimenting in the kitchen with culinary ingredients. One needs to be an accomplished communicator with a knack for decision making under pressure, staying ahead of the curve in anticipating guest needs and varied preferences. In totality, Chef Freedom has worked in kitchens across the world for 15 years, which has granted him experience he is proud to have brought back to Mother Africa.



Chef Freedom's top 3 dishes and their origins...

- Foul Medames. I cooked this dish when I was in the Middle East. It's a flavourful, vegetarian dish that's an absolute delight for anyone looking for a meat-free option.
- Oxtail. Still a favourite I think for most Africans. I cooked this dish in Germany to show case our African cuisine and it was a hit!
- Tswii or Waterlily root. In Botswana I'm currently playing around with local dishes, and I tried this root and it turned out to be a beautiful pappardelle pasta which goes down very well with Arrabbiata Sauce



**Your top 3 favourite dishes and the accompanying beverage*



- Linguine con Vongole which goes down well with a light crisp Sauvignon Blanc
- Teriyaki bream fillet pairs well with full bodied Chardonnay and of course... beef oxtail with Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot

“I love the fact that we get to experiment with different ingredients, be creative and showcase our love through food,” says Chef Freedom as he weighs in on where he draws his inspiration from in the kitchen.

Growth has come at a steady pace for Chef Freedom, and he is good about celebrating a multitude of milestones along the way, naming running a 650-seater restaurant with 34 chefs working under him as one of his major career highlights. He is proud of also having the opportunity to share an Africa inspired menu in Germany with international chefs and has also taken to food photography since working at luxury bush camps and finds this to be a passion he is developing further.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has given us a good bit of time to develop our culinary creativity as chefs, especially given the downtime we all experienced with hotels, lodges and borders closing. What we will experience moving forward is a “new normal” and I believe that will usher in more creativity, especially as it relates to healthy dishes. After spending almost, a year in limited productivity and more than that for some still, most chefs are looking at ways to keep costs low, with preparation of healthier cuisine in a bid to promote wellness being at the fore of their culinary experimentation,” cites Chef Freedom. 🍷



Chief Freedom's Wild Kalahari Truffled Samp & Beans

Ingredients

1kg samp
3 litres vegetable stock
2 onions, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves crushed
2 tablespoons curry powder
2 tsp black pepper
2 tsp Salt
100g butter
30 ml Kalahari truffle oil

Method

1. Pour off the water after soaking, place the samp and bean mix in a large saucepan
2. Cover Samp with stock, simmer until nearly soft (Add extra stock if necessary.)
3. Sautee garlic & onion in truffle oil
4. Add onion mixture and continue to simmer until Samp is soft
5. Season with black pepper and salt
6. Stir in butter





Embrace The Sweet Life At Bijou Patisserie

By Yvonne C Mtengwa



It wasn't too long ago that I enjoyed the opportunity to check into the luxurious Sofitel Dubai The Obelisk, a stunning property located in the Dubai's Healthcare City District. Having opened in the latter part of last year, I had heard plenty about its distinctive Franco-Egyptian allure, and so I was thrilled to learn that on the cards as part of my dining experience, was an afternoon spent in the lobby lounge, which serves breakfast and an all-day menu, and fresh option for a grab-and-go snack.

It was an opportunity to savor a sweet moment at the patisserie, named Bijou – a term which from my recollection of highschool French classes, means “jewel”. Ensuring a variety of sweet temptations are available, is none other than Romain Castet, Executive Pastry Chef, who boasts more than 10 years of experience, having worked at Lenôtre, a French Patisserie institution in Paris, at Fairmont Monte Carlo, and at Fairmont Dubai where he launched The Chocolate Room and created the UAE's largest chocolate Easter egg.

The experience


The menu at Bijou includes a variety of indulgences, from playfully delicate pastries and sweets such as classic éclairs, lemon tart and Chef Romain's signature cannelés Bordelais in a variety of different flavors including vanilla, pistachio, chocolate and lemon. On this occasion, Sofitel's signature French afternoon tea, Le Goûter, was what I was slated to experience, a unique combination of sweet and savoury flavors created with passion and served in a sophisticated jewelry box, unlocked with a special key. I too was going to indulge in my very special box of treats such as a Croissant with Brie cheese,

rocket, honey and figs compote, Lorraine quiche with turkey bacon and cheese, Chouquette with sugar pearl, Madeleine with orange and lemon and others.

Located in the heart of the hotel lobby, with bold geometric forms visible on the ceiling, an ivory color palette, curving furniture and smooth polished surfaces, the art deco theme is prominent in Bijou Patisserie. The marble counter brimming with an array of delicate pastries and other delicious treats truly takes center stage, making Bijou the jewel of the hotel and guests' daily indulgence.

Bijou Patisserie is open daily from 8am – 8pm, however, if you are looking to partake of the Le Goûter experience, one would need to make reservation for a slot between 2pm and 6pm. For the latter, upon being seated, we were graciously asked what beverage was to accompany our experience; an easy choice for the children who always opt for a hot chocolate or a fruit juice. With my café latte having been served, I was ready to indulge in this experience I had been told about right at the onset of my check-in earlier that morning.

We were presented with little boxes that when opened, unveiled a little key which was going to open the bigger 'jewelry' box of delectable treats. It was delightful to see such attention to every detail, so much that my daughter and I had our boxes in pink and my son in blue, which when unlocked, unveiled Chef Romain's indulgent creations. A hearty yet sophisticated high tea experience, I would imagine enjoying a themed, casual afternoon with family or friends at Bijou Patisserie, tastefully appeals to all the senses.

A sophisticated and chic address in the epicenter of luxury, Sofitel Dubai The Obelisk merges modern French art de vivre and ancient Egyptian heritage with the essence and culture of the UAE. Adorned with a gold pyramidion and in the shape of an obelisk, representative of the Luxor Obelisk currently in Paris, Sofitel Dubai The Obelisk majestically thrones in the heart of Dubai. So if ever you find yourself in Dubai, or call this city home already, and are keen to try an experience that celebrates the essence of casual French inspired dining and memorable, fine service delivery, Bijou Patisserie will grant you the sweet life you deserve... 



A person is sitting in a hammock on a wooden deck, looking out over a large body of water at sunset. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light. In the foreground, there is a round table and a chair. A thatched roof structure is visible on the left side of the frame.

ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA

Discovering The *Green Safaris Collection*

The 'travel with kindness' energy you'll get
with a Safari experience





Experiencing a sustainable safari in Africa will have you become part of a love story that leaves the world, and you, transformed for the better. Luxury and kindness go hand in hand and leading the charge with offering guests to the mother continent such unique opportunities for exploration and relaxation, when you stay at any of the hand-picked locations in the Green Safaris collection.

Green Safaris' premier properties are hidden in pristine ecosystems in Zambia and Malawi, and each offers a unique sustainable safari experience. Travellers are invited to truly get to know the personality and story of each place, to connect more deeply with the local people and wild spaces.

THE PROPERTIES

The cornerstone of Green Safaris' philosophy has been to develop lodges and camps in areas where eco-tourism is most needed to preserve them. Green Safaris is made up of six luxury eco-lodges and camps, as well as the world-famous Livingstone Island/Devil's Pool experience on the very edge of Victoria Falls. Each property has been designed and built in the most sustainable way. To ensure they blend seamlessly into their specific habitat, every lodge or camp is also designed with the local people, culture, and ecosystem in mind, so none of them look or feel the same.

CHISANGA BUSANGA CAMP: WHAT TO LOVE AT GREEN SAFARIS' MOST RECENT PROPERTY.

Weaver birds are masterful little builders that knit together twigs and grass, which they line with feathers to create a cosy cocoon for their chicks. Chisa, which means 'bird nest' in Nyanja, draws on a little of this

natural genius in their entirely unique ‘bird nest’ rooms. Instead of a tent or house, each room is a human-sized nest, built four metres off the ground and shaded by baobab trees. This camp, which is only opening in June 2021 and is therefore still very much an undiscovered gem, is hidden away in the Busanga Plains, in the Northern region of the Kafue National Park. Guests will have true bird’s eye views of elephants wandering below through the main camp. Be sure to wake up early to catch the morning mist rising through the open plains ahead. Or perhaps take a Silent Safari into the Busanga bushlands...

ON A QUEST FOR SUSTAINABILITY: ZAMBIA’S FIRST SILENT SAFARIS

Years ago, Green Safaris developed the first ever electronic Land Rover, or ‘eCruiser’ in Zambia. They now have multiple eCruisers, all used for game drives within different wild spaces. These vehicles are sleek, comfortable, and eco-friendly, powered on purely solar energy! Which is why Green Safaris then created a solar-powered cruising boat at Ila Safari Lodge, as well as a collection of eBikes at their soon-to-be-opened Chisa Busanga Camp and the renowned Malawian beach paradise Kaya Mawa. Green Safaris’ goal is to create a solar fleet for land and water in line with their zero-carbon emissions goal, and to preserve the peace and quiet of the precious ecosystems where they are based.

Converting a traditional engine from relying on diesel fuels to relying on ‘sunshine power’ not only removes harmful emissions from the safari equation... it also cuts back on noise.

These electronic vehicles mean that travellers can get much closer to the awe-inspiring wildlife they have come to see. Sunbathing lions, elephants at watering holes, even the usually skittish antelope roaming through the long grass... remove the sound of an engine, especially that start-up roar, and these



To learn more about the Green Safaris collection visit www.greensafaris.com





animals are perfectly happy to let you get up close and personal as they go about their lives.

Green Safaris is still the only operator in Zambia to provide this unique Silent Safari experience.

COMMUNITY AND COVID-19 KINDNESS

The Green Safaris Conservation Foundation initiates and empowers an ever-growing list of community, conservation, and sustainability projects, all designed with sustainability in mind. Everything the organisation does; it aims to do with the environment in mind, from building, farming, developing careers and creating jobs with the smallest carbon footprint, minimum environmental destruction, and maximum social benefits.


So, despite few to no guests due to Covid-19, in 2020 the Green Safaris Conservation Foundation embarked on the largest expansion of their projects since they started. In collaboration with a Dutch, locally based NGO ByLifeConnected, Green Safaris initiated Covid-19 sensitization programmes in isolated Zambian and Malawian communities, providing sanitization, food, and other vital necessities to the elderly and vulnerable in these communities, and worked with local leaders and Headmen to ensure that the impacts of this virus were minimised as much as possible.

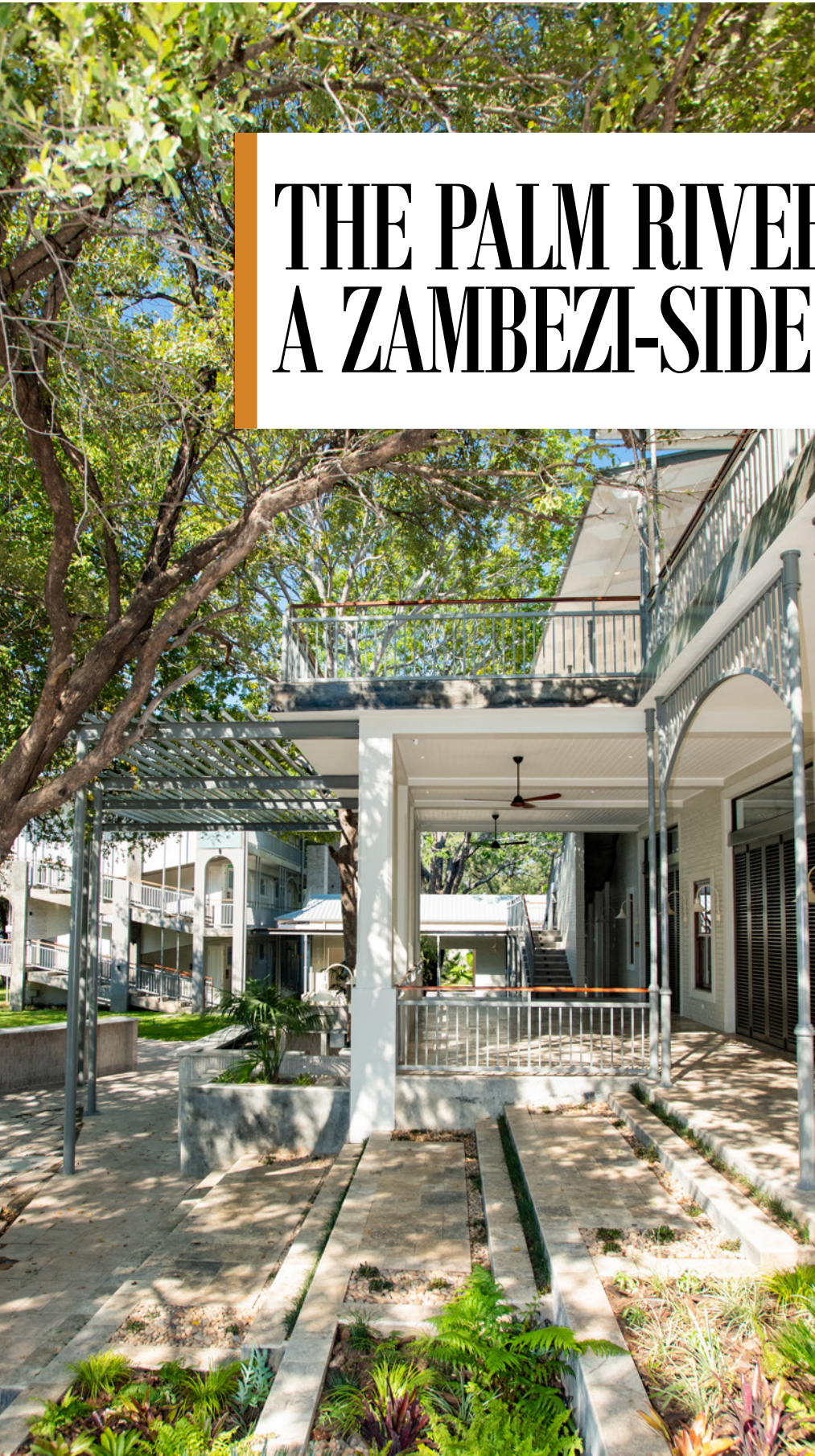
COVID-19 has had devastating effects on many African communities, yet the biggest impact came not from the virus itself but from the ensuing loss of employment, income, Aid, education, and support. And whilst it was impossible for all the Green Safaris staff to retain their usual roles, with all the properties closing briefly at one point or another – Green Safaris created projects designed to generate employment and training opportunities for their staff in the short term; projects which involved local communities and could be passed on entirely to those communities in the longer term.

THINKING GREEN

Travelers are finding ways to return to Africa. Slowly but surely, tourism is waking up. Green Safari's hope is that travellers moving forwards will be a little more conscious of the footprints they leave around the world, that they will choose companies and places that have been working towards a brighter, more sustainable future for all, even during these trying times.

Beyond Green Safaris inviting travellers to a safari experience that is not only silent and more in sync with nature, they also enable guests to get hands on in sustainability, conservation, and community engagement projects. Guests are invited to work in the community gardens, share their knowledge by holding classes at local schools, even sit around a campfire with conservation experts... and all in the name of sustainability.

Perhaps luxury with kindness really is the future of travel? Well Green Safaris sure hopes so! 



THE PALM RIVER HOTEL: A ZAMBEZI-SIDE PARADISE

located along the shorelines of the Zambezi River, among towering trees is the new Palm River Hotel – another development by the Spencer's Creek Group, owners of Ilala Lodge Hotel. Both hotels are ideally situated within minutes of Africa's Natural World Wonder, Victoria Falls, in the heart of the popular tourist destination of Victoria Falls town, in Zimbabwe.

Construction of the Palm River Hotel began in January 2019, with the vision for the Palm River Hotel being to juxtapose simplicity and complexity: a unique hotel offering unparalleled luxury without compromising a sense of home comfort; vast, unimpeded views which maintain shelter and privacy; and the convenience of a central location preserved within a tranquil bubble of peace and quiet.

The Palm River Hotel has been inspired by the architectural style of the Queenslander, distinct in its savvy use of timber and corrugated iron and its consideration of climatic conditions. Highly skilled and professional teams of Zimbabwean architects and interior designers took these principles and modified them to create a hotel that is aesthetic as much as it is functional, modern and timeless, cosmopolitan and perfectly suited to the local environment. The innovative blend of traditional East-Coast Australian design and the unique landscape of the upper Zambezi River has resulted in a brand new



and distinctive landmark for Victoria Falls.

The buildings flanking the view are linked, with a slender steel bridge, just enough of a statement to create a welcoming threshold and frame of the view of the Zambezi River, while at the same time referencing the original iconic Victoria Falls Bridge. Guests are welcomed through this viewing portal onto a travertine terrace, from where they are presented with the tranquil panoramic view of the Zambezi River.

As a first-time guest, you arrive, explore, and become thoroughly immersed in the natural beauty of the river frontage; long

before being confronted with the formalities of checking in at reception. This is according to the design intent to keep the pleasure of arriving at the forefront of the experience. Instead of standing at a reception desk with your back to the view, you are seated at a comfortable river-facing terrace, where the receptionist brings you a drink and takes you through an informal briefing.

The Palm River Hotel's appeal

The Palm River Hotel offers the discerning traveller luxury accommodation with easy access to explore Africa's Natural World



Wonder of Victoria Falls, enjoy a plethora of activities on offer within the historical town of Victoria Falls or soak in the magic of the Zambezi River, while experiencing the abundant wildlife and birdlife that inhabit the popular tourist destination.

The Palm River Hotel offers a total of 73 rooms and suites spread over seven blocks, some of which are named after trees that are indigenous to the area such as the Acacia and Baobab blocks. 60 Deluxe Rooms including two wheelchair accessible rooms all award guests 4-star hotel furnishings of international standards, with all deluxe rooms also availing a private balcony where guests can enjoy views of the Zambezi River and the gardens, a spacious bedroom with

writing desk, fixed luggage storage, right and left bedside tables, bedside reading lights and a fully equipped tea and coffee station. The contemporary bathroom features an open and spacious shower, a double vanity for both guests to enjoy their own space and all the amenities necessary to compliment your stay. A generous fixed wardrobe space includes shelves and ample hanging space.

The two fully serviced wheelchair accessible rooms are both interleading Deluxe Rooms, and on the ground floor closest to the Main Area. The rooms are equipped with multiple handrails, carefully positioned to assist with mobility inside the room and bathroom and furnished with beds and chairs which will be of optimum height for handicapped. access. Alarms and phones are fitted with light and sound alerts.

A suite life on offer

The hotel's deluxe suites are situated on the ground floor overlooking the flowing waters of the Zambezi River and surrounded by lush green gardens. The suites are made up of two spacious bedrooms including a large King Deluxe room and a Twin Deluxe room complete with writing desk, fixed luggage storage, right and left bedside tables, reading lights and fully equipped tea and coffee station. Centred between the rooms is a comfortable and contemporary shared lounge area offering a peaceful space in which to unwind and relax and soak in the tranquil surroundings.

The two honeymoon suites are perfectly suited to celebrate recent nuptials, anniversaries and vow renewals – or just spend time reconnecting in idyllic luxury, surrounded by the magic and romance of Africa. The honeymoon suites most stand-out features include a spacious room, lush balconies, nestled in the treetops. Other memorable features include a relaxing outside lounge and hanging daybed, as well as a starlit outdoor shower. The rooms are spacious with king-sized beds, writing desks and lounge chairs. The bathrooms boast a beautiful bathtub, double shower and vanity, and separate toilet.

For those looking for extra privacy and luxury during their stay, the executive

suites perfectly connect a comfortable room with a relaxing lounge and peaceful balcony area overlooking the Zambezi River. The rooms are tastefully designed to incorporate the vast space, high ceilings and open-air setting, without detracting from the beautiful landscape surrounding the suite. The well-appointed executive suites also offer an intimate dining area, suitable for 4-6 people to enjoy private in-room dining experiences.

The grandest room in the collection is perfectly situated in the centre of the hotel grounds, with unparalleled views of the Zambezi River. It features a spacious balcony, where guests are shaded under the branches of an ancient indigenous tree, as well as a perfectly appointed lounge area, complete with modern facilities, and designed for relaxation and luxury.

The Presidential Suite offers a remarkably spacious room, featuring a super king-sized bed, private mini-balcony, secluded wardrobe and changing areas. A beautifully finished bathroom boasts an encompassing bathtub, double vanity and double shower.

And then there's the Palm River Villa

Offering the pinnacle of private residing at the Palm River Hotel is the exclusive Palm River Villa. Made up of a twin Deluxe Room, a Honeymoon Suite and an Executive Suite, the secluded and inti-



mate accommodation option showcases the hotel's range of elegant, stylish and charming room varieties. The Palm River Villa comes complete with a shared kitchen, dining area, spacious lounge, private car park, private swimming pool with an expansive patio and garden; shared only with free-roaming wildlife that frequent the lush lawns. The secluded space allows for families or small travel groups to have their own exclusive space, while immersed in the riverside location of the Palm River Hotel.

Dining, entertainment and events at Palm River Hotel

A large al fresco dining area under a canopy of trees will offer an à la carte restaurant serving breakfast, lunch and dinner to hotel guests and day visitors. In-room dining is also available for guest who prefer to retreat in their rooms. The dining area's position offers stunning garden views sweeping down and out onto the flowing waters of the Zambezi River. The cuisine reflects the natural setting, using fresh, local ingredients to create unique fusion fare. The

Set under a canopy of trees in the main area, the outdoor bar serves a selection of local and imported beverages, wines, cocktails, specialty coffees and fresh fruit juices daily from 10am to 10pm. While the River Deck, built on the edge of the Zambezi River, offers an idyllic vantage point for the mighty Zambezi River, with its breath-taking sunsets and a front row seat to view the wealth of wild animal and bird life along the banks of the river.

Spacious and privately appointed, the Palm River Hotel conferencing suites feature panoramic views and fully serviced amenities, offering convenience and flexibility for conferences, meetings, small events and gatherings. Suitable for maximum groups of 50 people.

Hotel grounds are a charming, tranquil and romantic outdoor wedding venue situated along palm fringed banks of the majestic Zambezi River. Wedding guests can enjoy two stylish bar options and the choice of à la carte dining under the African sky or an elegant dining facility within the hotel's grand dining hall. With 73 rooms available, there are a variety of accommodation options for every guest to choose from.

To learn more about the Palm River Hotel, visit www.palmriverhotel.com
More information on the Ra-ikane cruises visit www.raikane.com



If one is looking for a little relaxation, an opportunity to unwind and relax awaits in the hotel's luxurious spa, with tranquil views of the Zambezi River. The spa's offerings include a variety of aromatherapy treatments inspired by the natural surrounds, soothing massages and beauty treatments such as manicures and pedicures.

Exploring Victoria Falls from the Palm River Hotel

A complimentary shuttle bus which runs on a regular basis throughout the day transports guests between The Palm River Hotel and Victoria Falls Town, stopping at the key landmarks for guests' convenience: the Victoria Falls Rainforest, Ilala Lodge Hotel and the various craft markets. With so much to see and do in the Victoria Falls and surrounding area, the tours and activities desk offers an invaluable information asset to help guests plan their stay and book their activities inhouse.

Victoria Falls is deemed 'Africa's Adventure Capital' delivering everything from helicopter flights above the Falls, highwire activities over the 120m gorges or white-water rafting the rapids beyond the World Wonder, Victoria Falls waterfall. Adventure also awaits within the 5 National Parks within 100km of Victoria Falls, offering unmatched game viewing in untouched wilderness areas.


Guests can discover the rich history of Victoria Falls, from a pre-colonial era and traditional African heritage, through to the early pioneers, explorers and missionaries such as Dr David Livingstone, who journeyed to the Victoria Falls, and ignited the first international interest to the area, over 200 years ago.

On the River with Ra-Ikane River Cruises

The luxury Ra-Ikane River Cruise on our historic and intimate cruise boats, offers breakfast, birdwatching, lunch and sunset cruises on the Zambezi River, a service exclusive to the Palm River Hotel and Ilala Lodge Hotel.

The well-appointed Ra-Ikane fleet was

built to ensure that each guest is able to experience the wild beauty of the Zambezi River in comfort and style. The monohull design of the river boats enables them to navigate further up the Zambezi River, through shallow river channels and closer to the wildlife on the riverbanks.

The cruises follow a circular route around the Zambezi River islands to provide guests with a panoramic view of the upper and lower Zambezi River and the wildlife and birdlife it offers. Each Ra-Ikane boat has its own crew, made up of a friendly and knowledgeable captain, guide and waiter to ensure a tranquil and memorable experience onboard. 





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Remnants Of Italian Influence In East Africa

By Louisa Choruma



*"Good afternoon –
can I join you?"*

I looked up and made eye contact with one of the friendliest faces I have ever seen. Not sure whether it was his face or the poise with which he spoke – but I found myself reaching across the table and making space for Haile to put down his coffee and sandwich. He read my mind and as he sat, because he immediately introduced himself.

"I'm Haile and I have told the pretty girl at the counter that the only way I can enjoy my meal is if I joined the lady at the window and pretended to have a meeting with her!" I had to laugh! With "sit down" dining prohibited in all restaurants – this had to be the cleverest game plan ever!

Haile was from Eritrea and it was not



long before he was sharing on the Land of Serenity that is his home! This North Eastern African country shares borders with Sudan to the west, Ethiopia to its east and Djibouti in the south west. It has its coast in the Red Sea.

An ardent traveller, we exchanged cruise ship tales of the Atlantic and I was highly impressed by his ability to identify different African nationals just by their body language! Of those from the south, he said we were friendly but guarded! He was quick to share that this was a sharp contrast to those he had met on his many travels from the West – who were friendly and open!

TALES OF ERITREA'S CAPITAL, LITTLE ROME, COFFEE EXPERIENCES AND MORE....

Conversation between us however, always gravitated to his beautiful nation of Eritrea. Covering an area of 117 600 square metres it is made up of three diverse physical zones; that is, the interior plateau, the coastal plain and the steeply sloping intermediate zone. Thus, it is possible to experience four seasons in one day!

The capital of Eritrea is Asmara and this pearl of the nation, with its positioning at the tip of an escarpment, makes it the 6th highest capital in the world by altitude, situated at an elevation of 2,325 metres! The Italian influence is most certainly evident in Asmara as it is affectionately coined Africa's "Little Rome." Described by others as an Italian Shangri La, La Piccola Roma is all things Italian, with its distinctive architecture and incredibly inspired art!

The cultural influence is found in the sidewalk cafes, the Italian themed eateries serving pizza, pasta and of course the Coffee!! From cappuccino, to espresso, to macchiato and doppio, Asmara is a coffee drinker's paradise!


As a coffee producing nation, Eritrea regards coffee as a delicacy and their coffee drinking ritual is a symbol of hospitality. This ritual is an integral part of Eritrean Culture and can take as long as three hours from the selection of the coffee beans, to the roasting and brewing of coffee! The entire experience is composed of interacting with the women who brew the coffee, smelling the aroma of the beans at different stages of roasting in a metal pan over the fire, to smelling them as they are pounded, and brewed again but now in an

earthenware pot – the Jebena. Through it all, guests are treated to popcorn made on the fire and as soon as the coffee is brewed to perfection – it is served!

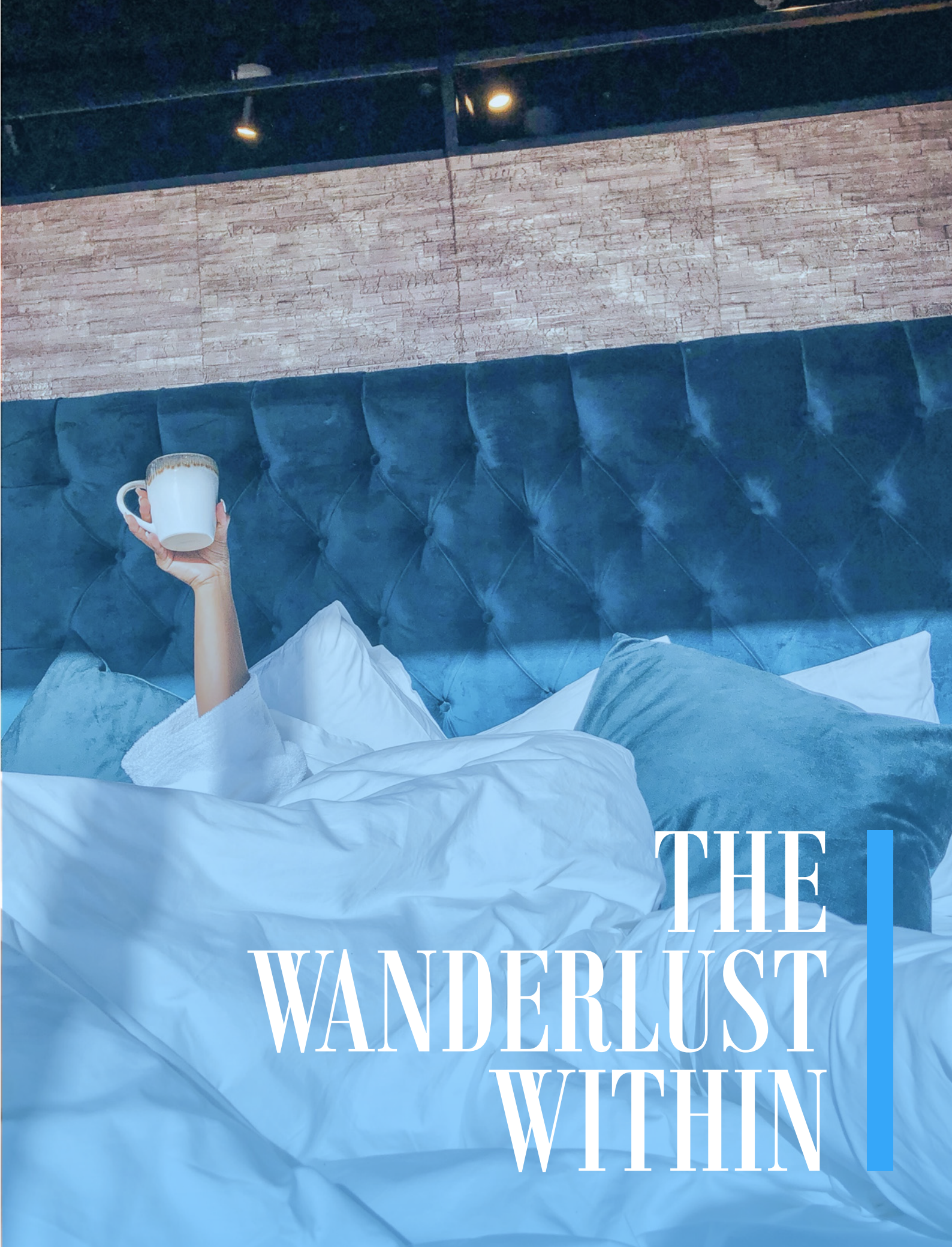
ASMARA ON THE MAP

2017 saw the city being declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its well-maintained and preserved architecture. Asmara boasts of historical buildings, mosques and museums rich in culture and stories for generations to behold. A city Tour of Asmara, with stops at the Cathedral of Asmara for the stunning Roman architecture, the Tank Graveyard, the Cinema Roma, Cinema Impero, Fiat Agliero are some of the many reasons why it is has been voted the best city in Africa and widely believed to be the fourth best city of attractions in the world by some. Still amazed at how Haile had managed to talk and have his sandwich - I wanted to know more about this beautiful country.

"The Unspoilt Red Sea coast," he said as he sipped his coffee. It is the home to the Dahlak Archipelago, a group of islands located near the Port city of Massawa and in the Red Sea. Made up of 124 islands and 2 larger ones, it is still known for its pearl fisheries even to this day. Scuba divers will love the islands for their wealth of over 300 fish species, as well as dolphins, turtles, ancient shipwrecks and coral reefs which have divers coming back again and again! Other water activities include swimming, yachting or simply taking in the sights from the pristine beaches! The Dahlak Archipelago appeals to the birders too, as many nesting seabirds can be found there.

As we exchanged numbers and I shut down my now very neglected laptop, I marvelled at the meaning of the word ambassador. Haile had represented his country so well in a just a few short minutes so much that he piqued my curiosity and elevated Eritrea to a spot a little higher on my bucket list! 



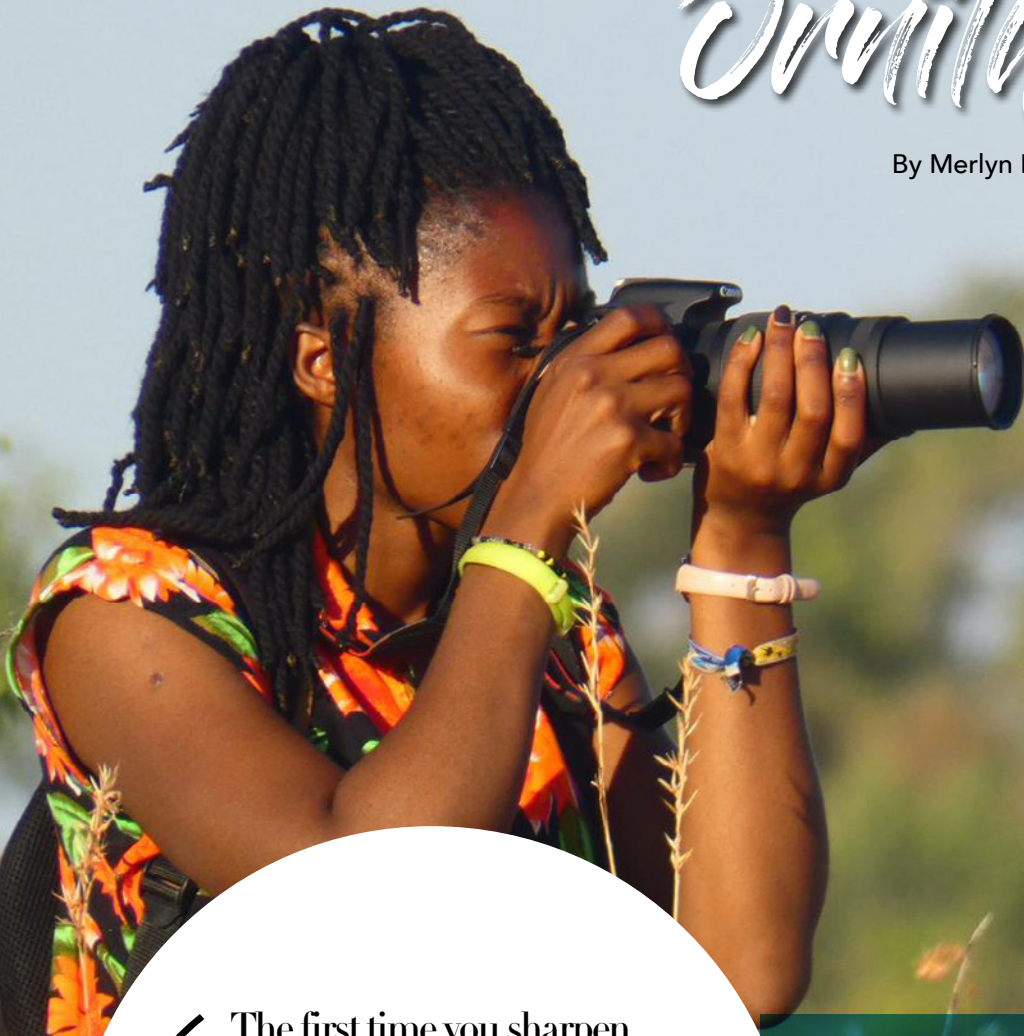


THE WANDERLUST WITHIN



Diaries Of An African Ornithologist

By Merlyn Nomsa Nkomo



The first time you sharpen the focus on a pair of binoculars to look at a bird, a whole new world is revealed to you. It is like finding a secret door into a wing of a mansion you have lived in for years and realising just how much there is to discover.

The first bird I ever identified was an Emerald Spotted Dove in Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. I stood in awe describing its vivid colours to the lecturer who was teaching me how to use his binoculars. In that moment I was shocked to note that doves weren't white after all. This experience changed my life, forever setting me on a course of immense discovery, and this discovery was not only my talents and limits but also my insatiable love for travel, history, culture and sharing the wonder of nature. At present, I am a Conservation Biology master's student at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, pursuing my long-time passion



for birds of prey. So many have asked me: Why birds?

Choosing a career in conservation was strange from the first time I verbalised it in a room full of my peers in high school on Career Day. The university student addressing us and telling us of the wide range of possibilities that awaited us in university had just told me that a degree in Forestry would be suitable for my interests. Everyone found this not only strange but funny and they all laughed. The question of why birds, therefore, never surprises or offends me because the norm is, we cannot aspire to become what we do not see those like ourselves being. After a few years of using this question as a conservation teachable moment, I decided to become the Ornithologist others like myself can see and aspire to be because representation is everything.

Birdwatching, previously perceived as an old white folk hobby, is now one of the most popular activities connecting people globally. As a new birder, it became an exciting challenge and seeing a new bird was the reward that crowned my day. Familiar childhood sounds came alive in 3D as I saw the birds that were singing and calling them. I found out that some of these birds were migrants, traversing over countries, regions, and continents,

flying over oceans and places I would never reach in my lifetime. This opened my mind up to how big the world is. I watched birds to connect to the lifetime I had already lived ignorant of them and the people, landscapes and seasons they witness on their flights to the perch I see them on. In this small way, I travelled and learnt about different countries and cultures on the wings of the birds facing different threats in a rapidly changing world.

THE THRILL OF A BIRDER'S LIFE

Unbelievable to many, seeing a new species of birds is one of the best experiences I enjoy from time to time, and exploring new environments is easily one of the most fulfilling parts of my work. An iconic place that come to mind is the hills of Matobo World Heritage Site in Zimbabwe. Matobo is a granite boulder-strewn landscape that is a cathedral of history, tradition, art, nature and biodiversity. Matobo also has the densest population of the magnificent Verreaux's Eagles in all their range. This eagle is one of over fifty species of birds of prey that have been recorded in the area, thirty-two of which are resident breeding species.

The density and diversity of the raptor community in

Matobo is a privilege to experience in my backyard as a raptor biologist from a city just forty kilometres away. Additionally, the rural communities in Matobo have intricate histories and traditional beliefs linked to the wildlife and they co-exist in reverence of birds such as the Southern Ground-hornbill, affording them protection like nowhere else in their entire range. Centuries of history on the beautiful co-existence of man and wildlife can be found on numerous caves in this landscape with the densest rock art in the world.

ORNITHOLOGY IN THE PROTECTION OF BIRD SPECIES

Birdwatching is a pro-environment activity and ornithology is a step forward in protecting birds and their environment, it is hard to imagine any negative impacts coming from these activities. However, Avitourism is a fast-growing niche tourism market. In 2010, South Africa estimated international Avi-tourists to spend between R309- R618 million annually. In other parts of the world, the birding culture had unintended negative impacts birders should learn from. The obsessive-competitive approach to birding causes much unnecessary travel, contributing to greenhouse emissions and disturbances to fragile habitats with rare sought-after species.

Whilst financial benefits to this market are great, very little trickles down to the local economy where these birds are found. Consequently, no relationships are built between the locals living side by side with these important birds while they are exposed to the affluence of birding. We have seen other impacts of birders in the kind of scientific information we produce being skewed towards where birders choose to travel to and local bird names and knowledge being largely excluded, unreported or worse presented in a bad light. Much work must be done to improve the ways we follow birds in an ethical, inclusive, and mindful way.

LIBERTY, AN AFRICAN BIRDER AND BUILDING BRIDGES.

To me birds represent liberty, the ability to rise from the ground and float above the landscape, seeing things impossible to



perceive from a linear perspective below. My passion for ornithology compelled me to overcome my insecurities, organise public education events, write about birds and my work. Finding one's voice may be a natural progression for all in life, however, if you are a misfit in your community and also in your career path this can be very difficult. As a young birder, I had a lot to learn about my chosen field after embracing my passion for it. The conflict between African thought and viewpoints about not only my career choice but the field of conservation became a challenge in my self-expression. I was a scientist in a privileged standpoint approaching conservation problems in Africa from a perception I knew was flawed and I knew this because, on the other hand, I was and still am, an African in Africa. In my work, I now aspire to represent African thought and build bridges between communities and the scientific community.

I never set out to change the world, I followed my curiosity and love for birds and it has been the most rewarding journey I've ever travelled on. 🌍



“IT’S A LIFESTYLE” *with* PATRICIABLACC

ENJOY A SOPHISTICATED STAYCATION
AT CARTEL HOUSE BY IDEAS CARTEL



Who knew that a year later, we would be in the same position we found ourselves in when COVID-19 first hit? Still under level four lockdown with hectic restrictions and more on international travel, as South Africans, most will concur that as a nation, we are feeling more boxed in than ever. But with that being said, I believe that it is important to find ways to occupy time while simultaneously reconnecting with self and others as best we can. Dare I say we've outdone ourselves with TikTok viral dance routines and baking new variations of banana bread to keep oneself busy.



Local travel has garnered significant traction over the past year, as more and more curious adventurers are heading out to discover the hidden gems within our borders. I'm not one to shy away from an opportunity to explore what the beauty of South Africa has to offer and so I've taken every opportunity possible to enjoy mini staycations in and around Cape Town, touring wine farms, boutique hotels and cool restaurants with unique propositions. And – it has been a blast!

Please understand, one doesn't have to drive long distances to enjoy a great staycation. I recently went on a weekend getaway a mere 10 minutes from my apartment to the Cartel Hotel by Ideas Cartel on Loop Street in Cape Town. The idea was simple really. Because Cape Town is experiencing cold and rainy winter months at the minute, I wanted to spend the entire weekend in bed with a view, while sipping on a few dozen cups of coffee as I watched television. If you've never booked yourself in for a simple take on self-care – then this I highly recommend.

EXPLORING CARTEL HOUSE BY IDEAS CARTEL

The boutique hotel located in the city centre is a sophisticated establishment, suitable for anyone looking for a quick getaway or a cool and eclectic space to work from. Conveniently located close to trendy restaurants



order from in to add to the complimentary tea and coffee provided for in the room. The café is available for lunch and dinner orders should you want something to eat and drink on site.

STELLAR SERVICE CREATES A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

In the world of boutique hotels, it's the service standards that sets experiences apart. Upon arrival, I was greeted by the kindest valet employee who made sure my car was safely parked in the underground parking. The reception staff were equally as warm, with welcoming smiles and consistent willingness to assist with my needs in any way they could. I will say though that you will notice once you check in, the idea of breakfast in your room can be something that takes getting used to, especially given that there was no in-room menu or phone to allow me to place my order for meals. Beyond that, this cool little hotel on Loop Street is dreamy as much as it is chic and keeps you right on the pulse of the city.

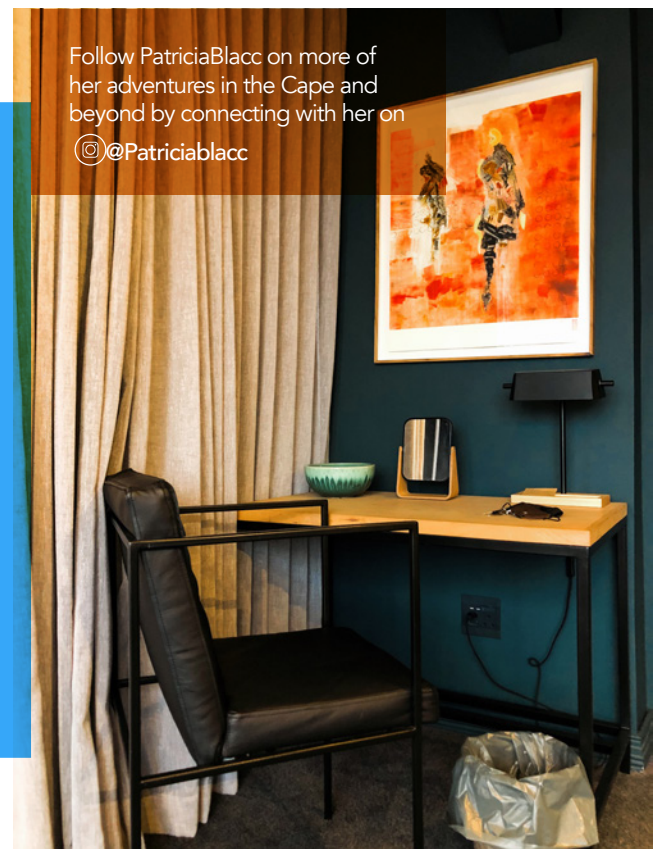
In addition to refreshing your mind amidst and innovatively curated space, my stay at Cartel House awarded me a much-needed opportunity to take a break in the middle of my busy schedule, and still get plugged in when I needed to. So, if you find yourself in the Mother City and are looking for a stay at will also spark your creativity while granting you much needed rest and recuperation, the Cartel House by Ideas Cartel is one I highly recommend...

Until next time.... Patricia Blacc 


and cafes, its easily accessible to guests and comes with a multitude of reasons why you'd like to book a stay or pop by for a short while. You'll enjoy an impressive coworking space, fully equipped with fitness pods, meeting rooms, a rooftop with a sparkling pool and a beautiful 360-degree view of the city. You'll quite literally immerse yourself in a world of tailored sophistication, taking in lush finishes, skyline views and tasteful interior design that makes Cartel House a luxurious home away from home. Whether you're in town for business or pleasure, this is a space to relax, recharge and experience elegance – and my stay was about taking it all in.

The hotel only has 6 rooms of varied sizes and tailored to suit the profile of its guests. Whether you are looking to enjoy a great view or need space for an extended stay, the rooms are spread across a building that carries 11 floors; all with free highspeed WIFI and adorned with spectacularly themed décor, state-of-the-art lighting, and all the trimmings that come with a convenient stay – that is, your SMEG appliances, hair dryer and bathrooms stocked with amenities by Africology for your personal pamper sessions.

The room I was checked into was inclusive of breakfast every morning. With the COVID-19 restrictions in full swing, breakfast is served in the comfort of your room, which to me is an absolute win and goes a long way to really make you feel like you are away for a retreat. Breakfast is made from the little ground floor café coined "Brunch by Ideas Cartel", serving up a hearty fix of your first meal of the day, including toasted croissants, egg and oat bowls. In addition, the menu has an extensive list of hot beverages that you can



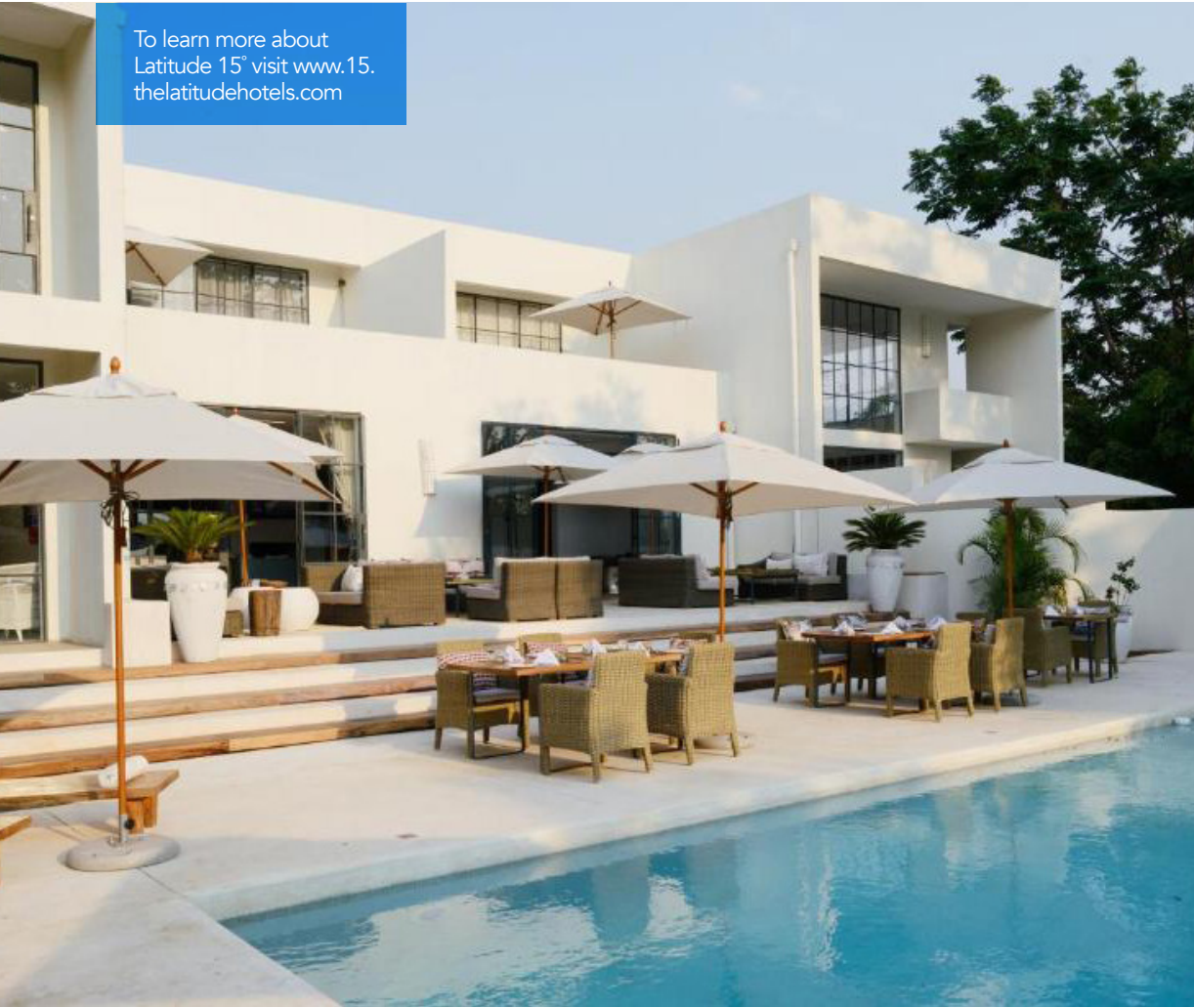
Follow PatriciaBlacc on more of her adventures in the Cape and beyond by connecting with her on

 @Patriciablacc



PULSE OF
THE CITY

To learn more about
Latitude 15° visit [www.15.
thelatitudehotels.com](http://www.15.thelatitudehotels.com)





Inside Latitude 15°

Lusaka's Social, Stylish Urban Retreat

Part of The Latitude Hotels group of boutique hotels, a distinctive African lifestyle hospitality brand, is Latitude 15° in Zambia's capital city. With a member's club, workspaces, spa, gym, dining and conferencing facilities and best practice sustainability to ensure that guests enjoy responsible comfort, this property like its sister-hotels across the continent, provides an escape from the buzz, crowds and commotion that characterise so many African city centres.



Set amidst the beautiful tree-lined avenues on the south-east corner of Lusaka, 20 minutes to the city centre and 30 minutes from Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, the hotel is home to 32 spacious guest rooms, three of which are 2-bedroom suites, a restaurant, bar, lounge, and poolside terrace, which blend modern Africa and the spirit of Zambia's capital city, with a cosmopolitan twist. The property also boasts a private members' club – The Other Side – which offers all hotel guests a separate dining, drinking, networking and socialising den, a heated pool, a gym, a spa, a contemporary set of workspaces and a series of music, art, fashion, business, and party events.

But above and beyond what this boutique hotel offers is the essence of what

Latitude 15° is: a social, stylish, surprising, and sustainable mix of people, places and environments that stimulate connections with locals and visitors alike. The brand's promise is one of bespoke and personal attention, with space to stretch out in private rooms, sofas to sink into and gardens for quiet reflection.

A PERFECT OVERNIGHT SANCTUARY

32 guest rooms of soothing stylish bliss, whether you're staying on business, or popping in before and after your safari adventures. The three 2-bedroom suites, complete with their own kitchens, are ideal for families or long-staying guests. Sumptuous beds, walk-in showers, full-sized baths, inviting sofas, 32" flat-screen TVs, Nespresso coffee machines, complementary still and sparkling Latitude mineral water and, of course, free Wi-Fi are but a few of the amenities available for guests checking into Latitude 15°. But it's the flavour as much as the functionality of the boutique hotel that sets this property apart: cool in the summer, cosy in the winter, naturally sunlit and lovingly adorned with luxurious linens, sumptuous fabrics, and bespoke artworks.

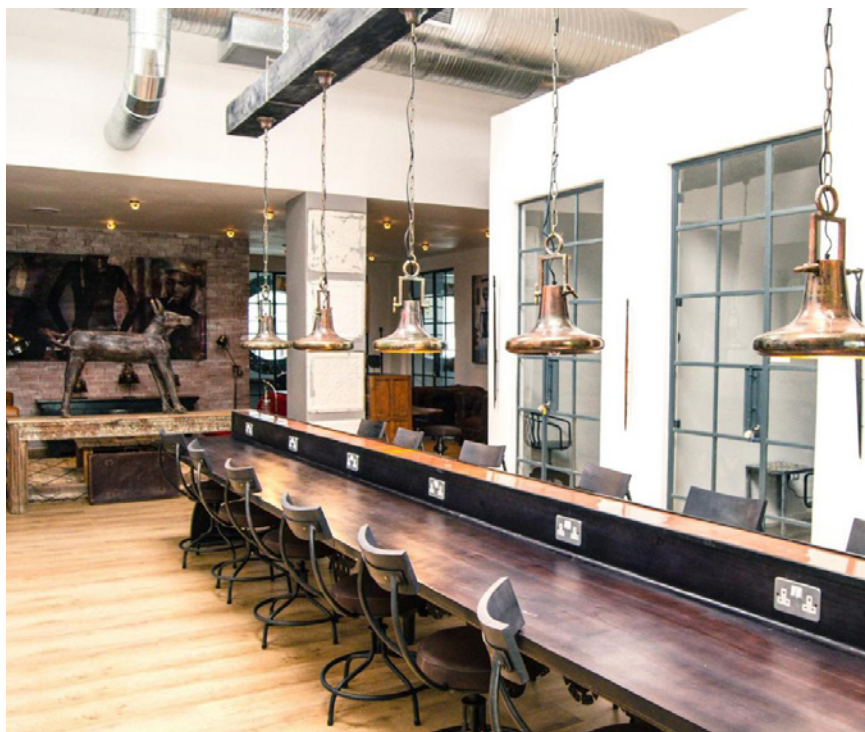
CULINARY DELIGHTS IN A CHIC NETWORKING SPACE

The Latitude 15° kitchen creates gastronomic delights from all corners of the world, while the restaurant at The Other Side offers a more informal array of sharing dishes as the centrepiece for networking or socialising. In both restaurants, attention was given to developing a tantalisingly long wine list curated from South Africa and Europe that can be happily paired with your food choices to make sure you get the most from both.

The Other Side, Lusaka's premiere members only club offers privacy, sumptuous bar, and delicious food in the comfort of a lounge or on the veranda by the pool. Doing away with stuffy rules and dress codes, the concept behind The Other Side is to create an atmosphere where guests can connect with others and have a great time. An exclusive events program for guests provides weekly entertainment in the form of live music on a Wednesday and Friday evenings, annual member cocktail functions, food and wine tastings, and motivational talks amongst other things

A COOL WORKSPACE TO GET THINGS DONE

The Works, also located on the property, is an all-in-one workspace that doesn't feel like work.

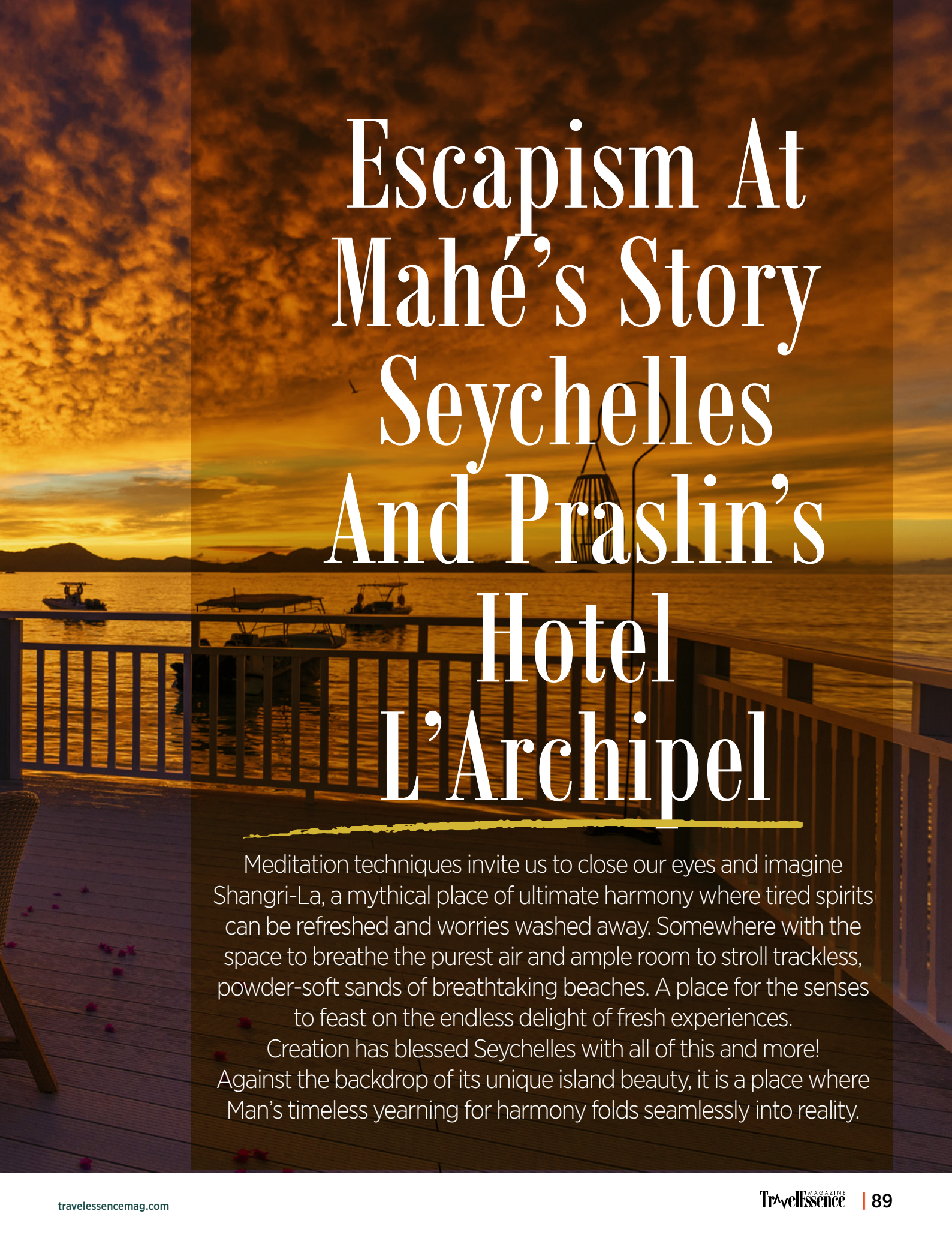




It is designed to serve you and your cohorts, clients, and guests. Why put up with outdated offices, a dingy and frantic coffee shop or distracting hotel lobby or a sleepy hotel room, when The Works offers modern facilities, consistent fortified Wi-Fi, and full back-office functionality. The Works was conceived with entrepreneurs in mind: a business environment that's both stimulating and stylish, offering a mix of open-plan 'hot-desking' spaces, as well as single and multiple-person private workspaces, meeting rooms and event areas. And, you'll have all the fitness, wellness, networking, wining & dining facilities of The Other Side private members' club right on your doorstep. 







Escapism At Mahé's Story Seychelles And Praslin's Hotel L'Archipel

Meditation techniques invite us to close our eyes and imagine Shangri-La, a mythical place of ultimate harmony where tired spirits can be refreshed and worries washed away. Somewhere with the space to breathe the purest air and ample room to stroll trackless, powder-soft sands of breathtaking beaches. A place for the senses to feast on the endless delight of fresh experiences.

Creation has blessed Seychelles with all of this and more! Against the backdrop of its unique island beauty, it is a place where Man's timeless yearning for harmony folds seamlessly into reality.

The Seychelles' 115 islands have slumbered very much untouched since the dawn of time in an isolated corner of the western Indian Ocean. Inhabited since a mere 250 years, the islands are a melting pot and shining, rare example of durable, ethnic fusion of peoples from the four corners of the planet embracing an envious degree of religious tolerance in a society in which harmony is a way of life.

The archipelago comprises 115 islands that extend in a gleaming arc from 4 to 10 degrees south of the equator and between 1600 and 480 km from the east coast of Africa. The total landmass is 450 sq km, situated within an economic zone of 1, 400,000 sq. km.

Possessing legendary beauty, the islands are a sanctuary for some of the rarest species of flora & fauna on the planet and an astonishing degree of diversity and natural splendor rolling from mist-clad granite peaks through virgin forests down to a dappled, sapphire ocean.

A SEYCHELLOIS WELCOME FOR EVERY TYPE OF TRAVELLER

Long associated with being a playground for the rich and famous, the greater airlift from all across the planet has done much to alter perceptions and open Seychelles to a new clientele who are discovering the pleasures of staying in an affordable range of charming small hotels, guest houses and self-caterings. These form an ideal base from which to discover the myriad attributes of Seychelles: world-beating beaches, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, fascinating walks & trails, eco-tourism and historical hotspots and island-hopping adventures as well as a range of exciting activities such as golf, zip lining, horse-riding, unforgettable wellness & spa experiences, diving, snorkelling, sailing and several forms of fishing.

Seychelles enjoys a comprehensive network of aviation connections from Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe to the International Airport on the main island, Mahé, which is the hub for all transportation to the other Seychelles islands.

MAHÉ

Mahé, principal island of the Seychelles and site of the international airport, lies some 1000 miles off the East African coast, due East of Mombasa. It is a granitic island 27 km (15 miles) long and 8 kms (5 miles) wide and rises to a height of 905 meters (2969ft) above sea level at its highest point, its mountainous profile covered with a thick mantle of lush vegetation.

Aptly named 'Isle of Abundance' by the early settlers, today Mahé continues to live up to that name, holding many surprises for the visitor not the least among which is a choice of some 65 wonderfully preserved beaches as well as myriad sites of historical and botanical interest.

North Mahé, home of the famous Beau Vallon beach, the hub of tourism, tends to be busier and more populated than other regions of the island and is home to a wide range of hotels of all sizes, guesthouses and villas. However, with a total population of just 100,000 the term busy must be considered as a relative one. The southern lowlands of Mahé have, in contrast, a wonderfully pastoral aspect and are home to some of the island's prettiest beaches and villages too, all made accessible by an efficient network of roads.

Port Victoria, essentially a seaport, is one of the tiniest capitals in the world and, despite its drive towards moderate modernization, has still managed to retain much of its original charm and character. In its environs





one still continues to find examples of traditional architecture, a busy market as well as myriad shops and souvenir outlets, artists' studios and boutiques, churches, museums, restaurants, bars and many other service providers.

Mahé remains perhaps the most spectacular of the islands, allowing both stunning and contrasting panoramas of her satellite islands. It is also home to a surprising variety of flora and fauna including many indigenous species, discoverable by organised excursions as well as by popular walks and trails within the Morne Seychellois National Park. The underwater



treasure house of the St. Anne Marine National Park meanwhile can be visited by semi-submersible excursions as well as by snorkelling expeditions.

INSIDE THE PRISTINE STORY SEYCHELLES

Located on Beau Vallon beach which lays northwest on the island of Mahé; a mere 30 minutes' drive from the international airport – STORY Seychelles is a contemporary & chic hotel property featuring 100 rooms comprising of villas and suites, an award-winning spa and 7 eclectic dining experiences. As your paradise home away from home, the resort offers you the opportunity to enjoy all the modern comforts in this beautiful tropical paradise entwined with chic décor, sumptuous food, beverages and spacious luxury to relax in.

STORY Seychelles offers an unparalleled collection of opulently appointed accommodations, relaxation and recreational spaces that showcase the true heritage of their Seychellois surroundings. The 100 villas and suites redefine paradise - they simply exude stylish opulence, stylish comfort and idyllic bliss. Designed to represent a blend between Creole and colonial architecture - the resort is an epitome of tropical luxury. From plush furnishings and mesmerizing backdrops to the spacious layout and beautiful finishing's - all overlooking the topical tropical gardens leading to the beach.

The beach facing private pool-villas offer an entirely new level of luxury. A

unique product available only at this resort in the Beau Vallon beach area - each one occupies a private spot on the beach with direct access to the bay as well as a private pool, pool-deck, cabana, outdoor rain showers, luxury in-room amenities and personal pampering products. Similarly, the suites include a comfortable double bed and lounge area with luxurious amenities of comparison. All suites have choice of private terrace balcony or a terrace that opens out onto the resort gardens, complete with sun loungers. Each villa or suite also features indoor and outdoor daybeds and dining areas; plush sofas, beds and seating areas; pristine bathrooms featuring oversized free-standing bathtubs and rain showers - as well as all the modern technologies such as a large screen LCD and complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi.



guests are encouraged to pamper themselves at the award-winning spa or try some customised workouts at the Gym & Yoga Studio to flaunt that beach body. Our spa is a true heaven within a haven - whether it's a results orientated treatment, or just an experience of utter relaxation you're looking for, it is a must, to make it a part of your Seychelles experience.

In addition to our fitness and yoga programmes, recreational facilities are dotted throughout the resort with the stunning infinity pool taking centre stage. With ample sun loungers and parasols bordering it, the 24-meter-long sapphire blue water invitingly tempts you to submerge. The accompanying kids' pool is a safe 0.4 meter in depth. Also on offer is tennis, volleyball, pétanque, table tennis, a giant chessboard, masks, snorkels, paddle boards and kayaks to satisfy all your holiday recreational needs.



CULINARY EXCELLENCE AT STORY SEYCHELLES

With seven eclectic dining experiences in the form of bars and restaurants to choose from – you're spoilt for choice. The resort offers a wide selection of dining options, each one ensuring that your gastronomic experience at the hotel will be every bit as deep and pleasurable as the other aspects of your vacation. Guests can also choose the resort's 'pièce de résistance,' a bespoke, romantic under the moon & stars dining on the beach coupled with the ambience of the soothing ocean waves. Customised options also include privatised group reservations for beach and/or in-villa barbecues as well as a luxurious in-villa floating pool breakfast.

Holidays are meant for indulgence, so



PRASLIN

Praslin's original name of 'Isle de Palme' bears eloquent testament to its reputation as home to the Vallée de Mai UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of only two places in the world where the famous Coco-de-mer grows wild on palms 40 meters tall and some 200 years old. So impressive is this forest, even today, that it once led General Gordon (of Khartoum) to state his conviction that this was the site of the biblical Garden of Eden. Within the Vallée itself and at other biodiversity hotspots on the island may be found a host of rare and sometimes totally unique species of flora & fauna.

Seychelles' second largest island, Praslin, lies 45 kilometers (24 miles) north-east of Mahé and is accessible by Air Seychelles domestic flights in 15 minutes or by fast catamaran ferry in 45 minutes.

Praslin is divided by a ridge of hills running from east to west, intersected by a road that leads through the Vallée de Mai and possesses some of the most striking beaches of the archipelago such as Anse Lazio, widely acclaimed internationally to be the most beautiful beach on earth.

Praslin, location of one of Seychelles' most prestigious hotels, the five-star Lemuria resort at Anse Kerlan with its 18-hole golf course, stands at the forefront of the country's tourism industry with a rich assortment of hotels and guesthouses whose strong tradition of Seychelles' hospitality over a period of many years has proved a favourite with visitors. Further, not-to-be-missed Praslin attractions include the Praslin Heritage Route and Pirate Treasure Trail; the Black Pearl Farm Gallery; Praslin Museum and Fond Ferdinand for an out of this world experience of nature. Praslin is ideally situated for holiday-makers wishing to island hop to a handful of nearby exotic destinations such as Chauve Souris, Cousin, Curieuse, St. Pierre, La Digue and the Aride bird reserve. It is also a haven for nature lovers seeking rare endemic species such as the black parrot for which Praslin is the last habitat or wishing to explore the island's network of footpaths.

DISCOVER PRASLIN'S HOTEL L'ARCHIPEL


Every treasure awaiting discovery requires a stepping-stone to bring you to it and one could not wish for a finer steppingstone on Praslin Island than Hotel L'Archipel, conveniently situated at Anse Gouvernement on the north-east coast of Praslin. Nestled on its own private beach at the end of Praslin's

famous Cote d'Or Bay and commanding stunning views of the ocean, the hotel is located 12km from the airport and 3 km from the Baie Ste Anne Jetty.

Hotel L'Archipel's very own private beach is one of its most spectacular attributes and is for the exclusive use of its clients, affording them excellent opportunities for swimming, snorkelling and of course soaking up the sun in spectacular and comfortable surrounds. It is beautifully complemented by the hotel's magnificent, manicured gardens featuring meandering pathways and a wide selection of flowers, shrubs and trees which, in their turn, provide a stunning backdrop for the boutique charm of 16 deluxe rooms, 5 superior rooms, 9 senior suites and 2 executive suites.

Hotel L'Archipel proposes a select choice of accommodation options that includes five, 60 sq. m superior rooms with showers and designed for two adults and a child; eighteen 60 sq. m deluxe rooms for two adults scattered over the hillside, gardens and beach front offering breath-taking views and ideal for elderly couples, honeymooners or clients in search of seclusion and privacy; nine 65 sq. m senior suites ideal for two adults and a child, two of which are interconnecting and offer a sitting area and walk-in wardrobe and bathroom with both bathtub and shower and two, spacious 120 sq. m. executive suites for two adults and two children complete with separate lounge and veranda, walk in wardrobe and bathroom with both bathtub and shower.

Hotel L'Archipel proposes some of the best cuisine on the island in its two reputed restaurants: La Feuille d'Or and la Gigolette which offer a variety of delicious international and memorable Creole dishes featuring the very best seafood and local produce. Attractions include the live cooking of seafood right on the beach, weekly themed nights and spectacular Barbecues.

These two majestic hotels on the main islands of Mahé and Praslin offer the discerning traveller ultimate cocoons of comfort and pleasure that not only tick all the right boxes for a truly unforgettable stay on the islands, but also serve as perfect introductions to your further island adventures throughout the archipelago. 





AFRICA TO THE WORLD





Rose Yombo Djema On Spicing Up African Cuisine With *Neema Food*

Rose Yombo Djema is the visionary behind a distinctive array of carefully crafted chilli pastes infused with the rich flavours of Central Africa. Birthed from a keenness to share an age-old family recipe with the world, Rose embarked on the journey to produce Neema Food, which brings to kitchens chilli pastes that elevates every dish by bringing out sumptuous earthy African flavours. We chat with Rose...



1. Rose, tell us a little about Neema Food? What is it?

Neema Food is a premium brand which aims to bring the taste and authenticity of African cuisine through our range of condiments to the western palate. This is in line with consumers increasing interest for authentic global cuisines and deliciously spiced products. With growing trends for spicy food and West African flavours, adventurous consumers are spicing things up with a fifth eating more spicy food than 5 years ago and 26% replacing salt with chilli sauce or flakes.

2. How did you get started on the Neema Foods journey?

I am originally from DR Congo; I've lived in London for over 20 years. Prior to starting Neema Food I worked in the charity sector as a Fundraising Manager, and I left my job to work on Neema full time. I wanted to introduce consumers to African cuisine with our range of chilli pastes which can be used as a table sauce, marinade, condiment or cooking ingredient. Our chilli pastes are made from my family recipe, my mum first made them when she was 12-year-old to take to boarding school because the food was bland, and she used the chilli paste to add flavour to her meals.

3. What inspired you to start Neema Food?

The idea of Neema Food came to me whilst shopping in my local supermarket after work. I noticed the lack of representation of African food products on supermarket shelves, so I thought to fill the gap by introducing people in the UK to African flavours with our range of chilli pastes.

To learn more about Neema Foods visit www.neemafood.com





With African cuisine growing in popularity, Neema Food presents an opportunity for retailers to offer a unique brand and delicious products that can occupy and develop its own space as well as the market for African cuisine in the same way as Indian, Chinese, Thai and Mexican food categories over the last decades.

4. How has your product line evolved since you launched Neema food?

Our current range of products are authentic chilli pastes which has been in my family for over 3 generations. We use 100% natural ingredients with no preservatives, additives or added sugar. They are a perfect balance of heat and flavour and can be used as a marinade, condiment, table sauce or as a cooking ingredient. They will enhance your eating experience with delicious fruity and aromatic spicy African flavours. All our products are gluten free and suitable for Vegans and Vegetarians.

They are now available across 90+ health and independent stores across the UK, on Amazon UK and on our website.

5. Which product is the most popular and what is special about it?

Our bestseller is our African Fruity & Fiery Scotch Bonnet chilli paste. It is the hottest of our range and is very popular because of the scotch bonnet chilli used which has sweet undertones. Scotch Bonnet chilli is best known for the unique flavour it brings to jerk dishes in Caribbean cuisine but very few know that it's also widely used in African cooking.

Our chilli paste is cooked according to our family recipe and blended with our spices, it has the perfect balance of heat and flavour which people love.

6. Where do you source your ingredients for your sauces?

We deeply care about the environment and the communities where we source our ingredients. Therefore, we ensure that our entire supply chain is transparent, sustainable and that our products are produced in the most ethical way. Our chillies are sourced directly from local African farmers, and they come in fresh every few months in the UK. We are dedicated to continuously work closely with farmers in Africa so that they achieve better overall trading conditions.

7. How have your sauces been received in the market?

We've had great response from consumers, they really love our products. We have over 100+ 5-star reviews on Trustpilot and received 2 Great Taste Awards for 2 of our chilli pastes. Our customers add our chilli pastes to everything! In their breakfast, lunch or dinner, they are very addictive!

We are also currently working on exciting new products and will be launching some before the end of this year so follow us on our social media and do keep an eye for a new product announcement coming soon. 🌱

A CALL FOR *Contributors*

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

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

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

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

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

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