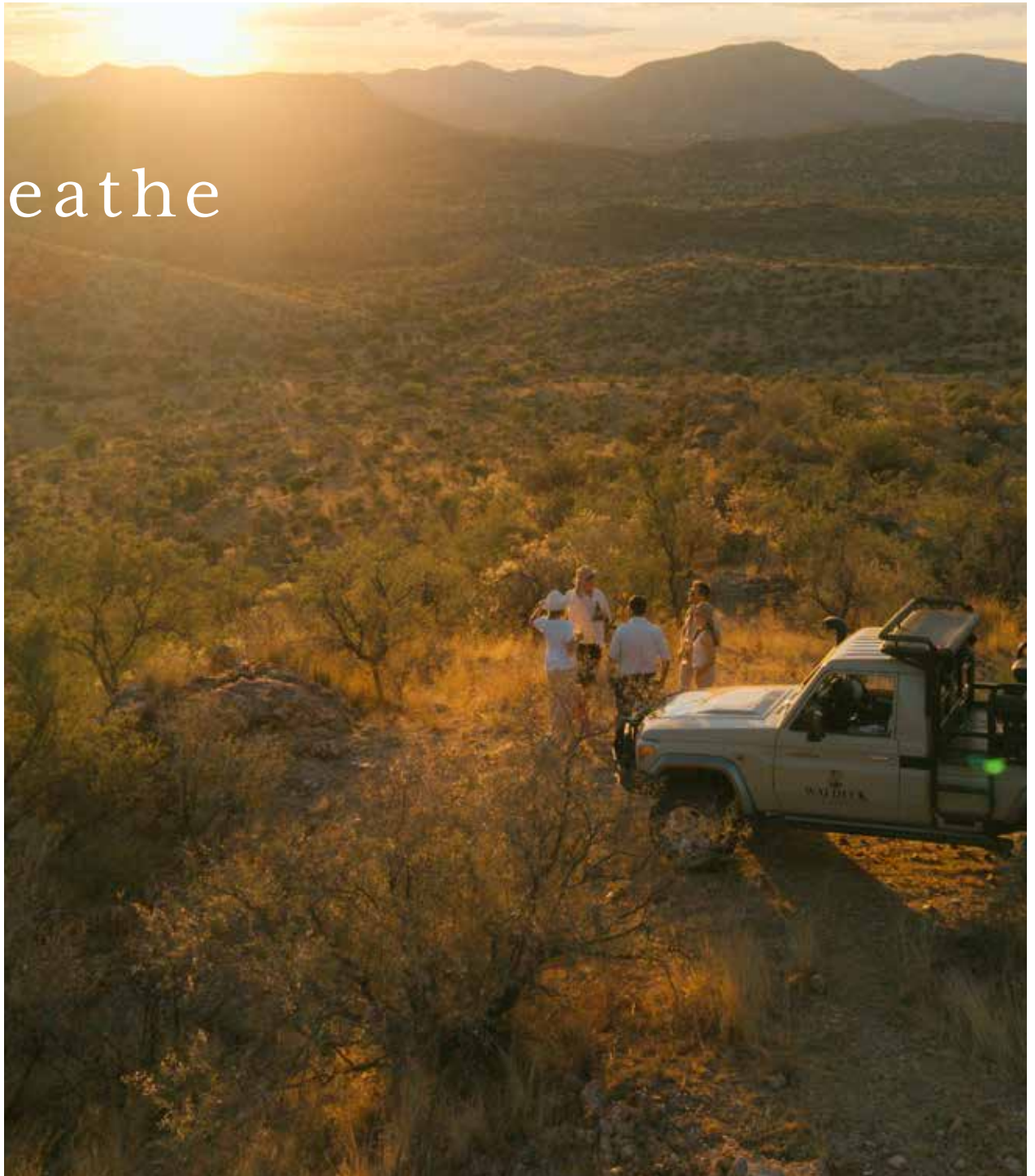


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IN FLIGHT. IN ROOM. IN AFRICA

MAY 2026

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*A reflection on memory,
sacrifice and the shared future
carried by every Namibian child*

Dear readers,

On the 25th May 1963, delegates from 32 African countries that had just attained independence, convened to form the Organization of the African Union (OAU), signaling the commencement of a new path and identity for the people of the African continent.

The month of May thus invites us, as Namibians, to reflect not only on our origins as a nation, but on the future we are shaping together. Similarly, May also brings with it, a somber reminder of our past, most notably Cassinga Day and Genocide Remembrance Day, where we remember those Namibians who faced untold brutality. In remembering those who suffered, we renew our collective responsibility and ensure that the future we continue to build together belongs to every Namibian.

Namibia's story will always form part of a greater continental journey, one that continues to advance with resilience, unity, and growing confidence. Our journey remains closely linked to that of our continent we proudly call home.

This month also calls us to acknowledge, with deep appreciation, the enduring contribution of Namibian workers across every sector of our society. From our farms and fishing grounds to our classrooms, clinics, ports, mines, businesses, and public institutions, it is the hands

of our workers that built the roads we travel, strengthened the foundations of our democracy, and shaped the social infrastructure that sustains our national life. Yours is not only the work that built our country — it is the work that continues, each day, to carry Namibia forward with dignity.

Dear Namibian child, you should know that you are part of something larger, a country shaped by courage, strengthened by diversity, and connected to Africa and the world. Looking back across the decades, one is reminded how far Namibia has travelled. The Namibian child of today grows up in a country that is independent, peaceful, and globally connected in ways earlier generations could only hope for. It is now their ideas, their innovation, and their sense of responsibility that will shape the next chapter of our national story.

In this month of remembrance, we are reminded that Namibia's journey has always belonged to all her people — those who came before us, those who walk beside us today, and those who will carry our nation forward into the generations to come.

Above all, to every Namibian child, in every corner of our country:

This is your Namibia — its memory, its strength, and its future. 🌍



The Rarest Luxury

*In an increasingly crowded world,
Namibia's silence has become the
rarest luxury of all*

SEBULON CHICALU
Chief Executive Officer
Namibia Tourism Board



Dear readers,

As of 2026, the global population has reached approximately 8.3 billion people. In 1950, there were only 2.5 billion. Today, Germany is home to about 84 million people, and France to nearly 68 million. Namibia, by comparison, has just 3.3 million.

At first glance, one might assume this simply means Namibia has space waiting to be filled. The truth, however, is far more profound. Namibia is shaped by two great desert systems: the Namib Desert, the oldest desert on Earth, and the vast Kalahari Desert, one of the largest continuous sand formations on the planet. The Namib Desert has endured for more than 55 million years and is unlikely to change any time soon. The Kalahari, meanwhile, stretches across roughly 900,000 square kilometres of southern Africa. Even if its boundary shifted by one kilometre per year — already a remarkably energetic pace for a desert — it would still take thousands of years to noticeably change the map. In other words, the Kalahari is not going anywhere soon.

Unlike the gemsbok (oryx), which can survive for months without drinking water, humans insist on habits such as water and shade. We stayed near taps. The result? Namibia remains one of the least densely populated places on Earth.

This makes Namibia not merely a destination; it is a rare encounter with the Earth in one of its oldest and most revealing forms. It is a land where silence carries memory, where ancient shadows move slowly across dunes shaped over millions of years, and where resilience is written into both landscape and people alike.

On behalf of the Namibia Tourism Board, I invite you to step into a country where nature, heritage, and human

warmth come together to create an experience that changes perspective. To the west, the Atlantic Ocean meets the stark beauty of the Skeleton Coast, where desert and sea converge in dramatic contrast. To the south, the great dunes of Sossusvlei stand as monuments to geological time, while in the northeast, the rivers of the Zambezi Region bring life to rich wetlands and wildlife. From the salt pans of Etosha National Park to the striking landscapes of Damaraland, Namibia offers something increasingly rare in today's world: space — true, uninterrupted space.

Beneath some of the clearest night skies on Earth, there is a heartbeat — and it is the people of Namibia: a living tapestry of cultures, languages, and traditions sustained by dignity, unity, and shared respect. At the Namibia Tourism Board, our mission is guided by a singular conviction: tourism must be a force for good. Namibia leads the world in community-based conservation, ensuring that local communities remain the primary guardians and beneficiaries of the land. Our commitment to sustainability is a promise to future generations. By choosing Namibia, you support a model of travel that empowers people and protects endangered wildlife. What a remarkable privilege this is.

Whether you arrive with a backpack or by private charter, Namibia's hospitality and landscapes remain rare and truly special. In an increasingly crowded world, Namibia remains a place of profound authenticity. I extend a warm personal invitation to explorers, dreamers, and seekers from every corner of the globe.

In a world of 8.3 billion people, Namibia's space and silence are no longer ordinary — they are both a luxury and a rarity. Enjoy this month's read. 🌍



breathe



Waldeck Namibia
Luxury Lodges

ON THE COVER:

Seclusion, sophistication and sweeping views define Waldeck, a quietly luxurious escape just beyond Windhoek. Turn to page 12

Cover image supplied by
Waldeck Namibia Luxury Lodge
waldecknamibia.com



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Namibia Tourism Board

Michelangelo Magazine supports responsible tourism. We encourage readers to book only with Namibia Tourism Board-registered properties and operators.

On behalf of the Michelangelo Magazine Team
Proudly Namibian | Globally Positioned



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Waldeck – An Oasis Of Sophistication

*Seclusion, sophistication and sweeping views
just beyond Windhoek*

edited by Anne Schaffer | photographs supplied

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Sitting at the heart of Namibia's Khomas region, you'll find Waldeck Namibia Luxury Lodge, available to only one group at a time, an exclusive retreat that catapults you from your other life... to this luxurious, personalised one.

It's set in the extreme beauty of the landscape, overwhelmingly tranquil, exclusive and personalised. That's Waldeck Lodge, sitting quietly on a 16,000-hectare farm — home to over 6,000 animals of many species — just 45 km south of central Windhoek, and 85 km from Hosea Kutako International Airport. It offers easy proximity to the travel hub, yet feels like a million miles away, offering seclusion in a breathtaking landscape. A stay at Waldeck Lodge offers you the choice of a complete escape, a retreat into nature, or, on the flipside, as much exploration and activity as you can handle.

Step into the sophisticated main lodge and you'll instantly feel welcomed into an inviting, enticing communal space.

There's an elegant bar and sitting area, a luxurious dining area, and a TV room with a billiard table. The terrace is wonderfully spacious, with two large sitting areas, a fireplace and an outside dining table overlooking the pool area. From there, you'll enjoy sensational views over the lake and its superlative birdlife. The nearby boma has a fireplace and pizza oven, so you can relax, wine and dine under the stars.

You'll fall in love with the sensational food at Waldeck — it's considered a key part of the Waldeck experience, and you'll see why. Daily gourmet meals are prepared using the freshest produce, with field-to-table game, homegrown vegetables and freshly laid eggs. There's a wonderfully curated selection of fine beverages, including handcrafted cocktails, carefully chosen South African wines, locally brewed beers and spirits from all over the world.

Waldeck's focus on privacy and exclusivity is clear in that

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—TRAVEL—



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Zambia borders eight countries – more than most nations worldwide.

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—TRAVEL—



there are only six superb villas, including two two-bedroom villas and four one-bedroom villas. Each is not only bespoke, but light, airy and spacious, with every corner stylishly curated with touches of African culture. You'll have your own separate sitting area with a fireplace, minibar and coffee station, and the en suite bathroom includes an outdoor shower. Your private terrace has inviting sunbeds and comfortable lounge furniture, ideal for lazing and gazing out at the sensational view. This is how you spell relaxation.

The goal of the Waldeck team is always to ensure you get precisely what you want and need from your stay. The 24-hour dedicated butler service is just part of how they achieve that; the private chef is yet another. Whether it's breakfast at sunrise or dinner under the stars, each dish is crafted to your personal desire. You can also enjoy an outdoor breakfast or dine in nature, with expertly prepared dishes served in breathtaking outdoor settings — a truly magical way to connect with Namibia's wilderness.

Nature, too, is an integral part of the Waldeck experience and is undoubtedly considered a catalyst for the promised tranquillity and relaxation. You can join a guided game drive

whenever it takes your fancy, whether at sunrise or sunset. Your personal guide will not only share his knowledge with you but ensure you have an unforgettable drive. Walks are superlative on the farm, and you'll be able to immerse yourself in the diverse flora and fauna of the landscape. Waldeck's bird list is impressive, and twitchers, enthusiasts and the simply curious are likely to see everything from a giant Kori Bustard to a Secretary Bird.

A well-equipped gym and heated swimming pool are there for fitness — even fun — and the spa and sauna offer the deep relaxation you're longing for. Skilled therapists provide a variety of massages.

And for those who enjoy a challenge, Waldeck has target and clay pigeon shooting. You can be a beginner or a skilled marksman — no matter — expert guidance will have you spot-on in a short space of time. The scenic setting makes it particularly enjoyable.

Untamed beauty with refined luxury, that's the Waldeck Namibia Luxury Lodge mantra. Whether you're looking for downtime or an uplift, stillness or movement, a break from reality or an intense refresh, you'll find it offered at Waldeck. 🦅



Gwarrie Tree Lodge

*Where Karoo stillness
meets rugged adventure
and quiet escape*

edited by Anne Schaffer | photographs supplied

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Planning a little getaway to big landscapes? A remote tree lodge in the Eastern Cape answers all your questions about nature and hideaways.

Gwarrie Tree Lodge at Kleinrivier Mountain Escapes is sensational. It accommodates four guests in two bedrooms and ticks every single box for seclusion and immersion in nature. Sitting pretty in a vast 3,000-hectare wilderness area just 70 km from Port Elizabeth – north of Uitenhage – it's ideal for small families, nature lovers, couples or artists looking for their next unspoilt landscape painting.

Kleinrivier Mountain Escapes is a paradise for hikers, birders and breakaways. There is game on the property, but none of the Big Five, so it's entirely safe to walk and explore the many trails on your own. Five species of antelope occur here naturally, and you could encounter klipspringer, kudu, impala and wildebeest, to name a few. Reptiles are king in this dry environment, the most common being the 'Bloukop koggelmanders', which scuttle out of your way on the trails. The scenery in the Kleinrivier gorge is

spectacularly beautiful, and there are frequent pools to tempt you in on a hot summer day.

By walking and exploring the remote Winterhoek Mountains, you'll encounter Karoo fauna and flora simply by heading in the opposite direction. The mountains are clad in this unique flora, comprising literally thousands of different fynbos species.

Accommodation in the lodge is delightful, with one bedroom furnished with a king-size bed or twins, and the other with a queen-sized bed. You'll share a bathroom fitted with a shower, basin and toilet, and if you're adventurous, you'll love the outdoor shower.

The living area includes a modern kitchen equipped with a fridge-freezer, gas stove, microwave, cutlery and crockery, as well as tea- and coffee-making facilities and a central six-seater dining table. Adjacent to the kitchen, the lounge offers ample comfortable seating, with clear glass sliding doors opening to a 180-degree view of the Karoo landscape. Whether you're alone, with friends or family, nothing beats

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—TRAVEL—



18 | MAY 2026



the company of that view.

Surrounded by mountains, indigenous vegetation and abundant wildlife, Gwarrie Tree Lodge is the perfect retreat for both relaxation and adventure. You can unwind on the covered patio with outdoor furniture and braai facilities, cool off in the splash pool, and enjoy secure parking while embracing the serenity of this unique wilderness setting.

The exquisite surrounds themselves are the reason to stay at Gwarrie Tree Lodge, but there are other related little treats, like the rock pools. The mountain pools are seasonal and dependent on local rainfall, but swimming in them is such a wonderful experience. For those keen to put their best foot — or pedal — forward, the owners have created no fewer than 12 trails for hikers and bikers.

Gwarrie Tree Lodge is a wonderful getaway from it all. You'll be a return guest, for sure.

Do note that there is a gravel road leading to the accommodation, and you'll need to enquire about the road's condition before arrival — it could be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. 🌀

<https://www.lifetree-escapes.co.za/stays/gwarrie-tree-lodge>

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Am Weinberg – Namibia’s Only True Five-Star Lifestyle Estate

*A refined residential retreat overlooking
Windhoek’s most exclusive valley*



Am Weinberg prestigious residential estate offers an unparalleled lifestyle in a supremely secure oasis, with the most spectacular views over and beyond the city of Windhoek.

The landmark Am Weinberg residential estate hugs the contours of Roman Hill in the well-established, sought-after Klein Windhoek Valley, an exclusive enclave which offers the most spectacular views. On an estate two hectares in size, Am Weinberg is intentionally designed as a fully integrated lifestyle environment, and the scale allows for a high level of control, maintenance, and an uncompromising approach to world-class security. Am Weinberg operates its own dedicated, estate-wide security team, covering both the residential areas and the broader estate.

At the heart of Am Weinberg is a curated mix of world-class facilities, integrated across the estate rather than centralised in a single clubhouse. The facilities include The Weinberg, an iconic five-star hotel; three of Windhoek's most sought-after restaurants of different culinary styles – Butcher's Block, Olivia's Kitchen, and Cape Town Fish Market; a full-service Life Day Spa; and a well-appointed conference centre. Residents can access both the spa and the hotel gym through membership.

There are 22 contemporary residential properties in total, with a strong architectural emphasis on clean, contemporary lines and terraced forms that maximise views across the valley. The estate consists of fourteen spacious 430 square metre villas positioned at the top of the estate, and eight more compact terrace homes located just below them along the slope of the valley. Both property types are designed as high-end, stylish townhouses with individual splash pools, private terraces or outdoor areas, and an architectural language which speaks to the breathtaking hillside setting and views across the valley. Am Weinberg's executive villas are offered furnished or unfurnished on a long-term rental agreement.

As Namibia's only true five-star lifestyle estate, Am Weinberg combines residential living with a superlatively diverse lifestyle. This effectively creates an environment where residents can live, work, and entertain within a single secure estate. At Am Weinberg, the result is a refined, self-contained community that balances convenience with sophistication.

Rental Rates

Hotel villas around N\$50 000 per night, but longer term annualised contracts around N\$110,000 per month. 🌐



1 9 **&L** 1 9

LEISURE

CHobe WATER VILLAS ZAMBEZI



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WHERE TIME

STANDS STILL

Ruben on Chobe Water Villas, Namibia

The moment I arrived at Chobe Water Villas, everything slowed down. Not in a drowsy, disconnected way but in the best possible sense. A kind of stillness settled over me that I hadn't realised I was missing. The lodge looked extraordinary: genuinely stylish, yet so perfectly woven into its surroundings that it felt less like a building and more like a natural extension of the landscape. My first thought was this: I wished someone close to me could experience this as well.

Suspended over the water's edge, each villa commands a 180-degree view of the Chobe River, Botswana's Sedudu Island and Chobe National Park on the opposite bank. From my private terrace I watched elephant and buffalo herds graze on the floodplains as the light changed across the water. It is the kind of view that makes you put your phone down and simply be present.



THE WILD, UNSCRIPTED MOMENTS

Chobe has a way of delivering exactly the kind of moment you could never plan. One afternoon, I watched a monitor lizard attempt to steal Egyptian goose eggs. What unfolded was a full-on battle. The geese held their ground completely and, against all odds, won. It was raw, real and utterly gripping. That is Chobe Water Villas: no filters, no scripts, just nature doing exactly what it does.

It is the story I keep telling people. Not just the big animals, though there are plenty of those and, seeing them up close, completely undisturbed in their natural environment, is something else entirely. There are also the smaller, unexpected moments in between that stay with you. Sitting quietly, watching it all unfold, there is a genuine sense of serenity and tranquillity that is hard to put into words.



The boat cruises along the river bank among my favourite memories. Quiet, peaceful and deeply still. You drift through the landscape while the world carries on around you. There is something about being out on that water, watching everything unfold at its own pace, that feels genuinely special. It is the kind of experience that recalibrates you.



FOOD, WARMTH AND THE ART OF BEING LOOKED AFTER

I never once felt alone at Chobe, not for a moment. The staff made me feel at home from the start. There was a kind of warmth that cannot be trained, only genuinely felt. O&L's core characteristics of their Persona are authentic, caring and passionate and I discovered the true meaning of these words here at Chobe Water Villas.

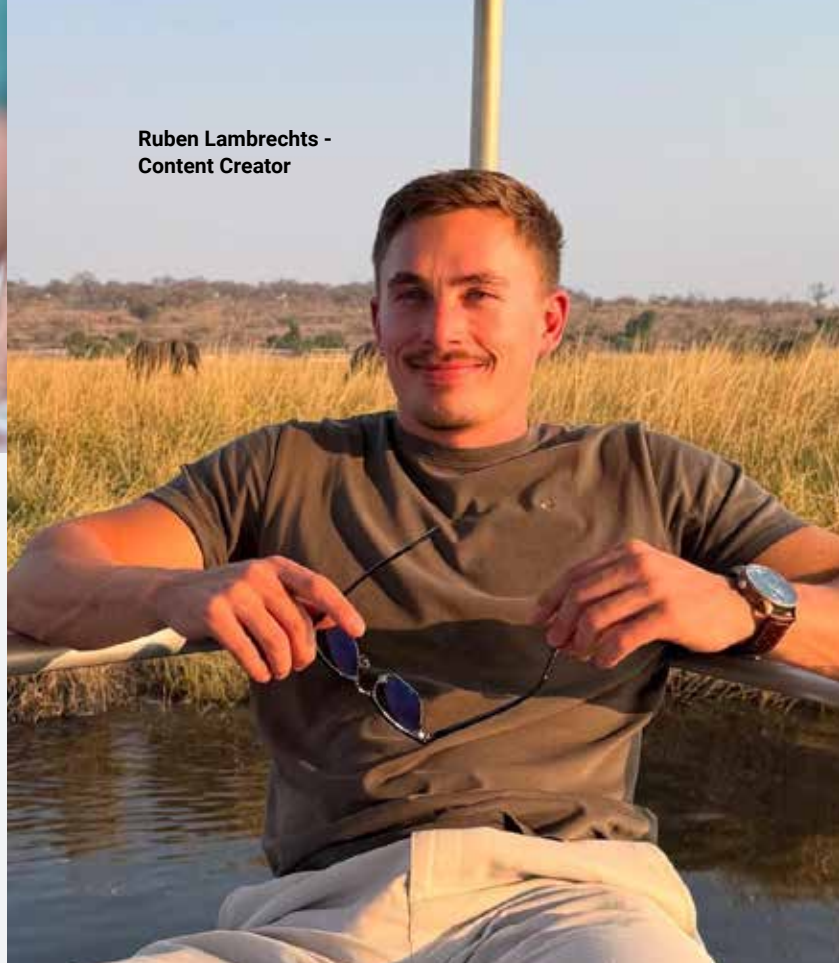
With wildlife active throughout the day and night (and yes, the hippos scratch their backs on the villa stilts), there is always something happening around you, some movement on the water or sound from the treeline that reminds you how alive this place is.

The food matched the setting entirely. Chobe Water Villas offers a full fine dining experience as part of its all-inclusive package. From à la carte breakfasts through to lunch and dinner menus that rotate to showcase a broad range of flavours and food. Nothing feels repetitive and every meal is considered. High Tea beside the Chobe River is its own occasion: scones, pastries, fresh fruit and sweets, paired with premium tea or a glass of sparkling wine, with those views stretching out in front of you. It is the kind of afternoon that deserves to be taken slowly.





**Ruben Lambrechts -
Content Creator**



What I did not anticipate was how seriously I would take the sweet situation – by day three, the gym and I had developed a firm understanding. I showed up, I put the work in and then I went straight back to the High Tea spread. Some cycles are worth repeating.

The Haven Spa rounds out the experience with quiet elegance. Perched above the river, it offers treatments that feel genuinely restorative, with the sounds of the bush as your backdrop and more than 40 wildlife species and 50+ bird species around you.



A PLACE THAT ASKS YOU TO SLOW DOWN

What Chobe gave me, more than anything, was perspective. It made me slow down and appreciate the value of a moment without distraction. You realise quickly that you do not need much - just the right place, at the right pace.

I did not get to everything on this trip and I am glad about that. There is a Cultural Village Dance in Kasika, recreational fishing on the river and a trip to Victoria Falls all waiting for a return visit. Chobe is not a destination you exhaust. It is one you come back to, each time a little more ready to let it do what it does best.

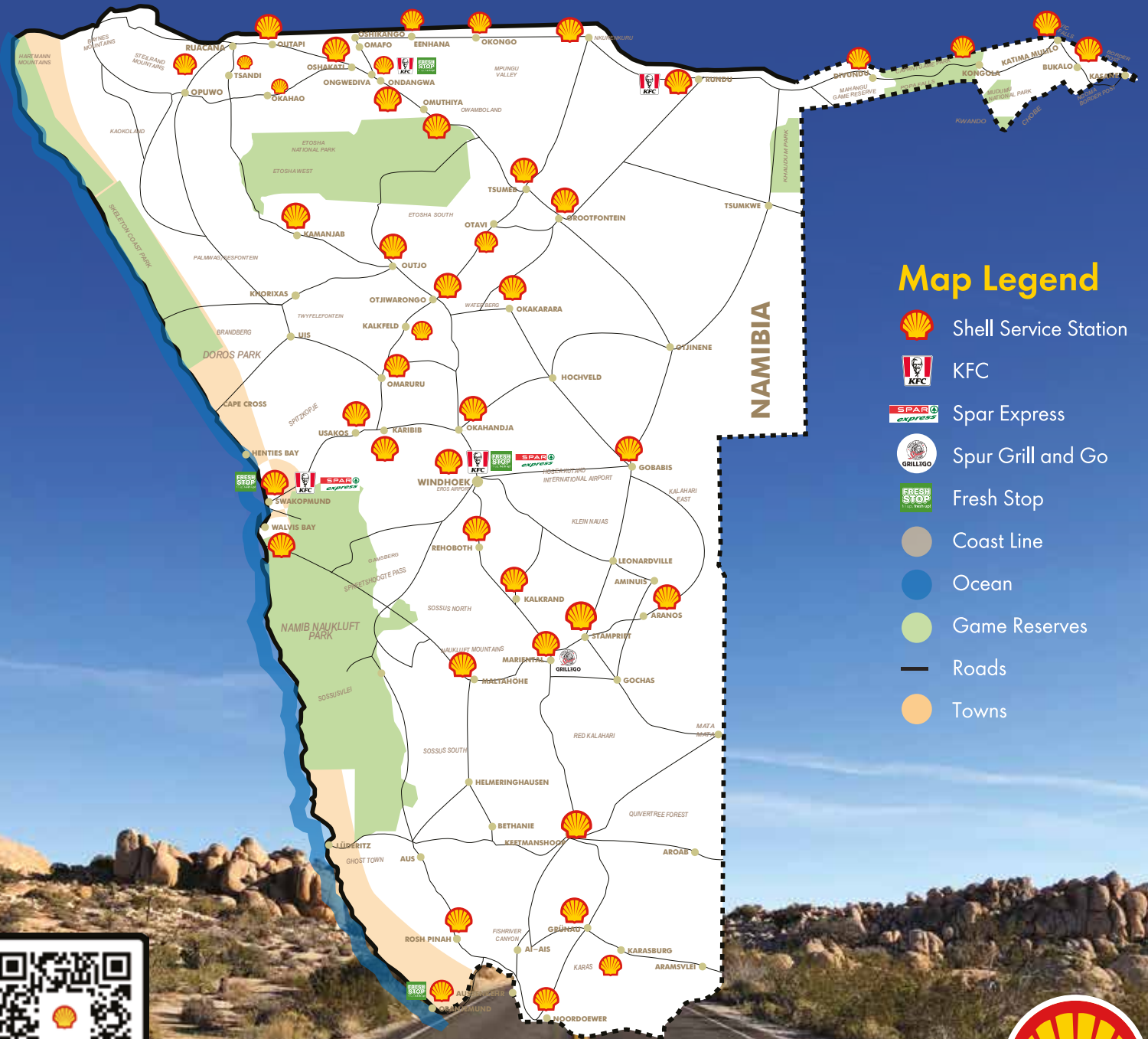
The stories you collect here are not the ones you manufacture. They find you – on the water, at the table, in the bush at dusk. And they stay.












**Slow down
and be still.
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-  Towns



SCAN ME



Family travel is evolving. Instead of the crowds of theme parks, the same old family holidays, parents want something greater, something that brings them closer to nature, culture, and the beauty of discovery. And that's exactly what Namibia provides - the vast open spaces where the curiosity of the what guides the journey, where every trip is a great story to be told, not told within the limits of four walls, but in the open spaces of the Namibian landscape through the various lodges of Gondwana Collection Namibia.



Let us assist you with your unforgettable holiday in Namibia. Scan the QR code:

LITTLE FEET, BIG DREAMS:
EXPLORING NAMIBIA TOGETHER

A family adventure in Namibia can begin in Etosha, where animal encounters bring educational experiences to life in remarkable ways. Staying in places like Etosha Safari Camp or Etosha Safari Lodge puts the family in close proximity to one of the most spectacular ecosystems on earth. Morning drives can provide children with lessons on the importance of patience and observation as they learn to spot tracks, observe elephant herds concentrating around waterholes, or simply try to absorb the guide's explanations of the intricate relationship between predators and prey. It's not just about seeing animals; it's about appreciating the way the wild works and respecting nature in all its forms.

Within the plains and wildlife areas found in Etosha, families can travel south to experience the famous Namib Desert. Here, families can create a playground for adventure and creative thinking around the massive sand dunes found at Gondwana's Namib Desert Lodge or The Desert Grace. The children can learn about the changing winds and how they shape this remarkable environment, while at the same time, adults can experience a new sense of wonder at almost anything. The opportunity to visit the Namib at sunrise provides adventure and contemplation, as the changing hues create an almost surreal effect upon the sandy dunes, colours ranging from gold to deep oranges.

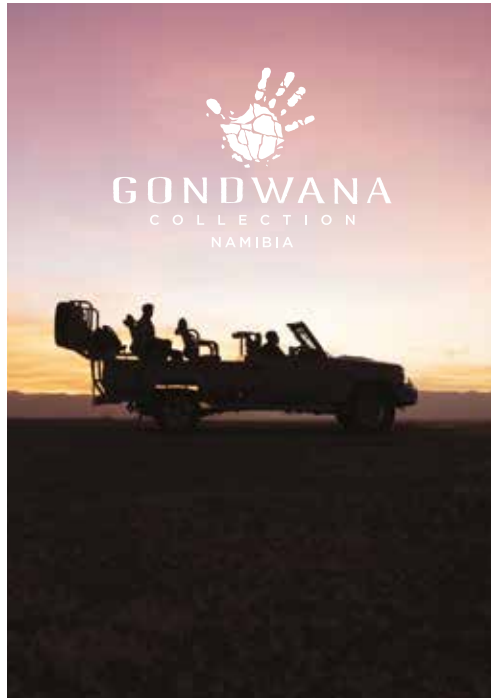
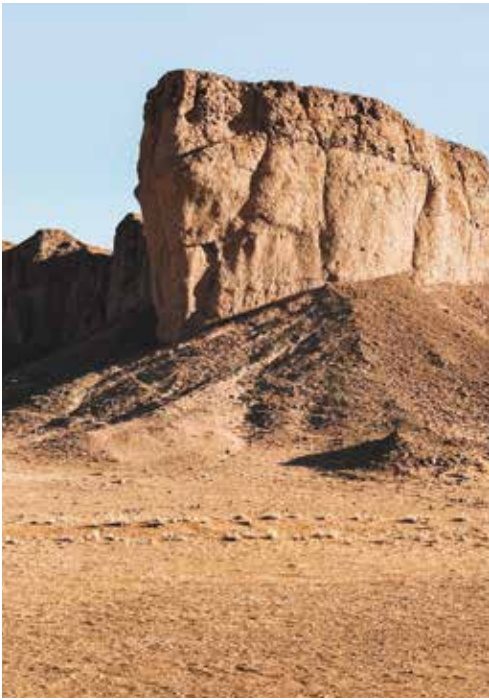


Further south, the spectacular scenery of Fish River Canyon brings another new era of discovery. Accommodations such as the Canyon Village or the Canyon Roadhouse are a haven that awaits families who wish to explore one of the biggest canyons the world has to offer. Hiking the viewpoints and driving through the area makes the history of the earth an interactive discovery. You can gaze upon the edge of the canyon, in wonder of its sheer scale, as the storyteller recounts the tale of the passage of time, water, and wind that carved this beautiful landscape.

As day slowly changes to night, one of Namibia's greatest treasures is revealed - uninterrupted, star-studded skies that stretch as far as the eye can see. At many different properties within Gondwana Collection Namibia, from the Namib Desert Lodge to The Desert Grace, Canyon Village, Etosha Safari Camp, and many more, families can go outside after a delicious evening meal, look up at the stars, and be able to see a fantastic array of constellations right above them. Without any light pollution, it is not long before young ones learn to identify the constellation known as the Milky Way stretching across the horizon, as parents, guides, and children discuss tales of navigation, astronomy, and ancient myths linked to what they see in the star-filled night sky.

Beyond landscapes and wildlife, Namibia's cultural storytelling deepens the travel experience. Encounters with the local communities, traditional crafts, and regional histories invite families to see the country through the eyes of its people. Children gain an appreciation for diversity and resilience through learning about desert-adapted lifestyles, stories told since time immemorial, and the unique heritage represented throughout Namibia's towns and regions. Such interactions encourage respect, empathy, and further understanding of the world-lessons that reach far beyond any classroom.

In Namibia, travel goes beyond being a holiday; it is a shared journey of discovery where children explore the world through experience and parents reconnect themselves with nature and with each other. From Etosha's wildlife encounters to desert exploration, canyon discoveries, starlit nights, and meaningful cultural stories, families leave with more than photographs. They carry home new perspectives, stronger bonds, and a greater appreciation for wild places in the world and for the joy of exploring them together.

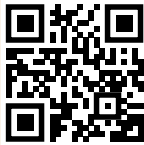


**NAMIB DESERT LODGE IS CALLING YOU, COME AND VISIT!
BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!**



Slice of Life

words by Jescey Bekker



The Month of May

The Month That Namibia Takes Off

If you are new to Namibia, this is a contextualisation. If you've lived in Namibia for a while, this is likely not news to you, but it may be refreshing to note that your experiences are shared by a community... Welcome to the month of May.

In the Northern Hemisphere, May is the last month of spring before summer takes hold. In most of the Southern Hemisphere, it is the last month of autumn before frosty mornings become routine. However, in Namibia, it is the mid-year pause.

After the December holidays, it takes our lovely desert country a few months to get started and get into the rhythm of things (January and February). From March, we get into the groove; April goes well, and then comes May, and the entire country basically comes to a standstill again. Whether intentional or coincidental, most of the public holidays in Namibia fall squarely in the month of May. Starting with Workers' Day on the first, Cassinga Day on the fourth, Ascension Day — this year on the fourteenth — Africa Day on the twenty-fifth, and the newest of the

public holidays, Genocide Remembrance Day on the twenty-eighth. Every single one of these days symbolises a moment of significance in the history of our country (or society) and should be approached with the appropriate respect and reverence.

However, what these days also mean is only one full, normal working week in the month of May. This has also led most schools to have their term breaks over this period, and many, many people to take leave. This, in turn, leads to Windhoek (the capital city) becoming almost as “abandoned” as it does over the Christmas break. Great for traffic, not so great for efficiency, though.

So, if you find yourself in Namibia over this period, expect to see locals galivanting through the countryside, enjoying our country. Alternatively, you may come across a very quiet town or city, where most residents are on hiatus for the month. Regardless, take the month of May in stride. Enjoy the time with family and friends, stay warm, and savour the last few weeks before winter. ☺

Public Notice

Important Update on Tariff Adjustments

20 January 2026



Dear Customer,

Starting 1 February 2026, Telecom Namibia will make some changes to its service prices. This is called tariff re-balancing, which simply means adjusting prices, so they match the cost of providing services and help us invest in better technology. Some prices will go down a lot, while a few will increase slightly.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

Namibia is moving towards a more digital economy, and we want to make sure you have fast, reliable, and affordable services. To do this, we have to invest over N\$2.3 billion in the coming years to:

- Expand fibre-to-the-home/business and strengthen our national fibre network.
- Upgrade mobile networks (3G, 4G, 4.5G) and prepare for 5G.
- Improve international connectivity through the Google Equiano undersea cable.
- Enhance billing systems and customer self-service platforms.
- Invest in cybersecurity, cloud services, and backup power solutions.

These upgrades will support Namibia's Vision 2030 and ensure better internet, mobile coverage, and digital services for everyone.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

Here are the main highlights of the new prices:

1. Local Calls (Fixed to Mobile):

- From N\$1.29 to N\$0.90 per minute (30% cheaper).
- TN Mobile standard rate drops from N\$1.45 to N\$0.90 per minute (38% cheaper).

2. International Calls:

- Calls to the USA drop from N\$9.90 to N\$3.65 per minute.
- Calls to Australia, Kenya, Portugal, Netherlands drop from N\$9.90 to N\$4.99 per minute.

3. Fixed Broadband Internet:

- Old 10Mbps plans prices: N\$909–N\$1,225.
- New price: N\$407–N\$534 (about 56% cheaper).
- Faster speeds now available (up to 500Mbps).

4. Simplified Packages:

- Home and Business plans merged into one set of offers—easier to choose, same value for everyone.

5. Other Adjustments:

- Some fixed-line and ISDN charges updated, but most reductions are on mobile and broadband.

Full details are attached below in Annexure A - Key Highlights of the Tariff Rebalancing, and also available at: www.telecom.na/tariffs.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- Cheaper calls (local and international).
- Much lower internet costs with faster speeds.
- Better network and services as we invest in upgrades.

We know price changes can be challenging, and we appreciate your understanding as we work to secure Namibia's digital future.

For any questions or help:

- **Call Centre:** 11000
- **WhatsApp:** +264 85 211 1111
- **Email:** customercare@telecom.na
- **Social Media:** @telecomnamibia

Thank you for supporting us as we build a digitally ready Namibia for all.

Best regards,

Stanley Shanapinda
Chief Executive Officer
Telecom Namibia

FOLLOW US!



www.telecom.na



WELCOME TO NAMIBIA

TRAVEL WELL TRAVEL SAFE



CLIMATE AWARENESS

- **Hot days, cold nights**
pack light clothes and warm layers.
- **Hydrate regularly**
desert conditions can dehydrate quickly.
- Always use sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses.

ROAD SAFETY

- Drive on the left.
- Gravel roads require slow, careful driving.
- **Avoid driving at night**-wildlife is often active.
- Ensure your vehicle is roadworthy and carry a spare tire and fuel.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- Keep valuables out of sight, especially in urban areas.
- Avoid isolated areas at night.
- Respect local customs and traditions.
- Ask permission before photographing people.

WILDLIFE SAFETY

- Do not feed or approach wild animals.
- Remain inside vehicles in game parks.
- Store food safely when camping and follow park rules.

HEALTH & EMERGENCIES

- Travel insurance is essential.
- Take malaria precautions when visiting the north.
- **All-round emergency:**
10111 or 999 or 112 and MVA National Accident
Response: 9682

GENERAL TRAVEL TIPS

- **Currency:** Namibian Dollar (NAD) – equal to South African Rand (ZAR).
- **Language:** English is official; local languages and Afrikaans are widely spoken.
- **Help us protect Namibia's beauty** – leave only footprints.

Safety Alert Know your rights

Only use accommodation and shuttle services registered with the Namibia Tourism Board (NTB).

- ✓ All lodges, guesthouses, and transport providers must have valid NTB registration.
- ✓ You have the right to request proof of registration.
- ✓ Look for the official NTB certificate at reception or ask your shuttle driver to show registration.
- ✓ When unsure, check or report with NTB

**City of Windhoek police
Emergency services: (24hr)**
061 211 111

Fire Brigade:
998

**Crime prevention:
Windhoek city**
+264 (0) 61 290 2239
+264 (0) 61 290 2018

Med Rescue
+264 (61) 249777
+264 (61) 230 505/6/7

Toll-free number:
+264 (0) 61 302 302

Emergency Rescue 24
084 124

Ambulance:
10177

Lifeline
086 132 2322

Crisis Response
+264 81 881 8181
+264 61 303 395





Authentic Namibian Hospitality

*A life shaped by travel,
now rooted in warmth and
welcome in Rundu*

edited by Anne Schauffer | photographs supplied

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



After 36 years of presenting Namibia to the rest of the world by road, air and water (yes, years on a houseboat in one of the most pristine wildlife destinations on Planet Earth), Alda and Tjaart Smuts finally chose the most unlikely place to welcome visitors into their world: Rundu.

Alda and Tjaart describe the emergence of Urban Farm Haus Guesthouse: “It rose from the ashes of the pandemic and found its place naturally, a resting place for those who enjoy personalized hosting, the way hosting is intended to be.”

The couple has spent a life close to nature and loves to share the positivity generated by such a privileged and uncompromised lifestyle. “We find it hard to treat our guests like clients — that is not how we see our service to visitors. Our passion for interaction, sharing knowledge and curiosity about the world’s fascinating cultures brings us together around a long table under a corrugated roof, while a Caprivian thunderstorm serves as our version of a rock concert,” says Alda.

Tjaart describes the Urban Farm Haus recipe: “Peaceful nights, comfortable beds, hot showers, lightning-fast Wi-Fi, air-conditioned rooms and Alda’s world-famous comfort food — meaty, vegetarian or vegan.” Their on-site restaurant, Petot’s Landing, offers an exceptional dining experience

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



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The Central Kalahari Game Reserve is one of the largest protected areas on Earth.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



where every meal is crafted with care. Petot's offers a perfect blend of local and international cuisine in an elegant, welcoming atmosphere and, if you add to that a few icy beverages, very soon the well-publicised Urban Farm Haus atmosphere ramps up until bedtime.

Urban Farm Haus is ideally positioned to host travellers en route between Etosha National Park and the eastern Okavango and Zambezi regions, or vice versa. The guesthouse's support services include free and unlimited advice on self-drive adventures to ensure visitors enjoy quality time and have rewarding experiences during a safari. They also have a second string to their bow in the second-generation Urban Farm Haus team's Safari Paparazzi, which offers Namibian

adventures. 'Taking you places' is their motto.

Accommodation at Urban Farm Haus is delightfully varied, with everything from luxury through to standard and family rooms. Each room is crafted to ensure a memorable stay, and you can choose bigger or smaller units, all with garden views, air conditioning, and simple, comfy, often quirky accommodation. It's a true home from home, with an art gallery that features intermittent exhibitions, convivial corners where guests can curl up with a book or swap stories with other intrepid travellers, and owners who fly the authenticity flag, whether it's through wonderful meals or warm hospitality. 🍷

Dear Diary

words by Sandra Baumeister

Where the Kalahari Slows You Down

Through Stampriet and Bagatelle Lodge, desert craft, red dunes and quiet encounters invite a slower way of being



There is something about driving south that immediately changes my breathing. It becomes slower. Deeper. As if the land itself gently reminds me: there is no hurry here.

I left Windhoek with that mixture I know so well, a little city dust still clinging to me, and a growing longing for wide horizons. My first stop was Stampriet, at the foot of the Kalahari, to visit The Mill.

And what a special place that is.

In the middle of this quiet, semi-arid landscape, talented hands are weaving the most beautiful natural carpets one can imagine, created from desert fibres, shaped by patience, rhythm and incredible craftsmanship. Watching them work felt almost meditative. There is something deeply grounding about people who create with what the land provides. It reminds me so much of why I started building my own dream here in Namibia, working with hands, with heart, with purpose.

I left inspired. A little quieter inside. A little more connected.

From there, I continued deeper into the Kalahari to my home for the next two days: Bagatelle Lodge.

“Bagatelle” means something small. Something insignificant.

Small? Perhaps in name. Insignificant? Absolutely not.

There are places in Namibia that stay with you long after you have left. Bagatelle is one of them.

Michelangelo

—PERSPECTIVE—



Set on the edge of the Kalahari, where red dunes rise softly from the earth and the light turns golden long before sunset, it is not just a lodge, it is a feeling. A quiet elegance in the wilderness.

I adore the contrast. Outside: the rawness of the desert, the wind, the endless space. Inside: warmth, comfort, calm.

You wake up to horizons that seem to stretch forever. To oryx moving like sculptures across the sand. To a sky so wide it reminds you how beautifully small, and yet how wonderfully free, you are.

It is a place for slow mornings and long sundowners. For conversations that somehow become deeper without you even trying. For reconnecting, not only with nature, but with yourself.

One of the highlights was joining the ranger on his morning visit to the cheetahs.

Elegant. Powerful. Almost unreal in their beauty.

These animals were found as tiny cubs when their mother could no longer care for them. At Bagatelle, they were given a second chance, raised with care, protected, yet living in an environment as close to their natural habitat as possible. Listening to the ranger speak about them, you could feel his respect and sense of responsibility.

Standing there, watching them move across the red sand, I felt humbled. Grateful. It is such a privilege to observe wildlife not as entertainment, but with understanding.

And then, as if the Kalahari wanted to show me its

playful side, I met a curious meerkat family.

I sat quietly near their burrow. Very still. (Which, for someone like me, is already an achievement.)

At first, they watched me cautiously. Tiny heads popping up, whispering in their secret desert language. But curiosity won. Slowly they came closer. Studied me. Tilted their heads as if to say, Are you lost?

And then they introduced me to their four little youngsters.

Four tiny, bright-eyed desert explorers. Fearless. Curious. Completely adorable.

For a brief moment, I almost felt accepted. As if I had passed some invisible test and was allowed to sit in their living room. I smiled like a child. It was funny, yes, but also surprisingly emotional. Because in these small, quiet encounters, something inside me always softens.

If you ever want to feel the spirit of the Kalahari without giving up comfort, this is where you go.

You can choose elegant rooms or camp beneath the wide African sky. Both experiences are breathtaking in the red dunes.

And if you sit on top of a dune at sunset, watching the light slowly dissolve into the sand, you will understand something very simple: Some places do not need many words.

They simply stay with you. With a little red sand still in my shoes,

Sandra 🐾



The Mothers of N/a'an ku sê

A legacy of care, carried quietly across generations.

words by Lynn Strydom | photographs supplied by N/a'an ku sê

Before N/a'an ku sê became a place, it was a way of caring. It was not built in a single moment, but shaped over time through women who chose to nurture, protect, and show up again and again.

This May, we honour the mothers of N/a'an ku sê. Those who gave life, those who carried it forward, and those who continue to care for it every day.

At the heart of this story is Marlice van Vuuren, but her journey did not begin with her.

It began with her mother, Tannie Marieta van der Merwe.

From her came a way of living where care was instinctive. Animals were not turned away. Responsibility was not questioned.

That way of life was passed on quietly and consistently, until it became something much bigger.

For Marlice, this was never a career path. It was her upbringing.

Raised among animals and alongside the San community, she grew up understanding that care has no boundaries.

In 2003, that understanding deepened.

A critically ill child. A long journey for help. A system that could not respond. It was a moment no mother could accept.

By then, Marlice was not only a daughter shaped by care, she was a mother herself.

What followed was not strategy. It was instinct.

The Lifeline Clinic was born from that moment. A refusal to let another child be lost when something could be done.

Today, that same instinct lives on, not only through the work, but through her sons, Zacheo and Nicklai.

But N/a'an ku sê was never shaped by one woman alone.

Among them is Tannie Rita van Vuuren, a quieter strength, steady and deeply present in the foundation of what exists today.

Some legacies are not spoken. They are simply lived and carried forward.

Mothers like Tannie Tineke represent the extended

family that shapes this place from within.

A motherhood defined by selfless action. By showing up, supporting, and holding space for others to grow.

That same spirit lives across the N/a'an ku sê family.

Beauty arrived alongside her mother and found more than work. She found a place to grow, to learn, and to belong. More than fifteen years later, she is still part of the N/a'an ku sê family, her journey shaped by opportunity and a deep sense of home.

Sherley found her calling with children. Through teaching, guiding, and simply being present, she creates spaces where they feel seen, supported, and free to grow with confidence and joy. "Motherhood is about care, love, and being present, not always biology."

Anna Daries, now in her eighties, continues her work at the Lifeline Clinic with quiet devotion. With gentle hands and a steady presence, she offers not only medical care, but deep compassion and unconditional love to every child she meets.

Because N/a'an ku sê was never just created.

It was carried.

From one mother to another.

From one generation to the next.

From one act of care to thousands more.

This May, we honour that legacy, in every life it continues to touch. 🌱

Bring your mom to where it all began

Mothers Stay Free | May 2026

One paying guest hosts one mother

Valid for stays during May

Limited availability

Ts & Cs apply – Limited to online bookings

N/a'an ku sê is not just a place you visit.

It is something you feel.



Windhoek Game Camp

*Luxury tented calm just
minutes from the capital*

edited by Anne Schaffer | photographs supplied

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Glamming is the name of the game at Windhoek Game Camp, just 20 minutes north of Windhoek. Luxury en suite tents, supreme peace and quiet, a hearty breakfast with giraffe and oryx watching you swim, and springbok guarding the car.

“If you close your eyes,” says Windhoek Game Camp owner and tour group leader, Peter Wackel, “you’ll hear nothing but the call of the African bush.” It’s the perfect place to unwind and recharge your batteries.

Fifty minutes by car, you can pre-arrange to be collected from or returned to Hosea Kutako International Airport or

Windhoek. It’s the perfect springboard or departure chill zone into or out of Namibia.

All eight Windhoek Game Camp luxury tents are equipped with a private bathroom (en suite), air conditioning, as well as a fridge and coffee/tea station on the outdoor terrace. Each tent accommodates up to 2 adults and 2 children aged 11 years and under.

For the perfect start to the day, the superb on-site catering team serves a delicious buffet breakfast in the restaurant, and in the evening, you can choose either a 3-course set menu or buffet dinner.

Namibia contains some of the darkest accessible night skies on Earth, making it exceptionally well suited to astro-tourism.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



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The heated pool and outdoor shower are available all year round, and it's an idyllic spot to relax and unwind. The pool — as well as the restaurant and reception area — has free Wi-Fi.

If you're keen to stretch your legs, the hiking trail leads you directly into nature — the property is around 50 hectares, and a tour will take about 1.5 hours. Whether on the Nature Walk, swimming in the pool, or having a sundowner on the terrace, Windhoek Game Camp's 'heraldic animal', the giraffe, is always nearby. Oryx, giraffe, and springbok (just to name a few) tend to enjoy a snack at the waterhole near the pool, so out with your cameras! 📷

We've saved you a seat

Welcome to the FNB Lounges



The FNB Lounges at Eros and Walvis Bay Airports can be accessed free of charge between 2 and 6 times per month, depending on the card type, by the following **FNB Namibia credit card** holders:

- FNB Platinum credit card (2 times a month)
- FNB Private Clients credit card (4 times a month)
- FNB Private Wealth credit card (6 times a month)
- FNB Business credit card (4 times a month)

Access for FNB Africa credit card holders

If you are an **FNB South Africa** or **Botswana Private Wealth** or **Private Clients credit card holder**, you are also welcome to access the FNB Lounges for a fee.

To enter the FNB Lounges, simply present your qualifying card, boarding pass and passport.

Terms & Conditions apply.



Shaping Women

Exploring form, femininity and the stories held within clay

edited by Anne Schaffer | photographs supplied



Michelangelo

—ART—



Met Namibian ceramicist Melody Rohlfs, whose work returns time and again to her experiences as a woman and a mother.

Melody Rohlfs was born in Windhoek and raised between Rehoboth and Swakopmund. She laughs when asked if she was creative as a child: “I was more of a weirdo at school, and we didn’t actually have art classes.”

Today, Melody has a fully equipped home studio, and pottery occupies all her working hours. She focuses largely on her own creative work, but every now and again she hosts Clay & Conversations workshops, details of which are always posted on her Instagram. She’s had several wonderful and acclaimed exhibitions in Namibia and South Africa.

Michelangelo chatted to her about her ceramics journey:

What, when and where was your first interaction with clay and pottery?

I first interacted with clay in 2022 after a family trip to Germany. I’d visited a museum and saw pottery from 300 AD, and was absolutely mesmerized. When I returned home to Namibia, I bought a bag of air-dry clay and, from that moment, have never stopped creating.

What’s your inspiration?

My work is greatly inspired by my experiences as a woman and a mother. Drawn to organic and abstract forms, my work tells stories of the womb as the sacred place from which all life originates. Sculpting human forms in often intimate settings has been a recent theme in my studio.

The TAZARA Railway runs 1,860 kilometres from Tanzania to Zambia and was built between 1970 and 1975.

Michelangelo

—ART—



How would you describe your current work?

Very experimental. Upcoming exhibitions with interesting themes have led me to step outside my norm and delve into challenging but fun pieces.

Do you make once-offs... or do you have signature pieces which you repeat?

All my pieces are once-offs. I could not capture the essence and emotion of a piece twice or repeatedly. They are all unique, and each tells a different story.

Do you have a brand name?

I present my sculptural pieces under the name Melody Milinga. Functional pieces I produce under Xammi Namibia.

How and where do you sell your work?

Functional pieces can be found at Bellhaus Everyday Art Collection and at the Craft Centre of Namibia. 🌐

Instagram @xammi.namibia | xammi.namibia@gmail.com

Luxury Meets Humanity.



The Carine Bag

Every Myeisha bag tells a story. About our craftswomen, who lead self-determined lives. About Namibian children in deprived schools, and Namibian rhino conservation programmes we support every day. It's about you and the freedom to carry a bag that matters. Each one is handmade and truly unique.

www.myeishanamibia.com





Holding Space

*The Project Room at RMB
Latitudes Art Fair 2026*

words by Laschandre Coetzee | photographs supplied by The Project Room

Michelangelo

—ART—



Set against the lush, layered landscape of Shepstone Gardens in Johannesburg, RMB Latitudes Art Fair 2026 continues to redefine how audiences engage with contemporary African art. With its emphasis on context, conversation, and curatorial clarity, the fair offers a space that feels less like a marketplace and more like a living archive of artistic exchange.

For The Project Room, returning to Latitudes in 2026 is both a continuation and a deepening of our commitment to placing Namibian artists within a broader continental narrative. This year, the gallery's presentation brings together the works of

Anne Lacheiner-Kuhn and Trudi Dicks — two artists whose practices, though distinct, resonate in their shared sensitivity to material, memory, and meaning.

At first glance, the pairing is understated. Both artists engage a restrained palette, leaning into monochromatic and tonal compositions that prioritise texture, gesture, and nuance over spectacle. Yet within this restraint lies a profound emotional and conceptual range.

Anne Lacheiner-Kuhn's work emerges from a process of assembling and reassembling fragments — images, references, histories — into new configurations. Her practice reflects an

Harare was deliberately built at altitude to avoid malaria.

Michelangelo

—ART—



ongoing negotiation of identity and belonging, shaped by her experience moving between Namibia and London. The works presented at Latitudes extend this inquiry, inviting viewers to consider how meaning is constructed, disrupted, and reimagined through acts of layering and erasure.

In contrast, Trudi Dicks' works from *Conversations* hold a different kind of presence. Rooted in repetition, subtle variation, and quiet control, her monochromatic compositions evoke a sense of stillness that borders on the meditative. There is a discipline in her approach that resists immediacy; instead, the works unfold slowly, asking the viewer to remain, to look again, to notice what shifts over time.

Together, these practices create a dialogue that is less about contrast and more about continuity. While one artist navigates the fluid and often fragmented nature of contemporary identity, the other offers a language of form that is grounded, enduring, and reflective. In this way, the booth becomes a space of holding — holding tension, holding memory, holding the quiet intersections between past and present.

This year's Latitudes theme, *Oasis*, speaks to the idea of creative refuge and renewal — spaces where ideas can gather, expand, and take root. For Namibia, a country often perceived through the lens of its vast landscapes and geographic distance, the notion of an oasis resonates both literally and metaphorically. Our artistic community, though small, continues to cultivate practices that are deeply engaged, globally relevant, and rooted in lived experience.

By presenting these two artists together, The Project Room seeks to highlight not only the diversity within Namibian art but also its capacity for depth and dialogue. It is a reminder that contemporary African art is not defined by a single narrative, but by a constellation of voices — each contributing to a larger, evolving story.

The gallery's participation in this fourth edition is once again supported by RMB Namibia. Their investment in platforms such as this plays a vital role in strengthening the visibility and sustainability of the Namibian arts industry, and in fostering meaningful cultural exchange across the continent. 🌍



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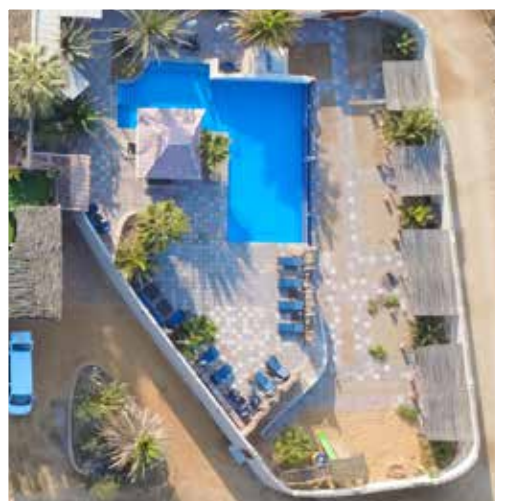
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Gecko Ridge

A Desert Getaway Near Swakopmund

words by Linda de Jager | photographs supplied

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Gecko Ridge Lodge is just 15 km from the centre of Swakopmund. Set in the Namib Desert, the property is surrounded by world-class vistas, rocky plains, and oasis-style palm trees. Guests enjoy sweeping views of the Swakop River and the world-famous Moon Landscape. Gecko Ridge advocates that local is lekker, “so we don’t forget about our SADC friends”, and offers special rates for visitors from the SADC region.

Owner and founder Zandr  Ruch says the location is one of the main draws. “You have the best of both worlds – better weather than Swakopmund, a beautiful view of the world-renowned Moon Landscape, and the feeling that you are far removed from the hustle and bustle of city life,” he says.

The hotel trade runs in Zandr ’s family, though he never planned to be part of it. His father and grandfather, both named Hans-Werner Ruch, worked in the hotel industry

in Switzerland before relocating to Namibia in the 1930s, bringing with them a strong tradition of hospitality.

His grandfather was invited to assist with management at the Mount Nelson Hotel in Cape Town, one of South Africa’s best-known hospitality landmarks. He was brought to South Africa by the owners of the Union-Castle Shipping Line at the time, reflecting the reputation he had already built.

Zandr ’s grandfather and father worked across southern Africa, managing hotels in South Africa and later in Namibia.

“Sort out management, create systems, correct the standard, hand over, and move on. That was my grandfather’s trade,” says Zandr . But for the grandson who grew up watching all of this, the industry initially left a fragmented impression. His earliest childhood memory is of a very tired little boy sitting on a staircase at two o’clock in the morning, watching people dance below. Gripping the balustrade,

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



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peering down at hundreds of guests swirling across the ballroom floor of a hotel that seemed never to sleep, he made himself a quiet but firm promise: “I never wanted to be in the hospitality industry.” Yet his social nature, his liking for talking to people, provided an irresistible pull.

“I’m a people person. And it seems the industry caught me eventually,” he shrugs.

Zandr  started his career by studying in Cape Town, which led him into the engineering and construction industry. Little did he know, as a young boy, that he would end up building a place like Gecko Ridge himself, following in the footsteps of his grandfather.

He initially worked for the Municipal Council of Swakopmund before establishing a consulting firm with a partner in 2006. He says, “I dreamed of doing something like what I have here at Gecko Ridge. But I first built it as a house for my family, then developed it into a guest house as time progressed. The plot was actually a piece of ground belonging to an old client of mine.”

“He owned a large piece of land, about 250 hectares, of which I helped him subdivide into plots of about 10–18 ha. I bought one of these subdivided plots,” he says. “That’s how

Gecko Ridge started. First, as a dream to live in the countryside with a bit more outdoor freedom than a town can offer.”

Zandr  recalls that when he “first started building here in 2006, there weren’t many people around us”. It was initially designed as a family home, with the option to upgrade over time. He was part of the pioneering group that began construction in the once-isolated area, now home to a variety of residential and business properties.

In 2013, the venue was transformed into an accommodation establishment, which then went on to establish itself as a popular event destination for functions by word of mouth. “The vision for the venture was supported by my family,” he adds. On the founders’ first night on the property, the land “was bare,” he recalls. They planted two palm trees and camped there.

What they heard that night gave the place its name: barking geckos - rare creatures that call only briefly during the mating season - were sounding across the ridge. The name came easily. “We were on a ridge. The geckos were calling. Gecko Ridge,” smiles Zandr .

Today, he reflects on an establishment he founded that

Lake Kariba holds so much water that, if spread evenly across Namibia, it would blanket the entire country under roughly 22 centimetres of water.



A pool party with a difference

Gecko Ridge, the well-known oasis just 15 km from Swakopmund, recently made a seriously splashy upgrade! They've unveiled a much bigger swimming area — and yes, it's now open for epic pool parties and day visitors. Don't worry, the original smaller pool is still around for those who love booking the space for functions and dinners, or just want a quick, refreshing dip.

Owner Zandr  Ruch says it wasn't exactly smooth sailing; it's been a lot of hard work. "We hit lots and lots of granite during the excavation!" But the effort paid off in a big way.

Campers and self-catering chalet guests are now also welcome to take a dip in the new pool.

"Our vision is to create a place where people can come, relax, unwind, and enjoy," he adds. "And there's more to look forward to — a sauna is also available on the property to help with detoxing and rejuvenation!"

"I always dreamed of building a much bigger Indonesian-style swimming pool — complete with a pool bar — and I'm thrilled to have finally made it a reality," he says. So if you're looking to throw the ultimate pool party just outside of Swakopmund, look no further — Gecko Ridge is calling your name!

expanded into offering several additional options to guests.

The main villa of Gecko Ridge contains six exclusive rooms, an option often exercised by those who book the venue for functions. The self-catering chalets and campsite are pet-friendly and were developed later. "And the campsites remain a firm favourite with guests," he adds.

"Our place offers spacious undercover parking areas, large enough for overlanders or self-drive visitors to unpack, clean and pack up their vehicles safely. We value a good night's rest and therefore prioritise safety for peace of mind. Entry to the property is controlled by secure access, and our guests are the only ones who have authorised access."

The property is home to a number of wildlife species, including peacocks and guinea fowl, and guests may be lucky enough to spot a springbok and, possibly, "even one of the grey ghosts, the kudu, in the nearby Swakop River," he adds.

The campsites at Gecko Ridge Lodge offer ten spacious camping sites with "everything you need".

All campsites are semi-enclosed for added privacy and include a shaded area. Each campsite has its own braai, a power point, and light points. Clean, modern shared sanitary

facilities are available, and laundry facilities are also available at the main lodge.

Activities such as quad biking and seal cruises can be booked at reception. A newly built Indonesian-style swimming pool is available to campsite guests and self-catering chalet guests.

Aside from hiking, the most popular activities are catamaran trips in Walvis Bay to see dolphins and seals, sunset dune tours, and quad biking in the dunes. "Those are the ones guests really love," says Zandr .

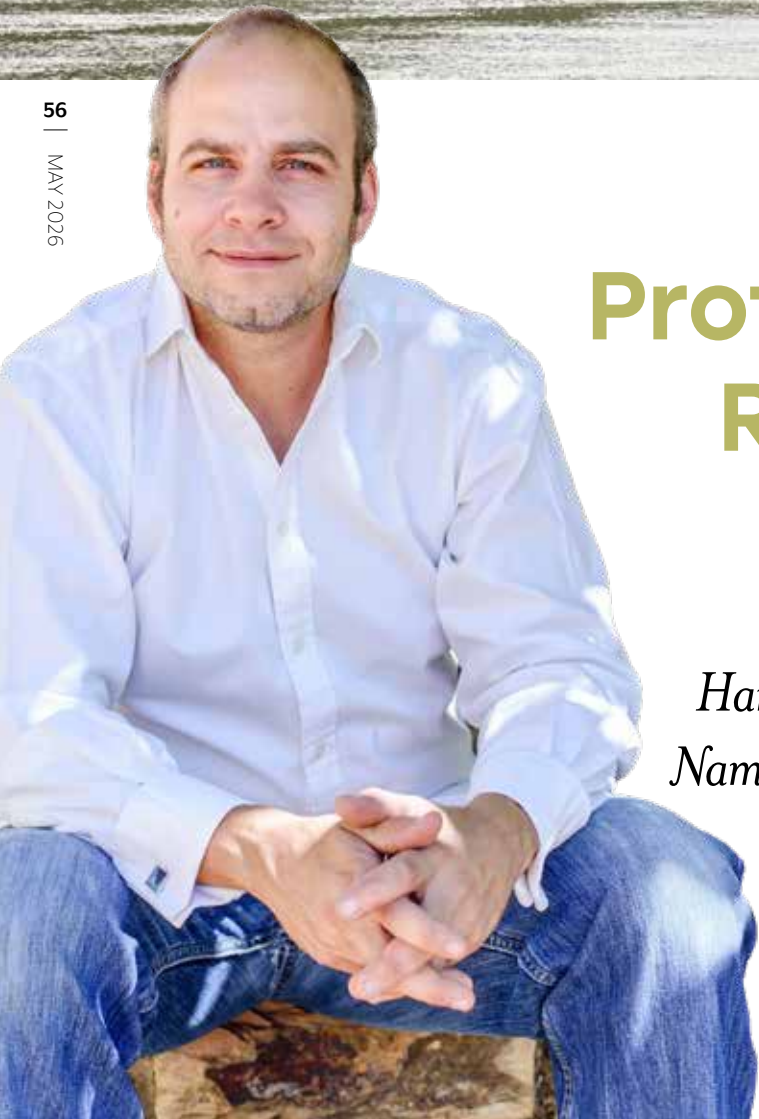
There are also plans to offer guided trips to the Moon Landscape and up to the nearby R ssing Mountain, which Zandr  describes as offering an "absolutely amazing" view. "When you sit up there, you get a real feeling of tranquillity," he says — the same sense of freedom that drew him to build Gecko Ridge in the first place, and one he is happy to now share with his guests.

Two of the rooms at Gecko Ridge offer direct views of the popular Moon Landscape.

Concludes Zandr , "My grandfather used to say, 'Guests take priority.'" Today, I have adopted my own motto: to be hands-on when it comes to guests visiting Gecko Ridge. 🌿



“Sharing river basins means Namibia’s decisions have significant cross-border consequences.”



The Fight to Protect Namibia’s Rivers – and Its People

Hans-Christian Mahnke on why protecting Namibia’s rivers also means protecting people

words by Linda de Jager | photograph supplied

For over 20 years, Hans-Christian Mahnke has worked at the intersection of people, power, and the natural world – where decisions made far from the riverbank ripple through entire communities.

His journey, from grassroots activism in Namibia to global environmental advocacy, tells a bigger story: one of rivers under pressure, communities fighting to be heard, and the growing realisation that protecting water is inseparable from protecting life itself.

A Windhoek-based political scientist, Mahnke started out at the grassroots level at the Clay House Project at Orwetoveni and AfricAvenir, and has moved on to legal advocacy at the Legal Assistance Centre – all driven by a belief that communities deserve a voice in decisions that shape their futures.

Today, he works with the Human Environmental Law Programme (HELP) and International Rivers, a global non-government organisation fighting to protect rivers and the people who depend on them.

With severe flooding affecting the Kunene region currently, the organisation's work is especially in the spotlight.

Why did International Rivers choose Namibia for expanding its work in Africa?

Namibia brings together a mix of ecological, political and regional factors that align closely with the organisation's mission to protect rivers and defend the rights of communities who depend on them.

Having supported the Ovahimba in successfully challenging a potentially destructive hydropower project upstream of the Kunene River (at Epupa Dam) in the 1990s, the partnership with those communities was revived in 2019, with renewed interest in protecting the river from new large-scale hydropower.

The Kunene River, originating in the highlands of Angola, flows along the border between Angola and Namibia. It rises about 32 km northeast of Huambo in the Sierra Encoco Mountains in Angola and flows southwards from the Angolan highlands to the border with Namibia, then bends west, forming the border between the two countries until it reaches the Atlantic Ocean.

Its lower reach cuts through a deep gorge that starts at

Ruacana Falls. The river basin covers an area of 106 500 km², with 14 700 km² (13.3 %) in Namibia and 95 300 km² in Angola.

In total, the river is 1 050 km long and is one of the five perennial rivers in this region. It is considered a resource of critical importance by those who live near it, and has for centuries supported the semi-nomadic Himba people – one of Africa's most successful remaining pastoralist peoples.

Expanding International Rivers' work in Namibia strengthens African-led advocacy, amplifies community voices, and challenges the notion that large dams are the only solution.

What environmental or river-related challenges in Namibia require international organisations to be present?

Namibia is one of sub-Saharan Africa's most water-scarce countries, making its transboundary rivers vital for ecosystems and livelihoods. Rivers like the Kunene face growing pressure from climate change, water abstraction, and proposed hydropower projects.

This is despite hydropower proving to be an increasingly unreliable solution, according to the World Dam Commission, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the United States National Science Foundation (among others).

Namibia's over-reliance on the climate-exposed Ruacana hydro-electric power station has already caused energy shortfalls, making new dam proposals deeply counterintuitive, think tanks like TMP Public believe.

Climate-induced flow reductions and shifting rainfall further threaten ecosystems and river-dependent communities. Growing interest in hydropower and extractive development risks altering natural river systems and repeating patterns seen elsewhere.

These include displacement, the loss of livelihoods, and environmental degradation, particularly affecting rural and indigenous communities.

Sharing river basins means Namibia's decisions have significant cross-border consequences. This emphasises the need for strong transboundary governance and community participation. Sustainable, rights-based alternatives are essential – and international organisations play a key role in supporting accountability and amplifying local voices.



How do global examples of river legal personhood influence environmental policy discussions in Namibia?

International Rivers senior campaign coordinator and co-lead on legal protections of rivers Genny Ngende explains it best. She says legal personhood basically means that an entity, like a river, has rights that the state must respect, protect and fulfil.

Because rivers cannot speak or act for themselves, indigenous peoples and riverine communities are often recognised as their custodians, she says.

Extending legal personhood to rivers means any activity that harms their ability to flow, exist, or remain free from pollution could be challenged in a court of law.

Namibian law also mandates traditional authorities to manage natural resources on a sustainable basis., which is crucial in the context of climate change.

What role does International Rivers play in promoting Namibia's rivers' legal rights?

We are currently conceptualising a webinar on the rights of nature, including the rights of rivers, for Namibian audiences. We hope this would lead to a broader debate among the legal fraternity and the broader society.

The webinar aims to create a space in which legal practitioners and experts, academia, and relevant civil society organisations can share information to protect and restore the environment.

Protecting rivers is also about protecting people. Please expand on this.

That statement speaks to the mission and vision of International Rivers, which is to protect rivers and defend the rights of communities that depend on them – also to envision a world where healthy rivers and the rights of local river communities are valued and protected.

River protection is often framed as an environmental concern, but in reality, it is just as much about people. Rivers are not separate from human life. They provide water for drinking, food through fishing and agriculture, and hold deep cultural and spiritual meaning for many communities.

When a river is degraded, diverted, or polluted, it is not only the ecosystem that suffers, but also the people whose livelihoods, health, and identities are tied to it. In that sense, protecting rivers is inseparable from protecting human rights and dignity.

This is why approaches that includes communities,

The Witwatersrand (South Africa) has produced about one-third of all the gold ever mined in human history.



especially indigenous peoples and riverine populations, are so important.

This is exactly what International Rivers' motto, 'Life, People, Water,' speaks to.

What is the most recent step your organisation has taken in living up to that motto?

Together with the Office of the Ombudsman, the National Heritage Council, and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, we conducted a site visit to the Baynes Mountains and the Kunene River in the Epupa constituency in April.

This region is home to the Ovahimba and Ovatjimba communities, whose centuries-long nomadic culture along the river makes them central to any decision on river use or planned infrastructure.

This visit reflects our commitment to upholding the right of the Ovahimba, Ovatjimba and other local communities to free, prior and informed consent for any infrastructure project that affects them. Meaningful consultation with these communities is essential – it safeguards their interests, mitigates potential impacts, and ensures that governments remain inclusive and transparent in their decision-making.

What economic and development pressures in Namibia make river protection a critical issue?

Namibia faces a critical energy crossroads: Nearly 50% of its population lacks access to electricity, and the country is heavily reliant on energy imports.

A key decision looms – whether to pursue large-scale hydropower like at Baynes Dam, or whether to harness the country's world-class solar and wind resources.

Why should ordinary Namibians and international tourists care about these issues, and why do you care?

For Namibians, rivers are lifelines, supporting drinking water, agriculture, fishing, and cultural identity. When degraded or diverted, the impacts are immediate, affecting livelihoods, food security, and resilience in a country already facing water scarcity.

For international tourists, Namibia's rivers and wetlands are what make the country unique. Places around the Okavango and Zambezi rivers attract visitors for their rich biodiversity, but these landscapes are not guaranteed.

Protecting rivers means preserving the connection between people and the water they depend on. 🌱

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Farm Godeis

From cattle and ox wagons to campsites and slow living under open skies

words by Linda de Jager | photographs supplied

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



The sun is low over the Khomas Hochland when we pull into Riverside Camp on Farm Godeis, some 70 kilometres outside Windhoek. A plunge pool glints in the fading light beneath beautiful trees. Firewood is neatly stacked. The private campsite stretches along the dry riverbed of the Otjimpau River — a river that runs every now and again in the rainy season and lies quietly waiting in the dry months.

I had booked a pre-pitched setup — tent and bed arranged in advance — which freed my hands for the more important

business of building a fire. Armed with red fireproof gloves, I tended the flames while my companions erected their own tents. They were, admittedly, the more productive members of the group.

Farm Godeis spans 7,000 hectares in the Khomas Hochland mountain range — and despite its sense of remoteness, it is barely an hour from Windhoek. Our group arrived with daylight to spare, a small but meaningful victory for anyone chasing a quick weekend escape.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



From left to right: Horst & Ursel Kock; Klaus, Gesa, Mia (shoulders) in front Lara Zahradnicky

The farm caters to a wide range of visitors. Hikers can choose between the demanding 16 km Leopard Trail and the more leisurely 7 km Dassie Trail. Mountain bikers have the 32 km Castle Hill route, which climbs over 500 metres, or gentler tracks through open bush where wildlife is never far off. The farm is pet-friendly — dogs and children are equally at home here.

A high-clearance or SUV-type vehicle is recommended for the 50 km gravel road that branches off the C28. The route can be tricky to navigate, so it is worth studying the directions before you leave — especially if conversation tends to win out over concentration.

Gesa Zahradnicky, who manages the campsites on the family farm, arrived the next morning exactly on time, warm smile included. She drove me to the old farmhouse — a place that breathes history. Ancient trees shade the yard. Unusual plants press against the walls. And inside, a family with stories to tell.

It does not take long to realise that the story of Farm

Godeis is, in many ways, a small chapter in the broader story of Namibia itself. The farmhouse was rebuilt in 1936, expanded and properly upgraded by 1979 — each addition a marker of the times.

Bees hummed in the yard when I arrived — fitting, as Gesa has recently taken up beekeeping. Before I left, she pressed a jar of her own honey into my hands. In conversation, it became clear that she is quietly working toward something larger: a way of life rooted in growing food, slowing down, and staying connected to the land. The campsites, it should be noted, have limited Wi-Fi — by design, one suspects.

The farm's story began in 1908, when Gesa's great-grandfather, Johannes Kock, purchased the raw land from the German government. In those early years, the land was devoted entirely to cattle and sheep.

Johannes was, at heart, a merchant. Two years before acquiring the farm, he had co-founded Kock and Schmidt — a textile company that would become a household name in Windhoek, and was already doing well.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



“With the textile business turning a profit, he bought the farm from the government once it had been surveyed and formally marked out,” says Horst Kock, Gesa’s father, settling into his chair at the large farm table.

“In the early days, it was mostly weekend farming,” says Kock. “Sheep, cattle — and when you needed to move dairy or other goods, you used donkeys and ox wagons.”

“The ox wagon trading runs went through Farm Onduno and Farm Ongos all the way to Windhoek — through the night, because there was no refrigeration,” Horst continues. Some of those ox wagon tracks are still in use on the farm today,” he says.

While Gesa pours glasses of homemade cactus juice, her mother, Ursel, pulls up a chair to add her own chapter to the story (she worked as a tour guide for SWA Safaris for many years, quietly keeping the family together).

“During the Second World War, all German foreign nationals in Namibia were interned for seven years in places like Koffiefontein. My father was among them,” says Horst.

During that period, it fell to the women of Namibia to

keep businesses and farms running. Marga Vaatz, a sister of Johannes, farmed Godeis until her marriage to Edgar Vaatz, after which the couple acquired the neighbouring farm, Düsternbrook.

Kurt Kock, son of Johannes, was born in Windhoek in 1910. He trained as an architect in Germany before returning to Namibia in 1939. He went on to spend two further years in Johannesburg, where he established his own architectural practice. This is where Horst was born, one of three children. When Johannes Kock died in 1941, Kurt inherited Farm Godeis. The Vaatz family leased it from him until Horst took over in 1977. When Kurt Kock died in 1979, Horst and his two sisters inherited the farm. He bought all the shares from his sisters in the years that followed.

Since 1977, for about 50 years, Horst has farmed various cattle breeds. Recognising the potential of tourism to supplement the farming income, he diversified early — a decision that has shaped the farm’s identity ever since.

Explains Horst, “In cattle farming, prices don’t rise like



Above top: Family Johannes & Frieda Kock with friends outside the first dwelling on the farm **Below:** Twins Kurt & Rolf Kock with sister Marga



Above: Johannes Kock with his sons: Kurt & Rolf

other commodities. They remain roughly fixed for eight to ten years while inflation runs wild. But you have to survive those years when the price-to-value relationship simply doesn't add up. That's why so many farmers are forced into debt just to get through that stretch."

Horst also left farming for a while to allow the land to recover, drawn by the lush plant and animal life in the Caprivi, a stark contrast to Godeis. At the time, he bought a tourism enterprise in the Caprivi region, known as Ndhovu Lodge, which he owned and managed for fifteen years before selling it.

The first campsite on Farm Godeis — the Mountain Camp — was originally established as a base for trophy hunting in 1981.

"We had some hunting guests from South Africa, and we had to keep those parties away from the home, you know. The hunters don't just hunt; they also drink a lot and celebrate their shot," explains Horst.

Today, the Mountain Camp, which forms part of the Khomas Hochland Hiking Trail (a six-day, 100 km trail linking five farms), sits high among the rocks, overlooking the spectacular Lovebird Gorge — a quiet, permanent waterhole below drawing wildlife throughout the year. Gesa says that smaller groups that prefer extreme privacy opt to camp here.

"I recommend no more than six people; it's for those who enjoy the quiet," she adds.

At the other extreme, Gesa also takes me to the Adventure Camp — another pet-friendly space with a self-catering kitchen. It is available exclusively to larger private groups, functions and events.

When Gesa returned in 2014 after a period working in Australia, she saw the potential to expand the Mountain campsite offering.

"I started advertising the Mountain Camp on Facebook, and it just grew," she says. "It became genuinely popular around Windhoek."

"We wanted to diversify further and avoid relying on cattle alone. My husband Klaus and I decided to develop two additional sites."

"I could see that camping was working — and we are only 70 kilometres from Windhoek. Recently, we have also started attracting foreign travellers who have visited Namibia more than once and come back with time on their hands. We are not on the road to anywhere particularly famous. Windhoek is our main market — and that is more than enough," concludes Gesa. 🌿

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Partybus photos by Linda de Jager

Farm Godeis Converts an Old School Bus into a Party Experience

Farm Godeis, which offers several campsites for guests near Windhoek, has transformed an old school bus into a party bus — and it's quickly becoming one of the farm's most talked-about attractions. Originally intended to be developed into a self-catering unit, the old school bus was reimagined as a mobile entertainment space — with benches removed and disco and UV lights installed inside.

Guests, who mostly stay at the Adventure Camp, gather an hour before sunset to enjoy sundowners, then are driven to the farm's dam, where they can swim, walk, or relax.

Guests wishing to play their own music can connect their device via Bluetooth and listen through the sound system.

The journey ends at a sundowner spot, and once the sun sets, the lights come on — transforming the bus into a stunning mobile dance floor. "It's such a unique offering," say Gesa & Klaus Zahradnicky, who initiated it.

Gesa adds, "The dogs jump in. Yes, dogs are welcome on Godeis. Oma and Opa, the kids, and everyone are on the bus. So it's the whole group that goes. We wanted to create an experience where the whole community takes part in a shared experience."



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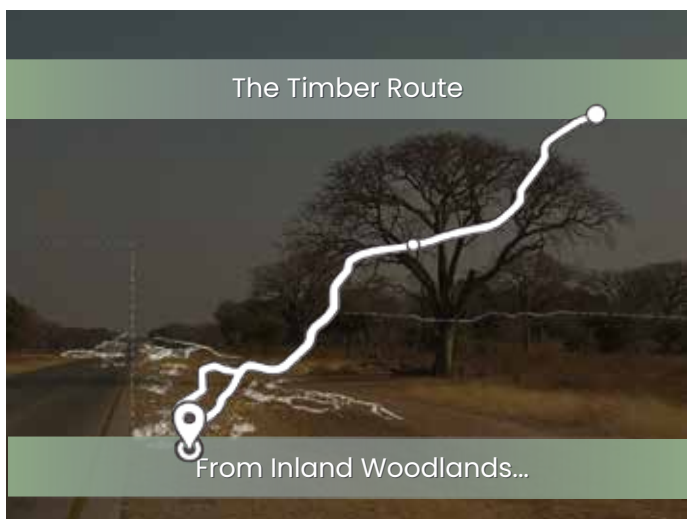
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Simanya River Lodge marks the meeting point of land and water, where Namibia's inland journey softens into river calm. Set along the Kavango River, it is both a destination and a threshold, welcoming travellers as the landscape transitions from dry woodland to lush riverside forest.

THE TWO ROUTES

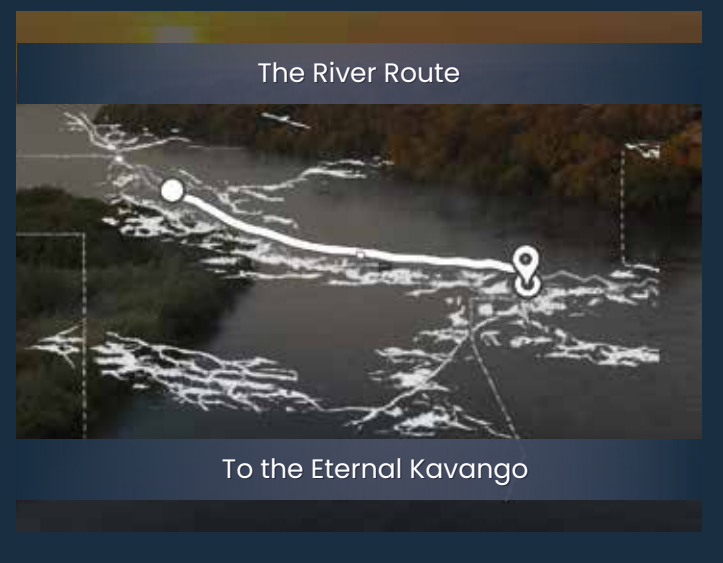
The **Timber Route** traces this transformation from the south. Beginning in the open savannas around Otavi and Tsumeb, it winds through Namibia's most continuous inland timber belt. Manketti trees, hardwood forests, and living traditions shape this quiet corridor, creating a sense of depth, heritage, and gentle progression before the river's green fringe comes into view.



From Simanya, the **River Route** follows the Kavango eastward toward Rundu. Extending more than 130 kilometres, it traces Namibia's only perennial river corridor, a lifeline where water shapes culture and daily life. Mokoro canoes drift past fishing nets, floodplains sustain communities, and riverside villages gather into the soft rhythm of evening.

Travelling these routes reveals Kavango West in its most authentic expression. Arriving at Simanya invites the journey to slow, offering entry into a landscape shaped by water, rhythm, and enduring connection.

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History, Home And Hospitality

*A lovingly preserved slice
of Stampriet's past in the
heart of the Kalahari*

edited by Anne Schaffer | photographs supplied

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



The delightful Stampriet Historical Guesthouse is located on Plot 39 in Stampriet, Namibia. More than authentic, different accommodation, it's a wonderful trip back in time.

Kobus and Petro Hayman, together with parents Anton and Irene Zondagh, own and manage Stampriet Historical Guesthouse. They've poured heart and soul into the property for decades, ensuring that the history is preserved. Petro is deeply involved: "I spend most of my time at the guesthouse — I'm passionate about Stampriet and the story of this little 1920s town. I was born and raised here, and my grandfather, Connie Zondagh, has written seven books about the history in and

around the town." You'll be able to buy them at the guesthouse.

The family took over management of the guesthouse in 2012 and not only preserved all the glorious antiques, but also brought in their own antiques and introduced their personal stories of life in this village.

Often described as a charming, rustic getaway, ideal for travellers exploring the Kalahari region of Namibia, Stampriet Historical Guesthouse perches on a hill with breathtaking views. Guests love the lush vegetation, flowing ponds and towering green trees. The facilities include a splash pool and sundeck, bar, secure parking, Wi-Fi, a jungle gym for kids, a magnificent thatched lapa and exquisite

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



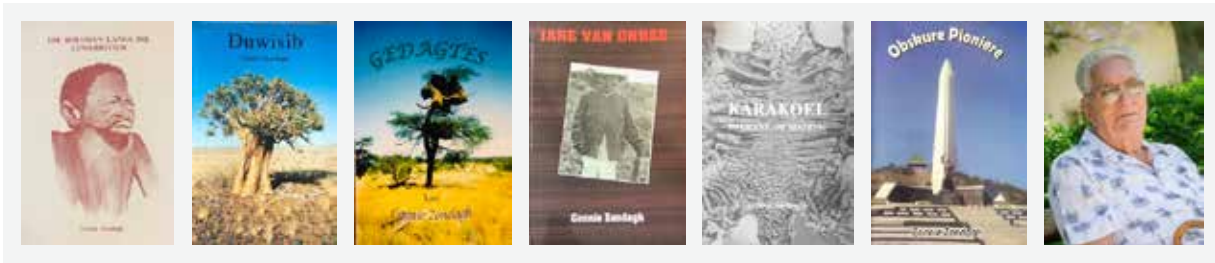
Your host, Managers of Stampriet Historical Guesthouse, Kobus and Petro Hayman.



Giraffes walk by moving both legs on the same side together.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



green lawns. The remarkable stone buildings — including the accommodation — have a strong sense of timelessness, each authentically decorated with historical artefacts. Walking into the main building is an eye-opener, with history hung on every wall and a fascinating souvenir table.

Stampriet Historical Guesthouse offers individually designed rooms which blend history and supreme comfort. There are two family rooms — a maximum of five people in each — two twin rooms, and six double rooms.

You'll not only be treated warmly and royally, but you'll eat like royalty with sensational 'boerekos'. Petro laughs: "Yes, we absolutely do home-cooked food using our local, farm-fresh produce, and all the baking is ours,

too. Our chocolate cake and carrot cakes are legendary!" The delectable aromas emanating from the kitchen are a constant reminder that something really good is on the horizon, whether it's a mouth-watering breakfast, lunch, cakes or dinner (on request).

This guesthouse is not your ordinary overnigher. It's filled with the history of the town and the buildings, not to mention the friendliness of the hosts, who are as keen to share their knowledge with you as they are their innate hospitality and sensational cooking. As Petro says, "Nothing is too much trouble for us. We love where we are and love what we do." 🍪

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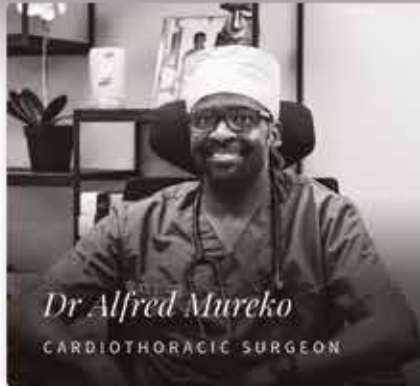
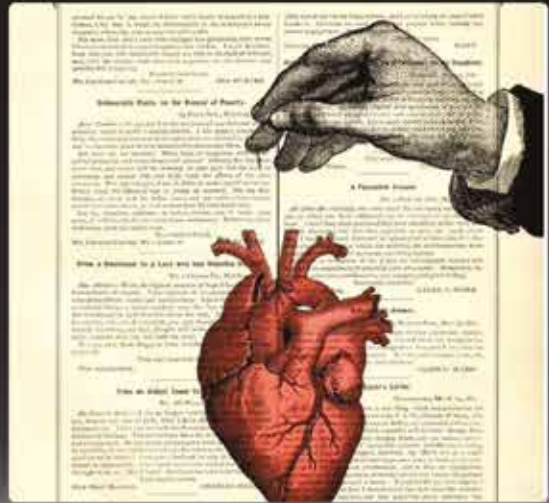
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Where The Wild Things Are

*Ten nights on horseback
through the Namib,
dreaming of far horizons
and wild horses*

edited by Anne Schaffer
photographs by Teagan Cunniffe

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



When you join a Namibia Horse Safari (NHS), you'll be very well cared for, but equally well cared for are the horses. Their well-being is a priority of the NHS team, and will swiftly become yours. This is about you, a unique camaraderie, and the glorious connection you'll make with your horse and this other-worldly landscape.

This is Namibia Horse Safari's Wild Horses Safari. It's quite a challenging ride, so not suitable for inexperienced riders. You'll need to be intermediate or advanced to manage – and indeed relish – this trip, and apart from being an

integral part of what NHS calls Namibia's most scenic safari, you'll have the additional thrill of seeing Namibia's legendary wild horses. Yes, the wild horses are certainly a highlight of this trip, as will be the deep dive – good, bad and challenging – into the lives of these horses, which will be shared by your knowledgeable and convivial host and riding guide, the experienced Andrew Gillies.

All NHS safaris are scheduled as 10 nights, 8 of which are spent camping wild in some of the most remote and dramatic terrain, while the first and last nights are in accommodation. The group rides 20–50 km per day at all



paces over rough desert terrain, including a challenging 27 km crossing of the Namib Dune Sea. It's almost impossible to describe the magical experience of camp life on a horse safari: the evenings spent quietly exploring new friendships, slowing down your racing thoughts, feeling the exhilaration of moving through breathtaking landscapes, and the joy of sitting around a simple fire. You'll sleep in a warm, comfortable bedroll on a stretcher – tents are available if required – but who'd want to miss out on the spectacular stars overhead? There are few places on earth with zero light pollution... this is one of them. While camping, hot bucket showers are available in the evenings, and there are toilets at all campsites. The experience is life-altering, but you'll find that out for yourself. You'll be living with horses 24/7, and that adds an unimaginable element to the safari.

Wake to the aroma of coffee, the business of preparing the horses, readying body and soul for a departure around

8am. You'll ride for four to five hours each day before breaking for lunch. Lunch breaks are one to two hours, followed by another two to three hours riding in the afternoon.

The Wild Horses Safari starts in the Tiras Biosphere Reserve and ends at Klein Aus Vista, near the home of Namibia's wild horses. You'll ride from the great dune sea of the central Namib to the edge of the infamous Sperrgebiet (German for restricted area) – the safari covers very diverse desert terrain, from the rugged Tiras Mountain Reserve to immense grassy plains dotted with inselbergs (island mountains), and the dunes of the Namib Sand Sea. Crossing the dune sea is an experience bar none, and you will come to appreciate why this is the chosen route – the remarkable deserts on the far side are as true 'Namib' as one can get.

On the penultimate day, you'll visit the coastal town of Lüderitz, and explore Kolmanskop, the historic mining town

The springbok can reach 88 km/h, making it one of the fastest antelope on Earth.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



the desert is 'reclaiming'. En route back to your overnight lodge, you'll stop for a sundowner at the waterhole of the Namib's wild horses.

"Welcome to the oldest, and arguably one of the most scenic deserts on the planet," are likely to be among Andrew's first words to you. By the time you return, you're going to agree with him a hundredfold. There's something about the rhythm of days and nights spent on this safari that will give you a new focus on life. It will certainly have you coming back again and again. Well, most do. 🐾

The wild horses of the Namib Desert are a unique, feral population of roughly 90 –150 horses living in the southern Namib, primarily near Garub in the Namib-Naukluft Park. Descended from abandoned or lost horses during World War I, they have adapted to arid conditions over a century but face threats from drought, predation and more.

The Last Word



words by Chris Coetzee

Recently, I found myself standing on one of the airport buses at O.R. Tambo International Airport, on my way to board Flight 162 to Lusaka. It was a remarkable discovery to realise just how many people could, apparently, be fitted into a single bus. The upside, of course, was that when one is stacked like sardines, one enjoys immediate and surprisingly reliable back support.

In their hands were passports of every imaginable colour: green, proudly Namibian; proudly South African; blue, proudly Zambian; and others whose loyalties I could not quite determine.

In front of me, seated in a perfectly straight row, were several elderly travellers. One could sense the wisdom immediately. Neatly dressed, there was something unmistakably dignified about them. Two hundred years ago, when the average human life lasted barely thirty years, most people left this world before their lives had time to ripen into themselves. Today, as we are so often reminded, the body still ages first. It always has. The soul, however, matures far more slowly, often too slowly for life's hardest questions.

Standing there, in what can only be described as a logistical achievement, it felt as though I was in the presence of people who had lived long enough to see their nations grow, and whose own lives had unfolded alongside the promise of the countries they carried in their hands.

It was a quiet reminder that the world we move through so

easily today was shaped by sacrifices most of us will never fully understand. Yet we live in busy and distracting times, where the glow of our screens so often turns our attention away from a deeper truth, that too often the soul ripens only to discover that the season granted to it has already begun to fade.

Which brings me to this month's Michelangelo Approved Destination: a night beneath the vast, star-filled skies of the Namib Desert.

In Namibia, we are fortunate to have some of the darkest skies in the world. I would encourage you, if you can, to spend a night sleeping beneath the desert stars. It is a breathtaking experience, and one in which sleep may prove surprisingly difficult — not because of discomfort, but because the vastness above you quietly refuses to be ignored, and because of the questions you will begin to ask.

There are nights in the Namib when the silence is so complete, and the sky so impossibly wide, that something within you begins to grow again.

And if you find yourself lying awake beneath that sky, do not be concerned. Those are not lost hours. They are the kind of hours that grow the soul, the kind we often realise we needed only later, when the seasons of our own lives begin to change and time starts to feel less endless and more extraordinary.

If I may offer one piece of practical advice: avoid a full moon. The universe performs better in the dark.🌑



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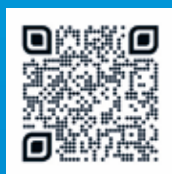
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