

# Michelangelo

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# The Namibian *story*

Namibia, home to the oldest desert on earth, is where the vast open landscapes stretch beyond the horizon and the crisp air tells the ancient stories of resilience and adaptability of the land, its people and its animals.

This is where the legacy of Namibian meat is born. As one of the least populated countries in the world, livestock production has been a life-line for generations of Namibians, and is deeply woven into the Nation's identity.

As the first African country to add environmental protection to its constitution, Namibia showcases a strong commitment to preserving its natural resources together with preserving centuries of tradition and ancient methods of farming, which still supports communities today.

Ever Changing conditions requires adaptation and cultivates resilience. Namibian meat is more than just sustenance. Every bite tells the story of generations of farmers who have perfected the art of adaptability, producing meat which is naturally lean, tender and infused with the rich, earthy flavors of the land.

Namibian meat is a testament to resilience, tradition, and the delicate harmony between nature and nurture. From farm to table, Namibian meat carries the untamed spirit of its homeland - authentic, unforgettable and a testimony to grace. It fuels an economy, sustains communities, nourishes the future, and brings warmth to every home it reaches.

**From my Namibia,**  
*to you!*

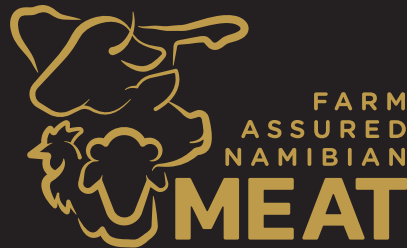


The Namibian Story

SCAN TO WATCH THE VIDEO



# Namibian Beef





# Abundance through Resilience

*Drawing on a lifetime of service,  
I invite Namibia's youth to take  
the lead in shaping a sustainable  
and equitable future.*



**N**ovember is always a special month for me, because it was in this month, on the 11th of November, that I was born in Grootfontein. From those humble beginnings, I grew up traveling to different parts of our country and have come to appreciate that Namibia is a land of vast opportunities and rich endowments. From dramatic and contrasting landscapes, where the world's oldest desert, the Namib, gracefully meets the Atlantic Ocean, to the rugged terrains concealing riches in the south, and the sub-tropical savannahs of the north and north-east, Namibia is a country of striking beauty and diversity. It is no wonder that Namibia is fondly known as the Land of the Brave, for to thrive in these contrasting environments, one must be resilient and hardworking to tap into our natural endowments and turn them into opportunities for all.

*Inge I. Zaamwani*

**Inge I. Zaamwani, MP**

Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform

Like most Namibians of my generation, my journey has been shaped by persistence and resilience — the determination to break free from the shackles of colonialism and apartheid oppression. The only way many of us could push back against the rampant abuse of human rights was to enroll ourselves in the organized national resistance and struggle for independence. I left the country at a tender age, which eventually gave me access to opportunities I could never have dreamed of, including quality education. I was privileged to be among other young Namibians sent by the SWAPO leadership in exile to study Development Studies at the United Nations Institute for Namibia, and later to pursue Law in the United Kingdom, where I obtained a Master's degree (LLM) from the University of Dundee in Scotland. At every step, the just cause of the struggle for independence remained a key driver in all I did, knowing that education was not only a privilege but also a huge responsibility — a duty to return its benefits to the Nation that raised me.

After independence, I joined the Ministry of Mines and Energy as Chief Control Officer, later becoming Director of Mines, and subsequently being appointed the first Managing Director of Namdeb Diamond Corporation. During my early years at Namdeb, I learned a lesson that has stayed with me: that diamonds, though born of immense pressure, shine brightest when they serve a greater purpose — when they uplift a Nation. This appreciation guided everything we did as we steered that great company to its highest potential. The same is true of people. Like farmers who trust that the rain will return and plant early, we endure through dry seasons, holding faith, and when the time is right, we rise: stronger, brighter, and unbreakable.

Today, as Minister responsible for Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform, I know with certainty that Namibia's greatest treasure lies not only beneath

the ground but within its people — and above all, within its youth. To the young women and men of Namibia: you hold the potential to drive productive agriculture and sustainable management of our natural resources, including water and land. Agriculture demands patience, but it also rewards vision, discipline, and innovation — qualities Namibians have long embodied in feeding their families, nurturing their communities, and building this Nation with quiet strength.

Young people have the responsibility to leverage their skills and knowledge in agriculture as a key driver of economic growth and job creation. To this end, the Ministry has introduced several initiatives for youth participation in agriculture along both the crop and livestock value chains. In addition, the Ministry continues to capacitate farmers through subsidized services, short training courses, weekly farmers' demonstrations, and information days. Furthermore, the Ministry offers opportunities in charcoal production at one of its farms through the National Youth Service, and I urge especially the youth to consider entering this field, which offers promising returns.

Equally, the fisheries sector offers numerous opportunities for developing the full value chain, as well as the aquaculture and mariculture sub-sectors. It is well known that marine fishery biomass stocks are on the decline due to various environmental and human factors. We must therefore begin to explore alternative ways to ensure sustainable fishery harvesting and management.

Land has always been here, but land alone does not create prosperity. It is your hands, your courage, your voices, and your ideas that will turn it into abundance. And so, I say this with pride: Namibians are not only the inheritors of this soil, but also its curators, its leaders, and its future.

I leave you in the company of this month's stories. Enjoy the read. ❀



# A Call to Wander

## *Veld Fire Ashes to Vibrant Ventures*

**A**s I reflect on my journey in the tourism and hospitality sector, a word that consistently comes to mind is *passion*. It's the driving force that began on the front lines of hospitality in the late 1980s, guiding me through various roles within Namibia's tourism industry while I pursued academic grounding — a Bachelor of Business Administration, majoring in Marketing and Entrepreneurship, followed by an MBA specializing in International Tourism Management. This academic foundation, coupled with decades of hands-on experience in the industry, has cemented my dedication to unlocking Namibia's extraordinary potential.

*Epson Kasuto*

**Epson Kasuto**

Chief Marketing Officer

Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR)

For the past decade, I have had the profound honour of serving as the Chief Marketing Officer for Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR). In this role, my work has been driven by the conviction that sound business systems and processes, combined with unparalleled hospitality, can contribute significantly to the overall growth of the Namibian economy. To achieve this vision, my marketing mandate has required me to hold a *global passport to global partnerships*.

In pursuit of positioning Namibia as a first-choice destination, I have travelled the world representing NWR and our nation's diverse landscapes. This journey has taken me across continents to major source markets — from the busy travel hubs of Europe (with Germany consistently being a leading market), to key trade shows and engagements in the Americas, Asia, and among our crucial continental partners in South Africa, the SADC region, and the greater African continent.

This continuous global presence is central to our strategy, allowing us to engage directly with international stakeholders. We actively forge vital collaborations with global partners:

- **Airlines and Tour Operators:** Creating competitive packages and expanding accessibility to Namibia.
- **Media and Content Creators:** Collaborating with international media and leveraging digital marketing to showcase NWR's offerings and Namibia's national parks to a worldwide audience.
- **Government and Tourism Boards:** Partnering with key entities like the Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) to ensure that a cohesive and impactful *Brand Namibia* is presented to the world.

These international collaborations are the lifeblood of our efforts, ensuring that our unique product — from the floodlit

waterholes of Etosha National Park to the eco-conscious *Eco Collection* resorts of Namibia Wildlife Resorts — is understood, appreciated and valued across diverse markets.

Namibia is a country defined by vast open spaces, unique cultures, and an abundance of wildlife — it is, quite simply, an experience that embeds itself in your soul.

Yet, like any other land, Namibia faces challenges. Our incredible Etosha National Park recently experienced devastating veld fires that swept through the landscape, consuming significant portions of crucial grazing land. This was a painful blow to the park's ecosystem and a stark reminder of the fragile balance of our natural heritage.

But here is where our shared passion comes into play: a crisis is also a call to action. The Namibian people and various stakeholders are already working tirelessly on the ground to support the recovery of Etosha National Park and its surrounding areas. However, the greatest contribution *you*, the global traveller, can make is to come and visit us.

We call upon you to look beyond the immediate headlines and see the enduring spirit of Namibia. Etosha National Park remains a jewel of Africa, its wildlife enduring, and its vast landscapes more beautiful than ever. By choosing Namibia for your next adventure — by booking a stay at one of NWR's resorts or exploring the breathtaking expanse of Etosha, the Namib Desert, or our pristine coastlines — you are directly contributing to the conservation, rehabilitation, and sustainable future of this country. Your booking is an investment in the rangers who protect our parks, the guides who share their stories, and the local communities who are central to their recovery.

I invite you to experience Namibia. Come and witness the resilience of nature and the warmth of the Namibian people. Come and be a part of our journey forward. The landscapes are waiting, and the welcome is genuine. 🌿



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#### A Day in the Life of the Damara Community

Where culture, conservation and community thrive in the #Khoadi //Hoas Conservancy.

*(See pages 14-18 for the full story)*

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



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





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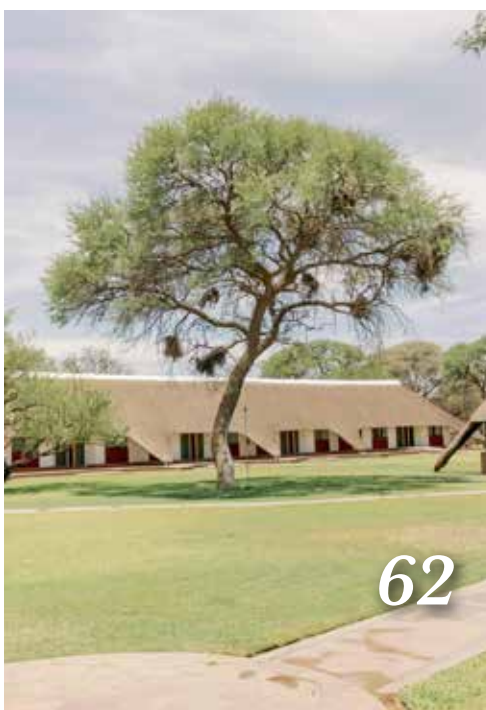
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# A Day in the Life of the Damara Community

*Where conservation, culture and community thrive together*



**G**uests at Grootberg Lodge in the ≠Khoadi // Hoas Conservancy have the privilege of visiting authentic Damara homesteads and immersing themselves in their heritage, culture, traditions, and more.

The ≠Khoadi //Hoas Conservancy is a global conservation triumph marked by the resurgence of endangered species such as black rhinos, desert-adapted lions, and elephants. This radical transformation of the landscape and wildlife took — and continues to take — the determined efforts of farsighted conservationists, government entities, private concerns, and the local Damara community living there to change the outcome of this area and its inhabitants.

Grootberg Lodge is the first middle-market tourism establishment entirely owned by a communal conservancy. For guests at the lodge, a unique experience is an invitation to share in the life of the local Damara community. You'll join a guided excursion to conservancy farms, visiting homesteads, meeting local hosts, and being exposed to their heritage, culture, traditions and strategies for managing human-wildlife conflict in challenging desert conditions.



**Lüderitz, Namibia:** Over 150 national and 20 world records have been shattered here, including Antoine Albeau's 53.49 kn (99.06 km/h) in 2024.

# Michelangelo

—CONSERVATION—



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Beyond that, the tour also includes an enlightening visit to the ǀKhoadi //Hoas Conservancy office. Here, guests meet staff and learn about the conservancy's role in preserving the region's natural resources while discovering the positive impacts and benefits gained by the conservancy through its ownership of Grootberg Lodge.

A stay at Grootberg Lodge is more than a wonderful wildlife experience. The ǀKhoadi //Hoas Conservancy stands as a beacon of international success in sustainable conservation, and you, as a guest, will become part of this Namibian success story, where conservation, hospitality and community unite for the greater good of all. 🍷



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# Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2025

edited by Anne Schaffer | photograph supplied by Natural History Museum, London



*Namibia's ghostly hyena  
claims the world's top  
wildlife photography prize*

## Michelangelo

—PHOTOGRAPHY—

◀..... *Ghost Town Visitor* by **Wim van den Heever**  
*Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2025*

**A**nd Namibia wins! The top award-winning image in the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2025 competition is this exquisite, ghostly shot of a rare hyena in the abandoned mining town of Kolmanskop, captured by Wim van den Heever, South Africa.

Selected from a record-breaking 60,636 entries from 113 countries and territories, Ghost Town Visitor was announced as the winning image in the world's leading wildlife photography competition, Wildlife Photographer of the Year, run by the Natural History Museum in London.

Wim van den Heever photographed this haunting scene of a brown hyena among the skeletal remains of the long-abandoned diamond mining town of Kolmanskop in Namibia. With sea fog rolling in from the Atlantic Ocean, Wim chose this spot for his camera trap after noticing hyena tracks nearby.

"It took me ten years to finally get this one single image of a brown hyena, in the most perfect frame imaginable," he said.

The rarest hyena species in the world, brown hyenas are nocturnal and mostly solitary. They are known to pass through Kolmanskop on their way to hunt Cape fur seal pups or to scavenge for carrion washed ashore along the Namib Desert coast.

Now in its sixty-first year, Wildlife Photographer of the Year is developed and produced by the Natural History Museum, London, and serves as a global platform for the world's best nature photography and wildlife photojournalism.❖



# Sand Rose: Windhoek's Vintage Escape

words by Linda de Jager | photographs supplied

*Eclectic villa vibes, poolside  
calm, and a fresh chapter under  
manager Chris de Villiers*



*Chris de Villiers, manager of Sand Rose Luxury Guesthouse, with Spookie, awaits guests.*

I place my weathered little leather suitcase on the floor of a luxuriously spacious room at Windhoek’s Sand Rose Luxury Guesthouse. In doing so, I can’t help but chuckle at how many well-meaning family members have told me to replace it, saying it was “getting” old. Indeed, but it’s hard to let go of such a well-travelled part of my story.

Stories abound in the distinctive space of the luxury room, and I am delighted that my vintage suitcase — literally loved to pieces — fits right in with the décor here at Sand Rose Luxury Guesthouse. The rooms are big enough to do cartwheels in — a welcome change from the cramped cubicles of some high-end hotels.

Centrally located in Brits Street, Klein Windhoek, the guest house has the feel of an Italian villa or family

home. Words like “eclectic”, “bohemian”, “pre-loved”, and “vintage” come to mind. The new manager, an old friend of the establishment, Chris de Villiers, has invited me to stay in one of the rooms to share his vision for the guest house’s upcoming renovations. It soon becomes clear that this is a fresh start for both him and the guest house.

Although De Villiers started his career at the coast in Namibia, he gained management experience at some of South Africa’s premier lodges. He learned the ins and outs of the hospitality industry as the child of a couple who managed a lodge in South Africa.

We sit down beside the swimming pool, which stretches near the breakfast area — a central feature of the property’s exterior, surrounded by green vines. De Villiers describes

# Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



*Paolo Bassi, owner of Sand Rose Luxury Guesthouse, out and about.*

the architectural vision as a “mixture of East African and Latin architecture that sets us apart from our competitors”. He says there are plenty of cosy outdoor and indoor spots to unwind. The lounge is being converted into a music room, he shares, and they’re unpacking vinyl records to set it up.

While I page through one or two books I recognise on a shelf, De Villiers invites me to try the cake of the day. “We have a fresh cake every day at three o’clock,” he says. While discussing his recent move to Sand Rose, we are treated to apple tart and good, strong coffee.

The guest house is gradually returning to accommodating short-stay guests instead of long-term tenants, De Villiers says. This, of course, benefits guests by still providing fully equipped bedrooms, each with its own kitchenette, and workbenches of various sizes. The bench in my luxury room can comfortably seat over five people.

De Villiers says guests can also rent the space to gather for brainstorming new ventures or to revisit and enhance existing ones — much like the new vision for Sand Rose, which has come a long way.

The guest house initially opened in Namibia with the aim of attracting Italian and Spanish tourists. It all began in November 1991, right after Namibia gained independence, with the original company called Sand Tour Operator, founded by Paolo and Luigi Bassi. They used seven-seater minibuses and larger buses that could fit 20 or even 44 people. To help introduce Namibia to Spanish-speaking countries like Spain and Latin America, the company participated in tourism fairs around the world.

“Initially, their headquarters were a private house in Olympia, a neighbourhood in the southern part of Windhoek. Over time, they moved to different locations —

---

**The Lüderitz Miracle:** Lüderitz, Namibia, has produced more world speed records than any other place on Earth — thanks to its perfect wind angle, flat water, and desert thermals.



Khomasdal, Ludwigsdorf, and even to where the Sand Rose Luxury Guesthouse is today. The tour operators eventually settled at the Gustav Voigts commercial centre before returning to Klein Windhoek.

“Their offices organised tours for groups and individuals, and they also provided transfers for airline crews travelling between Windhoek and Hosea Kutako International Airport,” De Villiers says.

In 2002, the tour company was sold, and that’s when Sand Rose Luxury Guesthouse was established.

“Meanwhile, Luigi sold his share to Paolo and moved to Okonjima Lodge with his wife, Rosalea Hanssen, to start a family. Today, Paolo is the sole owner of Sand Rose Luxury Guesthouse, and he has been busy developing and improving it over the years.”

As De Villiers shares the guest house’s history, we cross the street to Urban Camp’s bar and restaurant in Schanzen

Street. He explains that he has built a relationship with the owners, allowing Sand Rose’s guests to dine there, even though the restaurant is not open to the public.

“All our rooms include a standard breakfast, but I refer our guests to Urban Camp for dinner,” he says. We both opt for a Thai green curry, sharing a cold bottle of white wine. Urban Camp’s beer garden menu is diverse and of good quality. De Villiers compares the atmosphere here with a bushveld environment. It’s hard to believe the area lies so close to Windhoek’s city centre.

His dream for Sand Rose? “To maintain the sanctuary-like atmosphere and re-establish good management principles and ensure it is so in demand that it can survive any storm. I’m particularly proud of our recent online rating. Our Booking.com rating is consistently 9.7 out of 10,” he says.

The next morning, as we part ways, I ask De Villiers to describe his ideal guest. “Someone who appreciates beauty, art, and an eclectic mix of things — as Latin countries do,” he says.

Guests aged 12 and over are welcome. Choose from three standard double rooms (approx. 22 m<sup>2</sup>, king-sized bed), three junior suites (27 m<sup>2</sup>, king-sized bed), or three deluxe rooms (about 70 m<sup>2</sup>), the most spacious option.

*All rooms are equipped with modern amenities, including individual air conditioning, a private bathroom with shower, and a flat-screen TV with streaming services. Each room features a private entrance, a safety deposit box, and soundproofing to ensure guest privacy and comfort. Guests can enjoy free Wi-Fi, as well as a coffee/tea maker and a Nespresso machine. All units include a kitchenette with a microwave, kettle, toaster, and refrigerator. ❖*

For more information, visit <https://book.nightsbridge.com/28928> or <https://sandrosebnb.com/>

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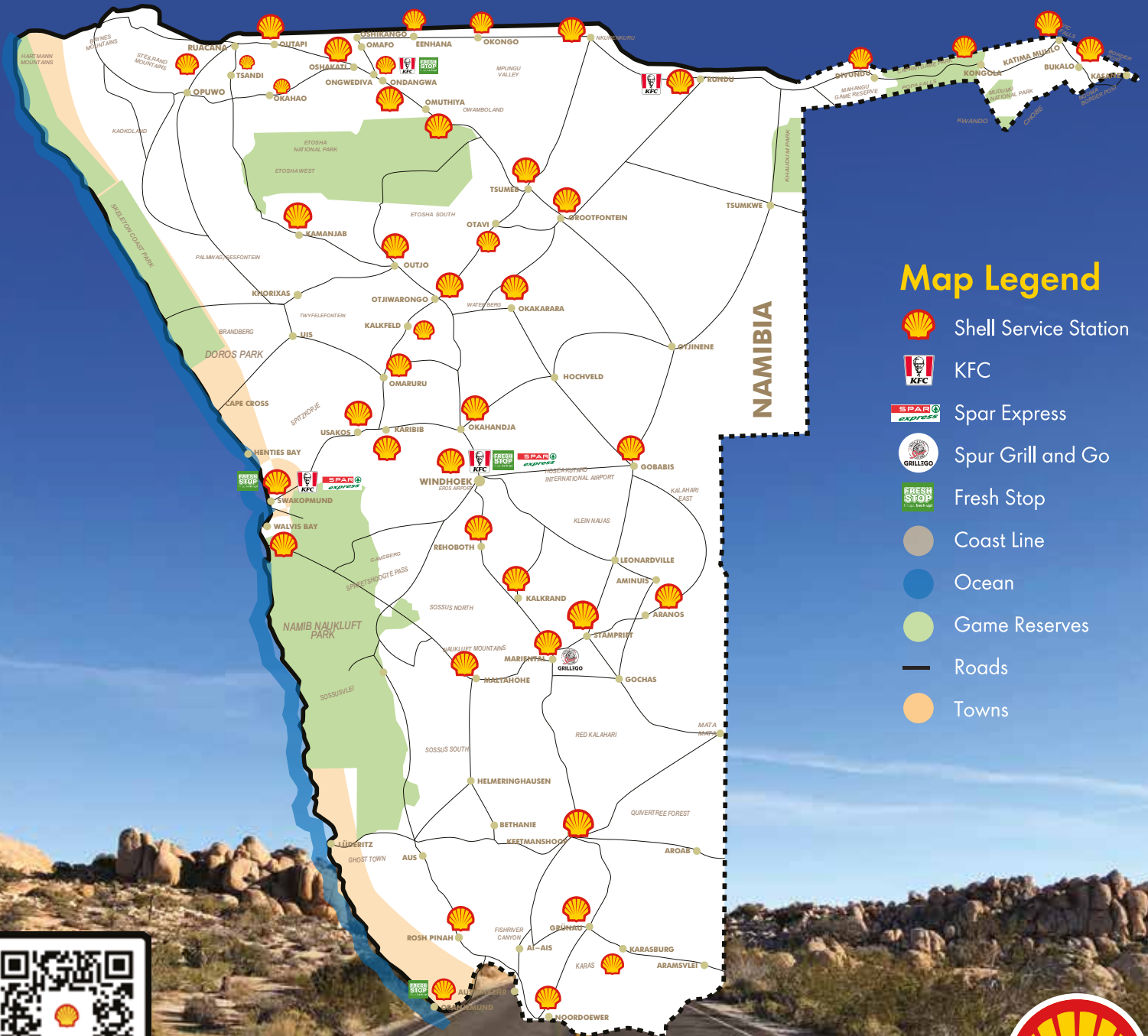
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# For the Love of Birds

*From rare owls in Botswana to dazzling shrikes in Namibia, Birding Ecotours offers an unforgettable journey for those who find joy in the skies.*

edited by Anne Schauffer | photographs by Dominic Rollinson



**M**ichelangelo quizzed birding guide, Dominic Rollinson of Birding Ecotours, about the supreme joys – and minutiae – of life on a birding safari that includes Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe... from one extreme to the other. The closest thing to nirvana for bird lovers.

**Do you run a Namibia-only tour? If not, what is the multi-country tour you run?**

Birding Ecotours used to run a Namibia-only birding tour during Covid times to alleviate the hassle of border crossings. However, now that borders are less stressful to navigate, we run our Namibia tour as a Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe tour, which goes from the Namib Desert to

Victoria Falls, from one extreme to another.

We also run a Namibia-only birding and wildlife tour, which is a premier, all-inclusive trip, a little different from most of our standard birding tour offerings.

**Do you recommend doing this trip in summer as opposed to other seasons?**

Many bird species migrate between Europe or Asia and Africa, spending time in southern Africa only during the Southern Hemisphere summer. We thus run this tour in early summer or late spring, when the summer bird migrants have returned. This is also one of the best times of the year to find birds that are displaying and defending territories and are therefore highly active.



## How many people do you take on a trip?

Most of our set-departure birding tours are for small groups of four to eight clients; however, we can run custom trips for smaller (or larger) groups.

## What kind of accommodation do you use?

Quality is of paramount importance to us, and wherever possible, we prefer to use superior accommodation at top birding sites. We are mostly based at higher-end lodges, but we also spend time in Etosha National Park, where we generally use Namibian Wildlife Resorts accommodation within the park, such as Okaukuejo and Namutoni Rest Camps. By basing ourselves inside the park, we can go on early morning (or night) drives and enjoy the camps' floodlit waterholes after dark.

## Do you offer a camping trip?

We don't offer camping trips to Namibia, as we prefer to base ourselves in formal accommodation with meals provided to save time on setting up camp and cooking food. We'd rather spend that time looking for birds and wildlife.

## What vehicle do you travel in?

We travel in a large and spacious modified 12-seater Mercedes Sprinter. We often receive positive comments about the vehicle we use in Namibia, as it is very comfortable (with a powerful air conditioner) and features wide-opening windows ideal for wildlife photography.

## What are the birds most sought after in Namibia, and what are the main areas you visit, and the special birds found there?

This Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe birding tour primarily focuses on finding southern African near-endemics — bird species found almost exclusively within southern Africa. Many of these near-endemics are species found only in Namibia and southern Angola, making them highly desirable for visiting birdwatchers. We also look for a range of charismatic (but often more widespread) bird species such as bustards, eagles, vultures, owls (including the highly desired Pel's Fishing Owl), bee-eaters, rollers, waxbills, and many others.

On this tour, we sample three different countries and

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**Rhinos are closer to horses than hippos.** Despite their bulky, hippo-like build, rhinos are actually part of the odd-toed ungulate family, along with horses and tapirs.



take in some spectacular and diverse scenery. The tour starts in the coastal Namib Desert with its impressive dune fields, which host near-endemic and highly specialised lark species, as well as the bizarre Welwitschia plant. While in Walvis Bay, we also spend time birding the lagoon and salt works, filled with flamingos, pelicans, shorebirds, and some truly localised species such as Damara Tern and Chestnut-banded Plover.

Next, the Erongo Mountains of the beautiful Namib Escarpment are on our itinerary, where we search for some very special Namibian near-endemic bird species such as Hartlaub's Spurfowl, Herero Chat, Rockrunner, Monteiro's Hornbill, Damara Red-billed Hornbill, and the incomparable, largely terrestrial White-tailed Shrike, among other charismatic species of northern Namibia.

Eventually, we leave the desert and enter the grassland, savanna, and woodland of one of Africa's greatest game parks, Etosha National Park. Etosha must surely be one of the world's best places for seeing Black Rhino and big cats, along with many other African megafauna. Birding remains very much on the agenda, and we spend time looking for species such as Namibia's dazzling national bird,

the Crimson-breasted Shrike; the world's heaviest flying bird, the Kori Bustard; the diminutive Pygmy Falcon; and many more. At night, we base ourselves within the park's rest camps, watching the floodlit waterholes as birds and animals come down to drink, bathe and hunt.

After Etosha, we head into an incredibly bird-diverse tropical corner of Namibia — the Kavango East and Zambezi Regions (formerly the Caprivi Strip) — and the adjacent panhandle of the Okavango Delta, which falls just within the borders of Botswana. The magnificent wetlands and riverine forests here support Pel's Fishing Owl (this is the most reliable place in the world for this rare owl), White-backed Night Heron, Slaty Egret, and literally hundreds of other species. While birding in this lush area, we also make use of boat trips to get close to birds and normally spend a wonderful afternoon watching and photographing spectacular Southern Carmine Bee-eaters at their breeding colony! Finally, we bird around the impressive Victoria Falls for yet another rich assemblage of species. Our tour is also timed to enjoy displaying birds such as the male Pennant-winged Nightjar — a sight to behold.



## What location is, to your mind, the most special? And why?

I always love visiting the Mahangu area in Namibia's Kavango Region, where we usually base ourselves for a couple of nights. The area is incredibly biodiverse, with an assortment of rare and beautiful bird species. Sitting on the deck overlooking the Kavango River, beer in hand, as African Skimmers fly up and down the river, is pure bliss!

## You can't promise you'll find a particular bird, but is it pretty likely?

Pel's Fishing Owl is a big highlight and target species of this trip. Although we don't often find it in Namibia (on this particular itinerary), we stand a very good chance of seeing it during our time in Botswana's Okavango Panhandle, which is surely one of the best places in the world to see this species.

## You do see wildlife – is this an important part of the trip?

It certainly is. We usually end up seeing around 50 species of mammals, in addition to the roughly 400 bird species we're likely to encounter. This trip takes in everything from the Big Five to obscure and specialised reptile species.

## Dominic, tell us a little about yourself and your experience.

I've been birding since the age of eight and grew up

spending time in the bush enjoying Zululand's many birding gems. I work full-time for Birding Ecotours, either leading tours around the globe or setting up tours from the Cape Town office. Birding Ecotours has several other tour leaders based in South Africa, who specialise in leading African tours, from nearby destinations such as Namibia and South Africa to further afield locations such as Gabon, Ghana, and Ethiopia.

## Can you give me a little history of Birding Ecotours?

Birding Ecotours was established in South Africa and has been running birding and wildlife tours since 2003. The company now runs tours around the globe on all seven continents and has a highly skilled team of tour leaders and office staff to ensure that all tours are successfully run and well-organised. It is our company policy to contribute a minimum of 10% of profits to conservation and local communities to ensure that wildlife and natural environments can be enjoyed by future generations.

## It's a birding trip... is there a good deal of camaraderie too?

Group camaraderie is one of the most enjoyable elements of these tours. There's nothing quite like the excited atmosphere after watching your first Pel's Fishing Owl, or enjoying a group dinner after a successful day out in Etosha packed with charismatic wildlife. 🍷

More information about Birding Ecotours' tours, can be found at:  
[www.birdingecotours.com](http://www.birdingecotours.com) | [info@birdingecotours.com](mailto:info@birdingecotours.com)



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## Dear Diary



## Wellies, Paws and a Dash of Wilderness



**B**efore I moved to Namibia, I lived near Stuttgart with my three faithful companions: Malou, my Golden Retriever; Luna, my Labrador; and Pepper, my little Dachshund. The “three musketeers.”

Taking them for a walk was a daily ritual, one that required more preparation than a trip to the supermarket. Raincoat? Check. Wellies? Check. Three leashes and, of course, the ever-important poo bags. Off we went across the fields, where Malou would jump into the stream — without hesitation, whether it was spring sunshine or freezing winter frost. On these walks, we met joggers, cyclists, other dog owners — and occasionally came home straight to the shower when the fields had been freshly treated with slurry. Trust me, three muddy, smelly dogs in a German house are not the definition of “gemütlich” - that special German kind of cozy comfort.

Fast forward to Namibia. Malou and Luna moved with me, and the family grew (as families tend to do here): Simba, Mila, Brandy, Henry, Nala, and Emma joined the pack. My furry family brings me endless joy. And yes, I still love our walks. But let me tell you — it’s a different kind of adventure here.

Wellies are still part of the dress code, but less for rain and more for dust, thorns, and tall grass. Morning walks are best — before the sun heats up the sand to paw-burning temperatures. Thorns, though, are the real challenge. Mila will simply stop and stare at me with accusing eyes until I rescue her. Simba, on the other hand, manages like a pro, removing them himself. Luna and Emma sometimes perform the funniest three-legged dance until I come to the rescue.

Our routes are no longer just about streams and cyclists. Now, I scan the area carefully: a herd of blue wildebeest



grazing; an elegant eland, springbok, or impala crossing the path. Beautiful, yes — but not exactly suitable playmates for my dogs. And unlike in Germany, I sometimes forget the leashes — though here, they almost feel optional. And poo bags? Let’s just say that in a place where wildlife has left behind enough “souvenirs” to fill an encyclopedia, my dogs’ contributions hardly make a dent.

Walking dogs on both sides of the equator is always an adventure — the same, yet so very different. One thing remains constant: the joy of being out in nature with my loyal companions.

Do you have a story to share about walking your dog — whether in the city, countryside, or the wild corners of the world? I’d love to hear it. Share it with me at: [deardiary@myeishanamibia.com](mailto:deardiary@myeishanamibia.com).

Best regards, Sandra. ❁



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MINDSCAPES:

# Coffee, Courts and Continents:

Inside  
Windhoek's  
Tucked-Away  
Café Gem

words and photographs by Linda de Jager



*From the canals of Holland  
to the red sands of Namibia,  
one man's journey brewed  
into a hidden café with stories  
steeped in adventure.*



**T**he Old Continental Café & Take Away, run by Dutch-born Sebastiaan Broeders, is a favourite with Windhoek's legal crowd, mere steps away from the Windhoek Magistrate's Court.

Opening at 07h00, it serves fantastic coffee and hearty meals to kickstart the day – five days a week. The spot is highly recommended on Tripadvisor by both tourists and locals alike.

Tucked away in a passage of Windhoek's Continental building, linking Independence Avenue and Lüderitz Street, the café can be a little tricky to find. Inside, the wallpaper and photos tell a story of a vibrant, well-lived life, full of warmth and character – just like its owner.

## How did you end up in Africa?

I've been travelling independently across the continent since before 1984. I was already travelling in North Africa, specifically Morocco and Tunisia. In 1984, I undertook an overland journey all the way from Belgium to Kenya, traversing the continent.

## Where in the Netherlands were you born?

I was born in the southern province of Brabant, where I also grew up. However, my heart was in Africa, especially after 1984, when I travelled to several other countries on the continent.

Later, I set off on a world trip that lasted nearly four years, starting in Tanzania. We explored the entire southern region, driving our own car, which we bought in Zimbabwe.

Eventually, we sold the car again in Zimbabwe and continued our world trip for nearly three years.

## How did you become a culinary expert?

I grew up deeply involved in the industry, working in my parents' café and restaurant, which hosted various events, including weddings. My childhood was quite busy as I helped the part-time chefs in the café, gaining valuable experience from a young age.

I was learning many things early on. We once hosted a



wedding dinner, and the part-time Polish chef arrived at eight in the morning – completely drunk!

My father kicked him out, and I had to do the job, but I was only 13 years old.

## How did you end up in Namibia?

It was me and my ex-wife who spent some time with friends in Western Australia. I came back to Namibia on our world trip. We spent a few months relaxing in Perth and Fremantle, Australia. I briefly worked at a well-known restaurant by the Swan River, even though I didn't have a work permit. We hosted a birthday party barbecue where I cooked. A couple was praising the food, and the man said he was going to Namibia on safari and asked if I wanted to join him to do some cooking. I said yes, and he told me it wouldn't cost anything. We travelled all over Namibia.

Later, I decided to go back to Africa, bought a car in Cape Town, and then returned to Namibia.

I travelled back to Namibia because of its beauty and wildlife. This time, I decided to stay. In 2000, I started a

guest house with my business partner, Terra Africa. We built it ourselves, and it was a beautiful place. The food was excellent, as I've been a chef my whole life.

My ex-wife went back to Holland, and I stayed in Namibia.

At some stage, a Dutch pilot living with us at the guest house approached me about taking over a small kiosk at Eros Airport, which also served as a cafeteria and catered to pilots and engineers. We agreed to discuss it, but the pilot tragically died in a plane crash before we could.

I started running the small place in tragic circumstances to cater to some aircraft for charter companies. There were also government pilots and flight attendants. I eventually operated an aircraft catering company for five years.

## And then came another turning point. Tell us about that.

One day, somewhere in 2001, a flight attendant approached me. She told me the president, Sam Nujoma at the time, was flying in a few days and needed some

**Lüderitz 2008:** Alexandre Caizergues made history as the first human to break the 50-knot ( $\approx 93$  km/h) barrier on water, shattering a record once thought impossible.

# Michelangelo

—PROFILE—



catering. She said he was mainly vegetarian but loved seafood. So I prepared a beautiful seafood platter, and Nujoma finished the entire thing.

That was a 'bingo!' moment. From then on, I often catered for the president.

## How did the Old Continental come about?

I had been catering for 20 to 30 years at this point, and never received a serious complaint.

I initially targeted this project to serve lawyers and bankers, since I'm right across the street from the Windhoek Magistrate's Court.

I felt that when you travel extensively like I have, at some point everything comes together. That's why the Old Continental's wallpaper depicts all the continents I've been to, and essentially my life story.

## What kind of food do you specialise in?

My cooking includes European, Asian, and other styles from all over the world.





## What is your trademark?

Quality and affordability. Our menu is international, affordable and fast. And the presentation is good.

I'm still passionate about it after all these years – I cannot give up. It's always about maintaining standards for me. I still occasionally do catering.

## What are the basics of good food in your view?

It starts with the ingredients, of course, and freshness is key. Compared to Europe, where I also ran a takeaway business, the selection here is quite limited. For example, if you're lucky, you might find three to four different types of mushrooms here, but where I used to

buy, there were 40 to 50 different species. And 60 to 70 types of fresh fish, and 20 different types of shrimp.

But Namibia has other benefits – the quality of the meat is better here.

## What else do you cherish about Namibia's experience?

The price is quite reasonable compared to Europe. And Kalahari truffles – called 'Nabba' by locals – are quite special. They only grow when it rains around April. I love using this ingredient.

The Omayova mushrooms that grow at the bottom of termite hills are very special to me too.



**You offer a unique and special beverage. Tell us more about that.**

I invite guests to come and enjoy a 'Sossus Dream', inspired by the Namib Desert. You might find something interesting about it on Facebook or Instagram.

**What would you want to change about Namibia's tourism and hospitality industry?**

I would make it more exclusive, expensive, and limited. After my recent travels, I was shocked by the number of tourists at many locations. Especially the self-driving market is out of control.

Excessive tourism is not good for nature, the environment, and wildlife. ❖

# The Pearls

## - the Alchemy of Stillness

Every pearl begins with an irritation. A grain of sand slips inside the oyster's shell. But instead of rejecting it, the creature responds with grace, layering the intruder in nacre, transforming discomfort into luminescence. Over time, intrusion becomes iridescence.

Standing on the Atlantic edge of Swakopmund, Namibia's salt-washed coastal town, one feels a similar transformation at The Pearls – Gondwana Collection Namibia's all-inclusive beach pods. Here, where the world's oldest desert exhales into the ocean, the line between wildness and refinement softens into something luminous.

### A New Kind of Coastal Luxury

The Pearls are unlike anything else along Namibia's coast. Two elegant, self-contained residences – The Mole and The Jetty – sit poised between sand and surf. Each pod is designed with modern minimalism yet the warmth of a lived-in beach home. Their palette borrows from the natural world: driftwood greys, oyster-shell whites, seafoam blues and shoreline browns.

There's no lobby, no check-in counter. You arrive and are immediately home. The kitchen and bar are fully stocked, the Gondwana promise of seamless luxury. There's a private host on call, but no unnecessary intrusion. Even service is layered subtly: attentive, invisible, always in rhythm with the environment.

Inside, floor-to-ceiling windows make the sea a living artwork. Morning fog arrives like gauze; sunlight breaks through, refracting across the interior in soft gradients of gold and silver. Outside, terraces open onto uninterrupted ocean views. A jacuzzi hums softly beside a fire pit. From both pods, you see the historic Swakopmund Jetty, now reborn as a promenade of cafes and a restaurant.

### A Day in Layers

Morning begins with the Atlantic's hush. Fog from the cold Benguela Current drifts inland, feeding the dunes and desert beyond. The day unfolds not by clock but by colour.

When the mist lifts, the town's pastel facades shimmer back into view. Yet The Pearls exist slightly apart, offering what every traveller secretly seeks: presence without performance.

At sunset, the ocean performs its final act: light fractures into burnt orange and gold. The sea hums low, and the first stars appear. It's a spectacle that costs nothing and means everything.

### The Taste of Refinement

Dining at The Pearls is an exercise in thoughtful simplicity. The kitchen comes stocked with local ingredients and handpicked wines, and a private chef can be arranged. Think freshly caught kabeljou grilled with lemon and herbs, wild Namibian oysters paired with crisp champagne, and dessert that tastes faintly of sea breeze and nostalgia.

Every bite tells a story of this coast's duality – harsh yet generous, remote yet deeply connected.

### Philosophy of Place

In the language of jewellery, a pearl is called an organic gem – the only one born of a living being. Its brilliance depends not on cutting or polish, but on patience. It's an accumulation of experience, shaped by time and response.

The Pearls channel that same ethos. They don't dazzle through grandeur but through restraint. Their sophistication lies in balance – the interplay of silence and sound, sea and shelter, stillness and motion.

For travellers accustomed to over-designed luxury, this is something else entirely: luxury as stillness, not spectacle. The kind that asks you to notice how fog softens the dunes, how light trembles on water, how a day can feel infinite when stripped of noise.



Perhaps that's Gondwana Collection's quiet triumph – the ability to create beauty that doesn't shout. To build accommodation that listens to its landscape rather than conquers it.

As I sat on the balcony one evening, the Atlantic sighing against the shore, I thought of how pearls are made – of that moment when the oyster decides to protect rather than reject. Travel, too, asks for that kind of grace. It intrudes on our routines, unsettles our certainties, and layers us with new understanding.

When dawn came, I realised The Pearls aren't just a destination. They are a metaphor made tangible – proof that the world's most beautiful things are born from discomfort, shaped by patience, and finished in light.

From intrusion to iridescence – that's the story of every pearl. And perhaps, every traveller too.

Text: Eva Johannes | Images: Gondwana Collection Namibia | Layout: Geena Visagie



Would you like to book your next dream holiday at The Pearls? Scan the QR code:





# Where Luxury Meets Legend

*Good Karma in Swakopmund is more than a stunning self-catering home. It's a soulful retreat where history, design, and mystery combine for an unforgettable stay.*

edited by: Anne Schauffer | photographs supplied

# Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



**O**n the surface, Good Karma is a sanctuary of light, air, and quiet luxury. Perched in the salt-swept serenity of Swakopmund, Namibia, this exquisite three-bedroom sanctuary is a gateway to both relaxation and adventure, offering an ideal beach retreat or family holiday just 300 metres from the pristine shore. Your accommodation includes a lavish master suite; each bedroom is a private haven with its own en suite bathroom, assuring you a luxurious getaway with all the bells, whistles, and, well, considerably more.

Good Karma is hosted by actress, journalist, and storyteller Nicola Theron, who prides herself on the home's wonderful merging of history with contemporary style and convenience. Every detail has been chosen not just for beauty, but for meaning. The textures invite touch. The rooms invite silence. Good Karma delivers on all the expected fronts. The rooms are gorgeous without being fussy. Pure magic. Nicola stocks the kitchen with local treats, the Wi-Fi works, you can have home-

# Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



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**Namibia, The Sperrgebiet (or “Forbidden Area”)** has produced over 65 million carats of diamonds since the early 1900s, making it one of the most valuable stretches of coastline on Earth.



cooked meals delivered to your doorstep, a daily cleaning service, and curated activity bookings to enhance your stay. The whole place feels like home - if home happened to be perfectly curated by someone with impeccable taste.

But, says Nicola, this is no ordinary stay: “Good Karma is more than a name; it’s a place for those who crave beauty with soul. A stay here is not just about comfort, it’s about alignment. Curiosity. That feeling of stepping into a space that somehow knows you. Guests come for the ocean air, the design, the soft rhythm of slow mornings, but they leave with a feeling they can’t quite put into words.”

One of Good Karma’s secrets lies in the exquisite cellar, carved deep into the earth, one which wasn’t always meant for wine, though. There’s a story buried there. Today, it’s a masterpiece of atmosphere: cool stone walls, candlelit corners, and air thick with quiet mystery. There are whispers of the past in every brick, and a strange, magnetic pull that draws guests in and holds them still. Some describe it as grounding, others as haunting — in the most delicious way. Not everything needs to be explained. Some places are meant to be felt — not figured out. This unique subterranean adventure offers a delightful wine selection paired with a delectable platter, promising an unforgettable tasting experience.

Nicola won’t say much, but as a storyteller at heart, it’s clear she loves the pervading air of mystery. She smiles when asked: “It’s just part of the story,” she says.

So, when you’re planning an adventure or road trip near Swakopmund, choose Good Karma and the stories that accompany it. This self-catering retreat feels less like a destination and more like a soul. Come and feel for yourself. ❖

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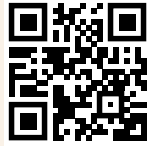
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## Slice of Life

by Jescey Bekker



# A Healthy Pause



It's the beginning of the end.

Octoberitis has passed, and Christmas décor is systematically making its way into stores. Mariah Carey is slowly defrosting, and pretty soon every radio station will be playing “All I Want for Christmas” at least three times an hour.

Right now, however, we find ourselves in an in-between space where energy levels have recovered slightly as October came to an end. The year-end is in sight; we're almost, sort of, slightly ready to start planning December breakaways, work schedules, activities for the kids, figuring out Christmas dinner, yada, yada, yada.

Right now, we could easily spend an unnecessary hour dropping down the rabbit hole of procrastination (and by “we,” I mean me). Not being unproductive per se, but rather differently productive, focusing on something that doesn't hold as much pressure.

So much is still to come this year, even though it's already November. Silly season is in full swing, and

Black Friday will be upon us all very soon. The pressures of Christmas shopping and family commitments are looming.

Right now, I'm a firm believer in small indulgences to offer yourself a pause, a moment to take a breath. Reading your favourite magazine (look at you already succeeding!), enjoying a glass of delicious Sauvignon Blanc, playing with your toddler, or taking your pooch for a walk.

I'm no professional, but taking care of yourself should never be left to the wayside. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Taking a moment to hit pause on life - to breathe and gather your thoughts - is not an indulgence but a necessity.

As we start hearing whistle notes and jingle bells, remind yourself to enjoy the chaos while you try to survive it. Take a moment to enjoy the smell of gingerbread and the hot heat of summer rolling into town. The end of the year is in sight. ❄️



# Bloukrans: Earthy, Quirky, and Pure Karoo

*A tucked-away gem in the Moordenaarskaroo, Bloukrans Guestfarm offers soulful cottages, rich history, and the peace only the Karoo can deliver.*



**B**loukrans Guestfarm lies hidden in the southern part of the Moordenaarskaro, 30km north of Laingsburg, in the wonders of the Karoo region of South Africa. It's an extraordinary, even haunting, landscape shaped by the Buffels River, and the quirky, glorious accommodation matches the mood.

Bloukrans Klein-bewarea Guestfarm is a 1,000-hectare farm offering three very individual Karoo-huisies, each beautifully restored, unpretentious in style and character, perfectly capturing the true essence of their surroundings. The largely unspoilt landscape is truly majestic. As it has for thousands of years, the Buffels River still shapes the scenery during its episodic floods, carving a canyon and exposing a massive rockface.

If you're looking to self-isolate to write that bestseller, you couldn't do better. Equally, you could come here as a couple or solo, and simply submerge yourself in the beauty, hiking, birding, swimming, San rock art, and a host of other quiet activities designed to restore your soul.

The accommodation is sheer delight - intimate two-person homes inspired by what came before. Manager - and the owner's daughter - Franci Vosloo, is the only one who can truly capture the spirit of her three cottages.

Of Kliphuisie, she says: "In a way, it pays tribute to a bygone era when a 'skaapwagter' had to face dangers and extreme

# Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



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**Namibia's Atlantic seabed** yields some of the purest gem-quality diamonds on Earth.



conditions on his own. Elements of such a simple existence have been purposefully preserved. It is guests' privilege to experience this simplicity as a different kind of luxury."

The Modderhuisie? "It creates paintings of the Karoo through every window and door – shades of olive and sage, rust pink and grey, fossil brown and ochre."

And the Sinkhuis? "Collected over time from all over the farm, the old rusted and discarded corrugated iron and somewhat askew window frames found a new purpose. Put together, its corners and walls are not square everywhere, and some even had to be patched, but now it can call itself a 'home'."

Beyond the charming architecture of the houses lie the quirks and history of the interior fittings - from an antique Dover stove to a Karoo cold tub. Attention to history, detail, and comfort is evident in every corner.

Another wonderful element of a stay at Bloukrans

Guestfarm is the option to order a freshly prepared meal, delivered to your door at a time to suit you. At R300 a head, the heartwarming winter menu is a celebration of comfort and flavour, featuring slow-roasted lamb shanks served with bulgar wheat, or bobotie, rice and poached fruit, and, when available, the much-loved skaaptongetjies. For those in the mood for spice, there's a fragrant chicken or vegetable curry, accompanied by rice and fresh greens. And, if you'd like to make the feast even more special, you can add a loaf of fresh, home-baked bread or crisp, golden vegetable samosas.

A stay in a Bloukrans cottage is something extraordinary. The landscape, the mood, the sense of Karoo peace is legendary. If you're feeling life's pressures, a trip to Bloukrans might be the best remedy. You're guaranteed to breathe far more freely here. ❖



**1. Oshana:** Meatma Ongwediva Launch: Mr Adolf Muremi, Chairperson of Meatco NCA Board assisting, Hon Cllr. Ulalia Katonyala Deputy Mayor of Ongwediva Town with ribbon cutting **2. Ohangwena:** EU Ambassador, Her Excellency, Ana B. Martins at the Onhangwena Livestock Marketing Cooperative's Bush-to-feed project **3. Oshikoto:** Oshifikwa Auction Crush Pen **4. Zambezi:** UNAM Marula Seed harvest training **5. Kunene:** Opuwo Rangeland Rehydration -filter installed at gully **6. Khomas:** Sustainable Leather Foundation - ESG training **7. Otjinene:** Goreses Solar Borehole upgrade



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## SPOTLIGHT ON KEY PROJECTS

Across Namibia, the Foundation's footprint can be traced through transformative initiatives, including:

- **Gam Auction Crush Pen rehabilitation**, complete with new fencing and kraals for sick animals.
- **Goreses Borehole Upgrade**, fitted with solar power to deliver water security to 350+ people and their livestock.
- **Oshifikwa Auction Crush Pen upgrade**, improving livestock trading infrastructure.
- **Ohangwena Livestock Marketing Cooperative – Bush-to-Feed**, advancing feed alternatives and resilience.
- **European Development Fund (EDF11) livestock value chain project**, boosting climate-change adaptation.
- **Opuwo Rangeland Rehydration Project**, where over 100 erosion-control filters have restored fragile ecosystems.
- **AgriBusiness Facility Matching Grant Fund (ABFMGF)**, supporting emerging agribusinesses.
- **Collaborative Research with UNAM**, including pioneering marula seed harvesting and oil projects.

Each initiative is a testament to Meatco's vision of shared prosperity and sustainable rural transformation.

**N**amibia's livestock sector is more than an economic engine—it is the heartbeat of rural livelihoods, cultural identity, and national pride. At the centre of this story stands Meatco Namibia, the country's leading processor and marketer of premium beef. For decades, Meatco has ensured that Namibia's red meat retains its internationally sought-after quality, positioning local producers competitively on the global stage.

Yet Meatco's impact extends far beyond the abattoir. Through its dedicated corporate social investment arm, the Meatco Foundation, the organisation is shaping a legacy of inclusive growth, rural development, and resilience across Namibia.

### Beyond Business: A Social Mission

"Our goal is to improve the livelihood of Namibian communal livestock farmers, and we do this via capacity building and sustainable development interventions," explains Dalicia Olivier, Acting Executive Officer of the Meatco Foundation.

In practical terms, this means more than supporting farmers—it means empowering entire communities. From building auction facilities and boreholes to pioneering climate-resilient farming practices, the Foundation's reach is wide and impactful. Over N\$26.4 million has been invested in community development and agricultural sustainability projects—up from N\$24 million in 2023 and N\$18.9 million in 2022—a testament to growing momentum.

The results are tangible: farmers report higher incomes, communities gain better access to education and healthcare, and local economies thrive as job opportunities and small businesses emerge. Importantly, infrastructure investments benefit not just producers, but whole villages and towns.

### Building Sustainable Futures

Looking forward, the Meatco Foundation is sharpening its sustainability agenda. Flagship programmes such as the Bush-to-Feed initiative and rangeland restoration projects are being expanded to reach more communal areas. These efforts help tackle encroaching bush, improve grazing land, and secure long-term food and water security for both livestock and households.

Meanwhile, Meatco and Meatco NCA are reinforcing their regional footprint, ensuring that producers in Namibia's Northern Communal Areas access mainstream markets through awareness campaigns, retail linkages, and targeted outreach.

### A Trusted Partner in Nation-Building

As Namibia navigates the challenges of climate change, economic diversification, and global competition, Meatco and its Foundation remain steadfast in their dual mission:

- **To champion Namibian beef in world markets, upholding the highest quality standards.**
- **To uplift rural communities, ensuring they share in the prosperity of the livestock industry.**

This unique balance between commercial excellence and social responsibility positions Meatco not only as a trusted industry leader, but as a true partner in Namibia's sustainable nation-building journey. ❖

*Please note: The Foundation does not accept unsolicited funding requests.*



MICHELLE WARDEN'S POSTCARDS TO NAMIBIA



# Becoming An Accidental Linguist:

Four Months Between “Chur  
Bro” and “Nou-Nou”

**W**hen I first arrived in Aotearoa, I thought I spoke English. I mean, my hubby is English, I wrote Grade 12 in Queen's English, and I've even argued about the best braai technique using it. However, after four months of bouncing between the breezy slang of New Zealand and the multilingual mosaic of Namibia, I discovered that my naïve belief in English as my trusty compass was wrong!

Take "Kia ora," for example. It means hello, thank you, good luck, and possibly "I acknowledge your existence." I heard it at the airport, in cafés, from bus drivers to cashiers, and once from a seagull (okay, that last one was probably imagined, but it did scream at me, and I'm hoping it was a greeting). I tried replying in a broken accent and got a smile and a pitying look that said, "You're not from around here, are you?"

Then there's the "yeah nah" national treasure. This phrase is the linguistic equivalent of a shrug wrapped in a hug of politeness. It means "no," unless it means "yes," or "maybe," or "I'm too polite to say what I really think." If you ask your "cuzzy bro" (who is not your cousin, brother, or necessarily a man) what they think of your homemade biltong and they hit you with a "Yeah nah, it's all good," you're still none the wiser — did they actually enjoy it, or were they just being polite?

In Namibia, you'd reply with either "Jis ja!" for approval, or "Ag, nee man!" with gusto, and possibly a theatrical hand gesture, appropriate facial expressions, and dramatic eyebrow choreography, when the taste did not meet your refined palate. Here, it's all about the gentle ambiguity.

Time is a slightly warped concept in both nations, though. In Namlish we have "nou-nou" (right now or never), "net nou" (soon, maybe), and "later" (which could mean tomorrow or next week, depending on the speaker's mood and feelings of urgency). "Sha" and "Kashona" also both mean "later," but the exact timing is a mystery wrapped in a proverb. Kiwis, too, take time fluidity to an art form. "Just now" means eventually or soon-ish, "in a sec" means "after I finish my pie," and "later bro" could mean next week or never. Māori speakers might say "kuanei" (soon), but no one's checking a watch. I now live by "Soon-ish O'clock", measured in sweet-as minutes.

"Sweet as" is another Kiwi gem and was just added to the Oxford English Dictionary in September 2025. It means "excellent," "great," "no worries," or "I acknowledge your request and may or may not act on it." And of course, "She'll be right" is the national motto for "I acknowledge your problem but might not do anything about it."

I once asked for help in a shop, and the assistant said, "Sweet as, bro. She'll be right." I panicked. Sweet as what? Was I a "bro"? Was I being flirted with or gently dismissed? Who was right about what? Was he going to help?

In Windhoek, we'd say "Help asseblief!" or "Tjina tjina!", and three people would saunter up and offer six different answers, which may or may not solve your problem.

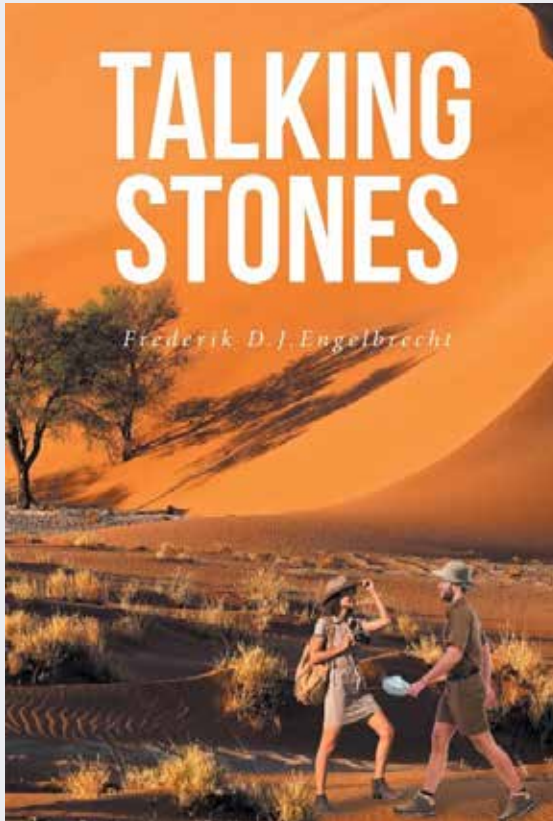
Reactions are also different. Wandering through the botanical gardens with my daughter, I saw a little boy sprint after a duck, only to end up knee-deep in the pond. His grandad just laughed and called out, "You're a hard case, mate." Instead of being a criticism, it's Kiwi shorthand for someone who's funny or a bit of a character. In Namibia, the same scene would have been met with a chorus of "Sjoe!", "Aikona!", or "Eewa!", followed by a hasty rescue and a stern lecture about ruining your good clothes. Here, it was simply a chuckle and a shrug.

By month four, I've slowly started slipping into bilingual-ish territory, and I sometimes say "Kia ora" or "Mōrena" without panicking too much about pronunciation. However, I've yet to master "chur bro," which can mean "thanks," "cool," or "I acknowledge your existence and approve of your socks."

I've also stopped counting down the exact minutes on the AT bus timetable and decided to go with the flow. The right bus will arrive "just now," which can also be "nou-nou." And I've learned to clarify: "Namibian soon or Kiwi soon?" when setting a time with family and friends.

New Zealand English is laid-back, full of slang, and occasionally sprinkled with Māori. It's not just a language. It's a vibe. And I, a proud Afrikaans Namibian, have been trying to vibe ever since. After four months, I'm not fluent — but I'm fluent in surviving. And that's enough. ❖





# Talking Stones

*A journey through  
adventure, love and  
spiritual discovery*

**“T**alking Stones” by Frederik D. J. Engelbrecht is an engaging narrative that blends adventure, love, and spiritual reflection. Through the journeys of the main character, Gerald Joubert, readers explore themes of self-discovery, relationships, and the search for deeper meaning in life.

Embarking on three life-changing journeys, the main character, Dr. Gerald Joubert, searches under a few universal and unisex “stones” for insights.

He’s a divorced lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Namibia; a competent lecturer and leader with sound character. Gerald carries out his lecturing duties diligently while addressing social issues such as the quality of university and secondary school education. He advocates for a national secondary job-oriented curriculum that accommodates different types of intelligences to reduce poverty and unemployment. He also works at cracking some “stony ideas” toward creating a new type of democracy.

Published by Christian Faith Publishing, Talking Stones

offers an intriguing blend of adventure and profound spiritual insights, inviting readers to reflect on the deeper connections that shape our lives.

## Gerald’s Three Interwoven Journeys

The first journey follows the luring voice of a diamond-prospecting adventure with his brother, Hugo, and two others. The journey is filled with excitement, brotherly love, and fascinating conversations about the diamonds and minerals they search for. It also highlights the magical voice of nature — its geology, animal and plant life, and the night sky. Their adventure takes them deep into Namibia’s early war and diamond discovery history, as well as the culture and spiritual beliefs of the original San people, culminating in a heart-racing search for the mythical Spirit Mountain treasure.

The second journey is romantic, involving Rika, a new geology lecturer at the university who is equally cautious about choosing the right partner the second time around.



She joins the prospecting trips, and together they unearth the traits they value in a life partner, which ‘stones in life’ clog their love wells, the spiritual gems they live by, and their passions and preferences. Their discoveries help determine whether they together possess the stepping stones toward lasting happiness.

The third journey takes Gerald beyond the voices of stones and nature, into the voice of the spiritual realm. Unknowingly, he steps into the world of the occult. Through deep reflection in the “courtroom of his conscience,” he reclaims his spiritual dimension as the true core of humanity.

## About the Author

Dr. Frederik D. J. Engelbrecht was a language teacher for five years and later a lecturer for thirty years in the School of Education at the University of Namibia. He obtained his PhD at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa (2007) with a thesis titled “A Framework for the Design and Implementation of Competency-Based Teacher Education Programs at the University of Namibia.”

He served in various capacities and taught several subjects, including The Science of Teaching and Curriculum Studies. He wrote four textbooks for local prospective teachers and served for many years on the National Curriculum Development Committee, participating in the establishment of the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

He also designed more than ten teacher education qualifications for a private institution in Windhoek and worked as a part-time consultant, presenting workshops on Leadership, Team Building, Discover Your Personality, and Problem-Solving and Decision-Making.

Dr. Engelbrecht is currently writing a book titled “The DNA of Intelligent Rugby.” He has also compiled life-changing articles, including “A Spiritual-Based Democracy” and “The New Role of the Modern Church.”

In addition, he has helped many high school students master effective study methods and continues to pursue his dream of implementing a job-oriented curriculum in Namibia’s secondary schools, one that caters to nine types of intelligence beyond academic ability, aiming to reduce poverty and unemployment.

## Contact

Talking Stones is available at traditional brick-and-mortar bookstores, or online via Amazon.com, Apple iTunes store, or Barnes & Noble.

For additional information about Talking Stones, contact the Christian Faith Publishing media department at 866-554-0919.

ISBN: 979-8-89345-234-1 (paperback) – US\$19.99  
(with a substantial discount for bookstores)

ISBN: 979-8-89345-235-8 (digital) – US\$9.99. ❖



*Frederik D. J. Engelbrecht*



# Cosy Comforts and a Thatched Legacy

*A family's love for craftsmanship, food, and faith keeps the spirit of the Okahandja Country Hotel alive.*

words by Linda de Jager | photographs supplied



*Morné, his wife Noleen, and their sons Xander and Janu live in harmony with Ikus, Bianca, and their sons Lubin and Lian, continuing the legacy left by their parents. The late André and Gretel van Dyk are pictured at the centre.*

**T**he Okahandja Country Hotel, just two kilometres from Okahandja, is a well-known oasis in Namibia. The à la carte restaurant is popular among locals and international visitors alike, with steak and pizza among the top favourites.

During my two-day stay, I observed people from all walks of life choosing this particular place to dine, meet, chat, and share a laugh as they passed through. From traffic police to high-heeled women and farmers in dusty vellies — everyone seemed to feel at home. The food is good and reasonably priced, with many options available. I also noticed some locals collecting takeaways.

Those who stay overnight are mostly travellers heading to or from Etosha National Park or the airport. The accommodation consists mainly of twin rooms featuring high thatched roofs. The lodge is practical, functional, and

thoughtfully designed, reflecting the work and life of its late founder, André van Dyk.

The beautiful garden, filled with singing birds and anchored by a sparkling swimming pool, was created by his wife, Gretel van Dyk. The lodge has come a long way since it first opened its doors in 1997.

## Thatched Roofs and a Family Legacy

Today, owners Ikus and Bianca Conradie, André and Gretel's daughter and son-in-law, continue the hotel's legacy. We sit in front of a fireplace — designed by André — in the spacious breakfast area, where thick wood crackles and casts a gentle light across the room.

The couple works side by side, much like André and Gretel once did. André had spent 12 years working as an electrician in Grootfontein, running a successful business



Photo credit: Linda DJ



with his wife. Frequent travel led him to build thatched roofs across Namibia. Realising there was no established local thatching business at the time, he seized the opportunity and founded Prothatch Namibia, the country's pioneering thatch roofing company.

The business grew through trial and error with Van Dyk even building his first thatched roof in the family's backyard.

"Then he built it too thick, then too thin... He experimented until he got it right," Bianca recalls with a laugh. "After that, a lady down the street asked if he could build her a thatched roof too, and he did. Soon the whole town wanted one, and eventually there was demand across the country."

The Van Dyk family later moved to Okahandja to be more centrally located.

The Okahandja Country Hotel's signature thatched roofs became the pinnacle of these efforts. In support of her parents' dream, Bianca studied hospitality and tourism at Boland College in Stellenbosch. She and Ikus, who had attended the same school in Windhoek, reconnected after his studies in financial management and decided to return to Okahandja to build both a life and a business together.

"I've always had an interest in the food industry. Both my parents loved cooking and being hospitable," says Ikus. "So, I wanted to contribute to creating a unique culture in our kitchen."

From the start, the couple decided to challenge traditional kitchen hierarchies. "We don't have a head chef," says Ikus. "Instead, we bring in different chefs for training, and our team works together. The person on the grill coordinates orders and assigns roles. Others prepare salads,

pizzas, and desserts. We value every role equally, whether it's washing dishes or grilling steaks, male or female."

He emphasises that the focus is on roles, not titles — a principle that seems to inspire the staff, whose warmth and attitude stand out.

## Pastoral Hearts

The couple agrees that one of the greatest challenges in Namibia's tourism industry is building and maintaining good interpersonal relationships with staff. Over the years, they've learned the art of communication and developed deep respect for Namibia's cultural diversity.

"They [the staff] don't just work together; they are like family," says Bianca.

Life, however, hasn't been without its trials. Ikus overcame a battle with cancer that began in 2024, while Bianca's mother, Gretel, passed away eight years ago after a long struggle with the same illness.

"My dad, affected by Covid-19, became very ill and passed away in 2021. That's how we became the owners," she says.

The pandemic brought another challenge: a sudden collapse in bookings. "It turned out to be a miracle story," says Bianca. "In the end, we didn't owe anyone and managed to pay our bills every single month, without letting any staff go."

## A Miracle

"When Covid-19 began, I was removing bookings from the system all day. There were no guests, no work, and I started to panic," Bianca remembers.

**The treacherous waters south of Lüderitz** have swallowed over 300 ships since the 1500s. Some wrecks, like the Otavi and Eduard Bohlen, still rest half-buried in the dunes.



“One day, I was standing on the lawn in the hotel as the doves came to perch on the roof of the guest rooms. I realised that the quiet without guests was inviting the doves to make their home in the roofs.”

Around that time, she and Ikus went to the Kalahari Desert for his birthday, seeking peace and perspective. “While we were there, we received a promise from the Bible, a reminder to trust God and not our own efforts.”

On the Monday after their return, the phone rang. “It was a manager from a company we’d worked with for over ten years,” Bianca recalls. “He asked to book all our lodge rooms for two weeks to quarantine their staff before deployment.”

That call arrived at the perfect time — a breakthrough they could never have foreseen. Bianca says she learned to live by her late mother’s motto: “You get up, you dress up, you show up, and you never give up.”

It’s a mindset she and Ikus now carry into their business every day.

## Craftspeople

In her father’s final days, Bianca asked him about their ancestors’ trades.

“He told me the Van Dyks were people who worked with their hands. They were always craftspeople, he would say. My dad could visualise things in three dimensions and then bring them to life. My brother is now doing the same, he is tremendously creative,” she adds.

Her brother, Morné van Dyk, owner of Prestige Wooden Products, inherited their father’s practicality and vision. He crafted all the wooden interiors at the Okahandja Country

Hotel and recently renovated the restaurant, bar, reception and conference areas.

The hotel is increasingly used for conferences and often accommodates overflow guests from the local tourism sector.

“The children and grandchildren appreciate the inheritance André and Gretel left for us,” says Bianca, “but we cherish the legacy they left in us even more.”

Many foreign accents can be heard at the hotel, yet Bianca says more than 70% of their guests are locals.

## A Rogue Toffee Apple

“We have mostly lovely guests, but some can be quite a handful,” Bianca says. Ikus laughs as he urges Bianca to tell “the toffee apple story”.

“There was a wedding here many years ago. We arranged everything, even toffee apples as table decorations. While packing up, I noticed two men had left theirs behind, so I took them back to the bar.” Recognising their names on the apples, she knew they were locals.

“Suddenly, one of the men, who was hot under the collar, perhaps noticing an opportunity and lacking a decent assault weapon, hit the other over the head with a toffee apple, sparking a legendary fight. Security had to step in to break them up.”

But aside from the toffee apple incident, things are mostly peaceful here at the Okahandja Country Hotel, a cosy spot for weary travellers to rest their heads in the company of dedicated hosts who pour heart, faith, and craftsmanship into everything they do. ❖

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NAMIBIA THROUGH OUR EYES



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NAMIBIA:

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Namibia's wilderness doesn't follow a script. One moment you're sipping morning coffee, the next you're watching a family of elephants wade through the river below. At four of our distinctive properties, wildlife isn't something you seek out on a scheduled tour—it's part of the rhythm of your stay, from ground-dwelling creatures to an exceptional diversity of birdlife.



If lady luck smiles on you during your visits, you'll discover that Namibia offers far more than the celebrated Big Five. Those iconic animals (lion, leopard, rhino, elephant and African buffalo) that once challenged big-game hunters and now captivate photographers and wildlife enthusiasts worldwide. At some of our properties, you might also encounter the charming Little Five: the elephant shrew scurrying through undergrowth, the powerful rhino beetle, the ancient leopard tortoise, the industrious buffalo weaver or the clever antlion. These smaller creatures share their names with their larger counterparts, reminding us that wonder comes in all sizes.

Then there are the Ugly Five. The marabou stork, warthog, vulture, spotted hyena and wildebeest whose unconventional beauty and ecological importance deserve equal mention and appreciation. And for those willing to embrace patience and nocturnal adventures, the Shy Five await: the spiny porcupine, bat-eared fox, mysterious aardvark, sociable meerkat (luckily spotted during the day as well) and the elusive aardwolf.

These encounters, whether grand or humble, remind us why we travel: to witness the extraordinary within the everyday.



## MIDGARD OTJIHAVERA WINDHOEK

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Just 85 kilometres from Windhoek's bustle, Midgard feels like stepping through a portal into another world entirely. This is a wildlife sanctuary with giraffes, oryx and the stunning kudu appearing at dawn or dusk, spiral horns catching the first or last light of the day.

For travellers arriving in Namibia or wrapping up their journey, Midgard offers something rare: an accessible taste of safari life without venturing hundreds of kilometres from the capital. It's a gentle introduction to the country's wildlife, particularly valuable for families with young children who might not be ready for remote bush camps. Here, kids can watch animals roam freely while staying in a secure, welcoming environment.

The property's sanctuary feel encourages patience. Sit quietly on your veranda and the landscape reveals itself. You might spot members of the Little Five: the rhino beetle lumbering through the undergrowth or a buffalo weaver building its chaotic nest in the trees. It's wildlife watching at its most precious.

## DIVAVA OKAVANGO

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The Kavango River moves past Divava, located close to the Popa Falls and here, the ecosystem teems with life. From the resort's vantage point, the wildlife viewing feels almost movielike as hippos surface with theatrical snorts, crocodiles sun themselves on muddy banks and fish eagles patrol the skies with their distinctive piercing cries.

Venture to nearby Bwabwata National Park and experience elephants moving through the woodland in scattered herds. Various antelope species from lechwe and sitatunga to reedbuck, appear in the floodplains. Rarest of all are the African wild dogs, endangered predators whose survival depends on protected spaces like this. Bwabwata is one of the last refuges of the wild dogs in Namibia and spotting them requires luck and early mornings. Their presence here goes beyond tourism—it's a conservation success story.

Between game drives, the resort's spa offers a beautiful contrast. Massage tables overlook the river where animals graze or frolic in the water. And for fishing enthusiasts, the Okavango's tigerfish provide sport and adrenaline in equal measure.

## MOKUTI ETOSHA

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Etosha National Park needs no introduction among safari enthusiasts and Mokuti sits at its doorstep. The park's famous salt pan creates stark, surreal landscapes where a myriad of animals including lions, rhinos, elephants, giraffes and zebras, congregate at waterholes in scenes straight from nature documentaries.



Mokuti's game drives capitalise on this concentration of wildlife, with guides who read the landscape like a familiar book. They know where leopards prefer to rest during the midday heat and which waterholes attract rare cheetah sightings.

Beyond the Big Five, watch out for the Shy Five which you could encounter on a night drive on the Mokuti Estate. Porcupines emerge after dark, their quills catching flashlight beams. Bat-eared foxes hunt insects with comic concentration. The nocturnal aardvark and aardwolf remain elusive, but spotting a meerkat colony – luckily also during the day – is reward enough. Their watchman poses and sudden dives into burrows never lose their charm. Throughout your day on the property, you'll also encounter the charming wildlife that calls the lush gardens at Mokuti home: playful squirrels darting between trees and the placid resident herd of Bonte Bucks, a species native to South Africa, grazing peacefully on the grounds. The Ontoka Reptile Park at Mokuti offers encounters of a different kind. Snakes, often misunderstood and feared, reveal their strange beauty. It's a chance to appreciate these creatures safely and to understand their role in Namibia's ecological balance.



## CHOBE WATER VILLAS ZAMBEZI

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The Chobe River hosts one of Africa's largest elephant populations and from your villa, you'll understand why. Herds arrive at the river's edge daily, sometimes dozens strong, to drink, spray water and socialise. Watching young elephants play while matriarchs keep watchful guard is absolutely spellbinding.

Sunset cruises along the river add layers to your experience. Hippos surface close by, while crocodiles float like prehistoric logs. Buffalo herds graze the floodplains, occasionally drawing the attention of lions and leopards who patrol these territories.

Birdwatchers find particular joy at Chobe Water Villas. The African fish eagle's haunting call becomes the soundtrack of your stay. Carmine bee-eaters nest in the riverbanks and if you look closely you might spot more unusual species: the diminutive dwarf mongoose, the rare pangolin or fruit bats hanging in the trees.

Chobe balances luxury with wildlife immersion seamlessly. You're never far from your next animal encounter, yet the villas provide sophisticated comfort. It's this combination—wild Africa meeting refined hospitality—that defines your overall experience.

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Dr. Simon I. Beshir & Associates



# A Showcase of Namibian Ceramics

edited by Anne Schaffer | photographs supplied

*Twenty Namibian ceramic artists presented exquisite work in the Shapes of the Current exhibition held recently at Kamma Art and Design in Swakopmund.*



**T**he Pottery Association of Namibia (PAN) — together with Swakopmund’s Kamma Art and Design — brought together no fewer than 20 powerhouse Namibian ceramic artists, as well as paintings by Heidi Louw, for a sensational exhibition under the theme *Shapes of the Current*.

The theme prompted artists to explore the ocean — from literal interpretations of its forms and creatures, to ancient myths and legends, as well as contemporary concerns about climate and conservation. It proved an infinite topic for artists to dive into and discover.

“The ocean is a vast archive — holding history, life, and mythology. It represents movement, power, change, and mystery. *Shapes of the Current* explores how our waters hold the imprints of time, shaping our physical world and much of our lives. More than this — the ocean is our lifeline, sustaining ecosystems, economies, and cultures. Yet, with its boundless power, it also holds the capacity to shape landscapes, erode and destroy anything in its way. This delicate balance between creation and destruction reminds us of its duality, as well as our dependence on it.

The exhibition delves into the stories carried by the water, both as a witness and a force.”

The exhibition was a wonderful balance of established and emerging artists, with numerous works sold on the well-attended opening night and beyond.

Ceramicist Michelle Brink emerged as the artist with the most sales on opening night, particularly notable as this was her first exhibition. A biology teacher by profession, Michelle has been doing pottery for only three years, a passion sparked after a one-off event she attended with established Namibian potter Carola Lorck. It was an art form she had longed to explore, and once she did, she never looked back.

“I am deeply inspired by the boundless beauty of nature,” says Michelle. “I draw from the endless array of colours, textures and shapes found in the natural world, from the scent of ocean breezes to the fresh earth after rain, to the delicate forms of animals and flowers. This rich tapestry of nature not only fuels my artistic vision but also offers calm, wisdom, and insights into life’s mysteries.”

Michelle embraces the art of hand-building and

# Michelangelo

—CULTURE—



**Namibia's giraffes**, especially in Etosha and Damaraland, are among the tallest recorded globally, with bulls reaching over 5.8 metres - nearly two storeys high.



describes her work as “celebrating joyful imperfection.”

Up-and-coming Namibian artist Charlene Vorster, born and raised in Tsumeb, also secured a number of sales. “I attended my first pottery class in December 2020 and became completely fascinated by the feel, smell, science and endless possibilities clay has to offer,” she says.

Charlene spends most of her weekends in her home studio. “I love contemporary, functional pieces with clean lines and inspiration drawn from nature and poetry. For the moment, I’m fine-tuning hand-building techniques, honing wheelwork skills, and focusing on one-of-a-kind pieces.”

Two established artists who produced exceptional work for the exhibition were Betsie van Rensburg and Cheryl Gibb.

Betsie has been working with clay for three decades, her journey evolving from functional wheel-thrown pieces to freehand sculptural explorations. Her work carries the movement of line, mark, and colour, often walking the edge between form and feeling.

For *Shapes of the Current*, she presented two stoneware pieces that embody her ongoing fascination with flow — shapes that hold stillness yet echo the invisible currents of life beneath the surface: *Keeper of the Current* and *Childhood Memories and Seahorses*.

“Clay, for me, is a vessel for movement — of water, memory, and the unseen currents that shape us,” Betsie says. “In *Keeper of the Current*, I explore protection and guidance,

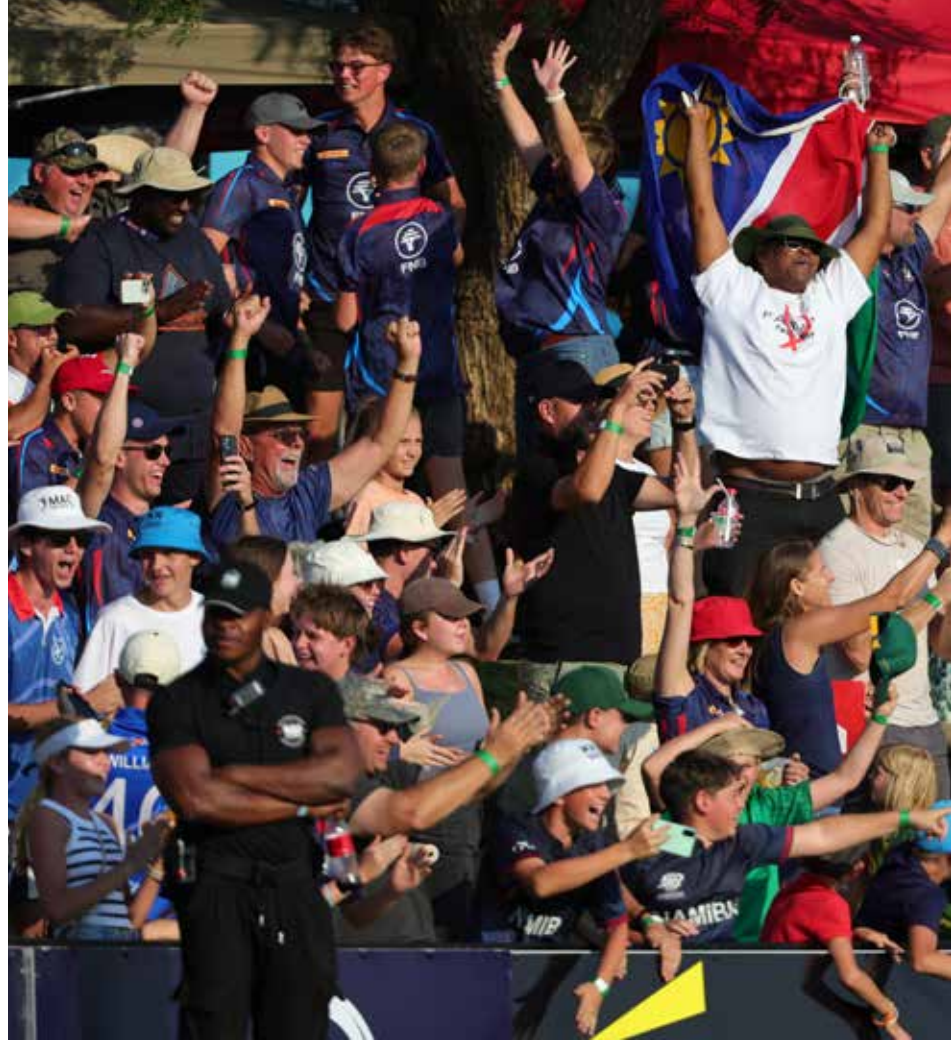
the steady presence that carries us through storms and still waters. In *Childhood Memories and Seahorses*, I return to the fragile wonder of looking inward, where imagination drifts like seahorses in the depths of memory. Together, these works reflect how currents — both oceanic and human — hold us, move us, and remind us of where we belong.”

Cheryl Gibb talked about her work on the exhibition: “For me, it explores the delicate balance between human creation — using clay and oxidation — and the natural world of the ocean. My one-of-a-kind pieces, crafted from stoneware clay using slabs, coils, pinching, and the potter’s wheel, embody a connection with nature and the ocean through organic forms and earthy ocean tones. Each piece, whether it’s a textured Whirlpool bowl or fluid Coral Reef vase, is a testament to nature, inviting the viewer to the calming beauty of the world around us.”

The opening evening of the exhibition was an event curated by many creative hands and filled with thoughtful details for visitors to appreciate.

The exhibition — made possible by sponsors Capricorn Asset Management — was a worthy showcase of Namibian talent in the ceramics and pottery world.

For the remainder of the weekend, the Pottery Association of Namibia (PAN) offered a special workshop with guest teacher Lindsay Oldham, a Cape Town-based artist who also took part in the exhibition. ❖



# The Power of Vision



*How a shared dream, rooted in purpose and guided by faith, turned a vision beneath a camelthorn tree into one of Namibia's greatest sporting triumphs.*

# Michelangelo

—VISIONARIES—



**T**he power of vision is not a human creation; it is a spiritual force. It creates extraordinary human effort.

On 11 October 2025, Namibia witnessed one of the greatest sporting moments in its history - the opening of the National Cricket Ground, the FNB-NCG.

On that same day, under the Namibian sun, the national cricket team defeated South Africa in the very last over, off the very last ball. The winning runs came from a young player, Zane Green, who celebrated not only victory but also his birthday, a poetic moment that seemed written by something greater than chance.

Looking back, on 9 September 2020, the board of Cricket Namibia gathered under a camelthorn tree, standing before a piece of land just leased to them by the City of Windhoek. That moment carried a vision, clear and powerful. A vision of stands alive with cheering crowds, the sun setting over the Auas Mountains, Namibia's Eagles facing South Africa's Proteas, and off the very last ball, the Namibian Eagles striking the winning runs. It was a vision larger than themselves, one born for the greater good.

The journey of Namibian cricket is a story of transformation.

# Michelangelo

—VISIONARIES—



**Scientifically recognised:** Namibia's night skies are among the darkest on Earth.



From hardship to hope, from obscurity to excellence, it is proof that belief, discipline, and shared purpose can move mountains.

At N/a'an ku sê, we are proud to be associated with this story, because the path of Cricket Namibia mirrors our own. We too began from a place of hardship, with little more than a deep sense of purpose and the will to act, to be changemakers for sustainable good.

Today, we see how that same spirit of vision and resilience runs through every part of Namibia's story. On the cricket pitch and in the fields of conservation, the same truth applies: when vision is clear and hearts are aligned, the impossible becomes possible.

At N/a'an ku sê, our own cricket team has also shown exactly that. What began five years ago as a handful of young boys learning to play has now grown into a competitive team in Namibia's cricket league, a symbol of true grassroots development. One day, some of these boys will wear the national colours and play for the Namibian Eagles.

And when that moment comes, we will be reminded of this truth: when the vision is clear, bigger than yourself, and exists for the greater good, it is not just a human plan but one shaped and guided by a higher Hand.

This defines the undeniable power of vision. ❖

# The Last Word

words by Chris Coetzee



**O**bserve carefully: life around us is not entirely ordinary. It carries a certain strangeness, the sort one would never admit in polite company, though it seldom escapes notice. This uninvited strangeness has stirred my mind to entertain a new thought. But let me begin with Opuwo, the capital of the Kunene Region. Beyond this town, the Kaokoland unfolds in raw, untouched grandeur. And yet, the name Opuwo itself carries a story.

Legend has it that when Carl Hugo Hahn, a colonial commissioner, asked the headmen for land to build his office, they granted him a plot. With generosity, they offered him more. He declined with a single word: Opuwo. In Otjiherero, it means “it is enough.”

But humanity has never been fond of the word enough.

To follow the path of this thought, we must travel south — into the Namib Desert. It was here, in 1908, that a railway worker named Zacharias Lewala bent down and picked up no ordinary pebble. In that instant, history shifted. That spark in the sand gave birth to Kolmanskop.

Kolmanskop was a marvel of its age — Namibia’s first city of light, the first to glow with electricity, the first to make ice, the first to X-ray a miner in the Southern Hemisphere. It had the first tram, the first bowling alley, even the first opera house. And for a time, it was not merely wealthy — it was the wealthiest town in the world. For a fleeting moment, Kolmanskop did not just keep pace with

the great cities of the age; it outshone them. Here were not just diamonds, here were diamonds in plenty.

Now, follow me a few thousand kilometres north to Paris, where French authorities are investigating a jewel theft at the Louvre. The haul, experts say, could fetch between two and eight million euros — provided, of course, the thieves don’t mind chopping it up and selling it off as scrap or loose stones.

But hear this thought: lab-grown diamonds cost only a fraction of the natural kind these days, and if you buy them second-hand, you might even get one tossed in for free. Market analysts insist they’re “just like the real thing.” My imagination, of course, knows no limits.

There’s just one very large elephant in the room: if lab-grown diamonds are truly just as dazzling, why would the Paris thieves risk a century in a French prison for the originals? Perhaps because they know what the salesmen won’t say out loud: brilliance can be copied, but rarity and heritage cannot. That, ladies and gentlemen, is the true currency of desire.

As my father always says: the chase for wealth is like drinking salt water to cure thirst. As the years passed, richer diamond deposits lured fortune-seekers further south to Oranjemund. And so, in 1956, the last voices of Kolmanskop fell silent.

I strongly recommend a visit. ❖



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