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My Love Affair with Namibia – A Journey Spanning Four Decades

Bruno de Comarmond

Bruno de Comarmond

CEO, BDC International Marketing
Kent, England

*How one unexpected weekend
sparked a lifelong passion for a
country like no other.*

“Will Bruno please go to Mr. van Heerden’s office,” came the announcement over the AVIS HQ tannoy system. It was April 1992, and as I stepped into an expansive executive office, the Chairman announced: “I’m sending you to Namibia to set up AVIS Sales and Marketing, make AVIS number one, and boost inbound tourism. After two years or so, you’ll return to AVIS South Africa.” He encouraged me to take a long weekend to experience Namibia’s capital, Windhoek, and the coastal towns of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. Reluctantly, I agreed.

That weekend turned out to be life-altering. As we descended into Windhoek International Airport, I was surprised to see no city skyline — just wild, untamed African bush. And yet, something about the beauty and uniqueness of Namibia captivated me. The towering coastal dunes felt like nothing I had ever encountered during my travels across the UK, Europe, Brazil, or southern Africa.

Upon returning to AVIS HQ in Johannesburg, I accepted the promotion and life-changing opportunity. My next hurdle was securing a work permit, which took five months to finalise. Once approved, I packed my bags and headed to Windhoek, officially starting a love affair with Namibia that has lasted four decades. This was September 1992.

During those initial two years, I exceeded all company expectations. In collaboration with Air Namibia, we significantly raised awareness of Africa’s newest democracy [21.03.90]. Back in the early ’90s, the mere presence of AVIS car rental branches was enough to convince people that Namibia had a road infrastructure.

Between 1990 and 1994, crossing from Swakopmund to Walvis Bay [across the Swakop River] required passing through a manned border post. I did this many times while visiting AVIS clients, fishing factories, and travel agents in Walvis Bay. At lunchtime, all companies closed, and I recall on many occasions being the only car parked at the lagoon, watching hundreds of flamingos up close — what a wonderful sight to behold.

The country had just one harbour, located in the picturesque coastal town of Lüderitz. Windhoek itself had one primary shopping centre and only two decent restaurants open on Sunday evenings. From Saturday at 13:00 until Monday morning, Windhoek was literally a ghost town. During my sales calls, the only way my team could reach me was via a pager [no mobiles in those days], and I would ask my client if I could use their landline. How times have changed!

In September 1996, my life took a dramatic turn. I faced a choice: follow my heart and stay in Namibia, or grow my career with the company I had poured so much into. Thankfully, fate guided me to a new path.

On 1 November 1996, I embarked on a three-year contract with Namibia’s national railways to re-conceptualise, develop, brand, launch, and manage the country’s first-ever luxury train. The Desert Express, a product proudly made almost entirely in Namibia, was inaugurated on 3 April 1998 by Namibia’s Founding State President, Dr. Sam Nujoma. A proud historical moment for me indeed — and for the nation. Within its first year, the Desert Express earned the prestigious Hospitality Association of Namibia [HAN] Excellence Award for outstanding service. It remains lauded today as one of the world’s top railway journeys, according to The Times UK.

Since 2011, I’ve dedicated myself to promoting and marketing one of Namibia’s top accommodations: the four-star Lüderitz Nest Hotel, in the enchanting town of Lüderitz. This coastal gem — with its unspoiled charm, colourful harbour, historic buildings, ghost towns, Halifax Island, Dias Cross, expansive peninsula, national maritime museum, and delicious seafood — feels like a nostalgic echo of early Namibia: uncrowded, unhurried, and wild. With its melting pot of cultures and a feeling of total freedom, my big-city soul is always fully rejuvenated whenever I return to visit.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Michelangelo as much as I do. ❖



ON THE COVER:

Ozondjou Trails

Ozondjou is the Herero word for “on the tracks of the desert elephants.” This extraordinary, intimate interaction with desert-dwelling elephants is what awaits you as a guest at Ozondjou Trails.

(See pages 46-47 for the full story)



Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of Michelangelo International Wine and Spirits Awards.



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Grootberg Lodge: Where Scenic Beauty Meets Social Impact

Perched high on a plateau in Namibia's northwest, Grootberg Lodge offers more than spectacular views – it's a beacon of sustainable tourism. Here, every stay supports wildlife conservation and uplifts local communities through education and empowerment. Come for the views, stay for the impact!



Grootberg Lodge is more than just a beautiful place - it's a community champion. With a strong focus on sustainable tourism, the lodge supports local education and wildlife conservation through initiatives like the Education Fund and Predator Fund. Every visit helps protect this fragile ecosystem and uplifts the resilient people who call it home.

Grootberg Lodge is a true gem, purposefully designed to capture the breathtaking views of the vast plateau. Whether you're lounging by the infinity pool, relaxing on the spacious deck, or enjoying panoramic vistas from your room, you'll feel like you're on the edge of the world, soaking in every moment.

Adventure awaits with a variety of activities - from rhino tracking to visiting local Damara villages - offering meaningful encounters with both nature and the resilient communities of this arid landscape.

Rooted in sustainable tourism, Grootberg Lodge is proudly part of the #Khoadi-//Hôas Conservancy's conservation success story. The lodge supports education through its dedicated Education Fund, which helps refurbish schools and provide scholarships

for underprivileged children. Guests are welcome to contribute by donating a small percentage of their bill to this vital cause.

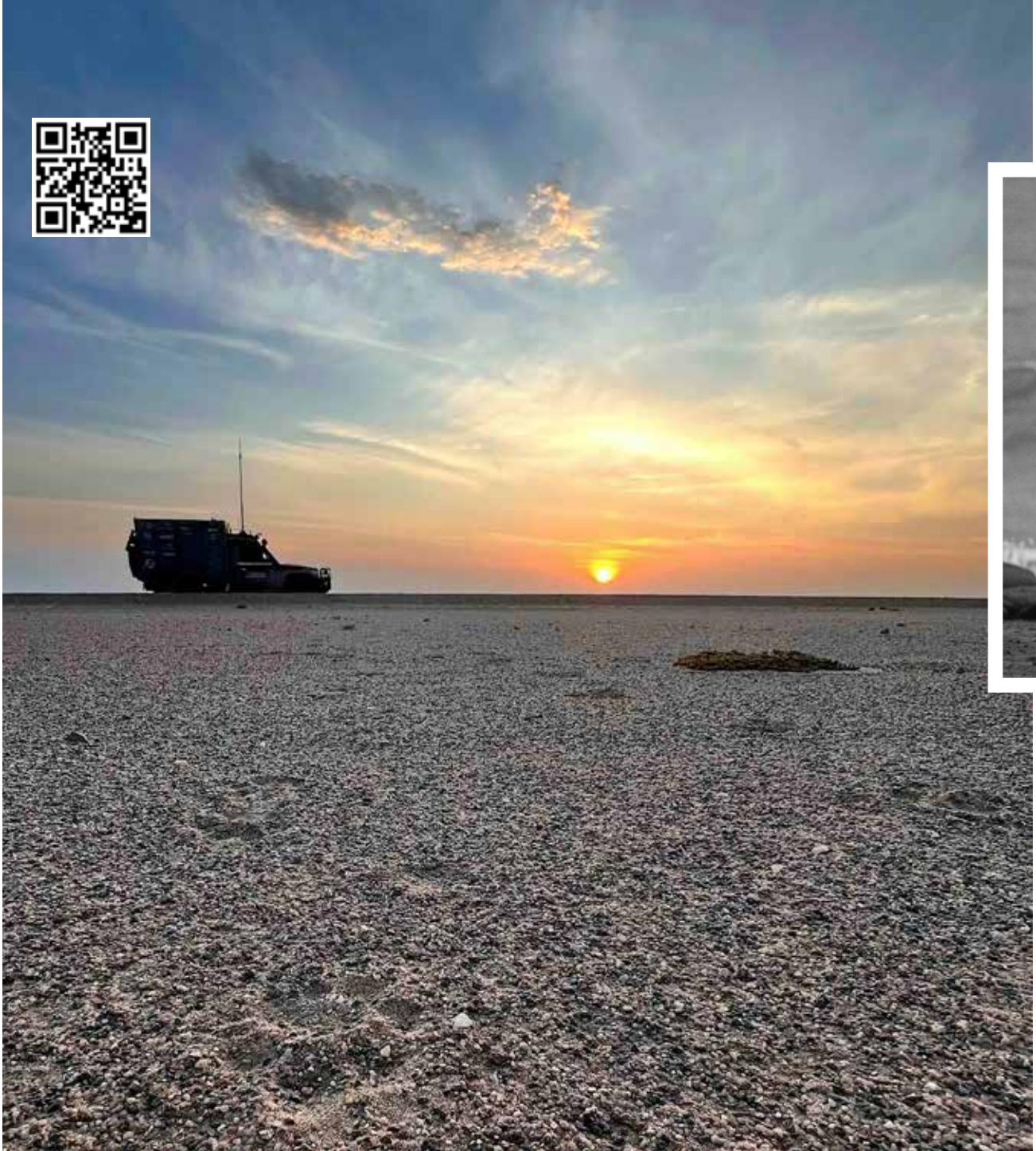
Journeys Namibia, the lodge's managing agency, plays a key role in this mission. With a strong commitment to conservation and community development, Journeys Namibia manages a portfolio of conservancy lodges, employing and training staff from local communities and ensuring that tourism benefits both people and planet.

Grootberg also partners with the Namibian Lion Trust and has established a Predator Fund to support farmers affected by wildlife. Every predator sighting during lodge activities contributes to this fund, which aids in compensation efforts and lion monitoring to reduce human-wildlife conflict.

At Grootberg Lodge, your stay supports wildlife, community, and unforgettable experiences in Namibia's wild heart.

Location:

Grootberg Lodge is 97 kilometres west of Kamanjab, and 25 kilometres east of Palmwag. 🌿



Lions In The Surf

*The kings of the jungle
also reign on some desert
dunes by the ocean*

words by Linda de Jager | photographs by Desert Lion Conservation Trust

“I’ve recorded the movements and activities of seven generations of lions and documented their return to the ocean.”

– Flip Stander



Namibia has lions that live in a desert, can swim up to 400m, and prey on an unlikely food source: seals.

These big cats of the Skeleton Coast are the first documented maritime lions — the only ones on Earth living in the dunes near the ocean. Their presence has posed unfortunate surprises for anglers and tourists, prompting a closer look at what the future of these “vanishing kings” might be.

“Three lion prides inhabit the Skeleton Coast National Park and rely on marine food sources along the coastline,” says Flip Stander of Desert Lion Conservation.

Samantha Nicholson, senior carnivore scientist at the Endangered Wildlife Trust, says lion populations are categorised as “vulnerable” in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of threatened species. The organisation estimates the global wild lion population to be between 22,000 and 25,000.

Nicholson says: “A wild lion is able to live, breed and feed in a natural environment with limited or no human intervention.”

For perspective, take the home ground of the Lions teams, Ellis Park - its stands hold about 62,500 spectators. The world’s wild lion population is only a third of that.

Stander says the number of desert lions has declined from about 130 in the late 2010s to fewer than 30 by the end of 2024.

“Apart from its scientific importance, the return of maritime lions to the Skeleton Coast holds enormous tourism potential and value for Namibia,” he says.

Stander studied at Cornell University in the US and later at Cambridge in the UK, where he completed his PhD. For his doctoral work, he was awarded the TH Huxley Award, named for the 19th-century biologist and anthropologist known as “Darwin’s bulldog” for his advocacy of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution.

Stander’s studies on desert-adapted lions span three decades. He uses a small structure in Möwe Bay, about 570km west of Etosha in the northern Kunene region, as his main base, with the aim of developing this into a research site over the next decade.

“I regard myself as incredibly fortunate to have been allowed to study the behaviour and ecology of all six large carnivores in Namibia. The majority of my work, however, has been focused on the unique population of desert-adapted lions in the northern Namib,” he says.

He co-authored the 2018 book *Vanishing Kings: Lions of the Namib Desert* and was featured in the award-winning 2024 film *Lions of the Skeleton Coast* by Will and Lianne Steenkamp.

“In the past 20 years, I’ve recorded the movements and activities of seven generations of lions and documented their return to the ocean, where they regained the skill to use marine resources,” Stander says.

He’s been working alone in the field for a long time. “It is not easy, but you get used to it. It became clear to me quite early on that it was the only way to collect the data and gain an unbiased understanding of the lions’ behaviour. The biggest

challenge has been working at night without any lights.”

The lions have adapted to the scarcity of water. They can go for long periods without drinking. Living close to seawater - or in it - presents a challenge, with the added pressure of facing an ocean polluted with heavy metals and plastics.

Stander says desert-adapted lions once roamed the Skeleton Coast, using the ocean for food such as seals and birds. In the 1980s, harsh conditions and livestock farming reduced their numbers until they disappeared from the area.

“After Namibia gained independence in 1991, things improved for wildlife. By 2002, lions began returning to the Skeleton Coast National Park — and by 2012, five lion prides had made their homes in the park again. They had forgotten how to hunt marine food during their decline, but by 2017, some lionesses started eating seals and birds. This recovery shows the resilience of these remarkable animals,” says Stander.

Stander tracked these ups and downs through fieldwork over many years.

“Technology has completely changed the way I work,” he says. “I embrace technological advances and am constantly modifying and adapting my methods to improve the quantity and quality of my observations and data collection. For example, the vehicle I use in my research is equipped with a server, a Wi-Fi network, and numerous infrared and thermal cameras. These allow me to drive and observe lions in total darkness. It has only one seat.”

This equipment enabled Stander to observe lions swimming up to 400m to a rocky island, where they slither onto wet rocks being pounded by waves.

“Lions have adapted to hunt larger seals, stalking through pools and pursuing them into the surf. They consume part of the seal on the island and swim back with the rest. Their remarkable interactions with seals highlight an intriguing development in their hunting behaviour,” says Stander. “They hunted cormorants before tackling Cape fur seals, refining their skills through trial and error as they navigated the tides and waves.”

The data Stander has collected over the years is crucial in developing an understanding of the protection the lions need in an unstable and deteriorating environment - one that is “undeniable and alarming,” he says.

“The climate crisis is real. The dramatic changes, characterised by frequent sand and dust storms, are affecting all forms of life, as well as the geomorphology of the northern Namib Desert,” he says.



Bar-Tailed Godwit: This bird flies 12,000 km in just 11 days – the equivalent of 14 Windhoek–Frankfurt flights. Non-stop. No landings.

“Marine foods have greatly benefited lions, contributing 65% of their biomass intake. This resource allows lions along the Skeleton Coast to hunt fewer livestock when natural prey is scarce. The lions’ territorial nature allows them to travel vast distances — as much as 10,000km². They have adapted to reduce inland habitat usage to 55% and to increase foraging along the intertidal zone on the beaches.

“Carnivores like coyotes and brown hyenas that forage in intertidal zones are known as maritime carnivores. Unique among them are these desert-adapted lions, which hunt marine resources. This plays a vital role in nutrient flow between marine and terrestrial ecosystems, especially in the Skeleton Coast National Park.”

But Stander’s behavioural ecology study also exposed new risks.

“The lions, initially unaware of two seal colonies, began hunting them after a pride discovered one in late 2018. This led to the deaths of two lionesses from pansteatitis — a disease that is linked to high oxidised fat consumption and low consumption of antioxidants — and exposure to oceanic poisons and heavy metals.

“But the ecological risks are not limited to the lions,” says Stander. Lions near the Möwe Bay seal colony pose safety risks to tourism staff and visitors. Stander urges urgent collaboration among all stakeholders, including the tourism industry, to reduce conflict and harness the tourism potential of the area.

“As the lions have now discovered the Möwe Bay seal colony, they are expected to return regularly. The colony is 2km from Möwe Bay station, so the potential for human-lion conflict will increase.”

Angling is technically illegal in this area, but it occurs regularly and is at times a source of food and income for local residents.

“I have spent several months over the past two to three years monitoring interactions between anglers and lions. The results were alarming. Intervention was required on 48 occasions to prevent potentially dangerous conflict. We need to develop guidelines to ensure public safety, conserve the lions, and optimise tourism.

“This presents an intriguing challenge that will require the use of the latest advances in satellite and AI technology. It’s necessary to establish guidelines to ensure public safety and a harmonious relationship between an amazing ecological development and human activity. “A concerted effort is under way to engage the tourism industry in

conserving the lions and developing viable attractions for visitors. This will require training tour guides and developing protocols,” says Stander.

While Stander considers this effort his “last chapter” in a life that unfolded almost parallel to the story of these creatures, in the bigger scheme of things, it is a brand-new chapter for lion conservation in Africa.

Stander reflects on what he has learnt, specifically from desert-adapted lions. “I remain astonished by the complexity of their social structure. It is not only the level of their coordinated cooperation, especially when hunting, or their cognitive abilities, but their continuous learning and adaptation to their challenging environment. Their knowledge of the habitat and prey is passed on to every generation. It has become a cultural key to their survival.” 🌿

This article was originally published in the Financial Mail in June 2025.

The article on the previous pages was completed three weeks before the tragic incident occurred on Friday, 30 May, when businessman and wildlife conservation benefactor, Bernd Kebbel (59), was fatally attacked while camping along the Hoanib River.

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism has confirmed that a lone lioness was subsequently shot and killed in the Hoanib River area of the Kunene region.

The decision to put down the lioness was made for public safety reasons, ministry spokesperson Ndeshipanda Hamunyela said in a statement.

Kebbel was ambushed by the lioness after leaving his tent in the early morning hours.

At the family’s request, those wishing to express their condolences are encouraged to make a contribution to the Desert Lion Conservation Trust in lieu of flowers:

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In this spirit, Michelangelo has decided to publish this article to raise awareness about Namibia’s desert-adapted lions.

Michelangelo

—PROFILE—

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“The man who knows Africa in all its moods and phases, and has loved it and lived in it, never afterwards looks upon the world with the same eyes as before. Its plains and its forests, its rivers and its deserts, its men and its beasts, have cast a spell upon him, and he walks through life remembering.”

— William Cotton Oswell



MINDSCAPES:

Tertius Jordaan and eyeseesAfrica

From spreadsheets to safaris, Tertius Jordaan traded a life in finance for one rooted in wild landscapes, heartfelt experiences, and a deep love for Africa.

words by Linda de Jager | photographs by Tertius Jordaan

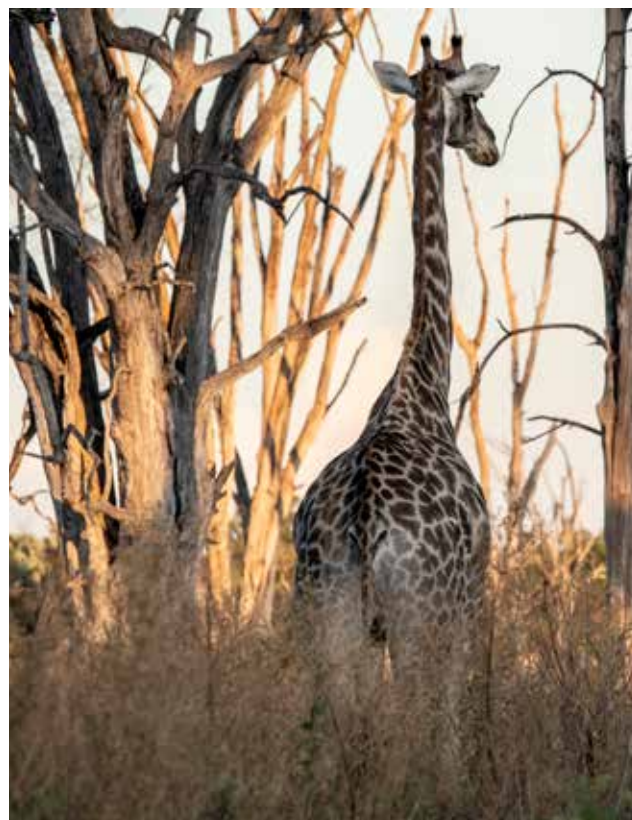


Namibian-born Tertius Jordaan made a late career shift from IT and finance to follow his passion for Africa. In 2014, he founded *eyeseeAfrica*, a boutique tour operator specialising in tailor-made safaris for travellers seeking authentic African journeys.

After owning an IT business in Namibia and then in Cape Town, you took a six-month sabbatical in Costa Rica before changing course. What motivated this change?

After school, I had no clear career path and was advised to study finance for job security. But even as a child, my passion was animals – not spreadsheets. At 26, I applied to study medicine but wasn't accepted, so I continued in finance, eventually founding and selling successful IT and finance companies in Namibia and South Africa.

A move to Cape Town and a year studying alternative medicine in Colorado brought another career shift – but it still didn't feel right.



Green Sea Turtles: After decades at sea, females return to the exact beach where they were born – guided by the Earth's magnetic field. One tracked turtle swam 12,000 km back to the same 30-metre stretch of sand.



In 2012, the six-month sabbatical in Costa Rica gave me the space to reflect. Surrounded by nature, I reconnected with my true passions – Africa, wildlife, and creating experiences for others.

This led to the launch of eyeseeAfrica.

The early days were challenging, but thanks to word of mouth, the business grew steadily. Last year, we celebrated our 10th anniversary – a milestone in what has been the most rewarding chapter of my life.

EyeseAfrica has maintained a 10 out of 10 rating on Tripadvisor since it was founded. That's quite an achievement! What are you doing right?

Every trip we plan is completely customised. I'm personally involved in the planning process of every journey, ensuring a thoughtful and detailed approach. After thorough consultation and drawing on our expertise, we design the best possible experience within the client's budget. Throughout their journey, we provide 24/7 support via a dedicated WhatsApp group, where we share daily updates, routes, and helpful information to enhance their adventure. I'm passionate about Africa and hope every visitor will also fall in love with this wild and extraordinary continent.

What makes Namibia a unique travel destination?

Namibia is one of my absolute favourite destinations in Africa – especially for photography. It's not just the scenery that captivates, but also its profound sense of solitude. You can drive for hours without passing another vehicle - a rarity in today's world of overtourism. Namibia is also the safest country to explore in Africa.

What are the challenges?

Namibia faces the growing challenge of overtourism. This is already evident in places such as Sossusvlei, where, in my opinion, too many visitors are allowed access on any given day, putting strain on the environment and infrastructure.

Another concern is the steady decline in the quality of government-operated camps across Namibia.

The Global Debt Is Over \$315 Trillion: That's more than 3x the size of the entire global economy.

At eyeseeAfrica, we've reached the point where we no longer include government-run camps in our itineraries due to the increasing number of traveller complaints.

Additionally, there is a significant missed opportunity in not pursuing a 'Greater Etosha' model, similar to what has been done with the Kruger National Park in South Africa. There, adjacent farms were permitted to remove fences, allowing wildlife to roam across a larger, unified territory.

Namibia already has a strong communal conservancy system, so why not expand this approach to include Etosha? It would enhance biodiversity, support conservation, and offer a more enriching experience for both tourists and local communities.

As a child, you spent a lot of time on family farms in Namibia. What stands out among those memories?

I have many fond memories of my childhood growing up in Namibia. Although I attended school in Windhoek, I spent most weekends and school holidays on the farm, enjoying activities like horse riding, hunting, and catching birds. There were always orphaned baby animals in need of care – sometimes even cheetahs and leopards – which we helped raise to adulthood.

Hunting was almost a daily routine back then, often done with the help of Bushmen trackers. They were remarkable teachers of everything related to nature, and it was truly a privilege to spend so much time with them.

As a child, I also collected animal skins from every species I could find. Looking back, I regret not being more educated about the importance of hunting with intent and respect – primarily for sustenance rather than sport. My days of hunting are now behind me, and today, I only shoot with my camera.

List five items that you never travel without in Africa.

My cap, my camera, a bottle of Oros (for when the local water doesn't taste that great), droëwors, and my own pillow.



Ostriches Can Kill a Lion With One Kick: Africa's largest bird can sprint at 70 km/h and kick with deadly force.

Michelangelo

—PROFILE—



What would you do if you could change the world?

The loneliness epidemic is an ongoing trend of social isolation experienced by people across the globe. As people age, companionship becomes crucial.

I would mandate that retirement villages and old-age homes either allow residents to keep pets or offer communal animals, enhancing lives through companionship with animals.

We totally underestimate how much animals can contribute to our lives. It is inconceivable that many retirement homes prohibit people from keeping pets.

Lastly, I wish that Sir David Attenborough could live another 100 years. 🍷

The Tsar Bomba (1961, Soviet Union): The largest nuclear bomb ever detonated – so powerful it shattered windows 900 km away.

Dear Diary



Threads of Love across the Desert

*From Sandra's heart to Myeisha's bags — ten years
of handmade leather, chilli-lipstick flair and
desert-born kindness*

Ten years ago, I traded the comfort of my life in Germany for the wild, breathtaking landscapes of Namibia. It feels like a lifetime ago, yet it's still as vivid in my heart as the very first moment I stepped onto this land. There's something magical about this place — the way the sun paints the sky at dawn, how the sand shifts with the wind, and the powerful silence that echoes through the desert. I couldn't help but fall in love with it all.

I'm Sandra. Somewhere around 50 years old — and yes, that sounds older than it feels! But honestly? I feel pretty young. Let's just say... young-ish and fabulous. I was born in Stuttgart, Germany, and spent most of my life there.

One of my greatest passions has always been fashion — those bold, timeless pieces that have stories to tell. And yes, I have a signature look: my chili lipstick. Without it, I feel completely naked. But my love for fashion goes beyond style; it's a deep connection to the materials, the colours, and the essence of what it means to wear something with purpose.

Nature, too, is a vital part of who I am. I need it — whether it's the stillness of the Namibian bush or walking with my dogs, it grounds me, clears my mind, and fills my heart. And yes, don't worry — I still wear my lipstick, even on the gravel path.

When I moved to Namibia, I didn't just come for a change of scenery. I came for a dream. A dream that had been quietly

burning in my heart for years. Fashion was always my quiet flame — bold pieces, timeless threads, a whisper of adventure. Namibia's endless skies and wild beauty became my canvas. From dusty boots to that signature chili lipstick, it's how I live my dream every day. Because true style? It's not about perfection. It's about spirit, adventure, and a heart full of stories.

In my 40s, something shifted. After years of being a teacher and raising my four amazing children, I felt a pull to create something new — something beautiful and meaningful. That's how Myeisha was born. My little social entrepreneur baby here in Namibia. We're a small but mighty team — nine incredible women, full of talent, soul, and love. Together, we craft high-end leather bags, and in every stitch, you'll find care, laughter, and a touch of love.

Running a business? It's like raising a fifth child — messy, emotional, challenging — but also incredibly fulfilling. And now, I get to live my passion every day — fashion, style, materials, and the beauty of creation. Myeisha allows me to translate that passion into something real, wearable, and lasting.

Did you know that Myeisha means “the one who is most loved” in Swahili? The name felt right from the very beginning. Because Myeisha isn't just about bags — it's about appreciation. It's about celebrating people, their talent, and their efforts. It's about respect — toward others and ourselves. I believe the



world needs more of that. More heart, more softness, and more celebrating the hands that make things.

Myeisha has given me the space to create, to connect, and to breathe life into something that, in return, gives life back.

So here I am... living the dream I didn't dare speak out loud for the longest time. Namibia — this wild, breathtaking, sometimes chaotic, but always grounding place — has become my home. And not just any home... a place of purpose, growth, and quiet magic.

I live here with my children and 13 very loved, very furry four-legged kids (yes, I'm that kind of mum). Together, we share wide skies, quiet sunsets, barking greetings, and peaceful evenings.

But it's not only my private life that brings me joy. Twice a month, my dear friend and I load up the car and drive into the heart of Katutura, where we visit Johanna — a powerhouse of a woman who runs a kindergarten with so much heart. We bring food for the children, which Johanna lovingly cooks for them, offering one warm meal a day. It's a small gesture, but it means the world to these children. Their joy is contagious. We sing, dance, laugh, and for a moment, the world feels simple and good.

Here's something I'm incredibly proud of — Myeisha supports Johanna's Food for the Children initiative.

Every bag sold at Myeisha helps provide food for these children, a warm meal that means the world to them. It's a simple act, but one that adds so much meaning to the bags we make. One handbag might not change the world, but the women who wear them can. That's our slogan, and it's something I truly believe.

Seeing the children's happy faces, hearing their songs, and watching their little feet move in rhythm — it's something I'll never take for granted. It reminds me that even small actions can create big ripples of hope.

This life isn't perfect, but it's mine. It's real, it's raw, and it's full of love, nature, meaning, and connection. And for me, that's more than enough.

I am incredibly proud and humbled to say that this July, Myeisha celebrates its 10th anniversary. Ten years of dreams, hard work, growth, and connection. We're full of new ideas, and we're excited to embrace the future as we step into the next chapter.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Here's to the next ten years.

With love,
Sandra 🍷

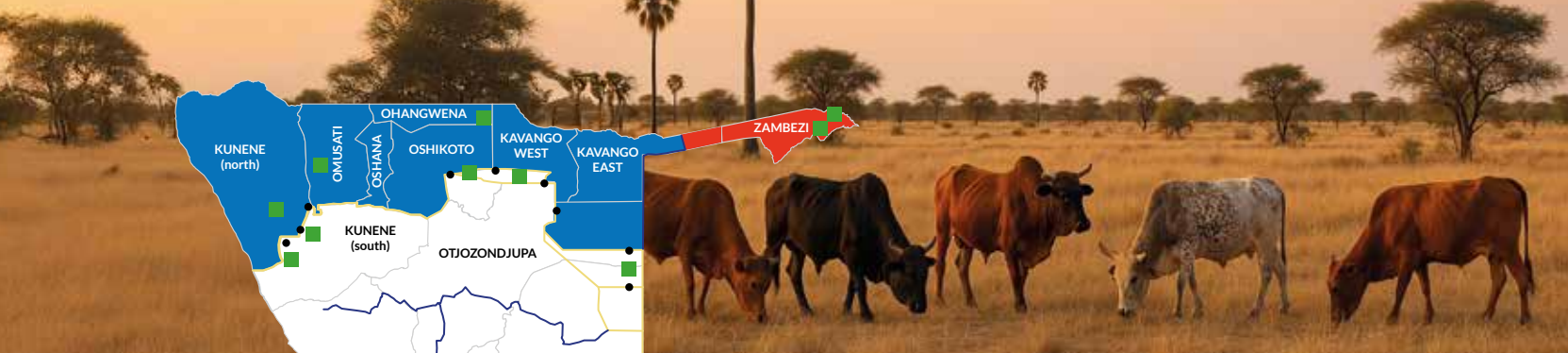


Celebrating 10 years of
MYEISHA
July 2015 - July 2025

Photography by CreativeLab



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LEGEND

ZONES

- Infected Zone
- Protected Zone
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FENCES

- Gameproof
- Stockproof & Gameproof
- Quarantine Facilities
- Veterinary Gates
- Windhoek

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Control Zones



Safe, certified beef from Namibia's Northern Communal Areas starts at Meatco's Katima Mulilo and Rundu abattoirs. Our WOA- endorsed CBT protocol knocks out FMD virus along the chain, keeping exports moving even during outbreaks. Backed by the EU's EDF11 Project - "Livestock Value Chain Development and Climate Change Resilient Action in the Northern Communal Areas of Namibia (LDCR-NCA)", the system drives market access and uplifts northern livelihoods.

**CERTIFIED SAFE.
READY FOR AFRICA.**

DELIVERING TO MARKETS BEYOND THE FENCE

Safe, Certified NCA Beef

THE DUAL SAFETY PROTOCOL APPROACH

Value-Chain Approach

1. **Verification cattle origin:** No veterinary restriction
2. **Namlits:** 90 days verification
3. **Vaccination per annum:**
 - 3.1. x 2 shot - 2nd not older than 6 months)
 - 3.2. x 1 shot - 2nd in quarantine
 - 3.3. x 0 shot - 1st shot day 1, 2nd shot after 21 - 28 days
4. **Quarantine:** 30-days
5. **Inspection:**
 - 5.1. Pre-quarantine - day 1
 - 5.2. During quarantine - day 15-16
 - 5.3. End- quarantine - day 30
6. **Transport:** Cleaned & disinfected trucks
7. **Offtake:** Quarantine completion
8. **Transport to Abattoir:** Day 31
9. **Resting for 12hrs:** Not more than 72hrs
10. **Inspection:** Ante-mortem
11. **Slaughtering:** Remove lymph nodes, vessels, contaminants.
12. **Inspection:** Post mortem
13. **Chilling for veterinary maturity:** + 2°C for min 24hrs
14. **Measuring pH:**
 - 14.1. Debone - for export: pH 5.4 - 5.9
 - 14.2. Debone - for local: pH 6.0 - 6.2
 - 14.3. Debone - for local infected zone: pH 6.3 - 6.4
 - 14.4. For processing: pH 6.5
15. **Deboning:** Prevent contamination, minimize fragments.
16. **Packaging & Distribution**

Processing Approach

1. **Steps 1-15 as per Value chain approach**
2. **Processing**
 - 2.1. **Cooking - Heat Treat:** 70 °C core for 30 min.
 - 2.2. **Can/Dry:** Hermetic seal 70 °C core for 30 min.
 - 2.3. **Salting & dried;** moisture protein ratio 2.25:1 & water activity 0.85 or less.
3. **Packaging & Distribution**



Namib Guesthouse, Swakopmund

Eco-chic comfort with heart — discover why this stylish B&B is a top Swakopmund favourite.

words by Anne Schaffer | photographs supplied



Uber-chic, eco-friendly, cool, calm and collected, Namib Guesthouse is consistently ranked among the top five of 75 bed and breakfasts in Swakopmund on TripAdvisor. For those who appreciate contemporary luxury with a conscience, it's a no-brainer.

Eco-Travelling Meets Effortless Elegance

Namib Guesthouse exudes a quiet exclusivity, balanced by a genuinely warm and friendly welcome - the perfect combination for a deluxe stay in Swakopmund. Ideally located, it offers easy access to beaches, natural beauty, restaurants, bistros, leisure activities, and a range of action-packed adventures in every direction. If attention to detail is your mantra, you've chosen the right spot.

The guesthouse boasts a contemporary feel throughout. Rooms are spacious, elegantly furnished, and vary from single and double suites to a two-bedroom family suite. The luxury suites feature indulgent walk-in showers.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL & LEISURE—



Giraffes Have No Vocal Cords... But They Hum at Night: Low-frequency hums help them communicate in the dark – too deep for human ears to detect.



Secure parking and full wheelchair accessibility add to the comfort and peace of mind. Everyone is welcome here. Guests will appreciate the complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi, flat-screen TVs, and the thoughtful extras that separate the best from the rest.

And then there's breakfast... A delectable selection of English and Continental options are served in their art boutique—every effort is made to source Namiban or home- or farm-made products and ingredients. Simply scrumptious. There's also a lounge with an honesty bar, coffee machine and water tap with filtered water, where travellers can refill their own water bottles.

Activities Galore

Swakopmund offers a wide variety of activities, and your hosts at Namib Guesthouse are happy to offer advice

or assist with bookings. If nature's your thing, consider a Living Desert Tour, a marine adventure, or a trip to Cape Cross to see the famous fur seals. Other nearby attractions include the Swakopmund Museum, the National Aquarium, and the Snake Park.

For thrill-seekers, options abound: fishing on land or sea, sandboarding, camel riding, kayaking, quad biking, horse riding, skydiving, go-kart racing, or scenic flights over the sensational desert landscape.

Chat to your hosts - they know Swakopmund inside out and are full of great recommendations.

Namib Guesthouse strikes a fine balance between style, sustainability and serenity. Located in a quiet neighbourhood yet within walking distance of the town centre and shopping hubs, it truly offers the best of all worlds.

A good choice. A really good choice. 🍷



On Your Bike



Onguza Bicycles is one of Namibia's true hidden gems – at least to most Namibians. But go for a bike ride in New York or London, and you'll realise Onguza may be one of the world's most powerful new ambassadors for African manufacturing.

words by Collyn Ahart | photographs by FC Smith



Onguza's founder, Dan Craven, is a two-time Olympic road cyclist for Namibia, and the country's first - and only - professional cyclist to compete at the highest level. "It still surprises me," he shares. "I'll be riding in Manhattan and a random person across the road will recognise our bikes and shout out, 'ONGUZA!' And I have to turn around and find out how this person knows about us."

Craven founded Onguza in 2020 with a simple goal: "I wanted to make sure the two brilliant farm workers who had been with my family for over 20 years would have work - and pay - that reflected their talent." The company is building some of the world's best steel-framed bicycles, completely by hand, from Craven's hometown of Omaruru

- a small farming community about 200km north of Windhoek. "No one expects us to be doing this, and that's part of the magic," says Craven. "We are this tiny operation, but we're winning awards for our work and punching way above our weight in the cycling world."

The cycling industry as a whole has suffered significant losses following the COVID-era boom and bust, but Onguza has largely shrugged this off by staying lean. As Craven says, "We keep getting orders, and that's the important thing."

At the moment, the business is making between four and seven high-end bicycle frames each month, destined for customers around the world. "Our goal is 200 bikes per year, which is a lot, but we're getting there," says Craven. "We're now reshaping our business model to reflect this



- selling bikes in a more affordable price range to reach younger riders.”

These bikes aren’t currently aimed at the Namibian market. “Namibians are still learning to love steel, and to believe in our own craftsmanship capabilities. It used to be - and still sometimes is - that Namibians assume we’re making farm bikes. Meanwhile, our bikes are winning professional gravel races in South Africa and Europe, up against top riders like Cape Epic winner Matt Beers.”

Namibia is a relatively small market for cycling, even if bikes seem to be everywhere. As Craven points out, “Steel bikes are really extraordinary to ride, but the conventional marketing of the cycling industry has always focused on the latest tech, and steel bikes have been around for over a hundred years. It’s what we do with them that makes them special.”

Onguza uses a “very fancy” bicycle frame tubing that’s machined in Milan. The team in Omaruru painstakingly hand-cut and file each tube to the specifications of each bike, then braze them together - again, by hand. “Until now, all our bikes have been customised to the rider,” a long process (“a bit like buying a bespoke suit from a Savile



Black Mamba: Capable of delivering several rapid strikes in seconds, its speed and venom make it Africa’s deadliest snake.



Row tailor”) and, in the long term, less profitable than producing simply customisable bikes in more standard sizes. The build process itself takes about a week, followed by painting, finishing, and final assembly to the customer’s specification. “But this is obviously getting faster and we learn and improve with every bike,” says Craven.

An unconventional company to come out of Namibia, Craven notes: “Namibia really has some of the most talented makers in the world, but very few opportunities.” He shares that “the big purpose” of Onguza wasn’t just to create well-paying jobs for Namibians, but to “change the way people perceive products made in Africa. We export minerals, charcoal, and meat - but almost nothing that’s manufactured by people. And we have a long, long way to go to change perceptions, especially of lesser-known places like Namibia.”

The company has also been set up with an unconventional ownership structure. Senior builders Petrus Mufenge and Sakaria Nkolo have real equity in the business, with the aim that all long-term team members will eventually have a meaningful ownership stake. “It’s not just about having a good job,” Craven says, it’s also “about being proud of the work and having a real say in how things operate.”

Onguza’s name comes from the Himba word okuti-onguza, which means “the great expanse of nothing out there,” says Craven. “Onguza means desert,” which suits a brand that makes bikes in the toughest place on earth, and, as they say, “for the toughest rides on earth.”

Onguza is just scratching the surface of what Namibia is capable of. “We’re proving a point—and this is just the start,” Craven says. “There’s a lot more to come.” And if the award-winning brand is anything to go by, Namibia’s future is in for quite a ride. ❖







LONE LADY TRAVELLING

I work in tourism, so my approach to travel is slightly different to that of the standard tourist. Regardless of the reason for travel, the modus operandi tends to remain the same. Because of my work, I have needed to spend long hours in transit to arrive at wonderful destinations, with that said it gives me the unique position to be able to comment on Namibia as a destination for solo women to travel in.

I have driven narrow gravel roads through the countryside to arrive in desert locations. On the other end of the spectrum, I have driven to the far north of the country, overlooking the rivers that divide the Namibia from Angola, Zambia and Botswana. I have seen most of what this gorgeous country has to offer.

As a woman, travelling can be a daunting task but in Namibia it doesn't need to be. The practicalities remain the same, be logical and practical. Remain aware of your surroundings, and don't get yourself in avoidable situations. Beyond that, it all remains pretty straightforward and Namibia is not a destination to be missed.

From standing on the edge of the second largest canyon in the world – the Fish River Canyon, to walking among ancient petrified camelthorn trees in the middle of the oldest desert in the world. I have stood on the crest of a dune overlooking Sandwich Harbour, and have spent time on a boat in the middle of the Chobe River during flood season, no land in sight.

The people of Namibia are exceptionally friendly, welcoming and hospitable.

What makes travelling as a woman even simpler is to have a good travel agent be available to support your journey every step of the way. Gondwana Travel Centre offers this service, with a team of well experienced consultants that can handle all your reservations and bookings for car rental, accommodation, activities and then some.

Travelling shouldn't be daunting, not for anyone but even if you do find the approach to travel a little out of your comfort zone, with Gondwana Travel Centre on your side you can be sure that your Namibian (or even southern African) experience will be impeccable.





The Namib Hideaways

words in collaboration with i-escape.com
photographs by i-escape.com
edited by Anne Schaffer

*The really great escape:
two super-romantic
boltholes in a remote
corner of the lunar
Naukluft Mountains, each
with its own unique charm
and sense of place.*



Who doesn't, at some stage, need to hide away a little and retreat to a glorious Namibian landscape? The Namib Hideaways are tailor-made for that. First came the Rustic Cabin, then in 2023, its contemporary companion, the romantic Honeymoon Hideaway. If you're looking to sneak off, these one-bedroom boltholes are made for intimacy, peace, romance, and stargazing. You'll have a giant window onto the spectacular landscape – where the Namib Desert meets the Naukluft Mountains – and the lunar terrain around is sensational. These cabins are set on 4,000 hectares of private estate, just waiting to be explored on foot or by 4x4. Now that's what you call tranquillity. And although there's plenty to do, you don't actually need to do a thing!

The Rustic Cabin is the original – the more chilled, back-to-nature one of the two. It's one big, glass-fronted sleeping space with an outdoor cooking area and a shower room slotted alfresco between its outer wall and an

enormous boulder. Beyond the sliding glass doors lies a paved and shaded terrace with a table for two and twin director's chairs: this is the spot where you're bound to spend most of your time reading, stargazing, and soaking in those awesome views.

A large double bed – with a feather duvet and a triple bank of pillows and cushions – is the axis around which the cabin turns, positioned so you awake to see the valley bathed in the first light of dawn. Behind the bed, stone shelving doubles as bedside tables, and on a higher ledge you'll find a handful of books and maps of Namibia. Candles are provided to light your way to bed should the solar input run low.

On a small side terrace between the cabin and a huge rock, you'll find your outdoor kitchen: a moveable gas hob, sink, cool box, and a small cupboard containing your cutlery, crockery, pots and pans, kettle, cafetière, and a few basic supplies.



Tucked around the corner is the open-air shower room and toilet. Water is heated by a simple rocket boiler: it's lit for you on the day of arrival, then you're responsible for firing it up yourself. The Rustic Cabin is authentically eco.

The Honeymoon Hideaway is newer, more plush, less rustic – charm personified. The open-plan space feels urban and contemporary, with a wide double bed, plenty of hanging space, a kitchen corner (with gas hob, sink, large fridge, and plenty of utensils), a wheeled dining table for two, and a pair of bucket chairs perfect for sinking into with a cold beer or glass of wine at sunset.

Even better views can be had from the terrace, which wraps around two sides. Perched on a hill, you'll enjoy sweeping views over boulders to the dusty savannah and jagged peaks that break the distant horizon. Sunsets here could not be more spectacular.

There's also a semi-separate (indoor) bathroom with a walk-in shower, dual-flush toilet, thick white towels, and surprisingly contemporary styling.

Rock Hyrax (Dassie): Looks like a furry guinea pig... but its closest living relative is the elephant. Nature had a wild sense of humour that day.



And there's loads to do on site or in the area:

- Join a guided nature or sundowner drive from Barkhan Dune Retreat (1 km away) to spot buck, oryx, zebras, and the occasional warthog, fox, or jackal.
- Birdwatching: nearly 700 species of birds.
- Borrow fat-tired e-bikes from the main lodge for a two-wheeled adventure – and cool off in their small pool afterwards.
- Spot prehistoric rock paintings at the Ubib Grotto, between Solitaire and Spreetshoogte Pass (a 2–3-hour excursion).
- Head to Sossusvlei to see the iconic dunes at sunset – an easy half-day excursion.
- Climb the mountain west of the lodge – best views are in the early morning or late afternoon.
- Go walkabout in the Naukluft Mountain Park

(30-minute drive) or even the NamibRand Reserve (2-hour drive) and experience the exhilaration of being completely alone, with no sign of human habitation for miles.

- Hot air ballooning in Sesriem.
- In your cabin: reading on the terrace as the sun sets, waking at dawn as the sky comes to life, and stargazing at night – this is one of the cleanest places in the world in terms of light pollution.

Please note: The Namib Hideaways are conceived as a remote and romantic retreat for adults, so children are not allowed.

Location

Sossusvlei area, between Nauchas and Solitaire, near the Spreetshoogte Pass. 📍



In the Hands of Time

words by Levona Mostert | photographs supplied by NAMRAD | artwork by Heidi Louw



We're always saying things like "time flies" or "where did the day go?"—and it's true. Time slips through our fingers like sand, and most days, we barely notice.

I never really understood how much that mattered until I walked through the doors of NAMRAD—Namibia Radiology. It wasn't for anything dramatic. Just a scan. A check-up I had postponed three times already. Too busy, I said. Too tired. Not urgent.

But what I found inside wasn't just machines and medical forms. It was a quiet, almost sacred respect for time. Not in the rushed, frantic way we often talk about it, but in the way you feel when someone sees you clearly and says, "Let's make sure you're okay. Let's not wait until it's too late."

At NAMRAD, time isn't treated like the enemy. It's treated like a gift—something to be used wisely, gently, and with purpose. Every scan they do, every image they read, isn't just about illness or diagnosis. It's about giving someone a chance to live better. To catch something early. To walk out of the building with clarity and a plan.

And maybe that's what conscious living really is. Not just yoga classes and weekend getaways but showing up for us. Booking the appointment. Listening to our bodies. Asking the hard questions before they become hard answers.

NAMRAD reminded me that time doesn't just fly—it reveals. It tells us who we are, what matters, and where we need to pause.

So, what does it take to save a life?

Sometimes, it's a machine that sees beneath the surface. Sometimes, it's a team of professionals who treat your five-minute scan like the most important part of their day. But often, it starts with a decision: I'll go. I'll check. I'll care enough about my own story to make time for it.

In a world that moves fast, NAMRAD gives us something rare—a moment to breathe, to notice, to take charge of our time before it takes charge of us.

And for that, I'm grateful. 🌿



Ozondjou Trails

words by Anne Schaffer
photography by Ozondjou Trails

Ozondjou is the Herero word for “on the tracks of the desert elephants.” This extraordinary, intimate interaction with desert-dwelling elephants is what awaits you as a guest at Ozondjou Trails.



At Ozondjou Trails, you're unlikely to ever come closer to elephants — these gentle giants — anywhere else in Namibia. And that's something truly special.

Elephant Human Relations Aid's (EHRA) base camp is set very close to Ozondjou's own camp, and you're fortunate: there, you'll find a team of extremely knowledgeable guides who'll change the way you think and feel about elephants. They share their insights generously, and you'll discover so much — about the desert-adapted elephant population, the farmers who coexist with them, and the scientists who work tirelessly every day to protect them. This solid partnership encourages a holistic approach that embraces tourism and sustainability — by raising awareness and contributing meaningfully to wildlife conservation. In doing so, it leaves a lasting, positive impact on both the environment and the community.

Located in the south of Damaraland, with elevated views over the (mostly dry) Ugab River and the Brandberg, Ozondjou Camp offers an immersive experience in nature and wildlife. The camp was built with minimal impact on its surroundings. It features just eight twin units and a main lapa with a lounge area for sundowners and a shared dining table for meals. This opens onto an outdoor sitting area at a convivial fire pit — with a glorious view over the Ugab River. Delectable, camping-style meals are prepared outdoors, either over an open fire or on gas.

A stay at Ozondjou Camp is unlike any other. You'll leave with an entirely new understanding of far more than just elephants.

Bucket list? Definitely.

Note: Children under 16 are not permitted at the camp due to the presence of free-roaming elephants. 🦏



Escape to Klein Aus Vista, a breathtaking destination nestled in the south of Namibia. Where you can discover tranquility and adventure amidst rugged mountains, sweeping plains, and unique geological formations. Located near Aus, Klein Aus Vista offers the perfect base to explore the natural wonders of the area, with a variety of activities to immerse you in the great outdoors, including Mountain Biking trails, Hiking trails and the chance to visit the iconic Stone Horse sculpture.



Slice of Life:



Fiery Passion



With the cold fronts rolling in one after another, our fireplace has been enjoying a great deal of attention. Usually, the role of Fire Keeper lies, stereotypically, with the man of the house (hubby dearest). I reminisce of the last cold front, when I arrived home well before my husband was expected. It was freezing, and I immediately imagined myself snuggled up in front of the fire with a glass of red wine. It was a quick decision: get a fire going to warm the house. Simple.

I've watched many a fire being lit, at braais or in fireplaces. It was time to take my feminism to the next level. If hubby can do it, so can I.

Firelighters in hand, I knelt at the hearth and got to work. A neat pile of wood emerged, reminiscent of a low, chunky Jenga tower. Firelighters tucked at the centre. Match strikes flint and voilà! Fire!

...Until the firelighter burns out and a sad, lopsided Jenga tower remains. Slightly perplexed, I pivot and adapt. The tower is dismantled and replaced by a tepee, with the blitz firelighter snug at its centre. The blitz starts to crackle as flames lick its edges. I watch closely. A skinny sliver of smoke sneaks its way out of the tepee, but soon the firelighter burns out. I add another chunk — a generous one, thinking maybe that's the issue. Alas, nothing. No smoke, no warmth, no sign of the wood catching. Agitated, I turn to my trusted friend: YouTube.

Five or six videos later, I go back to work. Laying thinner pieces of wood across larger ones, making sure there's space for air. An old paper bag is torn up and tucked into strategic nooks and crannies. Blitz placed precisely where instructed. Strike the match. Here we go. YouTube guaranteed this would work.

Nothing.

As soon as the paper burns away, all signs of fire vanish with it.

How? I sit back, cross-legged. A failure to the primal women who came before me. How could this happen? Hubby makes it look so easy.

No. I will figure this out. A new wave of determination crashes over me. I jump up and start to scheme. Returning to the fireplace minutes later with a range of new tactics. All the bigger pieces of wood are removed. I leave a neat pile of twigs, skinny shards, and paper across the grid. Next step: I place the blitz strategically, light it, and plug in my hairdryer. I blast the little flame with hot air. There it is — little lines of orange warmth racing along the wood! It's happening.

As soon as the airflow is removed, however, the flames die down again. Alright then, time for Plan B. The bottle of purple spirits is pulled out and squirted onto the smouldering wood. A flash of flames erupts, and I giggle in delight. Slightly crazed in my determination, my vision of snuggles and wine fuelling my resolve, I bring the hairdryer forward again and blast the fireplace with air. This will work.

"What are you doing?"

I'm pulled from my focus with a jolt. Hubby is standing in the entryway with a curious smirk. I imagine what he must be seeing — his wife kneeled over in front of the fireplace, bum in the air, hairdryer in hand, methylated spirits nearby, and a smudge of soot across her forehead from pushing back loose strands of hair... and a sad little fire once again dying in the hearth.

He doesn't need an answer. The spectacle says it all.

Within minutes, the fire is glowing, and I'm curled up on the couch with my glass of red, blushing at the chaos of my cause.

Years later, the memory still makes me giggle. These days, I leave the fire-lighting to hubby, who is clearly better at it - and I happily appreciate his efforts from the safety of the couch, snuggled up and warm. ❖



Neuras: Where the Spirit of Namibia Flows Into Every Glass

*Gold-Winning Wines. A Double Gold Grappa.
A Global Triumph Rooted in Conservation.*

words and photographs by Neurax Wine and Wildlife Estate

Michelangelo

—WINE & CONSERVATION—



Amongst the ancient landscapes of Namibia, where desert sands meet the Naukluft Mountains and wildlife roams freely under starlit skies, something extraordinary is being poured into glasses around the world – and it's changing the way we define African wine.

Neuras Wine and Wildlife Estate, a bold and unlikely vineyard nestled in one of the driest regions on Earth, last year proudly claimed a Double Gold at the Michelangelo Wine Awards 2024 and this year achieved what many in the winemaking world strive for their entire careers – Gold medals across every wine entered at the 2025 International Challenge Gilbert & Gaillard, and a Double Gold for their handcrafted Nappa Grappa.

The Gilbert & Gaillard International Challenge, founded in France, is one of the most respected global wine competitions. Every wine is blind-tasted by an international panel of seasoned experts, judging purity, complexity, and excellence. For Neuras, the results were breathtaking:

Namib Select – Gold, Red Wine

Directors Reserve – Gold, Red Wine

Shiraz – Gold, Red Wine

Ruby Dessert Wine – Gold, Dessert Wine

Nappa Grappa – Double Gold, Grappa



These awards shine a spotlight on Namibia's development as a serious wine-producing region, a feat made even more inspiring by the story behind the vineyard.

Owned and operated by the N/a'an ku sê, Neuras is no ordinary winery. It is one of the very few on the planet where every bottle supports conservation and humanitarian work. From saving cheetahs and elephants to empowering local communities, the proceeds of Neuras wine fund impactful projects across Namibia.

"We planted these vines in defiance of the odds – not only to craft great wines, but to build a better future for Namibia's wildlife and people," says Dr. Rudie van Vuuren, co-founder and Managing Director of N/a'an ku sê, a passionate believer in the power of purpose.

Crafted by Braam Gericke, Neuras' award-winning winemaker, these wines are shaped by extremes – intense desert temperatures, mineral-rich soils, and the determination of a team driven by more than profit.

"There's a resilience in every grape here. These vines

struggle, but that struggle gives the wine its soul," Braam Gericke says. "To be recognised internationally means that the story and taste of Namibia has found a place on the world's finest tables."

For Marlice van Vuuren, N/a'an ku sê Foundation Executive Director, co-founder and lifelong conservationist, Neuras is more than a winery – it's a vision realised to be change makers for sustainable good in Africa.

"We dreamed of creating something beautiful that could give back. These awards are not just for the wine – they are for every child we support, every animal we rescue, and every Namibian we empower," she reflects.

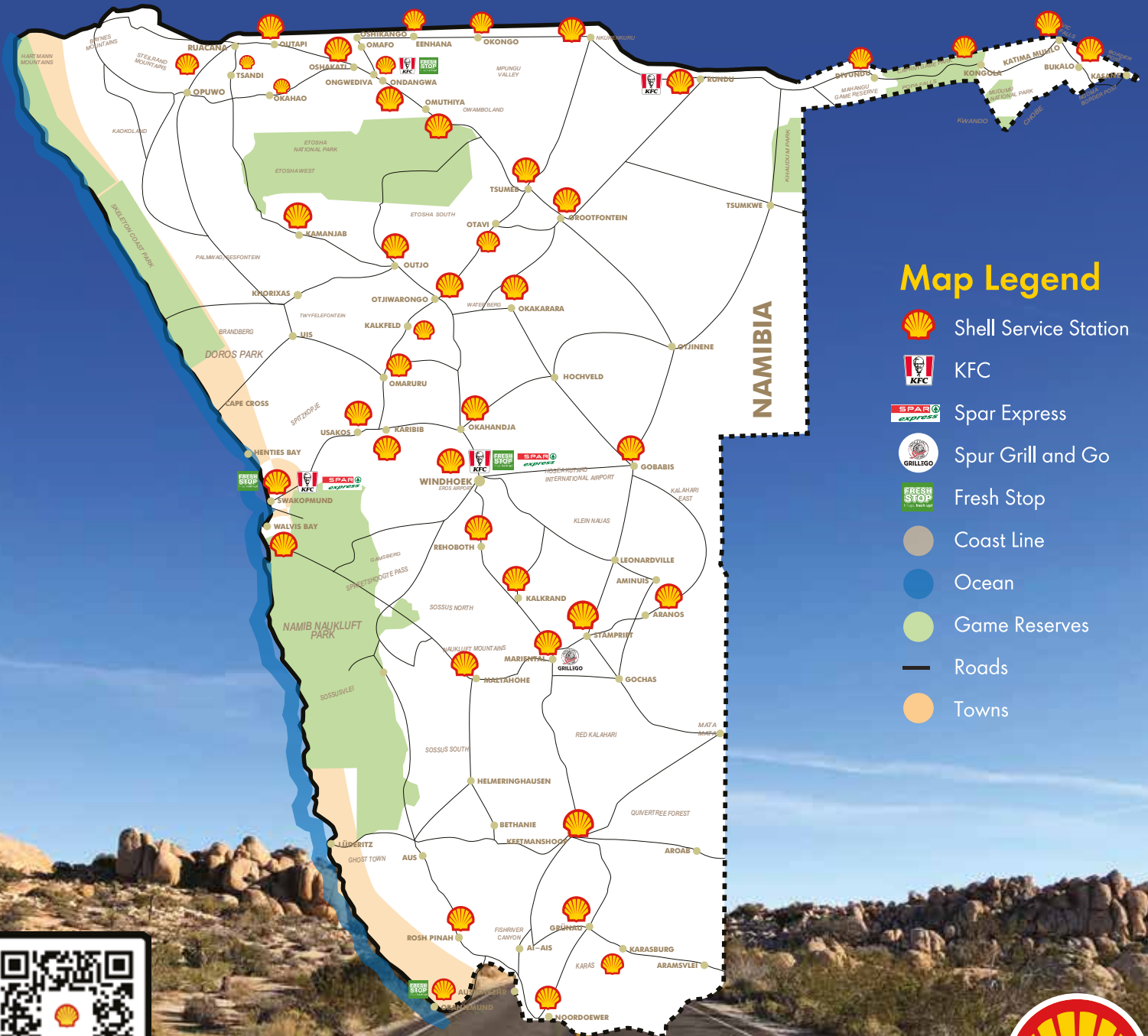
Visitors to Neuras don't just taste award-winning wine – they step into a landscape of impact. Sunset game drives, volunteer projects, and wine tastings beneath ancient camelthorn trees offer a chance to travel with purpose.

So next time you raise a glass, make it Neuras – and let the taste of Namibia inspire more than your palate. 🍷



Marlice van Vuuren, will be joined by respected San elder #Oma /Kunta as they travel to the United Kingdom to attend the Harmony Summit hosted by King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Representing Namibia on this global stage is a profound honour, and as a symbol of Namibian heritage and excellence, the Michelangelo Awarded Neuras Wines will be presented to Their Majesties – a heartfelt gift from the sands of the Namib to the gardens of Highgrove.

Whatever your journey, Choose Shell



SCAN ME





DROOMBOS

🕊️ EVERY MOMENT IS AN ESCAPE

Where Strategy Meets Serenity: Conferencing @ DROOMBOS

A business haven only a short drive from the airport and minutes from Windhoek, is the ideal location for your upcoming conference. Every event is expertly planned with more than 14 custom venues, beautiful gardens, and peaceful retreat areas. Droombos provides more than just a meeting; it's an experience, complete with specially designed service and carefully chosen tastings. This is conferencing at its most inspirational, perfect for strategic meetings, team retreats, and sophisticated overnights.



Where Work Meets Wellness: Business Travel. Elevated

When business brings you to Namibia, there's only one address that meets the standard. The rooms are tailored for the modern business traveler, offering thoughtfully designed desks and serene surroundings to foster clarity and focus. But this isn't just about work—it's about how you feel while doing it. Everything is arranged for you, from airport shuttles to short, rejuvenating escapes like guided city tours, hikes, or a quiet ride on horseback.





Where Connection Becomes Culture: Teambuilding Experiences

Teambuilding at Droombos is more than just a day out—it's a purposeful pause to reconnect, recharge, and realign your team. In partnership with Teambuild Namibia, we curate engaging activities designed to foster collaboration, trust, and fresh perspective. These sessions can seamlessly tie into your strategy day, with curated meal breakaways in our tranquil gardens to keep minds sharp and spirits high. It's not just about bonding—it's about building better teams with intention.

Where Flavour Meets Finesse: Tailored Dining Experiences

The culinary experience is at the heart of every gathering. Whether you're planning an intimate celebration or a large-scale event, each dish is crafted with care and purpose. From bespoke menus designed to match your theme or dietary needs, to flawless execution on the day—we make sure every bite leaves a lasting impression. Here, food isn't just served. It's an experience designed to delight, connect, and elevate every moment.



DID YOU KNOW?

Our sister lodge, Simanya River Lodge, has reopened after renovations and now offers the ultimate riverside retreat in Kavango West. Just 13 km from Nkurenkuru and easily reached via the scenic B15 "Timber Route," Simanya combines luxury accommodation with stunning river views, fine dining, a welcoming pub, an infinity pool, and enriching cultural experiences like river cruises and village visits.

The lodge now also features fully equipped conference facilities—ideal for meetings, strategy sessions, and team retreats in a tranquil, inspiring setting. For those seeking privacy, secluded campsites are available too.



Simanya
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✉ info@simanya.com.na

📍 Kavango West

🌐 www.simanya.com.na



Chobe Water Villas

Nestled on the banks of the Chobe River at the very tip of Namibia's Zambezi Region, this luxury destination embodies sustainability, diversity, and breathtaking scenery.

words by Anne Schaffer | photographs by O&L Leisure



The verdant, 450-kilometre-long Caprivi Strip – now known as the Zambezi Region – is a corridor bordered by Angola, Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, encompassing four national parks. It offers a striking contrast to the rest of Namibia, with its lush green landscapes, abundant wildlife, and diverse ecosystems. Marbled by multiple rivers, this region is a natural haven for four of the Big Five, and boasts a sensational 430 bird species.

Chobe Water Villas are suspended at the river's edge, offering breathtaking views of the Chobe River and easy access to the wildlife and birdlife of Chobe National Park. Here, nature is celebrated in all its glory – from wildlife to landscapes to impeccable hospitality.

Each of the 16 luxury villas features a 180-degree view of the wetland and bushland sanctuary, encompassing the Chobe River, Botswana's Sedudu Island, and Chobe

National Park on the opposite riverbank. From your private villa terrace, you can witness elephant and buffalo herds grazing on the floodplains of Sedudu Island.

Chobe Water Villas prides itself on personalised, intimate service – an ethos reflected in everything from professionally guided land and water safaris to recreational fishing. Guests can enjoy a cultural dance village tour or unwind at the fully tailored Haven Spa. The culinary experience is not only world-class, but also flexible – from a signature dinner to a picnic in a pristine natural setting, every meal can be customised to your taste.

A stay at Chobe Water Villas goes beyond luxury. The location is both iconic and unique, and as superlative as the setting is, so too are the warm hospitality, exceptional service, and the extraordinary beauty of nature at every turn. ❖

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CPE	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded
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Green light for Green Hydrogen Plant in Namibia

Swakopmund to be the site for project that promises stable, clean power — a project that supports Namibia's broader objective of gradual transitioning to a low-carbon energy system, one where renewables such as solar, wind and hydropower become the backbone of our energy mix.

words by Linda de Jager | photographs by HDF Energy Namibia



Namibia is set to build Africa's first green hydrogen power plant, aiming to boost clean energy generation and reduce reliance on imported electricity.

Experts consider green hydrogen a revolutionary solution for clean, renewable energy, though it is still early days for the technology.

Electricity can be produced from hydrogen using fuel cells, where hydrogen combines with oxygen to generate an electric current. The only by-products are heat and water - no greenhouse gases.

HDF Energy, a French independent power producer and global pioneer in hydrogen power and high-power fuel cells, has launched operations in Namibia.

At the centre of HDF's investment is Renewstable Swakopmund, a green hydrogen facility comprising an 85MW solar photovoltaic power plant. Once operational, it will provide 24/7 clean electricity and improved grid support, directly contributing to Namibia's energy security.

Located within Swakopmund's municipal boundaries in the Erongo region, it is one of five planned projects in the forthcoming Central Green Hydrogen Valley.

Owned by Bordeaux-based Hydrogène de France, the plant is designed to generate 142 gigawatt hours of clean

electricity annually - enough to power approximately 142,000 households. It will cover 400 hectares and integrate solar energy, battery storage, and hydrogen technology.

"Clean energy will also come with ancillary grid services. This will meet nearly 10% of Namibia's power needs," says Tashiya Walenga, HDF Energy Namibia's business and project developer. She also leads HDF operations in Zambia and Angola.

HDF Energy is part of the African Hydrogen Partnership and is expanding globally, with a project pipeline worth over €5 billion. "Our CEOG project in French Guiana is nearly complete, with a total investment of €170 million," says Walenga. "We also have developments in Barbados, Indonesia and Mexico."

HDF supports Namibia's target to increase electricity generation capacity from 624MW in 2020 to 879MW by 2025.

Walenga says the plant will contribute by generating storable green hydrogen electricity, helping maintain stable prices.

"What sets our plant apart is that we also provide ancillary grid services. This allows us to control and stabilise Namibia's grid on NamPower's behalf. If the grid fails, our technology can restore it.



“This N\$4.5 billion investment is supported by foreign direct investment, owner’s equity, and nonrecourse funding from development finance institutions and commercial banks.”

She notes that renewable sources alone are not enough: “We must also include stable energy sources. The grid needs a reliable baseload plant that’s flexible.” Baseload energy refers to the minimum electricity required to meet constant demand within a grid.

“Scaling up has its challenges, but I’m excited to deploy plants that give Namibia 70% energy independence and ensure 24/7, stable, zero-carbon baseload power,” Walenga adds. The project will use renewable energy and hydrogen storage, with minimal water via a closed-loop system, eliminating fossil fuels and harmful chemicals. The facility is expected to reduce Namibia’s dependence on electricity imports, mainly from South Africa.

“Swakopmund lacked a local power plant, so it made sense,” says Walenga. “We also aim to add value by retrofitting municipal buses to run on excess green hydrogen, boosting the town’s tourism sector.”

Swakopmund Mayor Blasius !Goraseb adds: “Together with the UN World Food Programme, HDF is preparing block

farms and gardens for informal settlements, helping residents grow and sell produce, and improving food security.”

Renewstable Swakopmund is being developed in partnership with the EU, with significant grant support from the European Investment Bank - formalised at COP27 in 2022 with European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, former EIB president Werner Hoyer, and the late Namibian president Hage Geingob.

“We’ve also received UK grant support,” says Walenga. “Our strategic investors include global energy players Rubis and Teréga.”

HDF is working with NamPower to finalise operational strategies. “We’re in the final stages of negotiating commercial terms. We hope to finalise the agreement by early next year,” she says.

Construction is set for early 2026 and will take 24 months, with full operations by 2028. The project will create around 2,000 jobs, including 600 during construction and operation.

Namibia currently imports more than 60% of its power. “We’re also exploring green hydrogen for rail and maritime transport and the export of green ammonia,” says Walenga.

The company is conducting a pre-feasibility study for



green ammonia production in the Central Green Hydrogen Valley, aimed at the export market.

Hybrid technologies are essential to provide reliable, round-the-clock power. They store energy during low production, allowing greater integration of renewables and supporting industrial growth.

However, advanced technologies remain costly, making rapid rollout difficult. “Prices haven’t dropped as quickly as hoped, but we’re optimistic,” she adds.

Jona Musheko, spokesperson for the Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme, says: “The HDF project is strategic in contributing clean, baseload electricity to the grid. It enhances energy security and reduces reliance on imports.

“Over time, local generation will ease consumer costs. Beyond affordability and reliability, this supports Namibia’s shift to a low-carbon energy system, anchored by solar, wind and hydropower, gradually replacing less sustainable sources like coal.”

The project is seen as a model for African nations looking to use renewable resources sustainably. Namibia aims to become a global leader in hydrogen production, aligned with its Paris Agreement climate change commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. ❄️



Tashiya Walenga
Country Lead in Namibia, Zambia,
and Angola—HDF Energy Namibia



Nakut – Cutting Edge Knives

words by Anne Schaffer | photographs supplied





Who doesn't love an exquisite handmade knife? Ivan Smit — the craftsman behind Nakut Frontier Knives — considers himself fortunate to have turned his passion into a career.

Windhoek-based Ivan Smit began his career as a goldsmith, moved into the hospitality industry, and today, he's a full-time knifemaker.

"Growing up on the farm, we always made knives or spears as kids. Both my great-grandfathers were pioneers in taming the Namibian frontier, and their stories of survival fascinated me. A knife was an essential tool for them, often the difference between life and death."

For Ivan, it began in 2009 as a hobby, and within ten years, he turned it into a full-time profession.

Ivan is self-taught: "You learn so much from trial and error... not to mention excessive class fees. Following other international knifemakers also helped a great deal. I can't say I had any mentors, but I had a very supportive wife, good

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL & LEISURE—





friends, and clients who supported me and encouraged me to pursue my passion.”

Knifemaking certainly has a strong creative side to it, and as Ivan says, “Like any artist, I like to create my own designs... but that takes time, and my commissioned work keeps me really busy. Everything is made and done by me – from shaping the steel on the anvil to stitching the sheath. There’s a lot of satisfaction in that.” Ivan has his own well-equipped workshop, and he’s built most of the equipment himself.

Keeping him busiest are hunting knives for the local and overseas markets, followed by kitchen knives. Ivan is so in demand that he hasn’t had the time to build up stock for the many prestigious knifemaking shows held locally and abroad – custom orders keep rolling in. “I try to keep my designs simple because I like function. Some of the most challenging

knives I’ve made are in Damascus steel. Handles, too, can present challenges, especially when you’re working with exotic materials.” He laughs, “There’s always an expensive chance of messing it up!”

Ivan credits television for the rising popularity of knifemaking: “The knifemaking community is huge worldwide, and there are some amazingly talented makers out there. Television has made it very popular, and young boys especially are very keen to learn the skill of forging.”

He laughs at the idea of retirement: “I’m a long way from that – too many knives still to make. My wife and I also own a catering company, so I try to keep all our clients happy!” He adds, “Knifemaking can be very labour-intensive and challenging, but I always look forward to – and get excited – when I shape a new piece of steel.” ❖

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LEISURE *club*



MEMORY MEETS MEMBERSHIP

At 824,292 km², Namibia is the world's thirty-fourth largest country and, after Mongolia, the second least densely populated—a land where space breathes freely. This is a country that houses the world's largest population of free-roaming cheetahs, the most significant community of highly endangered black rhinos and one of only two populations of truly desert-adapted elephants. Here, the world's largest underground lake—Dragon's Breath—lies hidden in the Otavi mountains while the Namib Desert, considered Earth's oldest at 80 million years, forms the highest dunes on the planet. Namibia was the first country to weave environmental protection into its very constitution, understanding that some treasures deserve safeguarding.

At O&L Leisure, we've always believed that beautiful, diverse Namibia warrants more than a passing glance. This vast, breathtaking country, with its ancient dunes that catch fire at sunset, its wildlife that moves with prehistoric grace and its people whose warmth rivals the desert sun, asks for something deeper from those who venture here.

Namibia Through Our Eyes is our philosophy and our promise. When we showcase this country, we do so with the devotion of storytellers who understand that authentic beauty cannot be manufactured, only revealed. Every luxurious moment we create reflects Namibia's true spirit—its endless horizons, its untamed wilderness and a profound stillness that rejuvenates body and soul.

This understanding led us to something we've never offered before - an invitation to not only visit, but to belong.





WELCOME TO OUR LEISURE CLUB

The O&L Leisure Club emerges from a simple recognition that many travellers seek transformation and revitalisation, not just a destination. They're the ones who understand that true luxury isn't about thread counts or marble finishes, but about moments that linger long after they've returned home.

Whether you're the Johannesburg executive who craves a room with an exceptional view, the European dreaming of wildlife wonders or the Namibian family turning an ordinary weekend into something extraordinary, the Leisure Club becomes your gateway to experiences that turn into long lasting memories.

From the mesmerising wildlife encounters at Mokuti Etosha and Chobe Water Villas Zambezi, where nature feels startlingly personal, to the coastal elegance of Strand Hotel Swakopmund, where the Atlantic meets endless sky, to the tranquil embrace of Midgard Otjivavera Windhoek, where time slows and you discover and explore this remarkable destination.

Our Leisure Club understands something fundamental about meaningful travel: it's not about seeing everything once, but about seeing some things deeply, repeatedly and with growing appreciation. It's for travellers who follow instinct rather than itineraries, who choose stillness over schedules, who understand that the best stories aren't captured in a day but unfold across locations and seasons.

From chasing sunsets to seeking spa sanctuaries or navigating smooth check-ins between meetings, your membership rewards you instantly. The card becomes your passport to spontaneous extensions, to ordering that bottle of wine without hesitation, to saying yes to the room with the better view.

Beyond the immediate rewards such as substantial savings that make premium experiences accessible or dining privileges that transform meals into celebrations, lies something more valuable, namely the freedom to explore Namibia as it's meant to be explored, without compromise.

LEISURE STORIES WORTH SHARING

There's a particular quality to experiences that become stories—they possess weight, texture, the kind of detail that makes others lean in when you speak. The Leisure Club creates the conditions for such moments. It's there in the morning coffee shared with elephants at Chobe Water Villas or lions at Mokuti, in the sunset dinner that stretches past dessert at Strand Hotel or in that moment at Midgard when you realise you've been holding your breath for weeks and are finally able to exhale.

These aren't manufactured experiences but authentic encounters with a country that reveals itself generously to those who approach with respect and time. For milestone celebrations that deserve extraordinary backdrops, for solo retreats where stillness feels alive, for business trips that accidentally become adventures—Leisure Club transforms how you experience travel, relaxation and adventure.



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8. Accept quote
9. Select 'Finish'

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words by Linda de Jager | photograph supplied

The River That Took – and the Man Who Chose to Give Back

After witnessing drowning tragedies in his youth, Marthin Muyenga turned personal loss into purpose – building a legacy of water safety and rescue through Monarch Lifeguard and Emergency Services.

“The water that sustained us also threatened our lives.”

For Marthin Muyenga (40), the Okavango River was a vital source of life that also carried unspoken danger.

From witnessing tragic drownings in his childhood village of Karukuta in the Kavango East Region to retrieving bodies from the ocean floor as a trained diver, Muyenga has transformed personal loss into a lifesaving mission.

Today, as the founder of Monarch Lifeguard and Emergency Services, he leads a nationwide effort to promote water safety, train communities, and rescue those in need.

How has your childhood shaped your calling?

Growing up near the Okavango River, we saw people crossing the river daily, bathing, washing clothes, or letting animals drink. I never realised the risks at the time.

I often witnessed people drowning - their bodies limp and motionless. People were dying.

It was only as I grew older that I understood the harsh truth: the water that sustained us also threatened our lives.

My passion for diving began during my time as a lifeguard, seeing bodies left in the water for days because there were no certified divers in our community. This remains etched into my heart to this day.

So this drove you to be part of the solution...

Yes. That experience compelled me to invest in diving skills and equipment so I could save lives and recover missing items under water - especially in disadvantaged communities.

As we speak, my team is training community members at lodges in the Kavango East Region.

You worked for the Namibian Navy for 17 years before starting Monarch Lifeguard and Emergency Services. What prompted the change?

I joined the navy at 22. That's where I learned how to retrieve bodies from the water and about safety precautions. But after 17 years, I hit a turning point. I realised I wanted to create something of my own.

What does Monarch Lifeguard and Emergency Services do?

We promote water safety and prevent drowning through education and community programmes. Our services include lifeguarding, diving, and underwater rescue operations. We believe in giving back, offering free lifeguarding and water safety education, particularly in areas with high drowning risks. We're also accredited to operate internationally and meet global maritime standards.

What was your first body retrieval like?

It happened in Walvis Bay. A person had drowned, and we were searching 16 metres underwater. When I found the body, the hand was still outstretched — as if they were reaching for help. It was emotional and terrifying. But I had to stay focused. I couldn't afford to break down underwater. I retrieved the body and brought it to the surface, keeping my emotions in check. I realised then, how urgently people across the country need help.

Have you ever been in danger yourself?

Yes - once at Henties Bay. I got caught in a rip current during a rescue. People onshore thought I was the one in trouble. Thankfully, I managed to save the person and get us both out safely. Those moments make the training worthwhile.

What's the most touching response you've received from someone you rescued?

A 13-year-old boy jumped into a pool without knowing how to swim. His mother jumped in after him, then the father. All three were drowning. I rescued them all. As a thank you, they gave me N\$1,500 and all the meat they were about to braai. It was a heartfelt gesture I'll never forget.

Why do you love water so much?

Learning to swim and dive was an adventure as a child. We explored the underwater world, set traps, and chased fish.

One of our favourite games was driving fish toward a trap we'd set near a fallen tree in the river. Those experiences instilled a deep passion for water in me.

Is this your calling?

I believe so. When I was born, I was called 'Medic'. That's the name the hospital staff gave me - they often help parents choose names in our community. In a way, it was prophetic. To this day, when I visit my village, people still call me Medic. My Christian name is Marthin, but my mother beams with pride when she hears that name.

What's next for Monarch?

My vision is to become a globally recognised aquatic training provider.

I'd love to see water safety and drowning prevention included in school and community programmes across Namibia.

I believe the government should also invest in advanced underwater search-and-recovery resources to improve emergency response.

Diving tourism is another area with huge potential - especially in Namibia's kelp forests and reef environments. It could attract visitors and support the local economy. 🌿



Michelangelo

—ARTS & CULTURE—



Untitled:

The Art of Becoming

Untitled resists finality. Featuring four emerging artists, this exhibition at The Project Room invites us into the raw, uncertain space of creativity in motion – where process matters more than polish, and becoming is the art.

words by Laschandre Coetzee | photographs by The Project Room

In a cultural landscape often fixated on polished outcomes and definitive statements, *Untitled* offers a refreshing pause – a deliberate embrace of uncertainty, experimentation, and artistic becoming. This group exhibition, featuring four emerging Namibian artists – Nicole Schaller, Nghihaluka “Luka” Ndivaye, Stephnie Mans, and Pontsho Kemba – was conceived to showcase creativity as still unfolding.

The choice of the title *Untitled* is itself an act of curatorial courage. It resists the pressure to neatly label or categorize, instead signaling that this is a moment of process and potential. At The Project Room, this approach reflects a commitment to supporting artists who are navigating the early stages of their practice or experimenting with new

ideas – those first steps that are often invisible in the broader art market or institutional programming.

For these artists, the exhibition is as much about how they create as what they create. Textile artist Nicole Schaller’s hand-embroidered portraits are stitched with memory and heritage, weaving together the past and present of the Damara people. Her work is a tactile exploration of identity that embraces imperfection and the handmade – qualities often lost in an age of digital precision.

Painter Luka Ndivaye’s journey from a monochrome palette to vivid oils reflects a personal evolution. His pieces speak softly of intergenerational sacrifice and unseen histories, inviting viewers to consider the stories that still lie beneath the surface of national memory.

Michelangelo

—ARTS & CULTURE—



In 1995, Tropical Storm Marco Tilted the Earth: It moved so much ocean water that it shifted the planet's axis by 0.1 arcseconds.



Meanwhile, mixed-media artist and physiotherapist Stephnie Mans embodies the tension between intuition and structure. Her works map emotional landscapes, offering an honest, textured record of grief, joy, and longing. Stephnie's creative process, which welcomes chance and layering, challenges traditional boundaries and invites us to value experimentation as a vital form of storytelling.

At just 21, Pontsho Kemba stands at the crossroads of personal and political transformation. Her oil paintings confront themes of identity, body politics, and motherhood with vulnerability and boldness. Pontsho navigates the expectations of academic art alongside a desire to break rules and tell stories often silenced in conservative spaces.

Together, these four artists reveal a new chapter in

Namibian art — one that celebrates diverse voices, embraces ambiguity, and prizes the unfolding nature of creative work. *Untitled* does not ask for conclusions, but for attention to the ongoing dialogue between artist, material, and viewer.

This exhibition is a testament to the role of independent spaces like The Project Room in fostering environments where uncertainty is not a weakness but a vital part of growth. By highlighting the process rather than the product, *Untitled* challenges us to rethink how we value art and artistic journeys.

Untitled opens at The Project Room on Friday, 20 June and runs until Saturday, 19 July 2025. It invites audiences not just to see art, but to witness courage — the courage it takes to remain open, curious, and in progress. 🍷

The Last Word



words by Chris Coetzee

The year was 1967, and Lusaka, Zambia's now vibrant capital, had a grand total of just 50 vehicles navigating its streets, most of them state-owned.

This delightful slice of history was shared over lunch atop a hill on Escarpment Road, a lookout perched on a dramatic mountain ridge overlooking the mighty Zambezi River and into the wilds of what was then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.

Fast forward to today, and Lusaka hums with the energy of over three million amazing people.

Now, let's make one thing crystal clear: I am, without question, the world's most devoted Namibian patriot; firmly believing that when the Creator sculpted this Earth, He saved His finest brushstroke for Namibia. But even I, proudly flying the Namibian flag, must admit: a surprise was in store.

Our journey began in Lusaka, winding its way south through the Kafue area and eventually down to the mighty Zambezi, before looping back through a slice of paradise.

Now let's address the elephant in the vehicle: the road. Brutal. Unforgiving. The sort of terrain that tests your character. It was bone-rattling. It rearranges your sense of what's possible. Zambia doesn't care about comfort or convenience, just magic.

By the time we caught our breath, we'd aged emotionally,

some say spiritually, others just visibly. And after eight hours of pure Africa, I had to face the unthinkable: No country has any right to be this breathtaking and not be called Namibia, Land of the Brave.

Honestly, how does one go about renaming a country? Which brings me to my public confession, and I say this directly to the Land Rover Defender loyalists: You're right. It's not just a vehicle. It's a time capsule, a memory-maker, a magic-holder, and yes, a slightly rattly therapist on wheels. (An unreliable one, but nonetheless, a therapist.)

Somewhere along the way, I fell head-over-heels for an old LR Defender.

As for its current location? Let's just say it's parked somewhere in Zambia, and I left a piece of my heart with it.

But here's what I can share: Northern Namibia and the Caprivi Strip remain among Southern Africa's most untouched treasures. It is a region that doesn't need to shake your bones to stir your soul. It offers true Namibian adventure - the kind that shakes you free from routine, finds beauty in dust and distance, and carves lifelong memories into your soul. Because let's face it: Nothing rejuvenates quite like the road less travelled. The Caprivi Strip is proudly stamped with Michelangelo Magazine's Seal of Approval. 🍷



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