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JANUARY 2026

Namibia



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—PRESIDENT'S LETTER—





Dear reader,

As we turn the page to a new year, may 2026 meet us with clarity, purpose, and the quiet wisdom that only time can teach.

To every Namibian travelling or working abroad: may your journeys be safe and your horizons wide. Carry your country with you, its spirit, its courage, its boundless skies, and know that Namibia is waiting to welcome you home.

And to all who will visit our shores to explore, to invest, to discover: welcome to a nation like no other. We are the Land of the Brave, and those who call it home know it is also a place of uncommon kindness, resilience, and a warmth that lingers long after the journey ends.

May 2026 rise before us with hope in its dawn, growth along the way, and the kind of meaningful moments that become stories worth telling. 🌿

Her Excellency

Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah

President of the Republic of Namibia

*Sven
Thieme*



Dr. Sven Thieme

Executive Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
Ohlthaver & List Group



A New Year, a new experience of Namibia through our eyes

As we enter 2026, global travel is undergoing a fundamental shift. Travellers increasingly seek destinations offering an escape and significance, places where vast landscapes meet authentic culture, where sustainability shapes the experience and where every journey creates lasting impact. Namibia stands perfectly positioned at this intersection.

The numbers tell a compelling story. Tourism arrivals have shown robust growth throughout 2024 and 2025, supported by enhanced connectivity through routes like Discover Airlines' direct Frankfurt service and expanding regional access. But statistics reveal only part of the picture. Recent industry analysis suggests tourism's true contribution to Namibia's economy approaches 17% when accounting for direct, indirect and induced spending—far beyond the 2% captured in official accounts. As Cirrus Capital describes it, tourism is the engine of Namibia's economy. This is the moment when that engine accelerates.

At O&L Leisure, world-class hospitality means creating experiences that honour our landscape, empower



our people and position Namibia as Africa's premium experiential destination. Our vision is anchored in excellence at every touchpoint, investment in people and communities, environmental sustainability and celebration of Namibian culture. These are operational imperatives guiding every decision.

Our portfolio spans Namibia's most sought-after destinations, from the coastal elegance of Strand Hotel Swakopmund and the dunes of Sossusvlei to wildlife-rich lodge landscapes. Each property is tailored to showcase its unique environment while delivering consistently exceptional experiences across diverse traveller needs.

Our current expansion and investment programme reflects confidence in Namibia's trajectory. We're adding capacity and elevating it. Strategic upgrades ensure we meet expectations of increasingly discerning international travellers while creating spaces where Namibian families and business visitors feel equally valued. Through our Leisure Club membership programme, we're making premium hospitality accessible to guests, fostering pride in experiencing our country's finest offerings.

This positions us to capture opportunity across multiple segments: experiential travellers seeking transformative journeys, regional business visitors requiring reliable excellence and guests celebrating life's important moments. In a crowded African tourism market, Namibia possesses distinct advantages. Our wide, open spaces offer room to breathe, reflect and truly disconnect. Safety and political stability provide the foundation for comfortable exploration. Our conservation commitment creates intimate, sustainable wildlife encounters.

But our greatest differentiator is our people. Namibian hospitality carries warmth and authenticity that cannot be manufactured. At O&L Leisure, we invest heavily in skills development and employment, understanding that exceptional experiences are delivered by authentic, caring and passionate teams. Every international guest benefits from this investment; every Namibian we employ contributes to building a more prosperous nation.

Leisure Tours extends this impact, creating integrated travel experiences that benefit communities nationwide while ensuring visitors access the full breadth of Namibia's offerings.

With opportunity comes responsibility. As one of Namibia's leading hospitality operators, O&L Leisure shapes how the world perceives our destination. Every guest becomes an ambassador based on their experience. This drives our relentless focus on quality, consistency and innovation.

The industry's wide-ranging touchpoints, from aviation and gastronomy to logistics and suppliers, create economic impact far beyond accommodation statistics. As discussed at this year's Travel Namibia Festival, improving data collection around tourism's true contribution remains essential for strategic planning and investment attraction.

Leading O&L Leisure through this pivotal period fills me with profound optimism. I know that tourism can create opportunities for young Namibians starting hospitality careers, assist small businesses supplying our properties, support communities where we operate and let international visitors discover our extraordinary country.

The challenge is clear: grow responsibly, maintaining what makes Namibia special while building capacity to welcome more visitors. Train skilled professionals. Invest in infrastructure and experiences. Balance commercial success with environmental stewardship and community benefit.

This is the work that excites me. This is the era we're building toward.

As 2026 unfolds, I invite both international travellers and Namibian residents to experience our country with fresh eyes. Discover the stories embedded in our landscapes, the warmth of our people and the innovation across our hospitality sector. If you are planning your first visit or rediscovering your own backyard, 2026 promises experiences that echo long after departure.

At O&L Leisure, we're ready to welcome you to world-class hospitality rooted deeply in African soil. Experience Namibia through our eyes. The new era of Namibian tourism is here. And the journey ahead looks extraordinary. Enjoy this month's read. 🍷

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IN FLIGHT IN ROOM IN AFRICA

JANUARY 2026

Namibia



ON THE COVER:

The Way You Make Me Feel

From desert dunes to riverfront horizons, O&L Leisure's Namibia is told through feeling — quiet moments, small gestures and places that stay with you long after you've left.

(See pages 16-19 for the full story)

www.ol-leisure.com

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www.creativelab.com.na



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

African Excellence Awards

2025

Best Luxury Tourism
Magazine 2025 – Southern
Africa & Client Satisfaction
Excellence Award 2025



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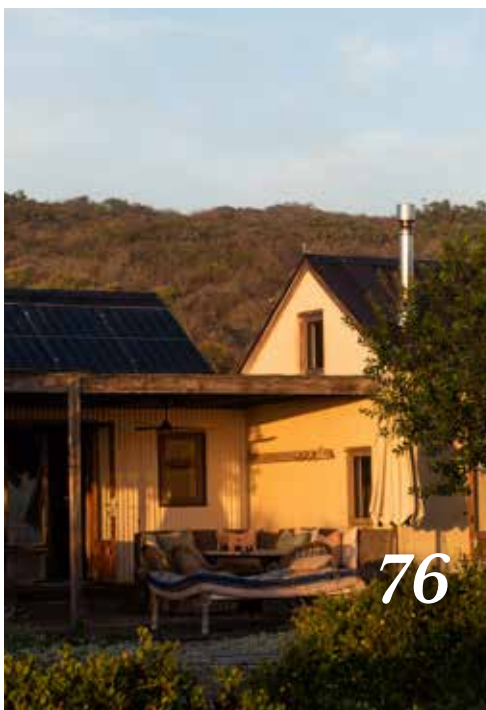
At Dede's in Okahandja, homemade comfort meets global flavours — themed evenings, full tables and laughter.

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Swakopmund – Best Adventure Destination

Ukrainian photographer based in Namibia celebrates her beloved town of Swakopmund's well-deserved award as Best Adventure Tourism Destination at the Africa Tourism Awards.

words and photographs by Olga Nesterenko



When I arrived in Swakopmund over a decade ago, I thought I knew what beauty looked like. Born in Ukraine — a country of forests, hills, vast steppes, and picturesque coastlines — and having travelled the world, I was unprepared for the surreal, ever-changing wonder that is Swakopmund. Locals call it “The Adventure Capital of Namibia.” Now, the world knows this too.

At the end of 2025, Swakopmund was named Africa's Best Adventure Tourism Destination at the Africa Tourism Awards. As someone who lives here and sees the town through both a photographer's lens and a traveller's heart, I can tell you: this recognition is not just well-deserved — it's long overdue.

The town's name derives from the Swakop River (which reaches the ocean only once every 5–10 years). The Germans called it *Swachaub*, formalised as *Swakopmund* — “mouth of the Swakop” — in 1896. The Herero people knew it as *Otjozondjii*, the “place of seashells.” Nestled between the roaring Atlantic Ocean and the towering dunes of the Namib Desert, this is a place of contrasts and surprises. One moment you're quad biking across golden sands; the next you're sipping coffee in a quaint German-style café. It's a place where adrenaline



meets elegance. Adventure is not just about thrill — it's about discovering who you are in landscapes that challenge and inspire you.

Today, Swakopmund is a melting pot of Namibia's German heritage and African warmth. Walking through town feels like stepping into a time capsule, as buildings whisper stories from over a century ago. Yet it's also a town that pulses with youthful energy. With a population that has grown from 44,000 in 2011 to 75,000 by 2023, and a median age of just 22, Swakopmund is alive with possibility.

Oktoberfest is a major event here, and during Christmas and Easter the town becomes a festive hub for Namibians, South Africans, and international visitors alike.

It's also a favourite for filmmakers. From *Mad Max: Fury*

Road to The Amazing Race, Swakopmund's surreal landscapes have starred on screens around the world. And when you're standing on the dunes at sunset, watching the light shift over the Atlantic, it's easy to see why.

World-class photographers say Namibia is a visual paradise. And Swakopmund is its crown jewel. Unless we're talking wildlife (though we have our own "Little Five"), no place in Namibia is more photogenic. The light here is something else. On many days, you witness all four seasons in one hour. Cold mist rolls in from the ocean, then lifts to reveal golden dunes, only to be swept away by the warm Eastwind that paints the sky with fiery sunsets.

It's the only place in the world where it's hotter in winter than in summer. The Eastweather can push night

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—TRAVEL—



temperatures up to 45°C. The wind, up to 100 km/h in the morning, calms by midday, leaving behind the most glorious afternoons.

And then there's the mist. While Namibia boasts 300 days of sunshine a year, Swakopmund wears a veil of fog for nearly 200 of them. That's why humidity is often 100% here. But rain is a rare treat, with less than 20 mm annually. It's hauntingly mystical, especially when the Fata Morgana mirage dances on the horizon.

Adventure isn't just a marketing slogan — it's a way of life. Whether it's skydiving over the desert, sandboarding down a dune, or kayaking with seals, Swakopmund offers experiences that stir the soul. Yet it's also a place to slow down, breathe deeply, and marvel at the small things: the

hush of the mist, the curve of a seashell, the colourful sand on the beach — which we enjoy all year round as temperatures range from 15 to 25°C.

This award is not just about adventure; it is about opportunity, identity, and belief in Namibia's potential. And it is about greater responsibility — we are custodians of something rare and precious.

Congratulations to everyone involved, to all Swakopmunders, to all Namibians, and to the guests who return year after year. And I, for one, am honoured to capture it through my lens. I come from a land of mountains and rivers, seas and fields, but it was the desert and mist of Swakopmund that taught me how to truly see. ❖

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LEISURE

NAMIBIA THROUGH OUR EYES

Scan to read later!



THE WAY
**YOU MAKE
ME FEEL**

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." This quote, famously attributed to Maya Angelou, epitomises what O&L Leisure wishes to achieve across every one of our properties. Franziska Rüeck, Chief Experience Officer at Ohlthaver & List, says: "Having spent time at all six of our destinations, I've come to understand that what makes each special is a combination of their remarkable unique features and, most importantly, how they make you feel. Each property has its own distinct character and offerings, but it's the emotional connection, that warmth, that sense of belonging from the moment you arrive that truly sets them apart. Allow me to share what makes each destination wonderful in its own way."





Midgard Otjihavera Windhoek holds a special place in my heart. It's where the List family story began and you can feel that legacy in every corner. With its typical farm feeling, you're enveloped by nature – leopards, eland and giraffes roaming nearby – yet you're so close to the city. The horse safaris are unforgettable and touches like the bowling alley, the picnic experience, outdoor chess and Oubaas's car museum remind you that this is where the heart and soul of O&L Leisure begins.

Travel south to **Le Mirage Sossusvlei** and you'll wonder if what you're seeing is real – a castle rising from the desert with a wine cellar beneath, an oasis of calm where nothing surrounds you but endless horizons and tower roof rooms that make you feel as though you're floating in the vastness.



At **Strand Hotel Swakopmund**, life rushes back in. Here, the ocean meets culinary excellence across three distinct restaurants – from craft beer and homemade pasta to the finesse of Ocean Cellar, where seaweed is harvested fresh from the sea and prepared for you. The dunes meeting the ocean at Sandwich Harbour create but one of those magic moments you'll carry home with you.

Mokuti Etosha takes your breath away differently. That beautiful pool – the longest in any Namibian lodge – sits within an oasis of greenery. Stay four nights and you won't be bored: game drives into Etosha to see the Big Four, the magnificent SkyBoma restaurant eight metres high with infinity markings, the Ontoka Reptile Park and the Haijlo cultural experience showing you how to make fire and use nature's gifts as generations have done.

Divava Okavango feels tropical and intimate, cocooned between amazing trees with the river flowing past. The spa's clever mirror lets you watch the river even during your treatment and you might spot crocodile or hippo tracks in the white sand as you walk to your sundowner spot.

And then there's **Chobe Water Villas** – an intimate collection of just 16 villas, where hippos scratch their backs on the stilts beneath your room and elephants wade through the river before you. The elevated sundowner deck offers 360-degree views across the wetlands and, at night, the sounds of Africa become your lullaby.



What ties these six unique destinations together? It's the experience we create everywhere – that warm, family, home-away-from-home feeling. Each property welcomes you with a specialised drink such as baobab juice in pottery cups at Mokuti and homemade ginger beer at Midgard. Each property also has its own signature scent, be it camelthorn or makalani, matched to the region in which our property is situated. You'll find Technogym equipment in every gym, BABOR products in every spa and those magical breakfast buffets with fresh, healthy juice you can make yourself.

Our guests tell us they wish they'd stayed longer. They say it "felt like family", that it was "a dream I didn't want to wake up from." They notice the personalised interactions and those special moments with our team that make their stay unforgettable.

We chose every destination by hand – nothing was convenient or coincidental. We want you to see Namibia through our eyes, but more than that, we want you to create your own story. Why not join us and experience it for yourself? We're excited to host you and share these special places with you. When you visit all six properties, you've truly seen and experienced our beautiful country. And when you leave, you'll carry home memories and stories which are your own to tell.

– **Franziska Rüeck**



**Franziska Rüeck, Chief Experience Officer,
Ohlthaver & List Group**



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de Baken – The Colour of Creativity

*A celebration of upcycling, West Coast
vernacular and playful design*

edited by Anne Schauffer | photographs supplied



Bold colours, quirky designs, and a generous and skilled use of recycled and repurposed materials are all part of the charm of owner-run de Baken, a delightfully different self-catering establishment in Walvis Bay.

Conrad Scheffer is the owner and architect of de Baken. Back in 2019, the family's quest for the right site and structure from which to begin their hospitality journey began with the premise: "The type of accommodation which we were always looking for on our travels as a family (or on business trips) and which always left a memorable experience." That's what they wanted.

This was no small endeavour, says Conrad: "No design or planning decision was taken lightly, with the majority of the building components bespoke and hand-crafted, so inevitably, the project took twice as long to reach partial completion. Recycled and upcycled building components/material formed

one of the major project pillars, while striving to establish sustainable architecture. The main design focus was to have a fresh look at Namibian West Coast vernacular architecture with a modern, yet eclectic approach – an architecture which belongs at the coast, to the Harbour Town, to the Namib and to Namibia at large."

And that's just what he did. For Conrad, the use of recycled materials and building elements enabled him to keep the cost manageable while simultaneously creating something extraordinary, and he handmade, renovated, and repurposed many of the building materials in his own workshop. The project team members were handpicked for their innovative abilities and excellent craftsmanship.

A satisfying 70 percent of the original infrastructure was retained, with the primary source of re-used material emanating from the existing structure, i.e. timber trusses, bricks, T&G

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—TRAVEL—



Jet fuel makes up roughly one-tenth of what is extracted from every barrel of crude oil.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



boarding, windows, etc. Even the existing old pine trees on site were repurposed as timber beams. The secondary source was salvaged material from old builder's yards, harbour salvage yards, farms, auction houses, and old joinery workshops.

Conrad noted, that the materials and design speaks to the location: "The project incorporates a significant amount of bespoke building components specifically designed and manufactured to meet our requirements. The mild steel and galvanized pipe elements have specific reference to our industrial town, factories, and harbour. The strong and vibrant colours on the external facades enhance the concept of creating individual dwelling units and bear reference to the marine environment with its brightly coloured vessels."

He believes, "to develop an authentic Namibian architecture, the design should be derived from a good understanding and local knowledge of a region's vernacular architecture and environmental conditions."

de Baken is situated very close to the lagoon and within walking distance of all the restaurants and coffee shops at the Esplanade or Waterfront. It's a happy and colourful landscape of spacious, functional one- or two-bedroomed units with all the expected amenities – each has its own personal braai and secure parking, kitchen, and cosy living area.

As Conrad says, "We trust that the playful nature of the design will put a smile on the face of every valued visitor and guest." ❁



REVERIE KALAHARI POD: NAMIBIA'S DESERT ESCAPE FOR THE MIND AND SOUL

Writer: Jandia van Wyk



Stop. Breathe. Be in the Kalahari.

There's a sort of silence in Namibia's Kalahari that you won't find anywhere else. It's not empty or still; it's alive. The sand shifts softly underfoot, the wind hums through the trees, and the sky stretches endlessly above you. This is the backdrop to Reverie Kalahari Pod by Gondwana Collection Namibia, a retreat that reimagines wellness travel as something simpler, deeper, and far more personal.

Reverie isn't a place to fill your days, but to empty them. For those who seek refuge from the constant din of connectedness, the pod provides relief from noise, screens, and schedules. In this space, wellness is not about perfection; instead, it is about reconnecting with the rhythms of nature in search of balance.

Wellness, the Kalahari Way

Every day starts off slowly: The sunrise spills over red dunes as you stretch into a morning yoga flow on your deck. Later, you sip freshly brewed tea as the desert wakes up or take a walk through the endless stillness of the landscape, where every sound feels magnified by its calm. As the sun starts setting and nights falls, meditations under Namibia's star-filled sky reconnect body and mind in ways that few places can.

The Reverie Kalahari Pod is the concept of mindful travel—you are present, you notice the small details, and you let nature lead the way. You won't have the urge to be in a hurry; you won't need a checklist. It will just be moments unfolding organically.

Nature-based

Wellness at Reverie Kalahari Pod flows naturally from its surroundings. Every detail, from meals inspired by fresh, local ingredients to spaces

designed for light, openness, and ease, reflects a deep respect for the land. The pod's minimalist architecture frames uninterrupted views of the Kalahari, creating an effortless harmony between comfort and wilderness. It is not about luxury in excess but finding it in the minimum-in stillness, good food, and feeling fully present.

And then there is the Kalahari itself, your best therapist. The soft rustling of grass in the afternoon breeze, the play of light across ochre sand, the comforting vastness that reminds you how small worries can feel. Healing happens here, not because you plan for it, but because the desert demands it—gently, wordlessly, completely.

The Luxury of Presence

Time comes to a near standstill at Reverie. The sunrise yoga stretch, a note in your journal, the meals that are slow, and a bath underneath a sky alive with stars—this is what wellness travel looks and feels like when excess is stripped away: immersive, intentional, and profoundly human.

For a digital detox, a need for a mental health retreat, a space to restore creativity, or simply a moment to breathe, Reverie Kalahari Pod offers something rare: stillness wrapped in luxury.

Because in a world that celebrates constant movement, perhaps the greatest luxury of all is learning to be still again. Experience the Kalahari like never before. Book your stay at Reverie Kalahari Pod today and discover the true luxury of stillness.

Images: Gondwana Collection Namibia | Layout: Geena Visagie



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Slice of Life

by Jescey Bekker



Date Night



Towards the end of 2025, hubby and I finally decided to treat ourselves to an evening of spoils and sushi — a long-overdue date night. With the toddler happily occupied at home with a babysitter, we actually managed a peaceful meal. Full and content, we headed back home.

About four kilometres from our house, turning into our neighbourhood, three young German Shepherds suddenly sprinted across the dark road. Quick interlude: my husband, bless his enthusiastic heart, would happily leap from an airplane in flight if it meant saving a dog. Add a glass of wine and the fact that he was in the passenger seat while I was driving... well, you can imagine the energy levels. End of interlude.

The dogs had barely passed us when hubby launched himself from the still-moving car. Thankfully, it was a quiet area and I was going slowly enough that he didn't need to perform a tuck-and-roll. Hazard lights blinking, he hopped back in after failing to block the pups' escape route, and off we went — crawling along the road, trying to keep the mischievous trio in sight long enough to figure out their home base.

After ten minutes of following them up and down, the dogs showed absolutely zero interest in being rescued. Then hubby announced he knew where they lived and, without waiting for confirmation, jumped out again — dress shoes, long jeans, and all — and ran into the darkness to alert the owners.

Left alone in the car, I carried on the search, suddenly remembering the little packet of biltong in my handbag. Maybe that would help. The night was dark despite the

streetlights, but eventually I spotted the trouble-making trio again. Just as I approached, a white T-shirt came sprinting out of nowhere — a man chasing after them, calling, “Sophie! Bagheera!” At least we had names now.

I continued after them down a longer stretch of road. I managed to pull ahead and park in a driveway, leaping out (in a dress and heels, mind you) to try to block them. Predictably, they blew straight past me. A moment later, a silver car pulled into the next driveway and a woman in a fluffy gown and slippers hopped out, also shouting the dogs' names. Another clue... and another failure, as the dogs zoomed past her too.

Back in my car, ready for Round Three, I suddenly heard my name. There was hubby — hanging halfway out of the driver's window of the silver car, yelling, “Go, go! Follow the dogs! I'm right behind you!” Not at all surprising that he had somehow ended up in a stranger's vehicle, assisting in the pursuit.

I drove ahead once more, parked, and crouched with the biltong ready. This time, success! The dogs paused long enough for Mama Fluffy Gown, White T-shirt Runner who appeared from the back seat, and my ever-determined husband to gather them up and load them into the silver car. Hubby drove them home while I followed behind to collect him.

An hour after entering our neighbourhood, we finally pulled into our yard, giggling like schoolkids at the comedy of it all. We'd rescued three dogs, met neighbours, and gained a wonderfully bizarre story.

And this is what I wish for you in 2026 — laughter, odd adventures, and the joy of knowing your neighbours. 🍷



INTRODUCING THE NAMPOWER OTJIKOTO BIOMASS POWER STATION (OBPS)

NamPower's 40MW Otjikoto Biomass Power Station is currently under construction after the groundbreaking ceremony on 15 November 2024. The project site is located 12 km outside Tsumeb, and entails the development of a biomass power station utilising encroacher bush woodchips as a fuel source.

As a project of national importance, the power station will not only assist NamPower in strengthening its domestic local generation mix with a fully dispatchable energy source, but also benefit the greater Namibian economy thanks to the significant macro- and micro-economic benefits of the value addition of harvesting encroacher bush, which negatively affects over 45 million hectares of grazing land.

THE BENEFITS OF BUSH CONTROL

Controlling encroacher bush through thinning and harvesting creates a range of benefits:

- Increased carrying capacity of rangeland which will make farms more productive
- Enhanced eco-tourism as the wildlife viewing experience is improved
- Increased farm value, potentially leading to more business opportunities
- Increase in groundwater recharge
- Improved scenic beauty as a diverse landscape is more visually appealing
- Increased biodiversity
- Restored land can help preserve traditional farming practices and local heritage



BUSH ENCROACHMENT: BACKGROUND AND IMPACTS

Namibia's open grasslands are being overrun by thick, unwanted bush. This problem is known as bush encroachment. It affects over 45 million hectares of land and causes serious issues like reduced grazing capacity for animals, loss of biodiversity and reduced groundwater. Many farms are no longer profitable as a result of bush encroachment.



A FORERUNNER IN GREEN ENERGY

The 40MW Otjikoto Biomass Power Station will be the first-ever biomass-to-electricity plant in Namibia.

Feeding electricity generated from biomass into the national grid will greatly reduce Namibia's reliance on electricity imports. It will also make a transition to solar and wind generated electricity possible, as biomass-to-electricity plants provide the required baseload power.

The Otjikoto Biomass Power Station (OBPS) will require approximately 250,000 tonnes of bush biomass annually in baseload operating, sourced within a 100 kilometre radius of the plant. Based on a conservative estimate of approximately 12.65 tonnes per hectare of sustainable harvestable biomass yield, around 20,000 hectares of bush encroached land can be rehabilitated per year. Over its 25-year projected lifespan, OBPS has the potential to contribute to the restoration of 600,000 hectares of bush encroached land.

KEY IMPACTS

OBPS champions a greener future for Namibia, combining renewable energy production with land restoration. This initiative is a win-win situation, offering the following benefits and positive-impacts:

- Bush thinning contributes to the rehabilitation of degraded savannah ecosystems, enhancing biodiversity, water retention and ultimately land productivity.
- Local economy is stimulated. Jobs are created in multiple industries, particularly within the biomass harvesting industry with spin-offs to agriculture and tourism.
- Namibia's energy self-sufficiency and security are increased. The country is diversifying its energy mix from imported carbon-intensive sources to local renewable biomass-based sources.
- A local biomass fuel supply chain in Namibia is established, with the potential to trigger further bush biomass-based industries.

HOW YOU AS A LANDOWNER CAN GET INVOLVED

For the long-term fuel supply, NamPower will contract long-term fuel suppliers to carry out bush thinning operations and aftercare for the first and third year at no cost to landowners (commercial farmers, resettlement farmers, communal farmers). Contracted fuel suppliers will cover all harvesting-related expenses, including equipment and operations. It will be the responsibility of farmers to ensure long-term land management and restoration.

NamPower will buy additional fuel resources from emerging fuel suppliers such as SMEs, farmers, community forests and resettlement farms.

This is the second aspect of the Fuel Supply Strategy to supply wood logs to the power station. The logs will be further processed into chips by means of an electric chipper. Farmers and farm owners can benefit as follows from this development:

- FSC certified bush thinning for your farm
- No costs for FSC Certification for 5 years
- No cost for Biomass Quantification (BQ)
- Free first round of aftercare.



OUTLINE OF THE FUEL SUPPLY CHAIN

The NamPower Biomass Fuel Supply Chain is a structured system designed to ensure a continuous, sustainable and efficient supply of biomass to the OBPS.

- Biomass will be sourced by contracted harvesters and fuel suppliers from farms, then processed, chipped and transported to the power plant under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) mandates. At the plant, the biomass will be stored, managed and utilised.
- OBPS will only accept woodchips from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified farms. Therefore, fuel suppliers must ensure that any farmland from which they intend to harvest is formally approved and certified under the NamPower FSC Group Scheme.
- NamPower will establish a dedicated Safety, Health, Environment and Wellness (SHEW) team, based at the plant, to monitor field compliance and produce environmental and social impact reports.
- Contracted harvesters must ensure that all harvesting activities and labour practices fully comply with relevant occupational health and safety regulations and Namibian laws.
- Landowners will be expected to sign agreements with long-term fuel suppliers. With support from the FSC Group Scheme Manager, Farm Management Plans will need to be developed. Farmers are expected to attend training on sustainable bush control, biomass production, restoring rangelands and environmental compliance as per EMP. Farmers can participate in the ad hoc programme directly.



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Dear Diary

The Art of Slowing Down



— Lessons from a Namibian Braai

When I first moved to Namibia ten years ago, I was invited to something called a *Bring and Braai*. “Braai?” I thought. “Easy — Afrikaans for BBQ. I’ve got this.”

Well, not quite.

I showed up on time, German-style — punctual, hungry, and ready for food to be sizzling on the grill. In Germany, the barbecue starts when the sausages hit the flames, and you eat as soon as the first one is done. Efficiency at its best!

But in Namibia, a braai is not about efficiency. It’s about *time*. About friends, laughter, and endless conversations around the fire. The meat isn’t just thrown on and eaten — no, it’s prepared lovingly over an open wood fire, and everyone eats together when everything is ready. Until then? You sip a glass of wine, enjoy the company, and learn the art of patience.

And the meat — oh, the meat! Namibia is famous for it. Not just beef, but game meat like oryx, eland, and springbok — and yes, sometimes even zebra. Rich, flavourful, and so different from German venison. I’ve even seen lifelong vegetarians “temporarily” convert because, as they say, these were happy animals, living freely under the African sun.

A braai is so much more than a barbecue. It’s a cultural ritual, a celebration of togetherness. The fire keeps burning long after the food is finished, warming hands and hearts as stories are told under the stars.

Looking back, I realise that my first braai was more than just an introduction to local food — it was my first real lesson in the Namibian way of life. Things here aren’t rushed. They’re savoured. Shared. And somehow, waiting makes everything taste even better.



So if you ever find yourself in Namibia and someone invites you to a braai — say yes. Bring your appetite, a bottle of wine, and a good story to share. And remember: don’t arrive hungry... unless you plan to snack on biltong first.

If you have a story to tell, I’d love to hear it! Write to me at deardiary@myeishanamibia.com

Until next time, from Namibia with a full heart (and usually a full plate), Sandra. ❖

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Forever welcome:

An Ovahimba desert victory

words and photographs by Linda de Jager



While some claim a visit to an Ovahimba village in Namibia is a staged experience playing to tourists, my recent journey to the northwest proved entirely different.

The semi-nomadic pastoral lifestyle of this tribe still captivates the imagination and offers much food for thought.

I recently found myself profoundly moved when a Himba man called Henry Tjambiru helped me secure a traditional bracelet on my arm in the far north. The gesture held special significance, and I discovered that the word for ‘thank you’ in the Ovahimba language, ‘okuhepa’, also means ‘welcome’.

There is nothing artificial about this experience, as some members of the Himba community in this area of the Kunene

region live much the same way they did a century ago.

My initial scepticism disappears when I see how community members arduously fetch water for themselves and their goats from a deep manmade pit.

Of course, several adults in the village have a cellphone, and their children attend the local school, where phones can be charged and where they have cellphone coverage thanks to a tower.

I am reminded of what my anthropologist travel companion, Margaret Jacobsohn, told me earlier: The opposite of traditional is not modern – you can be both at the same time.

During my five-day stay, I am also encouraged to dig deep and learn more about Tjambiru and his people –



many of whom still travel by donkey – as well as how their story connects to Conservancy Safaris Namibia (CSN) and Etaambura Lodge, where I stay overnight.

Tjambiru is the lodge's deputy manager.

Welcomed as a guest, treated as an equal

He travels with me to introduce me to his mother and sister who live a traditional life at a nearby village, one of several places this semi-nomadic family lived as he grew up. This is why the Etaambura experience feels genuine: You are welcomed as a guest and treated as an equal.

The people I meet co-own the company and the lodge.

CSN is not only a business, but more of a social and conservation initiative, emphasising community-based conservation and tourism even though it runs mobile safaris and manages a lodge.

It contributes the highest bed-night levy in Namibia – with over 20% going to the Orupembe Conservancy in the Kaokoveld, where the lodge is located.

“This lodge and the tourists visiting here are the Orupembe Conservancy’s primary source of income,” Tjambiru says.

Helping people further along the road

Many Ovahimba people call the company ‘Okamutenge’, which refers to the bag attached to the end of a stick carried over one’s shoulder when trekking. Tjambiru says this means the company helps his people further along the road of life.

Jacobsohn, a Namibian conservationist, writer, and anthropologist, has been part of a team that pioneered an African approach to wildlife conservation in this area and the rest of the country for the past 40 years.

Her business partner is an international entrepreneur who is passionate about conservation but prefers to remain anonymous. Over a decade, he has invested millions into CSN and Etaambura, our end destination.

He shares a dream with Tjambiru’s community – that conserving their wildlife would eventually bring financial and other benefits.

However, when these benefits initially materialised, it was mainly outsiders who reaped the rewards, but CSN aims to assign ownership to the community.

“Why do I continue to support CSN? For one, the local people are worth it. It has been proven that the Namibian

Namibia’s Orange Basin has become one of the world’s most promising oil exploration regions.



conservancy model is an effective way to manage wildlife,” Jacobsohn’s business partner says.

A highly successful businessman and realist, he adds: “Income is generated but not at its full potential.”

During our journey, Jacobsohn explains that she helps run CSN.

“I hold this company in a trust for the five most north-westerly communal Ovahimba conservancies,” she says. CSN also provides mobile safaris.

As we approach the lodge on our journey, a cooler sea breeze from the Atlantic Ocean about 60km to the west brushes my face as Jacobsohn talks about the sacred red Onjuva plains.

She points to a historic Himba battlefield alongside the road, which might seem like a plain landscape to those unfamiliar with its significance. We soon find ourselves at Onjuva, a few hours south of the Kunene River, seemingly in the middle of nowhere.

Etaambura lodge, artfully built to blend into the landscape, opened in 2012, and after our 700km drive from Swakopmund, Kukuu Musaso, the Himba manager, and her team welcome us warmly.

All about water

Right before I check into one of five en suite chalets perched atop a mountain, I take my first picture – clouds on the horizon promising rains.

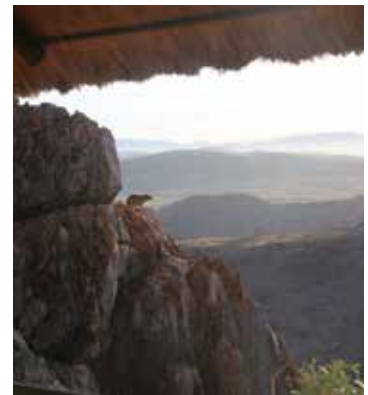
Aptly, Etaambura means “you can see the rain from here”. Water, its presence and its absence, is the dominating theme here.

“There is no shortage of water, although it might appear that way to a Westerner. Goats are very well adapted to this environment; the cattle less so. The point is during a drought animals die of starvation, not of thirst,” Jacobsohn says.

Community liaison officer and safaru guide Boas Hambo confirms that the Ovahimba people know where to find underground water.

“They learn the telltale signs from their elders and sometimes from the elephants.”

Adds Jacobsohn: “We are just out of a seven-year drought; the people lost 95% of their cattle and about 50% of their wildlife. With the rains last season, and hopefully this one just starting, we are seeing a baby boom, and the wildlife is recovering quite quickly.”



As the days pass, I become increasingly aware of the fact that my unique experience of this “arid eden” is the result of the early community conservation work of Jacobsohn and her life partner, the late Garth Owen-Smith.

Community-based conservation

Owen-Smith is the father of Namibian community-based conservation.

Together they founded and co-directed the Namibian non-governmental organisation (NGO) Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), which pioneered community-based natural resource management (CBNRM).

Jacobsohn says the lodge levy, which is paid to the conservancy, pays the game guards’ salaries. CSN also provides equipment, transport and field food for remote patrols.

The area now sports a school that benefits from the CSN food programme.

On my last evening at the lodge, I sit down to a goat meat stew prepared over an open fire in the unpretentious dining area, managed by a small team.

I go to bed aware that the spanking clean linen is still hand washed, and that the lodge has only had regular water supply for the past year.

I realise I’m not missing Wi-Fi.

I see the faint glow of distant lights on the horizon, and the fires of Himba families. Unlike at many luxury lodges in Namibia, the community is not ‘edited out’ to create a curated African wildlife experience.

The real deal

This is the real deal, with all its flaws and small victories.

Satellites orbit Earth at speeds up to 27,000 km/h – fast enough to travel from Pretoria to Windhoek in about three minutes.



Gustav Peters sharing his cooking tips



Kukuu Musaso, the Himba manager at Etaambura Lodge, preparing vetkoek over the fire for breakfast.



Gustav's Food Tip

Gustav Peters (now retired) spent 25 years with Nakara and was a partner for about 17 years. At Etambuura Lodge, he shared practical food tips for this remote area without fresh supplies, which are useful for tourists camping.

Tuna served for 4

Cut 4 large onions into 5mm slices and place them in a frying pan. Cut 6 large tomatoes into 10mm slices and layer them on top of the onions. Season with pepper, salt, and about 3 spoonfuls of medium or hot curry powder. Add 2/3 of a tin of solid tuna in vegetable oil on top. Cover with a lid and cook over medium heat until tender. Serve with rice or barley.

Corned Beef serving 2 as a snack

Slice 1 tin of cold corned beef into 3-5mm slices and arrange them in a circle on a round flat plate. Top with thin slices of onion, season with grated pepper and salt. Drizzle with sunflower oil and vinegar. Serve with bread.

I think of the wealthy entrepreneur who persistently refuses to leave this community to its own devices. He admits that CSN is a textbook example of how difficult it is to establish a viable problem-solving remote local tourism operation.

Despite all his wealth, he truly believes in the story of this small lodge and the different kind of power its people hold: resilience.

I silently salute Etambura for the immense achievement it is.

As I replay memories of this incredible trip, one stands out: wading knee-deep, through a flooding river ahead of our 4x4 to check for sudden changes in depth. Ah, rain in the Namib!

I think of our chance encounter with a group of Israeli soldiers on rented motorbikes on a short break after two years of war, passing cigarettes to each other as if their lives depended on it during their pitstop.

One of them, with bleak, haunted eyes, told us they

were here to find "some real peace for a while somewhere".

Jacobsohn describes this encounter as "surprisingly meaningful".

Ah, the peace in Namibia!

I think about the various photos I took of the traditional Himba community, the hikes down the hill with our driver, the patient Oshivambo-born Jekonia Hauwanga in tow, the cold beer I bought at a bargain price from the local shebeen, buying some Tennis biscuits, and enjoying them on a rickety bench in a sliver of shadow in the middle of nowhere.

I think of Tjambiru in safari clothes proudly introducing me to his mother in traditional dress, translating that she is saying I am "forever welcome" here.

And I hope I can persuade others to explore what might very well turn out to be "a surprisingly meaningful encounter". ❀



Saving the heart of the ‘arid Eden’

– a cry for responsible tourism

words and photographs by Linda de Jager



Gameguards sitting in a circle having a meeting.



Community liaison officer and safari guide Boas Hambo speaking to a member of the local community.

During a recent visit to the Orupembe Conservancy and Etaambura Lodge in northwestern Namibia, I realised that the unique experience of many tourists visiting this ‘arid Eden’ directly results from early community conservation efforts.

It is remarkable that rural communities are reinvesting the small income their conservancies earn into conservation, employing game guards to monitor and protect their wildlife.

Catalysts in pioneering community-based conservation were Margaret Jacobsohn and her late partner, Garth Owen-Smith, who is widely regarded as the father of Namibian community-based conservation.

“It was a team effort,” says Jacobsohn.

Prior to Namibia’s independence, local headmen, who did not want to see wildlife disappear, agreed to appoint game guards. The former regime, however, regarded communities as the problem, not the solution.

“A team of dedicated people, including many of us, worked together to change this paradigm,” Jacobsohn says.

Today, community conservation is prevalent across Africa.

A snippet from a conversation with community liaison officer Boas Hambo, my guide for one of the days I stayed at Etaambura Lodge, reveals that his story too is closely linked to the emerging new approach to conservation.

“I grew up around people who cared for wildlife, especially my uncle Elias Hambo, who started conservation work with Garth and Margaret in the north. During school



Margaret Jacobsohn at the grave at Wêreldsend of her late partner, Garth Owen-Smith, who is widely regarded as the father of Namibian community-based conservation.



Gameguards in action. (from left to right) Uakaevisa Tjisuta, Kautjuukua Tjivinda, and Mavetoto Tjiningire (Field Officer of the Orupembe Conservancy) are sharing their field experiences and knowledge.

holidays, I often accompanied him on patrols, because he couldn't read or write. I helped him with tasks like recording kilometres and counting game," he says.

I am familiar with the area Hambo is referring to, as I've extensively filmed there, capturing desert elephants, tracking rhinos, and desert-adapted lions. These animals can all be seen on a guided Conservancy Safaris Namibia (CSN) safari in the conservancies.

During filming in this region, I've frequently observed human-wildlife conflict impacting the lives of the locals living alongside these creatures. If you're not a local, it occurred to me that you could not be in safer hands than those of Hambo, who knows the area like the palm of his hand.

He says his sister Sonia is an expert at open-fire cooking. She is CSN safaris' chef, supported by a small backup team that usually travels ahead to establish

comfortable mobile camps in spectacular locations off the main safari routes.

Henry Tjambiru, who serves as the deputy lodge manager at Etaambura Lodge, also belongs to this new generation caught between two worlds. In addition to his lodge work, he is responsible for the conservancy game guard programme.

He says his main reason for 'running away' to attend school was to learn to count, so he could make sure shop owners don't cheat him. As a child, Tjambiru says he was often sent to shops 20km or 30km away and had to walk there, and he didn't want to rely on the other children to do the math for him.

I accompany him and Hambo to meet the local community game guards one morning. We come across seven men, unaware of my visit, gathered under a tree, dressed smartly in their patrol clothing, confidently sharing their



Henry Tjambiru, deputy lodge manager at Etaambura Lodge, along with his mother Veripahera Tjambiru, who lives traditionally. Tjambiru also oversees the game guard programme.

Insert: The game is recorded and documented in a booklet to assist wildlife management.



views on protecting the wildlife and needing more tourists.

Here too the sense of pride is genuine.

“We conduct community wildlife anti-poaching patrols, because the tourists who come here to support us need to see wildlife,” they all agree.

During our conversation, the local game guards also express a pressing concern about the recent increase in tourists entering protected areas.

They say tourists often drive through wildlife waterpoints in the hills, disturbing the animals.

According to the guards of the Orupembe Conservancy, tourists frequently venture off-road, camp near waterpoints, and scare game away, preventing them from drinking.

Despite designated campsites within all conservancies, many tourists ignore this and opt to camp openly or just outside the designated zones.

“Some even drive past campsites located only a kilometre or two away,” the guards share.

They explain that this issue has serious implications, making it much harder to trace poachers.

This hinders effective monitoring and conservation efforts, the guards add.

Their message is clear: Responsible tourism is essential to ensuring the safety and preservation of wildlife.

Namibia’s communal conservancies and community forests are autonomous entities officially recognised by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

Each conservancy and forest has a constitution and elects a management committee.

Conservancies and community forests aim to conserve and protect the environment while generating revenue through the sustainable use of natural resources. ❖

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Swakopmund Guesthouse

words by Anne Schaffer | photographs supplied

*A modern coastal
retreat with a heart
for hospitality*



If you're looking for a fresh, contemporary, and convenient place to lay your head in Swakopmund, you'll get more than you bargained for here... because the warmth and care of a family-run guesthouse surpass even that.

Swakopmund Guesthouse was once a much-loved holiday home, and when you meet the team there, you'll feel that sense of family and comfort. The guesthouse opened about 15 years ago and has recently been given a new lease on life. It underwent a complete revamp to bring it firmly and freshly into the new century. It's cool, contemporary, and sports all the mod cons. In addition, a few standard rooms were sacrificed to create new luxury suites, each more spacious, with a separate lounge able to

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



be converted into a family room. You'll love them with their gas fireplaces, air-conditioning, and underfloor heating in the bathrooms; in addition, you'll be set up with smart TVs and speedy Wi-Fi. The team has also chosen to embrace a sustainable path, and solar power fuels their commitment to eco-conscious hospitality.

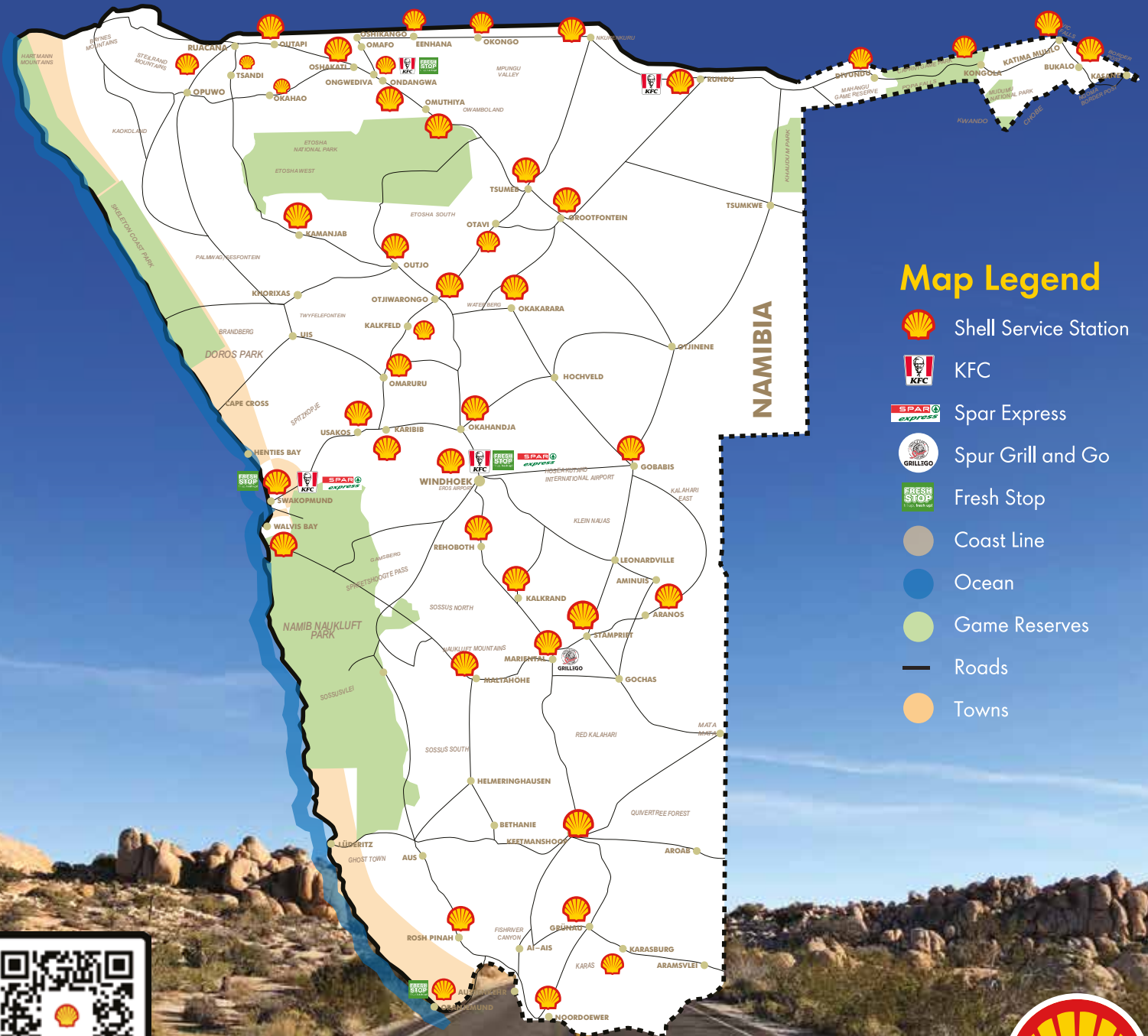
Like the home, the gardens of Swakopmund Guesthouse received a makeover, and that – together with secure parking – just adds to the charm. The owners laugh delightedly when they proclaim their guesthouse as “the finest address in town.” They have no doubt.

Yes, it's all brand new, but what is as old as time itself is the attention to detail and the care you'll be given. Personalisation is their mantra, and you'll find everything from laundry services to assistance sourcing activities in and around Swakopmund... and there are plenty. There's skydiving and fat biking, sandboarding and horse riding, camel riding and numerous tours to fascinating sites. You can visit the legendary Sandwich Harbour or head off on short or long tours to see the Welwitschia plant or the little creatures of the desert. The list of activities is long and fabulous.

Frankly, what more can you want or need? ❁

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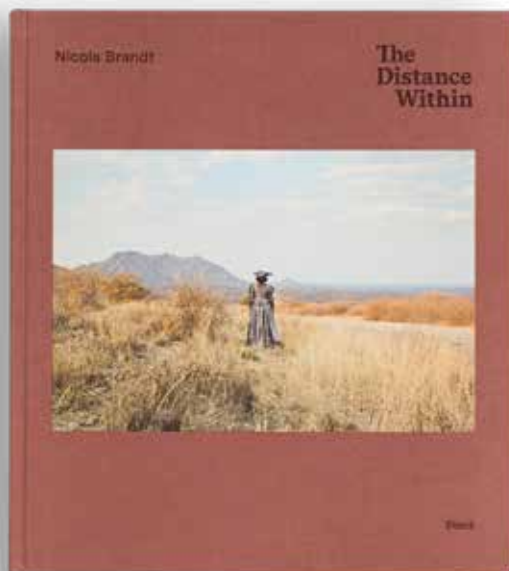


SCAN ME





“A crisis — or a significant challenge — is a terrible thing to waste.”



MINDSCAPES:

Nicola Brandt explores Namibia's (de)colonial history in her new book

Lind de Jager in conversation with Nicola Brandt | photographs by Nicola Brandt



Landscapes of Power, with Katuvangua Maendo, Windhoek



Portrait of Nicola Brandt

Nicola Brandt is known for her impactful large-scale photography, video works, and installations.

The Namibian-born dynamic multidisciplinary artist of German and Afrikaans descent examines themes of power, memory, and identity through a decolonial lens focused on German colonial history.

In her recent book, *The Distance Within*, she presents a striking collection of photographs and video stills that relate to her German and Namibian heritage, challenging conventional narratives about the country of her birth and childhood.

What is the book about, and how does it blend different mediums?

The Distance Within brings together photographs and video stills I've created over more than a decade. In this project, I reflect on my German and Namibian heritage, and I disrupt some of the familiar, often romanticised ways in which Namibia has been represented.

Over the years, I've travelled the country extensively, documenting landscapes, people, structures, and encounters to trace the layered – and often uncomfortable underlying elements – of histories of German colonialism, national socialism, and apartheid. These histories surface in many forms, from something as fragile and personal as a collapsing roadside cairn to official memorials that acknowledge, contest, or resist colonial violence.

Alongside the images, I've included texts by thinkers whose work in photography, postcolonial studies, memory, and genocide research has shaped my own understanding, as well as archival materials from both public and private collections.

Together, these elements helped me examine the blind spots that persist in the way these histories are viewed or overlooked.

With this project, I advocate for the recovery of suppressed narratives and identities, challenge inherited notions of whiteness, and, ultimately, attempt to make visible what has long remained unseen.



Possession. Uakondjisa Kakuekuee Mbari on Rössing Mountain outside Swakopmund



On the way to Ohamakari

How does the book challenge silences, and at the same time avoid a single authoritative voice when it comes to these complex histories?

As the filmmaker and writer Trinh T. Minh-ha says, “reality is delicate”.

Several of the photographs in my book require quiet and slow looking, as they are not obvious or sensational. They are rather a trace or memory of something submerged.

I can also strongly relate to Minh-ha, when she describes how she does not intend to “speak about; just speak nearby”. When you decide to speak “nearby”, you acknowledge the gaps in understanding – you leave a space others may enter and fill as they wish.

How did growing up in Namibia influence your work?

Growing up in Namibia, the values of my immediate surroundings were those of a middle-class, largely white community with historical ties to northern Europe and South Africa – a context that made me deeply ambivalent toward my roots. The work in this book, which spans over more than a decade, is an attempt to reflect critically on my inheritance

and to question and deconstruct certain perceptions. *The Distance Within* offered me a framework to examine the world of my childhood and youth.

The recurring challenge – beyond that of often travelling alone as a woman or accepting the unexpected invitation to wear the Herero dress – was to keep trying to undo the pictorial and romanticised views of whiteness. The project was driven by an anti-documentary impulse to make ‘non-landscapes’. Ultimately, the journey became a conceptual engagement with impossibility and absence. This ambivalence is something I carry at my core and will continue to reckon with beyond the boundaries of the book.

What is the significance of your collaboration with Herero women?

During the creation of this body of work, I travelled alone, and with two remarkable women – Uakondjisa Kakuekuee Mbari and Katuvangua Maendo – documenting episodes, structures, and performances with my camera.

Through key encounters and conversations, the entwined histories of German colonialism, national socialism, and apartheid became increasingly apparent.

More plastic has been produced in the past 30 years than in all previous human history before 1990 combined.



Woestynkombuis (desert kitchen), Maltahöhe

In one photograph, *No Monument to the Fallen* – which appears on the cover – Maendo is shown on her way to her homestead in the Ovitoto communal area of the Otjozondjupa region. In the distance is Ozongombeotumana, the mountain where an important battle took place between the Ovaherero and the Germans during the 1904 to 1908 war and genocide. She describes how her people often stop there to stand in silence and acknowledge their ancestors and all they endured.

Mbari invited me to wear a Herero dress to a Herero delegation meeting. This invitation marked the beginning of a new chapter in the work – one that developed into docufiction and performance art. The Herero dress itself is iconographically complex: a vessel of cultural and memory transmission.

What message does the work convey about the importance of recognising and learning from the past?

'History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes.' We are again witnessing in the world how those once aligned with victims can become perpetrators – perhaps we all carry both victim and perpetrator within us. Critical reflection – shaped by art, reading, and education – might guide us toward better choices.

Ultimately, the purpose behind this way of working is an invitation – to look more closely. There is a kind of everyday blindness. We grow accustomed to the spaces we inhabit, and we often project our values and assumptions onto what we see rather than letting the encounter reshape our understanding.

How does the book challenge readers to think critically about history?

The questions and themes in the book encourage slow, subtle, and critical engagement rather than passive consumption. While I have drawn on historical facts, the nature of the project is both evidence-based and deeply personal.

It is an invitation to look deeper, to recognise visual and cultural clichés, and to move beyond them.

How did creating the book change your own perspectives, and what motivated you to see it through?

A book, unlike an exhibition, becomes a permanent record and travels in the hope of reaching a wider audience. Bill Owens said in 1979, "The kind of photographs I do are not pretty pictures for the walls of your homes but instead say



Jakavava Kandimuine with his newborn, and his daughters Ngoo (left), with baby girl Maatu, and Uakovandu (right), in the Red Flag dress, Otjimbinde Village



The Reiterdenkmal with a view to the Christuskirche (Christ Church)

something about the walls of your home.” I learned to look again at the interiors of my own home and, beyond that, at the intimate spaces I may have taken for granted.

Making the work and getting it published required grit and determination. I could not abandon something that demanded so much emotional and intellectual labour.

At times, the process felt out of my control – especially knowing the publisher had world-class artists knocking at his door. I was amazed, and I wept, when I finally held the book in my hands.

One of my mottos in life is: “A crisis – or a significant challenge – is a terrible thing to waste.”

Will the book be of interest to tourists, and why?

I believe the book will be valuable for curious, critically engaged visitors who want to deepen their understanding of the country – appreciating its historical complexity, and

at times, striking contradictions. For example, the Herero dress is enigmatic and beautiful, even if its origins are tied to conservative European dress codes, trauma, and dispossession.

If you could select a few must-see historical destinations in the context of the book, what would you recommend to visiting tourists?

To understand Windhoek’s memory landscape, I would begin in the city centre, where the removal of the Reiterdenkmal occurred in 2009 and, more recently, the dismantling of the Curt von François monument in 2023. As Sean Sheehan writes in a review of the book, one image captured between the legs of an equestrian monument “announces the inflexible power of brute domination”, the booted foot pointing towards a colonial-era church and fort – an ideology rendered in stone.

Michelangelo

—PROFILE—



Remembering those who built this line. Kakuekuee Mbari walks along the Swakopmund railroad

Other essential sites include:

The Herero and Nama graveyard at Swakopmund, where the genocide memorial's inscription was updated in 2020 to reflect a more direct and uncompromising historical narrative.

Shark Island at Lüderitz, a site of profound memory politics and ongoing contestation.

The Ohamakari/Waterberg area, sacred to the Ovaherero, where centuries-old wild fig trees are said to have carried ancestors down from heaven, and where many fled – and perished – during the 1904–1908 genocide.

Messum Crater, deep in the Namib Desert: a majestic geological formation dating back 130 million years, older than human memory itself. ❖



The Distance Within (Steidl Verlag, 2025)

Edited by Alexandra Dodd

Hardback / Clothbound

ISBN 978-3-96999-308-8

1st Edition, March 2025

The book is available for N\$1 550.00 at the National Art Gallery of Namibia, The Project Room, the Namibian Arts Association, The Book Den (Windhoek), and Die Muschel Book and Art Store (Swakopmund).

Alternatively, you can order directly from steidl.de for €75.00 (incl. VAT) with free shipping.



Dede Elizabeth Kohne, owner and founder of Dede's

Dede's, the Homemade Heart of Okahandja

words by Linda de Jager | photographs supplied



Dede's Place at Okahandja has become a culinary hub, offering homemade dishes, locally sourced produce, global flavours, and community-driven creativity since opening its doors in 2023.

What is on offer here competes with the best in the world. The venue hosts a themed evening dedicated to exploring the food and culture of different countries around the world every month.

These special nights feature a three-course meal representing nations such as Greece, India, Italy, Morocco, Mexico, Russia, the United States, England, China, and Mongolia. Occasionally, the event includes live performances of traditional melodies from the country in the spotlight.

This event even featured 18 different soups from around the world recently, available for guests to taste in a single evening.

"Every palate is different, so I adjust accordingly," says Delilah, the mastermind behind the establishment, known by locals simply as 'Dede'.

Dede is best described as a live wire who turns anything she touches into something special.

Dede's Place has become the culinary treasure of Okahandja since its grand opening in 2023.

"We offer a wide variety of yummilicious food on our menu, all made from scratch with ingredients grown by local farmers, such as Belissima Home Industry vegetables and herbs.



“We grow fennel, chillies, spinach, thyme, rocket and mint in hydroponic troughs in our restaurant garden ourselves to ensure everything is fresh,” she says.

Dede began her career in the hospitality industry at the age of 15.

She spent 20 years at Morgan Bay Hotel in the Eastern Cape and later opened a restaurant in collaboration with her friend Robyn Röhm.

The current menu reflects an eclectic fusion of comfort food and international dishes, showcasing everything from traditional English muffins and scones to exotic kapana and oryx curry. Guests often rave about the restaurant’s standout item: the 450g cheese-stuffed, bacon-wrapped burger.

Dede’s maiden name, St Clair-Whicker, conjures the image of an English rose, although her heritage is Scottish-Italian with some South African roots.

Local Is Lekker

“I believe in uplifting the locals and building the infrastructure of the place where God has planted me,” she says.

Dede’s Place is a hub for local creativity, with a gift shop that opened in August offering handmade crafts, leatherwork, and local foods.

Dede highlights the importance of supporting the community by buying from local producers. The shop sells items like upcycled goods, second-hand finds from

Namibia, leatherworks, biscuits, and rusks from Belissima Home Industry.

She values her network, which includes a retiree who sells koeksisters, and some local farmers producing strawberries and tomatoes. Additionally, the shop uses home-grown or locally sourced chillies for its sauces.

Dede says she maintains a good relationship with the carvers across the street from her shop. She says they refused to move to the highway after the road was diverted, despite government plans to relocate them.

“They’ve been here 100 years,” she says, “and because of them, I can stay open.”

She ended up at Okahandja after marrying a Namibian, Julius Wilhelm Köhne.

“We came back here to retire close to our children,” she says.

‘Granny Fusion’

Dede says her food is “an eclectic mix of granny’s food, homemade and inspired by different cultures – almost fusion food”.

She describes herself as “a typical foodie cook” who gets bored easily – “so we create seasonal specials that are not part of the à la carte menu”.

Dede says her husband has built her two brick rocket stoves in the restaurant’s garden. She uses these to cook a potjie over the fire for the growing number of safari groups passing through.

“These potjies are also seasonal, such as

The energy used for one Google search could power a standard light bulb for six minutes.



waterblommetjie lamb bredie, beef goulash, and a cream biltong-and-mushroom hotpot – not to forget the oxtail or afval favourites. So, locals know to watch out for specials as they become available when stock arrives.”

Gourmet Pies, Painting And Sipping

Dede makes her own samosas with an authentic onion-and-mince filling, and her pies are becoming a huge hit. They are rustic, with shortcrust pastry stuffed with delicious meats: smoky beef and bacon, eisbein and mustard, pork and thyme chicken a la king, chicken and mushroom, spinach and local Jersey ricotta, vegetarian curried butternut, Italian mince, and more.

“We take pride in creating and serving quality treats. We custom-make cakes, cupcakes, finger foods, and brötchen for events and parties. We also host events like paint-and-sip afternoons, where women can learn art while enjoying drinks and cheese. Our garden venue is available for birthdays, christenings, hen parties, small gatherings, high teas, and ladies’ clubs.”

She says their bottled products are also seasonal and market driven.

Homemade ‘Snake Venom’

Dede is not afraid to combine unique flavours to make her products stand out, for instance, her Snake Venom chilli sauce includes cumin and garlic with lemon, while her hot sauce is made with serrano and dhania.

“My Ring Sting is a chunky chilli relish, offering a fiery burst of red or green chillies combined with a hint of vinegar and secret spices.”

It seems there is nothing Dede cannot transform into jam, pickle, relish, or sauce – and this is not where it ends: She also makes liqueurs, “and we sell our own blend of kombucha, pesto, pâtés, dips, and crudité crunch companions for cheese and wine”.

“We even produce Makataan konfynt and pawpaw jam.”

She says the establishment serves all its homemade sauces in the restaurant with meals.

The fresh breads Dede bakes on Saturdays are becoming popular because of their variety and freshness. “I normally start baking at 02h00 to finish the artisan breads, which are also made from scratch.”

These include Italian flatbreads topped with feta, tomatoes, onions, cheese, and more. Dede also bakes gluten-free bread, seed loaf, dill rye, banana bread, tramezzini, keto flatbreads, and ciabattas.

Cherry On Top

“We also sell puddings on Saturdays: malva pudding, Dutch apple tart, milk tart, and sometimes vetkoek and lemon meringue. It all depends on how I feel and what I have on special.”

Dede says she wants to make sure people realise there is more to Okahandja.

“You don’t always have to disappear.” ❖



Kgalagadi

Transfrontier Park

words by Michelangelo Magazine | photographs by Steve Newbould



Where red dunes and dry riverbeds define a transfrontier wilderness shared by Botswana and South Africa — easily reached via Mata-Mata from Namibia.

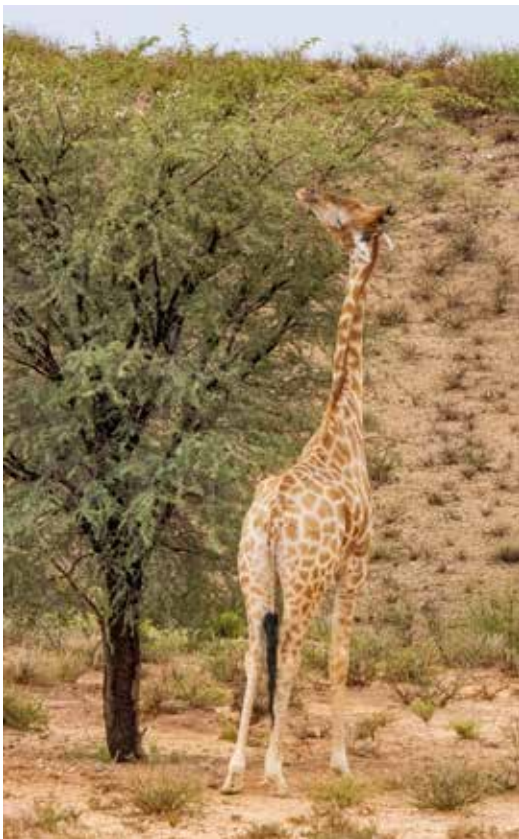
Kgalagadi is stark, spacious and quietly spectacular. It's vast, spare and brutally beautiful, a place where the usually dry Nossob and Auob riverbeds act as wildlife highways and the light turns every dune into a photograph. Shared by Botswana and South Africa, and easily reached from Namibia via Mata-Mata, it's one of the region's most striking desert safari landscapes.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



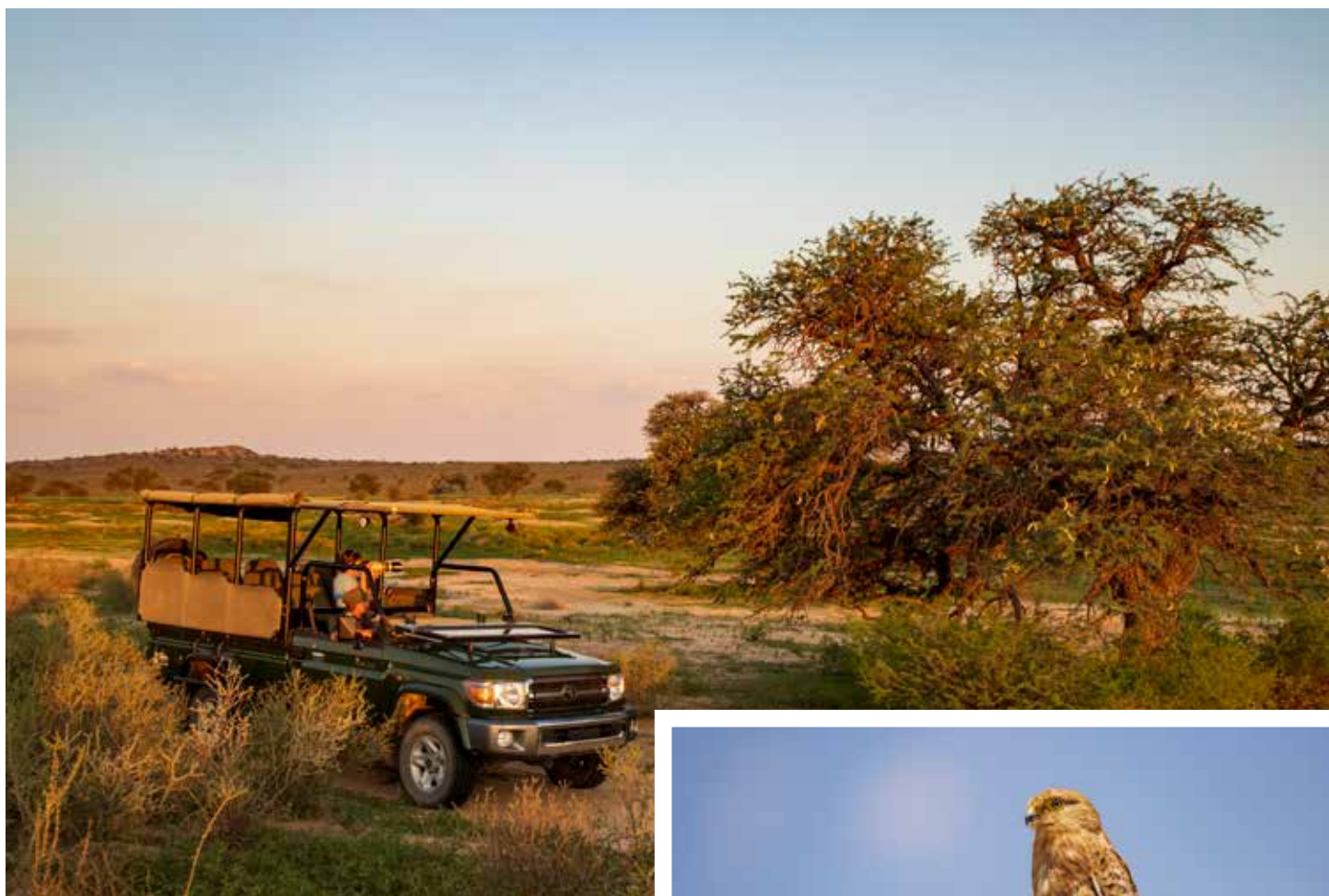
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Annual global travel numbers now exceed the entire world population of a century ago.

KGALAGADI AT A GLANCE

- Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is shared by Botswana and South Africa, spanning over 3.6 million hectares.
- It was formally launched on 12 May 2000 as southern Africa's first peace park.
- The Auob and Nossob riverbeds are mostly dry, flowing briefly after exceptional rain.
- The Auob last flowed in 1973 and 1974, and the Nossob last flowed in 1964.
- Access is through five gates in three countries, including Twee Rivieren and Mata-Mata.
- Day visitors entering via Mata-Mata must show passports to Namibian immigration officials.
- For cross-border routes, immigration controls are done at Twee Rivieren, and a two-night minimum may apply.
- Twee Rivieren is the park's main camp and HQ, with 24-hour electricity and cell reception.
- Mata-Mata Rest Camp sits on the Auob River and borders Namibia along the park's western edge.
- SANParks lists 272 bird species for the park, supported by riverbed habitats and camel thorn.



If you want Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park at its best, slow down. Pick a waterhole, switch the engine off, and let the desert do the talking, dust in the light, wind in the camel thorns, and tracks writing stories across the riverbeds. It's not a place you rush through. It's a place that rewards patience, sharp eyes, and long quiet stretches between sightings. And when you drive back out through Mata-Mata into Namibia, you don't leave with a checklist. You leave with dust on your dash and the desert still in your head. ❖

Clouds can weigh over one million kilograms,
despite appearing weightless.



Quiet Impact: Leading with purpose and persistent progress

For most of my career, I have been the observer—the one listening closely, analyzing quietly, and finding meaning in the details others overlook. Over the past 30 years in marketing, advertising, and project management, I’ve learned that my strength is not in making noise; it is in bringing clarity, calm, and purpose to whatever I touch.

I never planned to work in marketing or development. I once imagined becoming a lawyer or a doctor, yet life gently guided me toward business management, sustainable development, and eventually into roles where my natural strengths could grow. My curiosity, compassion, and commitment to transparency led me into projects that needed structure, honesty, and a steady hand. Before long, I became the person teams relied on when they needed direction, or someone who could tell the truth with kindness.

Today, as the Acting Executive Officer of the Meatco Foundation, those same values guide me. I am proud of the work we do as Meatco’s corporate social investment vehicle because it elevates communities. It brings opportunities to farmers who work tirelessly. It strengthens livelihoods. It plants seeds of change that grow into something lasting.

Every project we support, every farmer we empower, every community we help uplift is a reminder of why this work matters. These are not just activities on paper—they represent people,

families, and futures. Behind every strategy is a story; behind every outcome is a household; behind every number is a name woven into the ongoing pursuit of sustainability and progress.

What fuels me most is people. I believe in bridges, not walls. I believe teams thrive when communication is honest and respectful. I believe leadership is not measured by

volume, but by intention.

My colleagues often joke that whenever a challenge arises and someone asks, “What do we do?” the answer is always, “Just DO”—a playful nod to my initials, but also a principle I live by: Do the right thing. Do it with heart. Do it consistently.

My role has never been about being the loudest voice. It is about bringing clarity where there is confusion, direction where there is uncertainty, and calm where there is pressure. I strive to create environments where people feel seen, supported, and empowered—because when people feel

grounded, they shine.

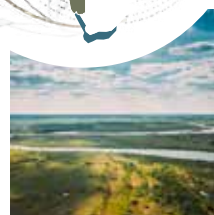
I don’t chase perfection or praise. I pursue purpose and progress, persistently. And if my journey inspires even one young woman to embrace the quiet strength of her own authentic voice, then I am grateful. Because your power is not in your volume; your power is in your authenticity.

That belief continues to guide my life and my work. 🌱



Dalia Olivier, Acting Executive Officer — Meatco Foundation

**“Do the right thing.
Do it with heart.
Do it consistently...”**



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Werner Bachmann, founder and visionary behind the Namibia Pie Company.

Marathon man of Walvis Bay's race to deliver 400 000 pies a month

words and photographs by Linda de Jager



Uwe and Hetta Bachmann: pillars of the Walvis Bay community.

Many a traveller in Namibia stops at a service station for a quick pie on the way home or on holiday.

Little do they know most of these pies are from the Namibian Pie Company.

Based at Walvis Bay, the start-up was founded by businessman Werner Bachmann in 2018, best known as the former owner of Top Liquors at the harbour town.

He sold his first business in 2017, then partnered with Excelsior Pies in Vredenburg and started the Namibian pie factory with 10 workers on 1 August 2018.

Today, the company sells about 400 000 pies to Namibian supermarkets and service stations each month.

“Pies are popular because they are an affordable, on-the-go meal,” Bachmann says.

Customers typically pay between N\$25 and N\$30 for a pie, he adds.

The Namibian Pie Company specialises in high-quality

frozen pies, pastries, pizzas, and samosas. Operating on a wholesale basis, passersby can stop at 17 Eighth Street East in Walvis Bay’s industrial area to pick up stock and enjoy a coffee.

But that’s not all: Werner’s brother, Uwe Jr, runs a bakery alongside the factory, called Artisan Bread Bakery, specialising in sourdough breads, brötchens, cakes and biscuits.

This is the perfect stop to buy supplies en route to Solitaire or Sossusvlei, or before heading out for a day on the sea.

The customer is always right

Bachmann says initially, he didn’t realise the scale at which his team would be supplying pies.

“We even supply faraway towns like Katima Mulilo and Oranjemund with fresh pies. One of the company’s key distributors is Seapride Foods in Windhoek,” he says.

Like with any business, the biggest challenges are cash flow and customer service.



“If there’s an issue with a pie, it should be resolved quickly; customers don’t want to wait. Even if they phone us over a weekend to say they’ve run out of pies, we resolve it immediately.”

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Bachmann says he learned that taking on heavy debts can really harm a business. His advice to new businesses is to keep debt levels as low as possible.

Another tip is to choose the right location.

“It can make all the difference,” he says. Finding the right spot should come before securing bank loans, Bachmann advises.

His factory shop is located inside an office building, where passing pedestrians help bring in customers. Similarly, his liquor store was situated on a busy street, drawing plenty of foot traffic.

‘Cheap meal, not cheap product’

“I wanted to introduce Namibia to a factory shop that keeps prices relatively low, also for frozen pies,” Bachmann says.

“I aim to offer them to customers at wholesale prices. They can also buy pizzas; I’m busy expanding the range.”

People must always eat, he says.

“And it’s a cheap meal, not a cheap product. We use the best ingredients, but it’s still an affordable meal. Our biggest seller is sausage rolls, and the second is pepper steak. I prefer the pepper steak.”

Bachmann Namibia is a notoriously tough environment for starting a new business.

“I saw it while running the liquor store as well. Even though I am a born and bred Walvis Bay person, it took me four years to start supplying the catamarans taking tourists out and other boats with cool drinks and liquor.”

Bachmann grew up at Walvis Bay and attended school at the town. He gained 17 years’ valuable work experience from his parents, Uwe and Hetta, who owned four supermarkets.

“During this time, I learned how to do business, how to make a profit from it, and how to treat customers,” he says.

“There is no doubt we face a challenge with customer service locally – people aren’t as proficient in customer



service as they are in South Africa. We have much to learn.”

The most valuable lesson he has learnt from running his first business is that customer service is crucial, he says.

“Price is further down a customer’s list. I must give the customer a nice store and atmosphere, and the staff must provide him with good customer service.”

He says he has the same approach to his pie business.

“I do the same with my distributors through regular meetings, and if I face a problem, I resolve it with my team immediately.”

Bachmann says he also believes in a hands-on approach to his business.

“All decisions and buy-ins must go through me, because then I know what’s happening.

“My main focus is managing my team, following in my dad’s footsteps. He is now semi-retired, but we still keep it in the family.”

Running on pies

When he’s not running his business, Bachmann is literally running.

He is well known in Walvis Bay’s running circles and has finished more than 15 Comrades Marathons and 80 marathons since 1984.

“After winning a 1 200m race at school in 1984, I was inspired to take on marathon running.”

Running clears his head, he says.

“It has become a daily practice, and I find joy in the camaraderie shared among runners. I often check if I can still finish the Comrades Marathon, which I consider a testament to my dedication to and passion for long-distance running.”

During long runs, fellow runners show remarkable support, he says.

“This sense of community and mutual care is what keeps me passionate about running.”

And the Bachmanns also bring this sense of community to Namibian Pie Company, with many old Walvis Bay residents coming in and out of the shop, making small talk alongside visiting tourists. ❀

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Yellowwood Cottage

A serene, off-grid hideaway where fynbos meets the sea in Churchhaven, right on Langebaan Lagoon

edited by Anne Schauffer | photographs supplied

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Escape to the beach! Yellowwood Cottage almost gets its toes wet sitting right on Langebaan Lagoon, on the West Coast of the Cape. It's entirely off-grid, and houses six adults and two children in four bedrooms - perfect for a private celebration, little retreat from real life, or family time.

Steps from the water's edge, nestled in coastal fynbos, you'll find the delightfully curated Yellowwood Cottage in Churchhaven, a small, private settlement within the West Coast National Park, about 90 minutes from Cape Town.

Surrounded by a myriad of fynbos species and set along the calm waters of the Langebaan Lagoon, it's one of the Cape's most peaceful and untouched coastal areas. Life here moves slowly, shaped by the tides, early swims, quiet walks, birdsong, and the sight of flamingos wading in the shallows.

With regulated park access and no through-traffic, Churchhaven offers a deep sense of stillness, seclusion, and connection to nature. Access is via a private gate to the reserve, with gate hours and SANParks rules to be adhered to.

Yellowwood Cottage is built in the style of Churchhaven's original cottages. You'll find a warm blend

of natural materials such as camphor wood, rattan, and screeded floors, with soft, neutral tones as an extension of the surrounding landscape. The open-plan interior is fresh, light and contemporary in a delightfully subtle way.

You'll love the wood-burning fireplaces and comfy sofas in the three king-size bedrooms, as well as the artworks and tactile textures. There are four en suite bedrooms, three with king-size beds, one with bunks.

The cottage runs entirely off-grid, powered by solar energy, yet offers all the modern comforts: gas stove, high-quality appliances, Wi-Fi, hot water, and thoughtful finishes throughout. Whether you're gathered around the braai or outdoor dining area, stretched out on the veranda, or soaking up the stillness of the lagoon, Yellowwood invites you to settle in and slow down.

The activities here are sensational for outdoor lovers. Enjoy the private Churchhaven Beach, mountain and road biking, walking trails, Kraalbaai and Preekstoel Beaches, Posberg Flower Reserve, Geelbek Farmhouse and Museum, wildlife watching, birding, and golf. ❖

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- ENT
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6000**
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SINCE 2012

WE ARE VERY SAFE
(complication rate <1%,
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- Treatment for Palpitations & Blackouts
- Heart Ultrasound (Echocardiography)
- ECG, 24-hour Heart & Blood Pressure Monitoring
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- Bypass Surgery (CABG)
- Heart Valve Replacement Surgery
- Various other heart procedures



Dr Du Toit
Cardiothoracic Surgeon



Dr Hugo-Hamman
Paediatric Cardiologist



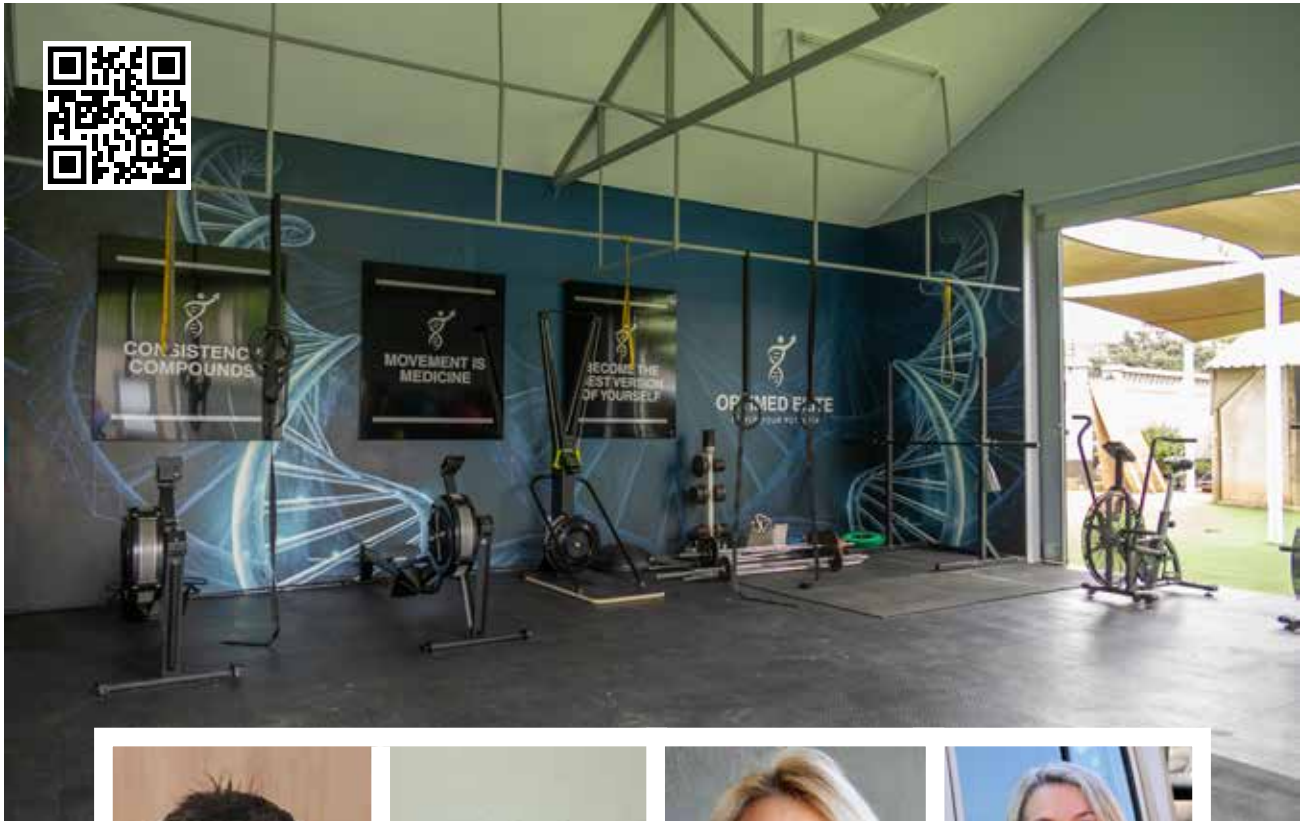
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Cardiologist

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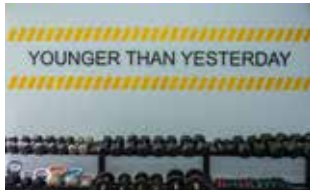
Marco Erasmus - Before and After OptiMED Elite



Marlice van Vuuren - Before and After OptiMED Elite

**Start the Year
Younger** — At a
Cellular Level

*Where science meets personal
transformation and turns intent
into lifelong health and vitality.*



Imagine becoming younger. Not metaphorically. Not “feeling younger.” Actually, biologically younger.

The program designed by Dr. Rudie van Vuuren was created to unlock human potential and help people become the best physical and mental version of themselves. It was first tested on himself and the N/a'an ku sê team.

The results were undeniable. Energy heightened. Strength improved. Metabolic markers shifted. And yes, biological age decreased.

Naturally, curiosity followed: If this works so effectively for us... could it help others too? OptiMED Elite was born.

A Legacy of Improving Lives

From these early successes emerged a familiar sense of purpose. N/a'an ku sê itself began with a simple commitment to uplift lives, first in Epukiro, where the vision for meaningful change took root and grew into the organisation we know today.

OptiMED Elite is an evolution of that legacy. A continuation of the mission to improve lives, now through the lens of science-driven health and longevity.

Where Purpose Meets Wellness

As the concept matured, the vision became clear: A health transformation program. Not a gym. Not a diet. A medically guided, scientifically grounded journey capable of changing lives from the inside out.

Soon, word spread within the N/a'an ku sê Foundation. Team members - who spend their days rescuing wildlife, supporting communities, guiding guests, and running lodges—began stepping into the training space behind Rooster & Co and those established at the lodges. For many, it was the first time their own health had been prioritised.

Week by week, something inspiring unfolded: Confidence rose. Posture improved. Energy lifted. Bloodwork changed. Physically, mentally, emotionally -

even biologically - people began to show up younger.

OptiMED Elite had become more than a program. It became a movement built on science, purpose, and personal transformation.

Now, For the First Time, It Opens to the Public

After months of internal success, OptiMED Elite is ready for its next chapter. You can now experience what began as an internal wellbeing mission: the possibility of becoming biologically younger.

This deeply personalised program, with medical oversight, continuous diagnostics, and one-on-one coaching, is open to only a limited number of participants per cycle. This exclusivity is intentional.

It ensures every participant receives the same precision, care, and measurable results that transformed the lives of our team.

What the Journey Looks Like

Your six-month transformation is guided by a multidisciplinary expert team and built entirely on data, not guesswork.

You'll receive a full medical exam and comprehensive blood panel, precision-designed nutrition and exercise based on your biomarkers, biokinetic testing for strength, mobility, and cardiovascular health, weekly one-on-one movement coaching, and continuous optimisation driven by real-time results. Progress is measured by your biological age, the number that matters most.

Every element is engineered specifically for your body and metabolism. No templates. No generic programs. No mass coaching. Just precision. Just results.

2026: The Year of the Younger You

A new year usually brings resolutions. This one brings something far more meaningful: the chance to grow younger. ❖

**POWER YOUR
POTENTIAL**

Due to the personalised nature of the six-month transformation, places are strictly limited. For more information about medical screening and program availability, visit us at 66 Barella Street in Klein Windhoek.

The Last Word

words by Chris Coetzee



I recently stumbled across an article that left me baffled: Global Artificial Intelligence now consumes roughly the same amount of electricity each day as the entire nation of Botswana, and 50–70 million litres of water just to stay cool. Some forecasts say that could reach 200 million litres a day by 2030.

As if that weren't curious enough, that very same week I came across another article, this time on Polokwane. The city is nowhere near the world's extreme danger zones, yet it comfortably falls into the category of "manageable with caution."

And these are not my words; I quote: "By day, mostly fine in the right areas." The irony? Polokwane, in Sepedi, translates to "Place of Safety."

But the real kicker of the week was this: Mosquitoes don't have a bladder. None. Zero. Not even a tiny backup tank. So what do they do? They drink your blood... and immediately start processing it. And the leftovers are expelled right there on the job. Meaning: They are casually peeing on you. The arrogance is astonishing.

Now, you may wonder what ties all of this together. In truth — nothing at all. But in today's world, we quietly navigate a maze of modern confusions: flight cancellations that appear without warning, software updates that arrive precisely when we're in a hurry, and solemn articles like "The Poison You Never Meant to Eat" or "What Happens When You Microwave Plastic."

And so, like any adaptable species, we carry on...

For all of you, I wish a year that rises far above

expectation. And yet, between these lines, let us be honest: the noise will grow louder, the headlines more dramatic, and the world will certainly not pause in its relentless pursuit of capitalism and consumerism.

Which brings me to this month's Michelangelo Magazine Approved Destination.

At this time of year, the air hangs heavy: boiling hot, drenched with sudden rains, and humming with life — a world not unlike the turbulent, ever-shifting realm of news and Artificial Intelligence.

But in the Zambezi Region, where 8,000–10,000 elephants move with the assurance of creatures who have seen centuries come and go, the world softens. It feels almost like stepping back into a memory, raw, unhurried, and untouched by the urgency of modern life.

It is here, beneath a Zambezi sky, that you are far more likely to rediscover your own *ikigai*, your quiet reason for being, than on any screen asking you to "upgrade to premium."

In this first chapter of a new year, perhaps the wisest thing we can do is step back from the glow of the screen and into landscapes that glow on their own. The elephants of the Zambezi are not trying to impress us. They simply move, remember, protect, and endure. And in that simple, ancient choreography is a lesson no algorithm can teach. Remember this: Not once has a Zambezi elephant asked you to accept cookies.

Choose your giants wisely. 🐘



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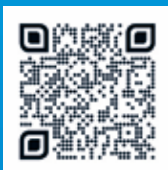
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