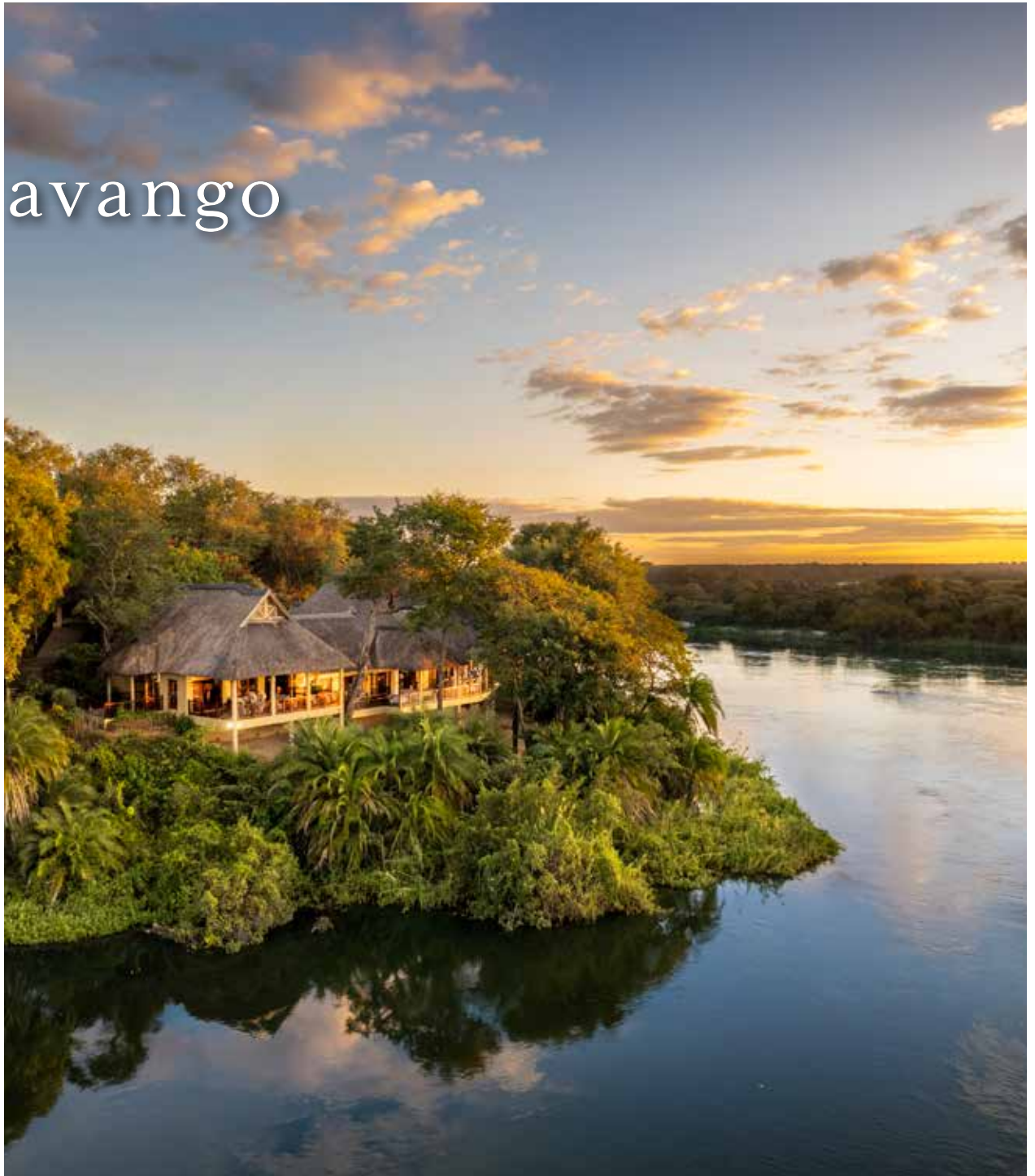


Michelangelo

IN FLIGHT. IN ROOM. IN AFRICA

AUGUST 2026

okavango



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The Peace We Build

Honouring Namibia's heroes — past and present — and the people whose daily service sustains our freedom, stability and hope.

Dear readers,

"August is a very important year." (The late Namibian President Dr. Hage Geingob famously—and humorously—referred to the month of August as a "very important year" due to a verbal slip. He used this phrase to highlight that August holds birthdays for multiple prominent Namibian leaders, including his own on August 3 and former President Hifikepunye Pohamba's.) August is the month of recognizing our heroes and heroines. This month, we expect to see one of the youngest heroes ever recognized in Namibia. The young man who rescued twins from drowning will be named a Namibian hero. It is also the month of celebrating the gallant sons and daughters who sacrificed for the freedom we enjoy today.

As we reflect on the sacrifices that built our nation, it is also worth considering the peace and stability that continue to define it today.

Across parts of the world, industrial action continues to disrupt the vital arteries of society, affecting transport, healthcare, education,



manufacturing, and public services. Between 2013 and 2022, Belgium averaged 103 working days lost per 1,000 employees due to industrial action, France 92, and Finland 90.

In Germany, 2023 saw more than 1.5 million working days lost across 312 industrial disputes. Closer to home, South Africa recorded approximately 845,500 working days lost in 2024, reflecting a complex labour relations landscape.

By comparison, the latest country profile published by the International Labour Organization records Namibia with just three working days lost per 1,000 workers due to strikes and lockouts.

This statistical contrast is not merely an administrative detail; it is a profound testament to our national character.

It reveals a nation built on dialogue, mutual respect, and a shared understanding that our collective progress relies on industrial harmony. This harmony extends far beyond the workplace. Independent international research consistently ranks Namibia among Africa's most peaceful nations and among the world's 50 most peaceful countries. Since Independence in 1990, Namibia has built and maintained an enviable reputation for peace, constitutional stability, and national resilience.

These are not just achievements recorded in international reports. They are reflected in children growing up in safety, businesses investing with confidence, communities protecting our natural heritage, and visitors discovering a nation where trust and stability shape everyday life. Because our daily lives continue uninterrupted, families can plan, businesses can grow, and visitors can explore our vast horizons with complete peace of mind.

Ultimately, a nation's greatest success cannot be measured only in kilometres of tarred roads, tonnes of mineral exports, or potential barrels of oil. It is measured by the confidence its people have in one another and in the future they are building together.

As we enter the month of August, Namibia prepares to celebrate Heroes' Day—a sacred time when we honour the brave patriots who fought and sacrificed to secure our sovereignty. They were the original architects of our freedom. Yet, in the quiet of the post-liberation era, we must recognize that peace is not a static monument; it is a continuous collective effort.

The heroes of today are the hands that build our peace through daily, honest work.

This peace is sustained and strengthened every day by members of our security services, healthcare professionals, teachers, conservationists, farmers, entrepreneurs, public servants, and the tourism and hospitality professionals who serve as our frontline ambassadors. Their quiet dedication, character, and competence transform a hard-won liberation into a thriving, stable society.

In an increasingly uncertain world, where disruption has become commonplace, peace has become humanity's most valuable and fragile asset. It cannot be purchased, and it cannot be imported. It must be cultivated from within.

To the workers and people of Namibia, we offer our deepest gratitude.

The world may admire our extraordinary ancient landscapes and abundant natural resources. Our greatest strength, however, has always been our people. Your resilience, compassion, integrity, and commitment to one another continue to shape a nation respected far beyond its borders.

Because of you, travellers arrive as visitors, but they leave as ambassadors for a nation defined by its peace, stability, and spirit. And they leave with something far more valuable than photographs.

They leave with hope. 🌍



Human?

“Cogito, ergo sum.” I think, therefore I am.

GYS JOUBERT

Managing Director

Gondwana Collection Namibia

I think, therefore I exist. Therefore, I am human.

Much of what we once believed made us human, made us different from, or perhaps superior to, other species, may soon become, at the very least, a shared experience with a new “species”.

Artificial intelligence (AI) thinks. Therefore, is it?

I sincerely hope thinking remains, at least, a shared experience.

It has become so convenient to leave all the thinking to AI. To outsource creativity to the machine. But if we stop using our imperfect brains, if we stop



struggling with difficult questions, it may lead to a gradual decline in our cognitive abilities, which, in the long run, could make us just a little less human.

An online article (one of many) published earlier this year warns that “excessive and unchecked use of AI in the workplace risks eroding human connection, cognitive ability” and a range of other qualities that define us as people (<https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en/insights/articles/the-human-side-of-ai-the-growing-risks-of-ubiquitous-use-of-ai-on-talent>).

It may be taking liberties, but if our cognitive abilities and our connections with one another are being negatively impacted, how is our humanity affected? Are we becoming something less because of the rise of AI?

Our ability to think now has competition. So the question becomes: what is it that truly makes us human?

I feel, therefore I am?

Often positively so but also in a negative sense.

I feel pain. I suffer. Therefore, I am?

Is it connection that makes us human? The old-fashioned kind, where we can see, touch, feel and smell each other.

I connect through my senses; therefore, I am.

Human senses are shared. Through them, I connect with other people, with nature, with spirit, and with myself.

This experience has touched my soul; therefore, I am.

In the past, questions of purpose and identity were largely individual. Going forward, many of these questions may need to become communal.

What is it that truly makes us human?

Then there is curiosity. Human endeavour, even when it is flawed. The drive and the ability to do hard things, sometimes willingly, maybe even foolishly, like running a marathon.

It is becoming increasingly necessary to understand that the value of our intelligence may diminish relative to AI. The value of our hearts, our feelings and emotions, however, will not.

Is it not ironic that AI may be the very catalyst we have needed to bring the focus back to all of this? Back to our humanity. Back to our shared humanity.

My vulnerability, my mortality, these represent my humanity.

AI may live on in the cloud.

My soul, I hope, will go to the clouds.

Make no mistake, empathy can be mimicked by a machine, but true humanity, born from shared vulnerability, cannot.

Some might say AI is the greatest threat humankind has ever faced. I think it is our greatest opportunity ever to rediscover Tribe and Fire – community, conversations, stories.

And perhaps what ultimately differentiates us is something as simple as this: I am afraid of dying. Or perhaps, even more profoundly: Thank God, I can die. Our limitation in life, our finite existence, is precisely what gives the present moment its infinite value.

So maybe AI is a Godsend. Maybe it is our Noah moment because, in this vast ocean of intelligence and information, it is only true humanity that stays afloat. Only genuine human connection matters.

Be that as it may, I embrace AI. It is a tool that can make us extraordinarily efficient. But eventually, we need to switch off and disconnect. We need to reconnect with Tribe and Fire. Namibia is the personification of exactly that.

Namibia offers culture, beauty and nature that remain remarkably untouched. Vast open spaces. Soulful experiences. No thinking required. Only feeling. Feeling that ultimately makes us human.

So let us embrace AI. But when we are done with our super-productivity, let the antidote be humanity.

Let the antidote be Namibia.

(At my own peril, no AI was used in the drafting of this article.)

Michelangelo

IN FLIGHT. IN ROOM. IN AFRICA. AUGUST 2026

okavango



ON THE COVER:

At the water's edge, Divava Okavango brings the wild rhythms of the river together with a quieter kind of luxury. Read *Let the Okavango Embrace You* on page 28.

Cover photograph by:

Divava Okavango, O&L Leisure



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
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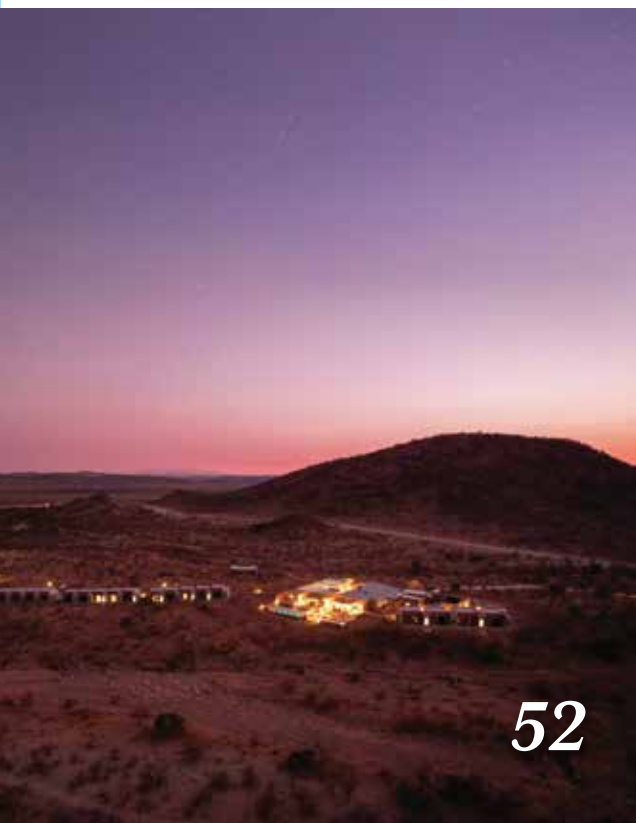
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Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Inside the Abyss

*The long walk into silence and self-discovery to a place
where there is no hiding from yourself*

words by Marc Springer | photographs by Marc Springer and Ronja Lyhs



Meet Ronja Lyhs. She's hiked the Fish River Canyon six times. So far. Marc Springer takes up her story and investigates the why.

It feels like looking down into the centre of the Earth. As if a fissure had opened, revealing a glimpse into the geological genesis of our planet. Standing at the edge of Namibia's Fish River Canyon, staring down into the abyss, seems like gazing back in time.

Stretching 160 km in length, up to 27 km wide and 550 m deep, the Fish River Canyon is ranked the second-largest canyon in the world after the Grand Canyon. It was formed over 350 million years ago, when a large depression developed along tectonic fault lines. This downward displacement of rock created a trench that was

further eroded by the ancient Fish River flowing through it, followed by glaciers carving the ravine even deeper during the Karoo Ice Age.

It is a natural wonder sculpted by time, formed by the forces of wind and water and the slow decay of ancient volcanic rock. From the famous viewpoint at Hobas, the ravine stretches towards the horizon below like a giant snake, enticing the viewer to come closer.

They say the canyon beguiles those who dare venture into its depths; that it enchants them, ensnares their very soul and reveals their inner self. That it puts a spell on the curious, compelling them to return time and again. They say that people come here looking for adventure and end up finding themselves.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Etosha was once a lake roughly the size of Switzerland, and its vast salt pan is visible from space.



Someone who knows more than most about that allure is Ronja Lyhs. She's walked through the canyon six times already, completing the 80-kilometre hike that follows the meandering riverbed past landmarks with colourful names like Bikini Beach, Shark Fin and Pink Palace, ending at the resort of Ai-/Ais.

"I too was told the canyon would take hold of me and never let go," Lyhs remembers. "However, after my first hike, I was so physically exhausted and emotionally drained that I vowed never to do it again."

She hadn't escaped the curse of the canyon, though. Just a few months later it started calling her back. Back into the embrace of the abyss. Back to the place she had promised herself never to return to.

For the uninitiated, associating an 80-kilometre hike with blood, sweat and tears is hard to comprehend. Why, after all, would people voluntarily expose themselves to extreme temperatures, dust, hunger, thirst, blisters and insect bites when they could simply relax beside a pool?

Lyhs laughs when confronted with that choice.

"The hike is not about having fun in the conventional sense," she says. "It's about challenging yourself and leaving your comfort zone. About overcoming obstacles and pushing your boundaries. Some say if you can conquer the canyon, you can conquer anything."

It's a recurring theme connecting those who have walked the Fish River Canyon: the sense of accomplishment, the act of proving yourself, the desire to leave everything behind for five days. To face your own demons, walking one step at a time towards a goal called Ai-/Ais.

But it is not just about the pride that comes with achievement. It's about the journey itself. About overcoming hardship and testing yourself against the elements.

When prompted to explain the fascination the canyon holds, Lyhs reclines in her chair, clearly intrigued by what seems an obvious question. After a while she says: "Down there you've got no cell phone reception. No traffic. No TV. No distractions. It's just you alone with your body and your thoughts. The canyon lends perspective. It dwarfs and humbles you."

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Namibia's 20 state-run protected areas cover approximately 17% of the country's land area.



A concept that dominates the conversation is what Lyhs calls a “clearing of the mind.” What she means is getting away from it all. Taking a break. Recharging the batteries. It’s something hundreds of hikers from around the world come here to do, over and over again.

Does fear play a role?

Lyhs contemplates the question before replying: “Perhaps some anxiety during the descent. There’s a risk of slipping and falling. And because you’re aware there’s no going back from here.”

What she’s referring to is the fact that hikers are all but trapped inside the canyon after the descent. Although two emergency exits provide an escape in cases of crisis, hikers are effectively hostages to the canyon until it releases them into the safety of civilization at Ai-/Ais.

Maybe that’s part of the temptation. The knowledge that down there, there is no giving up. No easy way out. That this place forces you to finish what you started.

It’s said that behind every mirror lies the reflection of another face. That it shows but a glimpse of our outer self. The same holds true for the Fish River Canyon. It’s as if it takes an X-ray of your character. A phenomenon Lyhs sums up simply: “Down here there is no hiding from yourself.”

When is it ever enough?

For the first time, Lyhs is at a loss for words. One thing she is sure about, however, is that until an answer emerges, she will return with her trusted group of fellow hikers. Back to the canyon. Back to the place she promised herself she would never visit again. Back to where it all began. A slave to the snake. 🐍



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Our conservation story is perhaps best told through Lightning, the world's longest-monitored free-roaming leopard. In 2009, after being rehabilitated by the N/a'an ku sê Foundation, Lightning chose Neuras as her kingdom. Fitted with a GPS collar, she roamed the edge of the Namib Desert, living as a non-conflict leopard and becoming a symbol of what dedicated conservation can achieve. Although Lightning now roams only in memory, her legacy continues to inspire our commitment to protecting Namibia's wildlife and wild places.

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Every glass poured sustains our purpose to conserve landscapes,
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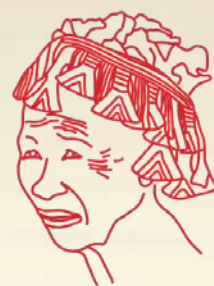
THREE WINES
THREE CONSERVATION PILLARS
ONE PURPOSE



PROTECT
WILDLIFE



CONSERVE
LANDSCAPES



IMPROVE
LIVES



THE NUMBERS BEHIND CONSERVATION

Statistics are based on the N/a'an ku sê Foundation's June 2026 conservation report.

ANTI-POACHING

5,611

Days without a poaching incident

2,216

Kilometres patrolled

Every patrol strengthens the protection of Namibia's wildlife and preserves vulnerable ecosystems for generations to come.



VETERINARY

21

Veterinary cases

06

Immobilisations

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RESEARCH

792

EarthRanger sightings logged

04

Human-wildlife conflict cases managed

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EDUCATION

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Michelangelo

—CONSERVATION—



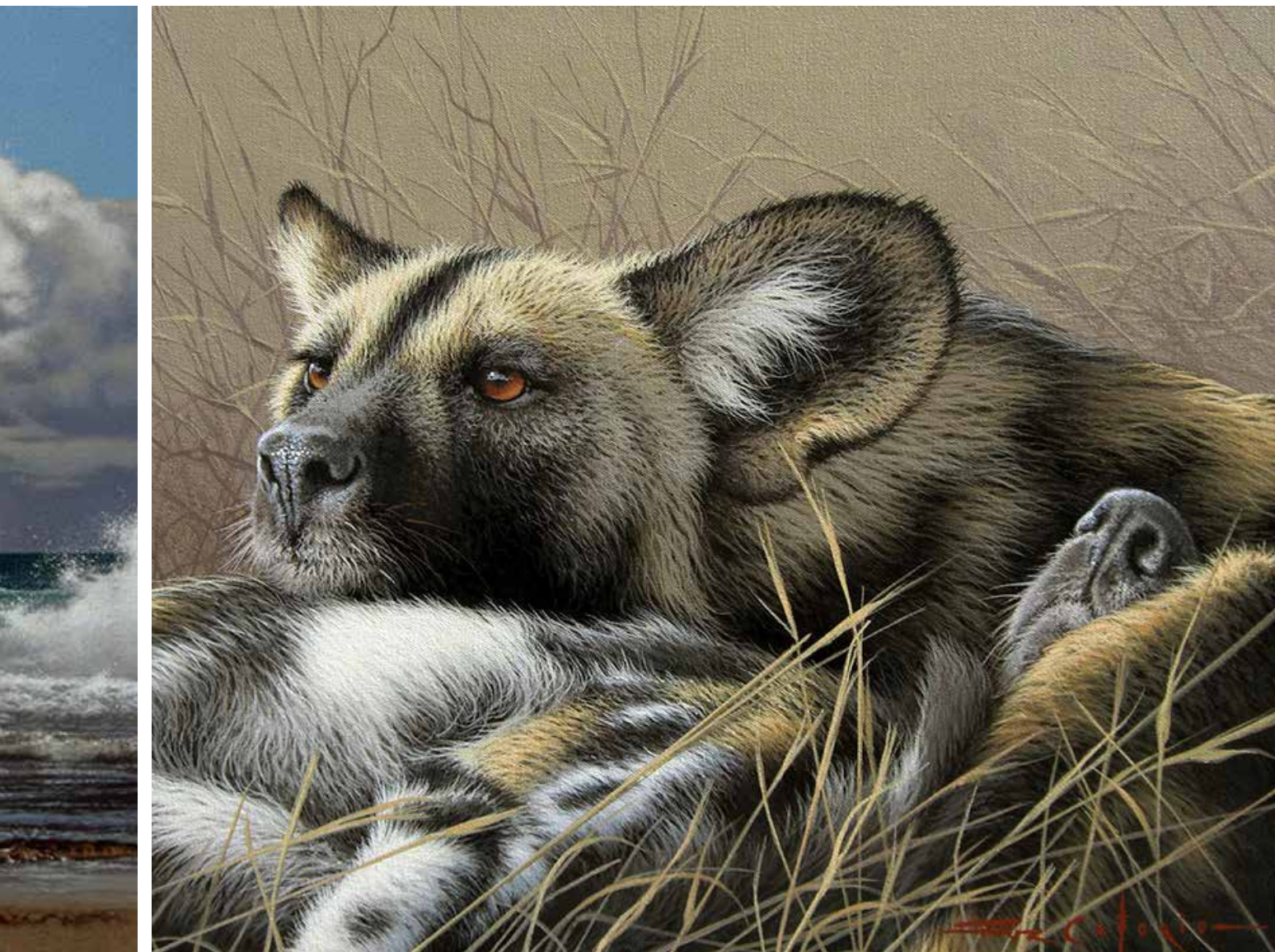
The Last Kingdom – 70 x 120cm

The Quiet Art of Listening

*The Longer We Look, the
More We See*

words by Martina von Wenzel

photographs supplied by Fine Art Gallery



Sleeping Siblings – 40 x 51 cm

Fuz Caforio was selected as this year's Africa Wildlife Artist of the Year. His solo exhibition, *Voices of the Vanishing*, opens at Swakopmund's Fine Art Gallery's on 21 August, and it's simply unmissable.

Every country has its own rhythm. Namibia asks us to find ours. There are voices that have become inseparable from our idea of Africa.

The distant resonance of a lion greeting the dawn. The animated chorus of African wild dogs. The unmistakable rasp of a leopard hidden beyond sight.

For thousands of years, they have formed the living soundtrack of the continent. So familiar, perhaps, that we rarely stop to consider what they truly mean.

It is only when we begin to imagine an Africa without those voices that we realise how deeply they have become part of Africa's identity - and of our own experience of the continent.

Few artists understand that more profoundly than Fuz Caforio. There are artists who paint what they see. Others paint what they imagine. Fuz Caforio paints what years of paying attention have taught him to notice.

Michelangelo

—CONSERVATION—



The King (cheetah) – 70 x 60 cm



Iganyana (Wild dog) – 58 x 58 cm

For more than three decades, the Johannesburg-based artist has returned to the landscapes of southern Africa with remarkable dedication. His work has found its way into private and corporate collections around the world, while his collaborations with wildlife photographers, researchers and conservation organisations have reinforced a lifelong commitment to the species that continue to inspire him. In 2025, that lifelong commitment was recognised with the prestigious title of Africa Wildlife Artist of the Year.

Yet awards tell only part of the story.

Standing before one of Caforio's paintings, the first

impression is often one of remarkable realism. Then, almost imperceptibly, something begins to shift. The painting is no longer simply about a lion, a leopard or a wild dog. It becomes about the feeling of standing quietly in their presence.

His paintings do not preserve wildlife. They preserve our encounter with it.

There is a quiet honesty to Caforio's work that is difficult to define, yet instantly recognisable. He does not dramatise the wilderness, nor does he romanticise it. Instead, he paints with the patience of someone who understands that nature rarely reveals its most memorable



Ingwe (leopard) 32 x 40 cm

moments all at once. They are earned through observation, respect and time.

Perhaps that is why his animals feel so familiar. They are never presented as symbols or trophies, but as individuals. A lion carries quiet authority rather than dominance. A leopard remains beautifully elusive. A young cheetah reveals curiosity before speed. Even moments of companionship and trust become reminders that the wilderness is shaped as much by character as it is by instinct.

His paintings invite admiration, certainly - but perhaps more importantly, they inspire understanding.

That understanding finds its fullest expression in *Voices of the Vanishing*.

This latest body of work is not simply a collection of wildlife portraits. It is a quiet invitation to slow down, to look a little longer and to rediscover the individuality of the animals with whom we share this continent.

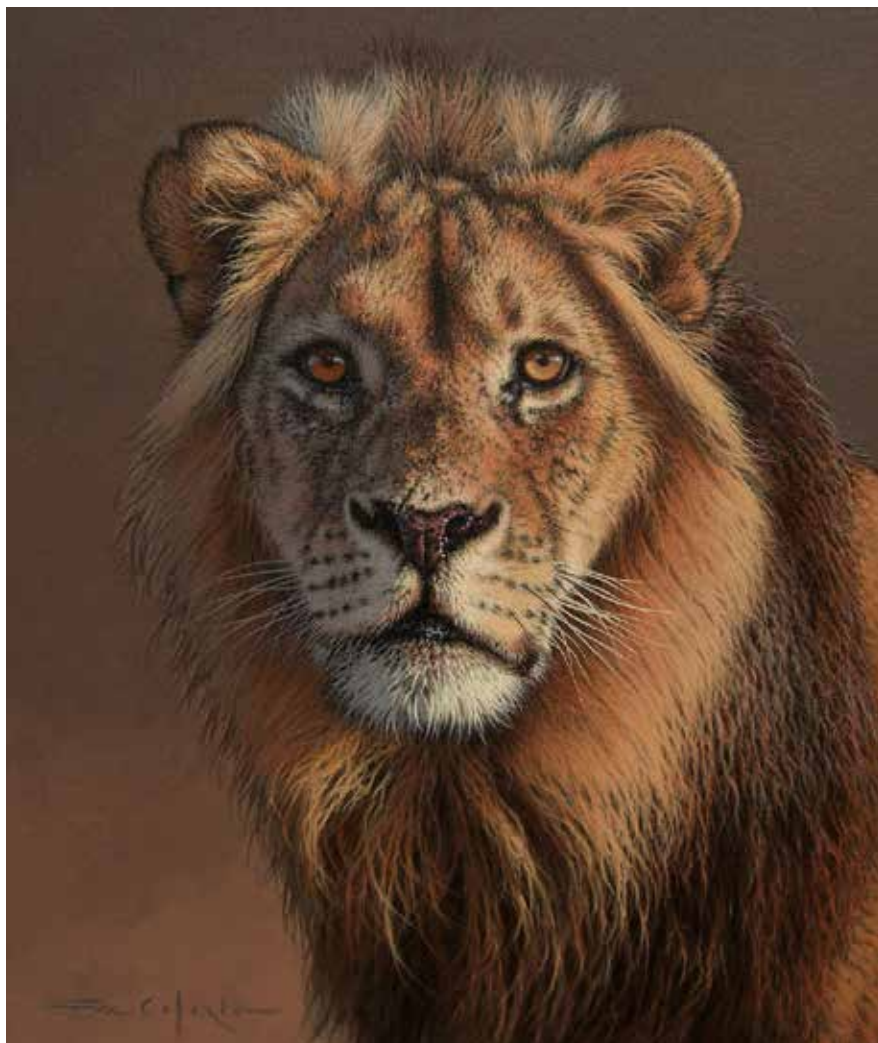
Each painting within *Voices of the Vanishing* offers a different encounter. There are moments of quiet authority, curiosity, companionship and resilience. Together, they

remind us that the wilderness is not defined by spectacle alone, but by countless individual lives, each with its own story to tell.

What makes Caforio's work so compelling is that he never asks us merely to admire these animals. He invites us to recognise them. His lions are more than emblems of strength. His leopards are more than masters of camouflage. His wild dogs reveal bonds of trust and family that feel remarkably familiar. The longer we look, the less these portraits become about species and the more they reveal character.

In doing so, *Voices of the Vanishing* gently challenges the way we experience wildlife. It encourages us to move beyond the excitement of a sighting towards a deeper appreciation of the lives unfolding before us. These are not fleeting encounters. They are enduring relationships between landscape, animal and observer.

Among all these extraordinary works, one painting quietly assumes a special significance. Not because it is more spectacular than the others, but because it seems to embody the very spirit of Namibia.



Icon – image attached – 70 x 60 cm

The Desert Lion

Few animals have become more closely woven into Namibia's identity than the desert lion.

Some landscapes shape the animals that inhabit them. Some animals come to define the landscape itself.

There is something profoundly moving about an animal that survives where, by all expectations, it should not. In one of the world's most unforgiving landscapes, the desert lion has learned not merely to survive, but to belong. It is a story not of dominance, but of extraordinary resilience.

Fuz Caforio understands this instinctively.

His desert lion is neither triumphant nor theatrical. It does not command attention through power alone. Instead, it possesses a quiet confidence, as though it has always

belonged exactly where we find it. The vastness of the Namib is not merely its setting; it has become part of its character.

Perhaps that is why this painting lingers so vividly in the viewer's mind.

It is more than the portrait of an extraordinary lion.

It is a portrait of resilience. It is a portrait of Namibia itself.

Fine Art Gallery, Swakopmund, proudly presents Voices of the Vanishing, Fuz Caforio's latest solo exhibition, from 21 August to 18 September 2026. It is an invitation to pause, to look a little longer, and perhaps to rediscover the voices that have become inseparable from our idea of Africa.

Some journeys change where we have been. The finest ones change how we look at the world.

May they never become only echoes. 🌀

19  19

LEISURE

DIVAVA OKAVANGO

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read the full feature



LET WILDLIFE, WATER, WONDERS AND A

SERENE STILLNESS EMBRACE YOU

On the banks of the Okavango River, close to Popa Falls and within easy reach of Bwabwata National Park, **Divava Okavango** sits at the edge of one of Namibia's richest wildlife regions. Our guests do not need to travel far to find elephant, buffalo, antelope and birdlife. The river brings them close to the lodge and the surrounding park does the rest.



Bwabwata stretches from the Okavango River in the west to the Kwando River in the east, taking in floodplains, woodland and seasonal pans. Within it lie the Mahango and Buffalo core areas, home to some of the largest elephant and buffalo populations in the country, alongside roan, sable, kudu, impala, red lechwe and sitatunga. Elephant move through in large numbers during the dry season, using the region as a migration corridor between Angola, Botswana and Zambia, while Bwabwata is widely regarded as the best place in Namibia to see Cape buffalo, ticking off a Big Five sighting in the process. Roan and sable, prized for their rarity elsewhere in the country, are a particular draw for guests who know their antelope.



Predators move through too. Lion numbers remain low but are recovering as conservation efforts give local communities a stake in their survival, while the African wild dog, one of the continent's most endangered carnivores, is a rare and remarkable sighting, a hunter so effective that four in five chases end in a kill. Along the water, hippo and crocodile are a constant presence, territorial and best admired from a respectful distance. More than 400 bird species have been recorded here, from the wattled crane to Pel's fishing owl. The park forms part of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KaZa), linking five countries and allowing wildlife to move along migratory routes older than any border.



EMBRACING EXPERIENCES

Divava's guided game drives into the Buffalo and Mahango core areas put guests within reach of this variety, while scenic flights over the park offer a different read of the same landscape, one where floodplain, woodland and river reveal their beauty and scale from above. Both are built around the rhythms of the park rather than a fixed itinerary, so a morning drive might follow elephant tracks toward the river while an afternoon flight traces the Okavango as it fans out across the floodplain.

The river itself is a destination in its own right. Divava's boat cruises move slowly along the Okavango, past hippo pods and basking crocodiles, through channels lined with waterlilies and reed frogs calling from the banks, while the distinctive cry of the fish eagle can be heard overhead. Our boat stops at a sandbank for sundowners as the light drops over the water and this mesmerising experience becomes a much talked about topic by all our guests.



A PLACE TO RETURN TO AFTER THE DAY'S SIGHTINGS

With so much to see across the park and the river, Divava's setting on the Okavango is as important as the experiences. The lodge's 20 chalets stand on high ground above the river, each with a private deck that looks straight onto the water and the wildlife it draws. Rooms are air-conditioned, with indoor and outdoor showers and enough space to settle in after a day on the water or in the park.



Beyond the chalets, the property offers dedicated spaces for complete relaxation. Guests can unwind by the swimming pool or retreat to the Riverside Spa, a tranquil sanctuary featuring a sauna, steam room and three private treatment rooms.

Meals are served with the same view in mind and the pace of the lodge follows the guest rather than the other way round. Our team knows the park as well as the property and it shows in the small things, an early flask of coffee before a sunrise drive, a chilled towel on return, a table reset for sundowners without being asked. It is this combination, wildlife within easy reach and hospitality that anticipates what a day in the bush requires, that makes Divava the natural base from which to explore the region.



**Scan here to explore
Divava Okavango,
Leisure Tours and
Leisure Club.**



"Guests who have been with us at Divava describe a stillness that stays with them: the outdoor shower, the turndown service and the boat trip that put them a few metres from a hippo and a crocodile on the same afternoon," says James Muzamai – General Manager, Divava Okavango. One visitor called it the favourite stop of a five week trip through Namibia, while another returned from Mahango having seen more elephants in a single game drive than anywhere else on their journey.

Few places in Namibia put this much wildlife this close to a comfortable bed. At Divava, the day begins with elephant tracks along the river and ends with a sundowner on the water and we ask nothing more from our guests than to let themselves be embraced by what is around them.



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PALMWAG LODGE & CAMP

A good eye

You haven't been lured if you found yourself between Namibia's secluded Kaokoland and the famed Skeleton Coast just after seeing this place "somewhere". It is all your doing. Your final decision. Probably, one of the best choices you have ever made too.

Like swaying makalani palms, Palmwag Lodge & Camp is widely known to sway travellers to the sweeping northern Damaraland landscape.

What's there not to be drawn to when Damaraland exhibits its large stretch of African savannah with its rounded granite domes? Who could truly resist the captivating ephemeral rivers that surge along their ancient channels following heavy summer rains, only to fade as their waters seep into underground aquifers for safeguarding? These lifelines serve as essential wildlife corridors and sanctuaries, where desert-adapted rhino, lion, and elephant move with freedom.

If you've come to find yourself at this place and distance you, quite candidly, have a good eye. So, welcome, dear traveller.

The more you know

As the saying goes: "To learn is to discover the world again, and again."

Trust that Palmwag Lodge & Camp will not leave you short, but instead will leave you much room to discover. Expert-led and picturesque journeys take you to experience magnificent flora, fauna and landscape.

Observing wildlife like the desert-adapted elephants and hearing interesting facts about plants and their uses are just some of the opportunities. During such a time, the stage is yours to ask how these giants made it so far into time on Earth. Or, you are more than welcome to ask more about the calcu-



lated ways of the felines. Perhaps, you might spark an extension of interest in indigenous plant life – both eye-catching and less noticed species carry fascinating narratives.

Nonetheless, chances are your curiosity will be evoked. These opportunity in reach are a clear invitation to live the balance of experience, insight and lasting memory.

Some special things

An Under Canvas Sleep-out. In other words, if you love to spend the night out in nature, you are in for a special treat. Palmwag Lodge & Camp offers a unique, and generous all-inclusive outing – a guided scenic drive taking guests to a tented camp within the Palmwag Concession area. And there, you gaze at the African sky right from beneath it, and savour your dinner surrounded by nature out in the open. Another treasure: the black rhino – an endangered species takes refuge in the area. Palmwag Lodge & Camp collaborates with neighbouring conservancies, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism and Save the Rhino Trust to safeguard this gem.

However, what is also fascinating is that visitors, knowingly or unknowingly, share in these efforts by rhino tracking on foot to witness the astounding beauty of these spectacular creatures. You are not just a guest or only an adventurer. You are also a guardian.

Friends of Jimbo

By the time you have left, you realise something – a connection has been made with this place, and its residents.

Jimbo, an adored elephant at Palmwag Lodge & Camp who has stolen many hearts has either met you, or made himself present just somewhere close within the vicinity. Just by your visit, you have formed a bond with him, even if from the distance.

But not just Jimbo. You have been welcomed to a home of many others who are rooted in this place – both the wildlife and the people who take care of it.

You have become friends with them all.



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Slice of Life

words by Jescey Bekker



Ironing Out the Kinks



A little-known (well, not so secret, because I tell people very quickly) fact about me is that I greatly, agitatingly, detest ironing.

I know how to iron, and I understand that many people find great pleasure in it... I, however, am not one of them. To emphasise just how much I am not an ironing aficionado, I actually buy clothes based on whether they'll need ironing. If a garment doesn't straighten out with a good shake and perhaps a little steam from my shower, it will remain on the shop rail and well away from me.

Recently, however, my day job temporarily took an unexpected turn, and I found myself spending an unusual amount of time in a laundry. Four massive 27 kg top-loading machines, a couple of hundred duvet covers, endless linen, towels and uniforms later, I came to the devastating realisation that ironing was very much in my immediate future.

At first, I did my best to avoid the dreaded iron by sticking to washing, folding and scrubbing. Then I discovered the roller iron and found a degree of satisfaction there. At least this way I could contribute by focusing on the linen. Unfortunately, that included super king fitted sheets, which, might I add, are an extraordinary

amount of fabric and surprisingly complicated to iron. The tiny perfectionist lurking inside me was highly dissatisfied with the results.

Then came the chino trousers — what a mission. Still better than cotton shirts, though! By quietly fiddling with the roller iron, I also discovered that the world of ironing is surprisingly diverse. Some people swear by a good old-fashioned hot iron, while others insist steamers are the best thing since sliced bread. Every now and then, a steam-iron expert would glide into the laundry with flair and confidence, effortlessly banishing the wrinkles from seemingly endless piles of cotton uniform shirts. Watching them work almost made it look... enjoyable.

Almost.

While the experience was certainly enlightening, and I have gained a new appreciation for the art of ironing (from a respectful distance), my opinion of it remains largely unchanged. As far as I can help it, I will continue evading my household iron and ironing board for as long as possible.

My preferred method, a good shake and some strategic positioning on the washing line—will remain my trusted solution. ☺



Driven to Protect

Pupkewitz Toyota & CITW Support Namibia's desert-adapted black rhino rangers

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Pupkewitz Toyota, a brand that has for more than a century embodied a legacy of trust, service excellence and community commitment in Namibia, is built on principles of integrity and innovation. It is a proudly African, family-owned group.

Namibia's remarkable wilderness is more than a destination – it is part of the country's identity. Protecting it requires partnership, determination and the courage to tackle some of conservation's greatest challenges.

Few species embody those challenges more than the critically endangered desert-adapted black rhino. Found in the harsh, rugged landscapes of north-western Namibia, these extraordinary animals have adapted to survive where few others can. Their future, however, depends on the tireless commitment of conservation organisations, local communities and the dedicated rangers who protect them every day.

This shared commitment inspired Pupkewitz Toyota to initiate a unique 12-hour endurance cycling initiative in partnership with Wilderness and Children in the Wilderness (CITW) – an event designed not only to raise awareness of the plight of the desert-adapted black rhino,

but also to generate tangible support for those working tirelessly on the front line of conservation.

The initiative concluded with the donation of essential field equipment to rhino rangers from the Torra, Sesfontein and Anabeb conservancies. The equipment strengthens their ability to carry out vital conservation work safely, effectively and sustainably across some of Namibia's most remote and demanding landscapes.

For Pupkewitz Toyota, the partnership reflects more than corporate social responsibility. It embodies the belief that vehicles engineered to conquer Africa's toughest terrain belong alongside the people dedicated to protecting it. Just as Toyota has earned a reputation for reliability in the continent's most unforgiving environments, so too do Namibia's conservation rangers rely on equipment, endurance and unwavering resolve to safeguard one of the world's rarest wildlife populations.

Alongside Namibia's conservationists, we stand guard over the living legends of this ancient land, so that their story may continue to unfold, not only in our lifetime, but for generations to come. 🌱

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Dear Diary

words by Sandra Baumeister

The Secret to Reaching Sossusvlei, Deadvlei, Big Daddy and the Dunes



Let me let you in on a little secret before we start: the magic of Sossusvlei isn't just what you see. It's when you get there.

And the trick to getting there first, before the crowds arrive and before the heat turns the sand into a frying pan, is staying right at the gate.

More on that in a moment.

Arrival: The Lodge That Kisses the Dunes

I visited Sossusvlei Lodge, and let me be honest with you, it was boiling. It felt like 40 degrees, and I'm fairly sure it actually was.

The lodge sits so close to the red dunes that it practically kisses them, and the sand got so hot I had to wear closed shoes just to cross it without doing a little hopping dance. So you can imagine how grateful I was to discover the pool. That beautiful, refreshing, life-saving pool where I ended up spending most of my afternoon.

No regrets.

Why You Should Stay Right at the Gate

Here's the secret I promised: Sossusvlei Lodge is the perfect base for entering the Namib-Naukluft National Park early in the morning. And by early, I mean sunrise.

I was at the entrance gate as the sun came up, and then we drove alongside the dunes, each curve lit more beautifully than the last by that soft early light. It honestly felt like another world.



That early start makes all the difference, both for the incredible light and for staying ahead of the heat.

Reaching Deadvlei

We drove on until we reached Deadvlei. After a 20-minute walk over the dunes, the view opened up, and it was spectacular.

Close to Sossusvlei, Deadvlei is a clay pan known for its dark, dead camel thorn trees standing against the white pan floor. The pan formed when the Tsauchab River flooded the area, allowing camel thorn trees to grow. Then the climate shifted, the sand dunes gradually crept in, and they blocked the river from ever reaching the pan again.

The trees are estimated to be several hundred years old. You'll often see figures of around 900 years quoted, although the exact age is still debated. What's remarkable is that they haven't decomposed; the climate is simply too dry for them to rot away.

For photographers, Deadvlei is paradise. The contrast between the pitch-black trees and the bleached-white pan, set against the rusty-red dunes and a deep blue sky, makes for unforgettable images.

A practical tip: Deadvlei is at least a 1 km walk from the parking area, so be sure to take drinking water with you.

We did.

And then we took so many pictures of the trees, wandering between those ancient trunks as though we'd

stepped back in time.

(I'll admit it, I kept half expecting a dinosaur to wander past. No luck, but I'm still convinced one was hiding behind a dune somewhere.)

Back to the Pool (and a Jealous Visitor)

Because it was so hot, we could only stay out until late morning. The afternoon called for one thing: the pool.

We spent it in and around the water, cold drink in hand, and we even had an oryx come to visit.

I'm certain he was a little jealous that we could cool off so easily.

Sorry, my friend.

The Bottom Line

If you want to visit Deadvlei or hike Big Daddy, one of the tallest dunes in the Namib, make sure you stay at Sossusvlei Lodge.

Stay at the gate, get up before the sun, take plenty of water, and bring a sense of humour for the heat.

Between the friendly staff, the great food, and that wonderfully refreshing pool, you'll enjoy a stay you won't soon forget.

And if you happen to spot a dinosaur out in Deadvlei... tell it I said hi.

Until next time,
Sandra 🐾

Sandra

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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.

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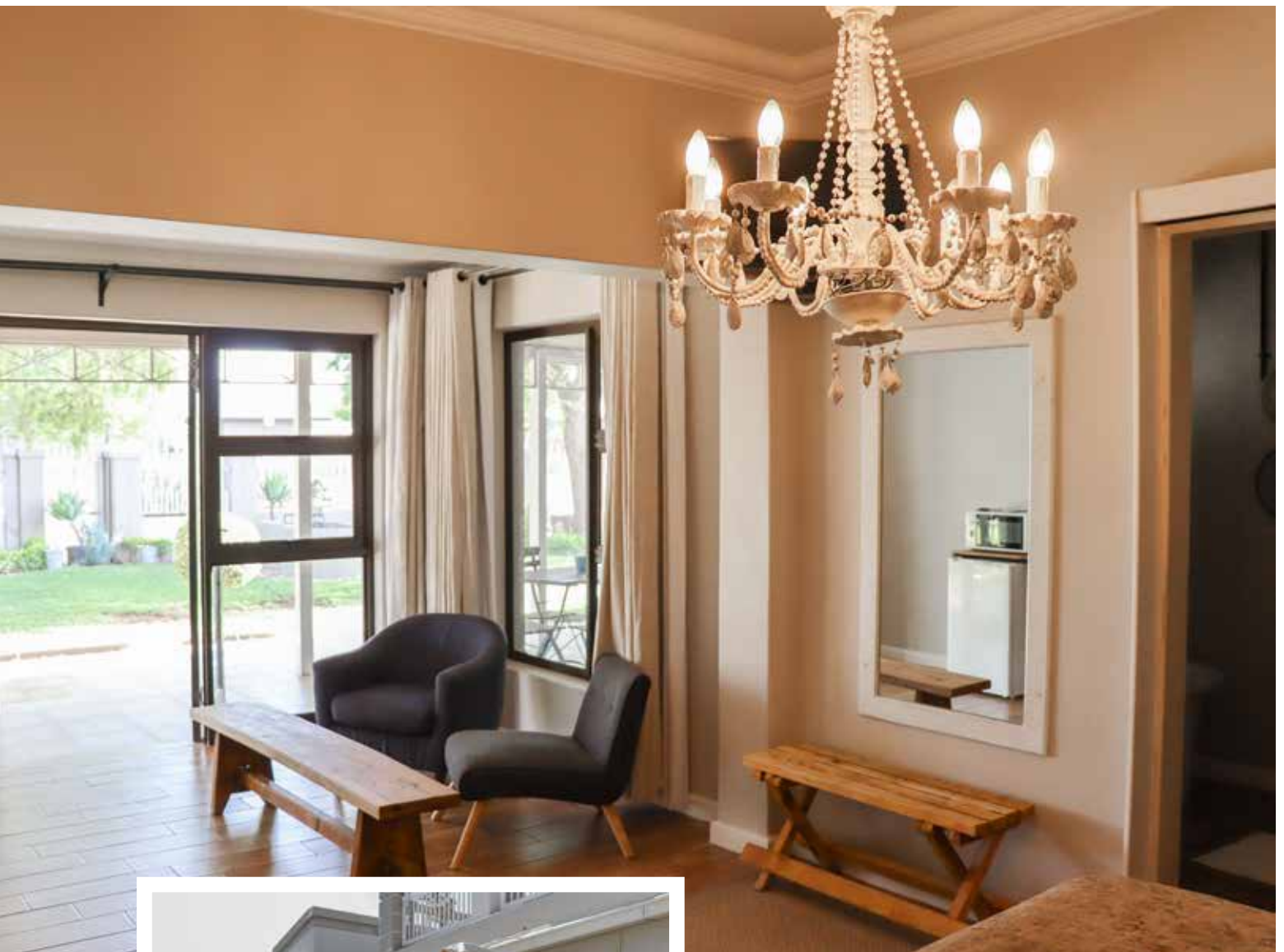
*Where warm hospitality
meets the perfect
stopover on Namibia's
southern route*

Boutique Guesthouse Mariental

edited by Anne Schaffer
photographs supplied

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Looking for a luxurious one- or two-night stopover en route to many of Namibia's top highlights? Welcome to Boutique Guesthouse Mariental, where wonderful hospitality meets the perfect location.

Mariental is the gateway to the Kalahari, with its red sand dunes stretching across Namibia and Botswana all the way to Mata-Mata and the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. West of Mariental and Maltahöhe lies the Pro-Namib, with its striking semi-desert landscapes, camelthorn acacias and the Naukluft Mountain Range. Beyond awaits the world's oldest desert, home to its highest dunes at Sossusvlei and Deadvlei.

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



Boutique Guesthouse Mariental is a luxurious guesthouse in the centre of Mariental. It is conveniently situated adjacent to the B1 highway and within walking distance of a number of restaurants. The guesthouse has been designed to meet the needs of both business and leisure travellers, offering warm hospitality, exceptional comfort and wonderful attention to detail. Personalised service is top of mind for the team at Boutique Guesthouse Mariental, and you'll feel that care from the moment you arrive.

With 10 spacious, air-conditioned, en suite rooms, guests enjoy complimentary Wi-Fi as well as DSTV. Some rooms open onto a lovely patio overlooking the garden, while others are located on the upper level with a large balcony perfectly positioned to enjoy the spectacular sunsets. A couple of

rooms are tucked away without a view, offering additional privacy. Each room has been uniquely decorated, with every detail focused on comfort and convenience. Amenities include a laundry service, daily housekeeping and secure on-site parking.

The day begins with a hearty breakfast in the guesthouse's dining area, and guests are encouraged to enjoy lunch and dinner in the local restaurants. No matter what you need, where you need it or why, the guesthouse team will go the extra mile to assist with everything from planning your day to providing directions to your next destination. Owner-managed and built on strong family values, that personal touch is the ingredient that makes all the difference at Boutique Guesthouse Mariental. 📞

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Nature as the World's Greatest Sculptor

*The Danish Coast and the Namib Desert Meet in Kerstin
Risbjerg Brehem's Meditative Ceramics, Inspired by
Weathered Forms, Wilderness and the Quiet Memory of Clay*

edited by Anne Schauffer | photographs by Kerstin Risbjerg Brehem

Kerstin Risbjerg Brehem grew up in the small village of Kollund in southern Denmark in the early 1970s, surrounded by forests, beaches and the sea. Her childhood was spent exploring nature and collecting shells, fossils, driftwood and beautifully shaped stones along the shoreline.

"If someone had told me then that I would one day be making ceramics from a studio overlooking a wildlife waterhole in Namibia, I would never have believed them. Yet those two landscapes - the Danish coast and the Namib Desert - are deeply connected in my work. Both have taught me to appreciate the quiet beauty of nature, time and weathered forms."

Michelangelo chatted to her about her past, present and future, and how they play out in her life with clay.

Were you a creative child?

Very much so. My mother was a kindergarten teacher for 30 years, and our home was always filled with creativity. She drew, painted and, in her younger years, created beautiful ceramic sculptures. My parents would spend evenings together, painting large abstract canvases or sewing dresses for us.

Our German grandmother, Oma, taught my sisters and me to knit and sew, and making things with our hands simply became part of everyday life. As an awkward teenager, I was happiest drawing for hours while listening to 1960s crooners on my mum's old record player. Later, while living in California, I studied multimedia art at the University of California, Berkeley, which broadened my appreciation of art and design.



When did you first work with clay?

I took my first pottery classes in Denmark when I was 17, together with my mother. Our teacher adored the colour blue, and almost everything she created celebrated it. Her enthusiasm and generosity planted the first seed.

Years later, while living in San Francisco, I returned to ceramics seriously. My teacher was an elderly hand-builder with long grey hair, a well-worn black French beret and decades of experience. He believed that almost anything that could be made on a wheel could also be created by hand, and he taught me to trust the process. Many of the techniques he shared were influenced by Japanese ceramics and still shape my work today.

What inspires you?

I've always believed that nature is the world's greatest sculptor. Wind, water, fire and time have been shaping clay and stone for millions of years; I simply continue a process that nature began.

My mother collected beautiful stones all her life and passed that passion on to her daughters. Even today, whether I'm walking on a Danish beach or through the Namib Desert, I instinctively find myself looking down for the next perfectly shaped stone or fossil.

Living in Namibia has transformed my work. Ancient mountains, dry riverbeds, seed pods, shells, weathered rock and endless desert horizons constantly inspire me. Clay itself fascinates me because it is never entirely obedient. Just when you think you're in control, it reminds you that it has its own memory and movement. Some of my favourite pieces came about because I stopped trying to control the clay and allowed it to lead me instead.

I've never thought of clay as an inert material. Before it reaches my hands, it has already lived an extraordinary life beneath the earth for millions of years. Creating each piece feels like borrowing a tiny fragment of that history.



How would you describe your current work?

My work sits somewhere between sculpture and functional ceramics. I draw inspiration from seed pods, shells, botanical forms and the colours and textures of Namibia's extraordinary landscapes. Surfaces range from deep matte blacks to richly layered glazes that evoke weathered stone, ancient earth and mineral deposits.

Every piece evolves slowly through a meditative dialogue between clay, fire and form. I hope each work carries a sense of calm, timelessness and connection to the natural world.

Do you make one-offs, or do you have signature pieces?

Discovery is one of the great joys of working with clay, and I quickly lose interest in repeating exactly the same object. Certain forms naturally reappear because they reflect what continually inspires me, but every piece develops its own personality.

Do you have a brand name?

My studio is called HøNSE Keramik. I am the youngest of three girls, and my father always called me 'HøNSE', meaning 'little hen' in Danish. The nickname stayed with me throughout my life, and my mother still calls me HøNSE today. Naming my studio after that childhood nickname felt like carrying a small piece of Denmark with me while creating a new life in Namibia.

How and where do you sell your work?

My work is available through selected galleries and design stores in Namibia and South Africa, as well as directly to private collectors.

Current stockists include the Namibia Craft Centre in Windhoek, Ambience Interiors in Swakopmund, The Project Room Gallery Shop in Windhoek and Moki Store in Constantia, Cape Town. I have also completed commissioned ceramic wall installations for dlh lifestyle interior design store, Bank Windhoek and Twyfelfontein Country Lodge.



Have you had any exhibitions?

Yes. My work has been featured in Shapes of the Current at Kamma Art & Design Gallery in Swakopmund and Origins at The Project Room in Windhoek. I see each exhibition as another step in an evolving creative journey.

Is this what you do full-time?

Not yet, although it is my ambition. My husband and I also run Black Thorn Films, a production company specialising in wildlife and natural history films in Namibia. Over the years, we've worked on more than a hundred productions for clients including the BBC, Apple TV, Disney and Netflix.

Spending so much time in remote wilderness has profoundly influenced my ceramics. It has taught me to slow down, observe and appreciate the remarkable beauty found in small details.

Do you have a home studio?

Yes, and I feel incredibly fortunate. In 2021, during

the COVID-19 pandemic, we built our dream home in the Namibian bush, where my studio overlooks a waterhole visited daily by wildlife.

Every morning, I open the studio doors to changing light, birdsong and the quiet rhythm of the landscape. Watching wildlife come and go while I work constantly reminds me why I create the pieces I do. The landscape has become my silent collaborator, and I cannot imagine a more inspiring place to make ceramics. I am also very proud that my kiln runs on 100% solar power.

Do you run any workshops or give talks?

I teach a small group every Sunday, many of whom have become close friends. Watching someone discover the joy of clay for the first time is enormously rewarding. Clay encourages patience, curiosity and presence, and seeing that transformation in others is one of the most satisfying parts of teaching.

Diarise: October 8, first potters market at The Project Room in Windhoek. ☎

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edited by Anne Schaffer | photographs by Alvaro Arbe

*Explore Namibia's Living
Geological Masterpiece Where
Adventure Meets Refined Comfort*

Lodge Damaraland



Sheer luxury - with a glorious sense of freedom - awaits you at Lodge Damaraland on the Arid Eden Route, near Khorixas, a stone's throw from the Petrified Forest and Twyfelfontein.

Close to the town of Khorixas lies a unique, somewhat mystifying natural landscape on Namibia's Arid Eden Route. The route stretches from Swakopmund in the south to the Angolan border in the north and, as one of the last remaining wilderness areas, is remote yet accessible, with a number of Namibian gems to visit.

Eco-friendly Lodge Damaraland offers luxury accommodation, authentic Namibian hospitality and warmth, and something close to joyful freedom in this unspoilt landscape. The lodge has 30 classic en suite rooms, including four family

rooms that can accommodate up to four people. Cuisine is sublimely Namibian, with hearty breakfasts, lunches and dinners served in the lodge's welcoming restaurant, while the swimming pool is always a great, sociable meeting spot during the summer months, as is the highly convivial bar.

Lodge Damaraland is a mere 43 km from the legendary Petrified Forest, home to around 50 fossilised, 280-million-year-old tree trunks, and 96 km from the World Heritage Site of Twyfelfontein, one of the largest concentrations of prehistoric rock art in Africa, featuring more than 2,500 ancient rock petroglyphs and paintings.

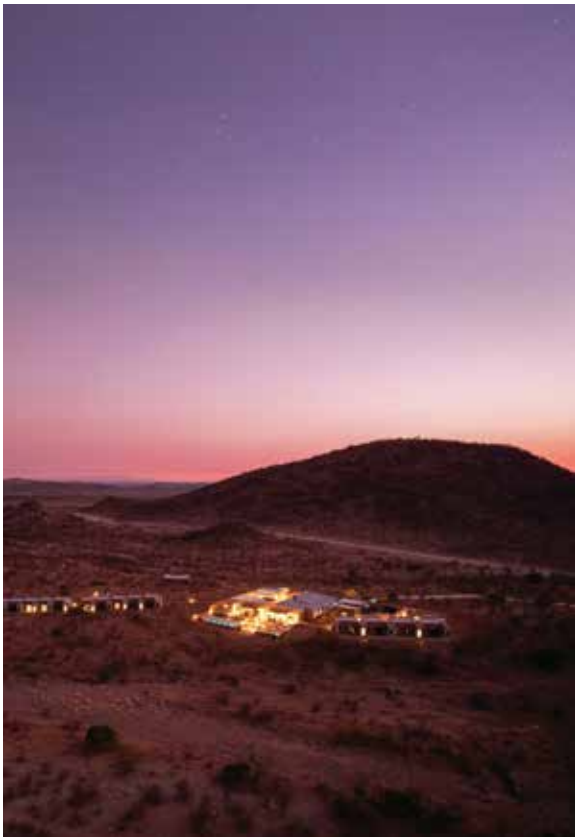
On site, Lodge Damaraland offers numerous must-do activities. Pick and choose - or preferably, do them all. You can set off on their guided Geology and Gin Sunset Walk, discovering

Michelangelo

—TRAVEL—



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A male lion can devour up to **63 kilograms of meat in a single meal.**

Michelangelo

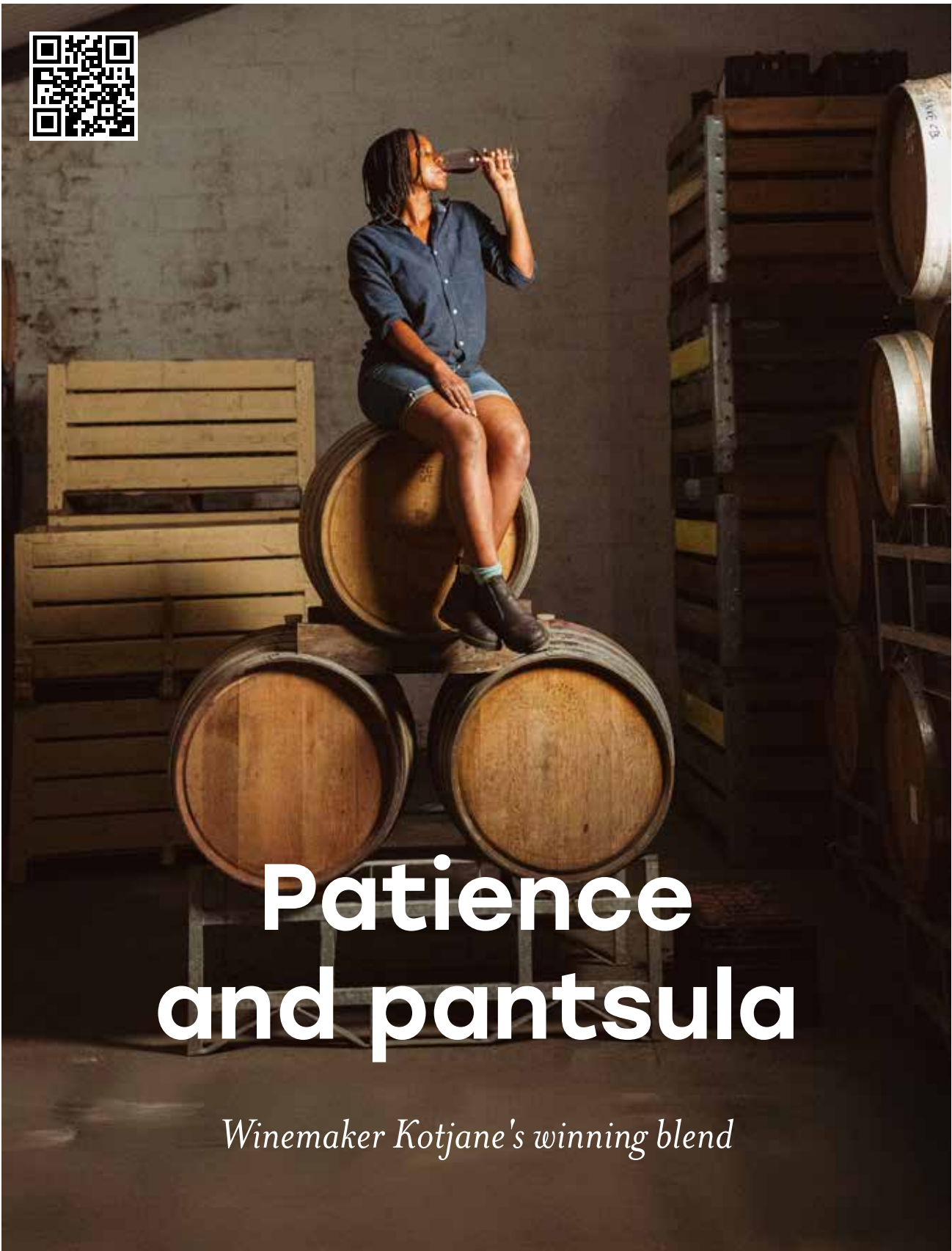
—TRAVEL—



local fauna and flora while sampling locally crafted gins. The Desert Elephant Drive is a must: head off early in the morning and spend the day tracking majestic desert elephants. Equally rewarding is the full-day Black Rhino Tracking experience, where you'll track free-roaming black rhinos in the wilds of Damaraland on a guided adventure, while directly supporting conservation through the lodge's per-guest donation to Save the Rhino Trust. Their Guided Himba Village Experience allows you to spend a couple of hours immersing yourself in the traditions and culture of the local Himba people.

A stay at Quiver & Co's Lodge Damaraland is as mindful an experience as the team's commitment to sustainable, eco-friendly principles. Everything has been thoughtfully considered, from refuse recycling and a greywater system for laundry to a 50 kW grid-tied solar system and gas cooking. They've also chosen energy-efficient cooling systems, with fans available in all bedrooms. Living in this remarkable Namibian landscape - even if only for a few days - is as restorative an experience as it gets. And that's before you've enjoyed the on-site massage treatments! 🧘

info@quiverandco.com; +264 6440 5045

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt and denim shorts, is sitting on a stack of three wooden wine barrels. She is holding a glass of red wine to her lips and drinking. The setting is a dimly lit wine cellar with many more barrels stacked on racks in the background. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the woman and the barrels she is sitting on.

Patience and pantsula

Winemaker Kotjane's winning blend



Mahalia Kotjane, a winner of the week on ‘Die Wynmeester’, turned a school science project into a career, crafting award-winning wines with her label Three Quarters Wines.

‘Die Wynmeester’ on VIA (DStv channel 147) explores the art of winemaking by spotlighting South Africa’s top independent winemakers.

Concept creator and presenter Danie van der Merwe, known for his decade-long career in radio broadcasting, hosts the show.

The second season, screened between 16 July and 3 September, follows winemakers through each stage of the process – from vineyard to bottle.

The show highlights their skills, techniques, and the challenges they face.

Weekly competitions, such as in wine-food pairing and blending, add a fun element to the show, and a final winner is announced at the end of the series.

Sponsored by Ardagh Glass Packaging, the show offers

a captivating glimpse of the passion and precision poured into every bottle of wine.

The overall winner receives free entry to the 2026 Michelangelo International Wine & Spirits Awards (MAIWSA).

Michelangelo Magazine spotlights winner of the week Mahalia Kotjane.

Kotjane’s passion for wine stems from a school project on microorganisms, during which she researched the role yeast plays in the fermentation process.

Coming from a township in the city, Kotjane moved to the Western Cape to study agriculture before getting her first job in the wine industry in 2011. Roles as a winemaker at Stark-Condé and Lievland Family Wines followed before she decided to go solo under the label Three Quarters Wines.

Kotjane’s maiden release is a Syrah, the first varietal she produced as a student. She believes in the role weather, terroir, and the creative process play in making wine, and thus creates wine with as little intervention as possible.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am the founder and winemaker behind Three Quarters Wines, a boutique wine producer based at Stellenbosch.

My winemaking philosophy is rooted in curiosity, storytelling, and a deep respect for the vineyards that shape our wines. While Syrah remains at the heart of what I do, I am equally fascinated with Rhône-style blends and alternative approaches to fermentation and ageing.

Through Three Quarters Wines, I aim to create wines that are thoughtful, expressive, and reflective of both place and people.

What inspirational advice can you share with emerging winemakers?

Trust your instincts but understand that instinct is built over time through careful observation, experience, and a willingness to learn.

The more closely you pay attention to the vineyard, the fruit, and the subtle changes that occur throughout the winemaking process, the more confidence you gain in your decisions.

Patience is an essential tool in winemaking. We live in a world that encourages quick decisions, yet great wines reveal themselves over time. Sometimes the best thing a winemaker can do is to create the right conditions and allow the wine to find its own voice.

If your vineyard could talk, what's the one thing it would say about this year's harvest that the weather report won't reveal?

"Are you ready to dance?"

This year, the vineyard didn't invite us to rehearsed choreography, it pulled us straight into something closer to a pantsula jive – fast feet and pauses.

The music had already started, and the only choice was to listen, find the beat, and trust your feet. The weather



wasn't just in the background; it set the beat. It shifted the tempo throughout the growing season, but what the weather report won't tell you is how the vineyard kept changing its rhythm.

Some days required patience, others demanded quick decisions. Success came not from knowing every step in advance, but from learning to move with the season as it unfolded.

What emotion or memory do you want to evoke when people taste your wine at first?

I hope they feel a sense of nostalgia and home, two ideas I see as deeply connected, because home is often where our earliest and deepest memories are formed, where belonging first takes shape.

The Lereol Rosé is named after my children, and for me, that already holds nostalgia and home. It carries memory and belonging, and I hope these feelings are reflected in the wine itself.

What's the hardest lesson you've learnt about making wine?

Early in my winemaking journey, I learned that intervention is not always improvement. I once overmanaged a ferment because I was trying to achieve a specific outcome rather than allowing the wine to express itself naturally. The result wasn't flawed, but it lacked character.

That experience taught me that winemaking is as much about restraint as it is about action. The lesson continues to shape every wine I make today: Guide the process, don't dominate it.

If you had to write an inspiring tweet about this win, the wine, and the courage it took to see it through, what would you say?

Lereol Rosé is my favourite pastime. We bring out the best in each other. 🍷



Drilling activities at WIA Gold's Kokoseb project

Out of the Blocks: Namibia's Gold- Mining Race

Which project will shape the country's next boom?

words by Linda de Jager | photographs supplied



Dr. Andreas Salom, acting senior manager for investment analysis and development at the NIPDB.



Mr John Roos was recently promoted from Country Manager to Managing Director – B2Gold Namibia.

Namibia's gold industry is set for major growth. Billions in new investment, big discoveries, and a new government strategy over the next five years could reshape gold mining in the country and boost its economy.

For investors, the question now is which of the several projects currently in the works will become Namibia's next flagship gold mine.

Dr Andreas Salom, acting senior manager for investment analysis and development at the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB) says the period between 2026 and 2030 will be a defining chapter for Namibia's mining industry.

"While gold production may soften temporarily in 2026 as B2Gold's Otjikoto Mine open-pit mining is coming to an end, the long-term outlook remains exceptionally positive," he says.

"New projects such as Twin Hills, the expansion of underground mining and continued exploration activity

could position Namibia with a larger, more diversified and more resilient gold industry by the end of the decade."

A key part of that strategy is the government's decision to view gold as more than an export commodity.

"Gold is now considered a strategic national asset," Salom says.

"By retaining a portion of locally produced gold in national reserves, Namibia aims to strengthen financial resilience while ensuring the country's mineral wealth delivers lasting value to future generations.

"For the NIPDB, gold now joins uranium and critical minerals at the centre of Namibia's investment proposition," he says.

Among Namibia's emerging projects, WIA Gold's Kokoseb gold project has rapidly established itself as one of Africa's most exciting new gold discoveries.

Listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), WIA Gold began as Tanga Resources Limited in Australia. Today, it holds

an 80% stake in the Namibian project, with the remaining 20% owned by the state-run Epangelo Mining Company.

Chief executive and managing director Henk Diederichs (former Stellenbosch University student), appointed in 2026, leads the company with more than 20 years of African mining experience.

Country manager Keith Webb, a Scottish native living in Namibia since 2006, brings valuable expertise. One of the project's key founders, Josef El-Raghy, is a seasoned Australian mining and finance executive. As a leader at Centamin, he drove the financing and development of Egypt's first large-scale modern gold mine, Sukari, which now produces about 500,000 ounces of gold per year.

The Kokoseb project boasts an estimated resource of 2.93 million ounces of gold, discovered at a competitive cost. The team is moving ahead with plans for an open-pit mine and a carbon-in-leach processing plant, capable of handling over five million tonnes of ore per year.

WIA Gold expects to produce about 177,000 ounces annually in the first five years, and 1.83 million ounces over the mine's projected 11-year lifespan. Final investment decisions are expected in August, which will be a major milestone for the project.

Kokoseb is located near Okombahe, close to Omaruru in Namibia's Erongo region.

WIA first entered the country by acquiring exploration

licences in its promising Damara Belt.

Investor confidence is strong. The company recently raised A\$92 million to accelerate exploration, technical studies, and project development. With gold prices on the rise, WIA Gold is fast-tracking drilling.

Kokoseb's progress has been swift. First identified in 2021, the project quickly proved its potential with trenching and drilling, leading to a maiden resource of 1.3 million ounces in 2023. By 2025, resources grew to 2.93 million ounces. A September 2025 scoping study outlined a \$358.8 million open-pit mine, aiming for annual output of 177,000 ounces in the first five years, and 146,000 ounces per year over the mine's life.

WIA Gold aims to complete a definitive feasibility study by mid-2026, with plans to quickly move into project delivery.

Despite Kokoseb's rapid progress, Salom believes the Twin Hills gold project near Karibib remains one of Namibia's most significant gold developments.

Following Shanjin International Gold Co. Ltd.'s acquisition of Osino Resources in 2024, the project became wholly owned by the Chinese mining group, while Osino's Namibian team continues to lead development on the ground.

"Twin Hills is the result of Osino Resources' highly successful exploration programme led by co-founder and former chief executive Heye Daun together with an



One of Namibia's largest trees, the Ombalantu Baobab (the Tree of Life) in the northern town of Outapi, is estimated to be around 800 years old.

outstanding geological team,” Salom says.

“Their work resulted in one of Namibia’s most important gold discoveries in recent decades.”

Once operational, Twin Hills is expected to become Namibia’s third major commercial gold mine.

“The project contains more than two million ounces of proven and probable reserves and is forecast to produce approximately 162,000 ounces of gold annually over a 13-year mine life.”

Salom says beyond production, Twin Hills is expected to deliver significant economic benefits, creating around 1,000 jobs during construction and about 800 permanent operational positions.

While much of the attention is focused on these new discoveries, Namibia’s longest-established producer is quietly investing in its future.

Navachab Gold Mine is undertaking a N\$4-billion underground expansion programme that will extend the life of the mine, unlock deeper ore bodies and introduce more advanced mining technologies.

The project is expected to create more than 150 additional jobs over the next four years.

Salom says Navachab currently holds proven reserves of 2.43 million ounces and a total mineral resource of 5.16 million ounces.

“Its workforce has expanded significantly – from fewer than 500 employees in 2020 to 889 permanent staff and 598 contractors by 2025,” he adds.

The mine’s economic contribution extends well beyond gold production.

“In 2024, Navachab spent N\$2.49 billion, with 84% of procurement directed to Namibian businesses, strengthening local supply chains and supporting domestic enterprise.

“Its community investments include the N\$80 million Karibib Medical Centre, the N\$3.5 million Usakos SME Park and water infrastructure projects benefiting thousands of residents and livestock in surrounding communities,” Salom says.

Meanwhile, B2Gold’s Otjikoto mine transitioned to underground operations after open-pit mining ended in October 2025. The first Antelope blast (which required considerable investment) in February 2026 extended the mine’s life to 2032, according to the company. B2Gold remains committed to Namibia despite recent layoffs. Kokoseb is advancing, Twin Hills promises scale, and Navachab shows that older mines can expand with investment. Together, they underscore Namibia’s rise as a gold producer. 🔄





Nakara Tannery: Skin in the Game

Crafting a family leather legacy for a global market

words by Linda de Jager | photographs supplied by Nakara

“A scar, a textured patch, a tick bite, or a colour variation isn’t a flaw, it’s part of the animal’s story – a quiet reminder of a life under the Namibian sun.”



Kevin Davidow founded Nakara.

With a new generation leading, Linda de Jager visits to explore Nakara’s current activities and plans.

Leather manufacturing is more than an industrial process; it’s closely tied to agriculture and resource efficiency.

In Namibia, hides from livestock are tanned into durable products, giving new value to what would otherwise be waste.

As global demand rises for authentic and sustainable goods, Namibia’s leather industry proves its worth.

Nakara, a leading manufacturer, has spent over 40 years turning local hides into premium products for international markets. The company blends tradition with innovation, having grown from a small Windhoek business into a modern tannery serving furniture, fashion, and footwear markets worldwide.

Tanya Davidow, director of retail and manufacturing at Nakara, awaits me in Windhoek’s industrial area – the site where Nakara was founded in 1980, and the factory where she played as a child.

A photo of Tanya as a young girl in a Nakara outfit, playing on the dunes, hangs on one wall. Though her father, Kevin Davidow, started the business, there’s a clear sense of new drive and vision.

The massive manufacturing plant quickly reveals a mindset rooted in the belief that margins come not from sales but from production efficiency.

“True success lies in how well you produce, not how much you sell,” Tanya explains.

In one corner, kudu horns are boiled for export to Israel as shofars – ancient musical instruments. It’s a rare nod to her father’s Jewish heritage, and the only part of the operation not focused on hides.

This family quite literally has ‘skin in the game’ – being fully invested, with real stakes and a share of every risk and reward.

“Large-scale leather manufacturing is fiercely competitive,” Tanya says.

Nakara battles rivals from China, Brazil, and Argentina.

Michelangelo

—MINDSCAPES—



Namibia is home to the largest known intact meteorite on Earth.

The Hoba meteorite weighs an estimated 50–60 tonnes.

The company depends on imports for everything from hides to machinery, spare parts, chemicals, and fittings – directly affecting production costs. This reliance makes efficient production difficult, especially when trying to maintain quality and meet deadlines, she says.

“For example, if chemicals ordered from Italy arrive late, customer deadlines are missed, often resulting in client frustration – a serious risk.”

For the past three years, Tanya has worked alongside her brother-in-law, Max Schaefer, now Nakara’s managing director. Max joined the business in 2020.

Many long-time staff members remain part of the team.

“We have a strong team working in a challenging and fast-paced environment, where skill and knowledge are passed from one generation to the next at all operational and managerial levels.

“It’s nearly impossible to find a drum operator on the Namibian employment market, so we train every employee from scratch at the factory and focus on building strong, long-term relationships with our staff,” Tanya says.

Tanya describes Schaefer as an “unbeatable sales strategist, combining deep product knowledge with irresistible charm”.

Streetwise and multilingual, he quickly adapted to Africa’s tannery industry, mastering everything from production to government relations, she says.

Schaefer says being a family business is one of Nakara’s greatest strengths.

“The values that built this company – hard work, lasting relationships, integrity, and commitment to quality – still guide how we operate. We don’t aim to replace those, but rather to build on them by introducing modern practices that make us more competitive and sustainable,” he says.

Schaefer and Tanya make a dynamic team with a unified vision: Schaefer excels at sales and Tanya combines her artistic flair with her father’s practical manufacturing know-how.

“We’re mechanical at heart – our hands know gears, not code. It’s like driving an old Defender versus a new one: One needs a mechanic, the other an electrician,” Tanya says.

Jaco van Eeden, the only non-family member in leadership, oversees the tannery, manages production, orders chemicals, and ensures smooth operations from raw

material procurement to finished leather.

What began with a single fleshing machine has grown into a business with 135 machines, mostly Italian-made, all overseen by Van Eeden.

Schaefer says the company invests in product development, boosting efficiency, embracing global sustainability standards, strengthening retail, and using data to make smarter decisions.

When touring Nakara’s bustling factory, one would encounter Davidow’s first dyeing barrel, bought over 40 years ago, still chugging alongside modern machines.

When Tanya joined, she says she called her dad out of retirement for weeks to teach her the process from scratch.

“He thinks he knows everything. And he does,” she says.

Where Hide Becomes Leather

The factory offers tours to the public to witness the process of raw hides being transformed into luxurious leather, “bringing the process closer to our customers”, Tanya says.

“Ultimately, we buy raw hides, mainly from abattoirs and farmers, and process them,” she says.

The company prioritises locally sourced hides, reducing transport and supporting Namibia’s agricultural value chain, since each skin is a by-product of the meat industry, Tanya says.

“Nakara has strengthened its environmental credentials through a partnership with the Sustainable Leather Foundation, underscoring its commitment to responsible manufacturing,” she says.

“Nakara offers an extraordinary leather portfolio, including full-grain, top-grain, and corrected-grain leathers,” she says.

Diversification is still on the cards, says Schaefer.

“On the leather manufacturing side, over the next three to five years, our focus will be on expanding our range of upholstery and lifestyle leather that reflect the character, landscapes, and heritage of Namibia to win the hearts of leather connoisseurs across the globe,” he says.

On the retail side, he says Nakara wants to continue expanding its product range with items that reflect the rugged beauty, resilience, and character of Namibia.

Michelangelo

—MINDSCAPES—



Max Schaefer, Nakara's managing director since 2020 and Davidow's son-in-law.



The Waterberg Plateau is a 50-kilometre-long sandstone mountain with permanent springs at its base.



Kevin with his daughter Nicole, wife Brigitte, and daughter Tanya, now Nakara's director of retail and manufacturing.



Back to Basics

Tanya recalls how Nakara's renowned crafting department shrank over the years as the focus shifted to bulk leather sales. That changed, however, when she returned from abroad, determined to help rebuild the retail side of the business.

Through trial and error, Tanya discovered success meant returning to the basics – not growing bigger or faster.

She started by cleaning and servicing every machine to cut waste, and revived the small leather crafting department, now less than 5% of the business, but still home to Nakara's signature craftsmanship.

"Everything was coming alive again," she says.

Nakara now operates three retail stores – at Swakop, the Gustav Voigts Centre in Windhoek, and at the factory.

"When we look at foot traffic, it's clear: People come in and they buy; they don't just browse."

Today, the crafting team has seven employees and the tanning section employs 163 workers.

Made by nature. Crafted in Namibia.

The shop adjoining the tannery is brimming with Nakara's signature bags, belts, jackets, and carpets.

No two bags are alike – just like no two stories are – yet each share a thread of unwavering commitment.

Tanya often says every Nakara bag begins with a story.

"Every hide is carefully selected to match the bag's design and character. No two are ever the same.

"Each item bears the marks of an animal raised freely on Namibia's open landscapes. Cattle and game roam naturally, never confined to feedlots.

"A scar, a brand mark, or colour variation isn't a flaw, it's part of the animal's story – a quiet reminder of life under the Namibian sun."

At Nakara, the sales pitch rings true and the family's collective effort amounts to hundreds of thousands of hours.

They are true experts – hard to match.

That's what it means to have skin in the game. 🐾

Dearest Namibia,

For 30 years, it's been our honour to power your homes, your dreams, your lives.

Every spark of progress we've made has been because of you.

And, just like electricity, our bond only gets stronger when we're connected.

Here's to the next 30 years – brighter, bolder, together.

with love
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1996

Establishment of Namibia Power Corporation as successor to the South West Africa Water and Electricity Corporation (SWAWEK)

Development of 400kV interconnector between Namibia and South Africa

1998

Strengthening of the northern region transmission network from 66kV to 132kV, and subsequent inauguration of Omatando Substation and adjacent 132kV feeders to Ruacana, Okatope, Efundja and Ondjiva

1999

Harib 220kV Substation commissioned

2001

New National Control building constructed

Auas SVC and 400kV Auas-Kokerboom line established

2002

Kokerboom-Obib 400kV line; Obib Substation and Skorpion 66/11kV Substation

2003

Kuiseb 220/66kV GIS Substation and 220kV line from Van Eck to Kuiseb

2010

350kV HVDC Zambezi Link Interconnector commissioned

2012

Addition of 92MW 4th unit turbine generator at Ruacana Power Station

2016

Ruacana Power Station Units 1 - 3 turbine refurbishment and upgrading to 85MW maximum output

2018

Hippo Substation commissioned

2019

Launch of NamPower's new fibre optics offering - Grid Online

2022

20MW Omburu Solar PV Plant commissioned

ISO 9001 certification for Anixas Power Station; a first for a Namibian company

2023

400kV Kunene-Omatando transmission line and 400kV Kunene and Omatando Substations commissioned: first 400kV Breaker and Half Substations

2024

400kV Auas-Gerus transmission line commissioned
54MW Anixas II power station commissioned

2025

Sekelduin Substation commissioned; the first fully digital Substation in Africa

2026

Close to a billion Namibian dollars invested in CSI through the NamPower Foundation, Rural Electrification Programme and vocational and academic bursaries



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Outstanding dining is an essential part of every conference experience. From energising breakfasts before a full day of meetings and freshly prepared coffee breaks between sessions to business lunches and refined dinners beneath ancient camelthorn trees, every meal is thoughtfully crafted using fresh, seasonal ingredients and exceptional local flavours.

Whether continuing conversations over dinner, entertaining clients, or celebrating a successful event with colleagues, our restaurants provide the perfect setting for networking, meaningful connection, and memorable shared experiences that extend well beyond the conference room.

For organisations seeking more than just a conference venue, Droombos Estate offers a destination where business, comfort, and genuine hospitality come together. Multi-day events become effortless with luxurious on-site accommodation, personalised service, award-winning hospitality, and dedicated event coordination that ensures every detail is taken care of. Guests can work, connect, unwind, and recharge without ever leaving the estate, enjoying beautifully appointed rooms, tranquil outdoor spaces, and an atmosphere that promotes both productivity and wellbeing. By combining sophisticated meeting facilities, exceptional cuisine, elegant accommodation, and serene surroundings, Droombos Estate creates conference experiences that are productive, inspiring, and truly unforgettable.





WHERE THE RIVER *Sets the Pace*

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THE RIVER EXPERIENCE

Beyond the comfort of the lodge, the Kavango River invites exploration and discovery. Scenic river cruises reveal spectacular sunsets, rich wildlife, and the vibrant ecosystem that makes this region unique. Fishing enthusiasts can enjoy world-class angling, including the opportunity to pursue the legendary tiger fish, while tranquil boat excursions offer close encounters with river birds, local culture, and the timeless beauty of Namibia's perennial river.

THE ACCOMMODATION EXPERIENCE

The lodge's spacious river-facing rooms are thoughtfully designed to bring comfort and nature together. Elegant interiors, generous living spaces, and private verandas create a seamless connection to the outdoors. Guests can relax while overlooking the water, watching abundant birdlife along the riverbanks and enjoying uninterrupted views that change beautifully with the light throughout the day.



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From Inland Woodlands...



THE RIVER ROUTE
To the Eternal Kawango





“During our interview, it feels as if all the ‘journeymen’ – Davidow’s endearing term for mentors – are quietly present. Now, as he passes the baton to his family and those he has trained, his story comes full circle, stitched together seamlessly.”

Kevin Davidow proudly wearing one of the first garments produced at Nakara.

A Life in Leather

Kevin Davidow’s Journey of Craft, Courage and Reinvention

words by Linda de Jager | photographs supplied by Nakara



On the left: Brigitte and Kevin Davidow proudly wearing some of the first garments produced at Nakara, in the early days of the company's manufacturing journey. On the right: Brigitte and Kevin Davidow still going strong today.

For over 40 years, travellers have been able to carry home a tangible memory of Namibia: a Nakara leather keepsake.

I meet Nakara founder Kevin Davidow at Swakopmund, an energetic man whose posture reflects years spent hunched over, crafting leather – a hint of the dedication that underpins Namibia's leather legacy.

During our conversation, it soon becomes clear that Davidow values detail and beauty; every Nakara piece holds a hidden story.

It began with a humble innovator skilled in both leatherwork and reinvention. Facing adversity, Davidow saw opportunity where others saw obstacles. Now in his seventies, he recounts how Nakara transformed Namibia's tannery tradition and elevated its leather reputation worldwide.

Looking back, he says: "Staying positive is important, but the toughest lesson has been to ensure you are paid for your work."

Over the decades, Nakara has broken with convention, reclaiming every stage of the craft – from raw hide to finished product.

Like something out of a sepia-toned film, the Nakara story unfolds with a fateful encounter: a young man seeking work and purpose.

From Chance Encounter to Apprenticeship

Sometimes the most significant turns in life begin with a simple, unexpected encounter. Davidow's happened by chance in Cape Town in 1967, "where an ordinary lunch with my grandparents led me to meet Bernd Hippe, a young furrier visiting from Johannesburg".

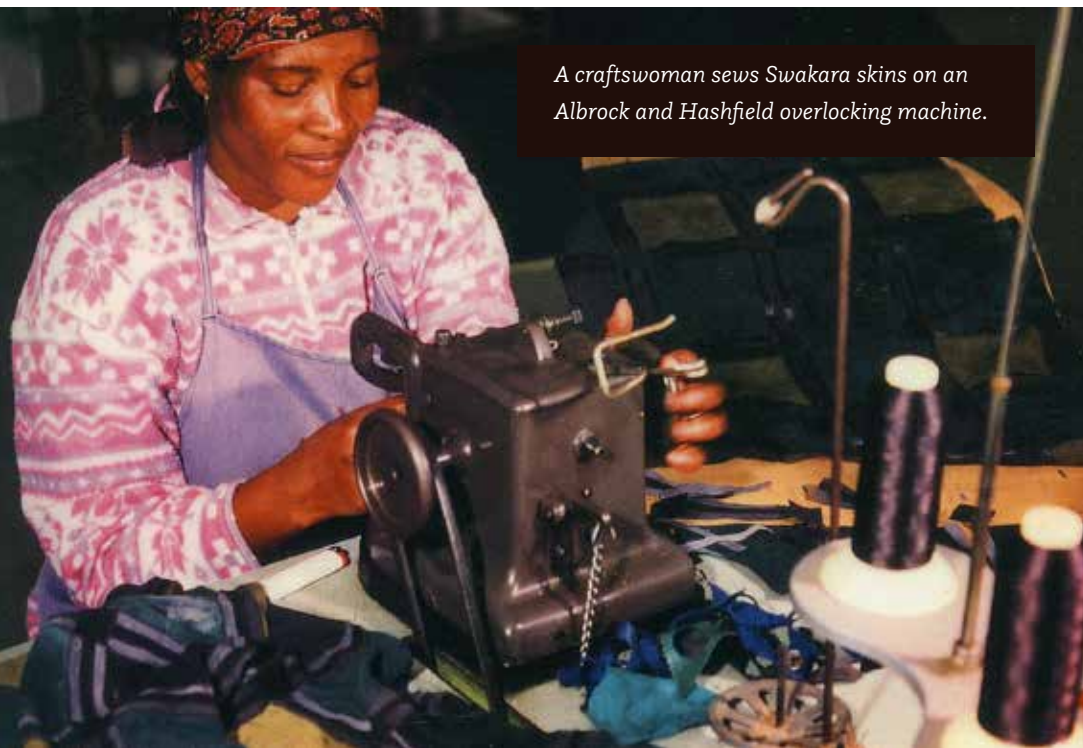
A furrier makes, repairs, alters, or cleans fur garments.

"I thought this is interesting, maybe I'd like to do it some day," he says.

After the army, Davidow visited Koseff Furs in Johannesburg where Hippe used to work.

"My father, a salesman, explained I wanted to apprentice. They usually took only qualified people, but made an exception for me."

And so Davidow started working on President Street in the heart of a pulsing Johannesburg.



A craftswoman sews Swakara skins on an Albrock and Hashfield overlocking machine.



“Entering a new world, I discovered the true art of assembling skins and fur garments.”

He adds: “The work was fascinating and demanded real skill. I spent three years learning from Jim Miller, a skilled United Kingdom journeyman, who generously shared his expertise.”

Davidow remembers the small workshop as a turning point, where he also had his first taste of patternmaking. There, he mainly learned to work alongside French, Greek, and German furriers – each with his own style.

The key focus was on Swakara pelts.

Swakara, or South West Africa Karakul, is a sheep breed known for its glossy pelt in southern Namibia, introduced from Central Asia in 1907. At the time, Davidow couldn’t have known he’d end up in South West Africa himself, where Swakara would later be tied to his Nakara label – a name chosen before Namibia’s independence.

“Jim taught me to sort black mink skins from blue-toned to red-toned for proper matching. I admitted I couldn’t initially see the colour differences and joked about being colour-blind,” he says.

A New Chapter: Windhoek and Namibia’s Furry Gold

After three long years of scraping by on barely R30 a month, Davidow sought new opportunities.

His friend Hippe mentioned a job in the then South West Africa.

“I barely knew Windhoek. I had only spent three weeks there during my army service,” he says.

Davidow then prepared to join Pelz Haus Huber, a fur business in Windhoek. Rudolf Huber, a German-trained master furrier, ran the show.

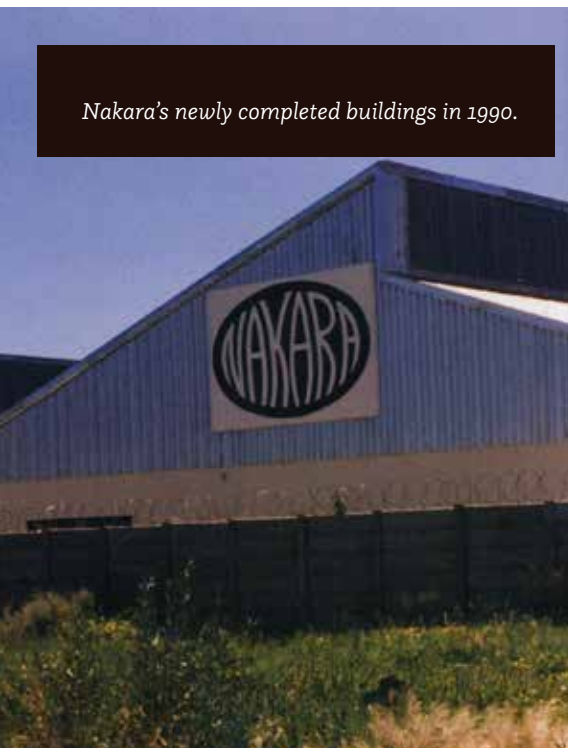
Huber needed backup, and Davidow was a perfect fit. Curious and quick to learn more, he peppered Huber with questions.

“I learned a lot from Mr Huber,” he says.

Most days were spent working with Swakara karakul, though “the occasional mink or fox jacket” came in for repairs. Davidow’s talent for crafting karakul garments was increasingly in high demand as Swakara karakul farming was booming in Namibia.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, Namibia’s pelt trade thrived. Graders inspected every pelt before shipment to Europe and the United States, where auctions buzzed with exporters vying for the best karakul.

Nakara's newly completed buildings in 1990.



Swakara skin hand-buffed on an overshoot buffing machine, highlighting Nakara's finishing process.



Quality and timing with global trends were everything—newborn pelts became like gold. Export routes ran smoothly, and local producers met every tough trade requirement. It was in these European tanneries that Davidow would soon work: he left Pelz Haus Huber with a partner to seek new opportunities in Europe.

He then spent two years in European tanneries before returning to Namibia, where his former employer welcomed him back.

“Around this time, a new trend emerged in Europe: using Swakara skins to make double-faced garments with a suede finish on the flesh side,” Davidow recalls.

“Some designs, as I saw in magazines, featured both leather and suede finishes. I told Huber we could do this ourselves, even though it was a different technique. From the outset, these garments sold well.”

Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Nakara's Beginnings

Noticing a growing trend, Davidow launched his own small Swakara garment business in a Windhoek garage despite limited capital.

In 1980, Nakara was established as a small manufacturing business in Windhoek's northern industrial area, using second-hand machines.

To overcome financial constraints, Davidow offered local furriers jacket and coat production using their skins, charging only for the cost of the labour.

This approach led to collaboration with all the local furriers. He eventually secured a deal with his long-time friend Hippe, whose Johannesburg shop drew significant attention to Davidow's new reversible styles.

Word spread quickly, prompting other stores to adopt similar designs, and demand soon surged across South Africa and Namibia.

Bringing Skin Processing Home

Davidow recalls making exclusive garments daily and soon employing 10 people. From the beginning through the mid-1980s, the business focused on producing clothing, relying on European-processed skins.

“We often learned by reverse-engineering existing products. For example, by taking apart a handbag or garment, you can see how it was made and learn which steps are needed to recreate it.”



President Dr. Sam Nujoma visits the Nakara factory, 1996.



As demand grew, Davidow began exporting his popular reversible garments to Europe in 1986 and expanded his workshop. Namibian skins were shipped to London auctions and then to processing plants in Germany, France, and Italy.

Nakara re-imported the processed skins to make garments – a wasteful cycle, Davidow says.

He aimed to process the skins in Namibia instead. To do so, he had to learn more about leather tanning – a specialised science that transforms raw animal hides into durable leather. The process uses chemistry and care to strengthen hides, which consist mostly of collagen, so they don't rot or crack.

"I was confident I could learn, even though I would need to invest in new machinery and develop new skills."

Determined to rise to the occasion, Davidow knew this phase was also born of necessity. The writing was on the wall for the Swakara industry; it was heading for decline. Soon, sales fell.

Animal rights concerns grew as baby lambs were slaughtered for their skins. At the same time, fashion trends shifted towards casual clothing.

As he heard about one fur shop after another in Germany closing, Davidow had to make a difficult decision.

"I knew we had to adapt. In the late 1980s, I bought land

in Windhoek's Northern Industrial area and planned a new factory. We began building in 1990, despite the industry's downturn and uncertainty, but remained committed to expansion."

Around this time, in the fiercely secretive and competitive world of leather processing, a rare invitation arrived for Davidow: Sandoz, the Swiss pharmaceutical giant, opened its main Basel tanning laboratory to him on request.

For one intensive week, he could immerse himself in the meticulous craft of processing Swakara skins. Sandoz's experts guided him through every step, from soaking and pickling to tanning, sharing not only their recipes but also hands-on demonstrations.

Having visited their studio in the 1970s, he found some practices familiar, yet the openness with which they shared their closely guarded methods was almost unheard of in the trade.

Overcoming Challenges

A persistent challenge was the painstaking work of stitching small skins into reversible garments, and hiding seams with leather strips was continually undermined by mismatched colours.



Even imported German leathers rarely matched the Swakara skins, and shipments frequently arrived off-shade. Frustrated by these limitations, Davidow set out to master the art of dyeing skins himself and began experimenting in 1984.

“You can learn the basics, but you need an eye for it. Mix, test, and adjust. Add a bit more red if needed. If it’s too red, start over.

“In the mid-1990s, I bought tanning drums, a fleshing machine, and a sanding machine to boost leather production in Windhoek. Although I didn’t have a building ready, I owned the land and quickly expanded the factory to install the equipment.”

Davidow recalls that small quantities soon became a challenge because they were simply not profitable enough. Around this time, new doors opened.

“Weylandt’s Furniture asked for hairless kudu leather, but the local tannery in Swakopmund couldn’t meet the volume. I now had some skin-processing experience but lacked expertise in full leather tanning and the right equipment.”

A pivotal moment came earlier during a visit to a leather factory in Hamburg, where Davidow discovered Quinn Chemie, an offshoot of Sandoz, whose expertise in leather

dyeing solved his colour-matching problems.

“When I called, they explained their process in detail,” he remembers.

But the search for perfect colour matching didn’t end in Europe. In Cape Town, he found a small agency specialising in leather chemicals. Spraying treatments weren’t enough; true mastery required learning the full dyeing process.

Early setbacks, such as receiving a dyeing drum of the wrong size, didn’t stop Davidow. Once again, he invested in hands-on learning and specialised equipment. Gradually, he achieved the precision needed for perfect colour matches.

“With some equipment for processing Swakara skins, I diversified further by processing springbok and zebra skins using similar techniques,” he says.

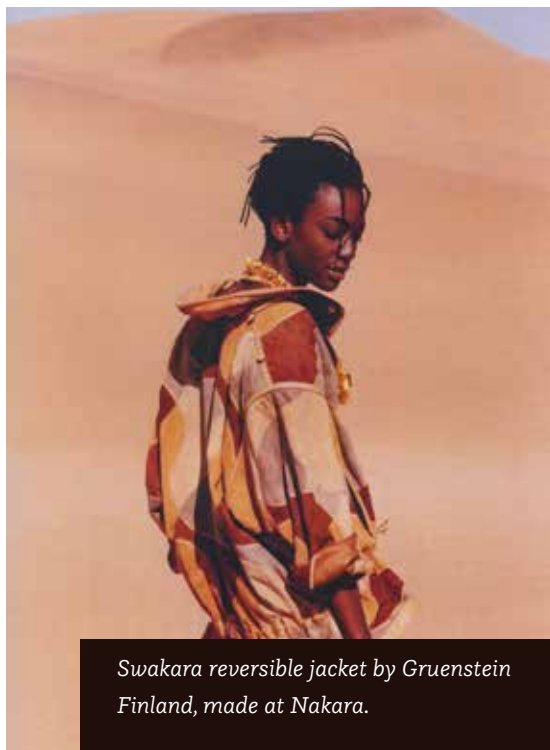
By the late 1980s, Davidow’s long-held dream was finally within reach. The hum of machinery and the strong scent of tanned leather filled the air, signalling a new era of efficient local production.

By the early 1990s, the business was strong and more competitive than ever, its reputation quietly spreading beyond Namibia’s borders.

In 2011, Nakara achieved a major milestone by winning the



Nakara Factory, aerial view.



*Swakara reversible jacket by Gruenstein
Finland, made at Nakara.*



Tanning drum delivered to Nakara.

Regional Tannery of the Year award for Africa in Shanghai. Of the six nominated tanneries from across the continent, Nakara stood out. It was also the only tannery in the competition to process all types of skins rather than specialise in a single type: a sign of things to come.

International Breakthrough: The Swakara Fashion Show

In 1992, the brand gained international attention after being invited to showcase at the prestigious Swakara fashion show in Rome.

Since 1992, their designs for Miss Namibia's National Costume, starting with Michelle McLean, have become part of Namibian culture.

"My wife, Brigitte, helped promote our business with advertising and fashion shows in Namibia and South Africa, especially from the early 1980s to the mid-1090s."

Nakara gained recognition in 1993 and 1995 by winning the J&B Rare Designers Collection competitions, putting Namibian design on the international stage.

Collaboration and Change

Around this time, the renowned Finnish design house Gruenstein, known for its unconventional techniques, discovered Nakara's work at a Frankfurt trade fair.

This sparked a collaboration that opened new international opportunities and produced striking, innovative garments. The partnership lasted into the mid-1990s.

Looking back, Davidow says his practical skills and understanding of machinery were a blessing. Trial and error remained his main way forward. As he had trained local Namibians to help make leather items, he had to teach several of them to use the machines safely.

Safety concerns included water pollution. Leather tanning uses a lot of water and chemicals, creating solid waste and environmental risks. To help reduce these risks and comply with Windhoek's strict water standards, Davidow built an on-site water treatment plant.

He says he was taught how to manage this by Dutch engineer Menno Wijma, who has visited Namibia several times to share his decades of tanning expertise.

"Today, Nakara stands out for its pursuit of innovation in clean and certified leather," he says.



Swakara reversible jacket by Gruenstein Finland, made at Nakara.



Early dyeing drum.



Swakara reversible Cape by Nakara, award-winner, Rome Fashion Show.

Nakara's enduring approach was established early on. Davidow expanded from a single product to processing the hides of all types of Namibian animals, including elephants, ostriches, buffalo, antelope, and wild cats.

"Today, cattle leather dominates our production – natural evolution, since cattle skins are a valuable byproduct of meat processing."

Nakara continues to produce high-end leather goods – belts, bags, wallets, accessories, and occasional custom clothing – for discerning customers.

Davidow retired in 2020. Nakara is still a family business, however. His daughter Tanya is the production and brand manager, and his son-in-law, Max Schaefer, who is married to his other daughter, Nicole, became managing director after working in sales in Germany.

Today, Davidow says he knows what satisfies him: It used to be selling a beautiful, impeccably made garment to a happy customer, but today, things are different.

"Walking into central Swakopmund and seeing furniture made from our leather is deeply satisfying. I often visit the Nakara shop in the centre of Swakopmund to check on the business, but what really matters is seeing our leather used and our business

thriving, especially given how tough this industry is."

Life Philosophy and Legacy

Davidow says he focuses on "doing his absolute best" in every situation, embracing each challenge as an opportunity.

He emphasises fairness, striving to treat everyone equitably. He says he now takes pleasure in supporting small manufacturers throughout Namibia.

The Nakara legacy, he says, forged through intense competition and survival, has evolved into a network of collaboration and mentorship.

Reflecting on the early days of his business, he recalls the challenges of working with small volumes and the reluctance of others to engage with him.

Today, Davidow is committed to supporting those who buy even modest amounts of leather to craft leather items, helping others in the industry overcome the hurdles he once faced.

During our interview, it feels as if all the 'journeymen' – Davidow's endearing term for mentors – are quietly present. Now, as he passes the baton to his family and those he has trained, his story comes full circle, stitched together seamlessly. 🧵

Explore the **NWR Collections** and discover your perfect Namibian adventure

Whether you seek tranquility in the embrace of nature, timeless elegance in historic settings, or exhilarating adventures amidst breathtaking landscapes, NWR offer something for every discerning traveller.

1. Onkoshi Resort
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5. Namutoni Resort
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12. Olifantsrus Campsite
13. Terrace Bay Resort
14. Torra Bay Campsite
15. Khorixas Camp
16. Mile 108
17. Mile 72
18. Jakkalsputz
19. Naukluft Camp
20. Sesriem Campsite
21. Hobas Lodge
22. Boplaas Campsite





Unforgettable Experiences Await in Namibia with NWR

Nestled amidst breathtaking landscapes and teeming with diverse wildlife in exclusive locations of the Protected Areas and National Parks, Namibia offers an unparalleled escape for discerning travellers seeking exceptional experiences. Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR), the country's premier hospitality group, invites you to embark on an unforgettable journey through its three distinct collections, each catering to a unique sense of adventure & experience.



Embrace the Untamed Beauty of the Eco Collection

Immerse yourself in the pristine wilderness of Namibia's most extraordinary natural landscapes with the Eco Collection. Discover remote desert oases, lush riverine environments, and towering mountain ranges, all while enjoying the ultimate in sustainable luxury. From the stark beauty of the Namib Desert to the verdant splendor of the Babwata national Park, NWR offers a sanctuary for the soul, where tranquility and adventure intertwine seamlessly.



Indulge in Timeless Elegance with the Classic Collection

Step into a world of refined sophistication with the Classic Collection. Experience the grandeur of Namibia's colonial heritage, where historic lodges and contemporary amenities blend harmoniously to create an atmosphere of timeless elegance. Savor exquisite culinary delights, impeccable service, and breathtaking vistas, all while basking in the warmth of Namibian hospitality.



Embark on Thrilling Adventures with the Adventure Collection

Unleash your inner explorer with the Adventure Collection, designed for those seeking adrenaline-pumping experiences and unforgettable encounters with Namibia's diverse wildlife. From heart-pounding desert safaris and exhilarating white-water rafting and unforgettable wildlife encounters, the Adventure Collection promises an unforgettable journey for the intrepid traveler.

Visit <https://www.nwr.com.na> to explore the NWR Collections and embark on your unforgettable Namibian adventure today.



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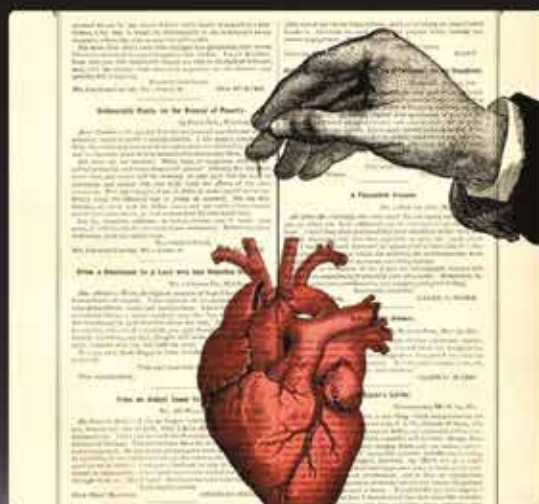
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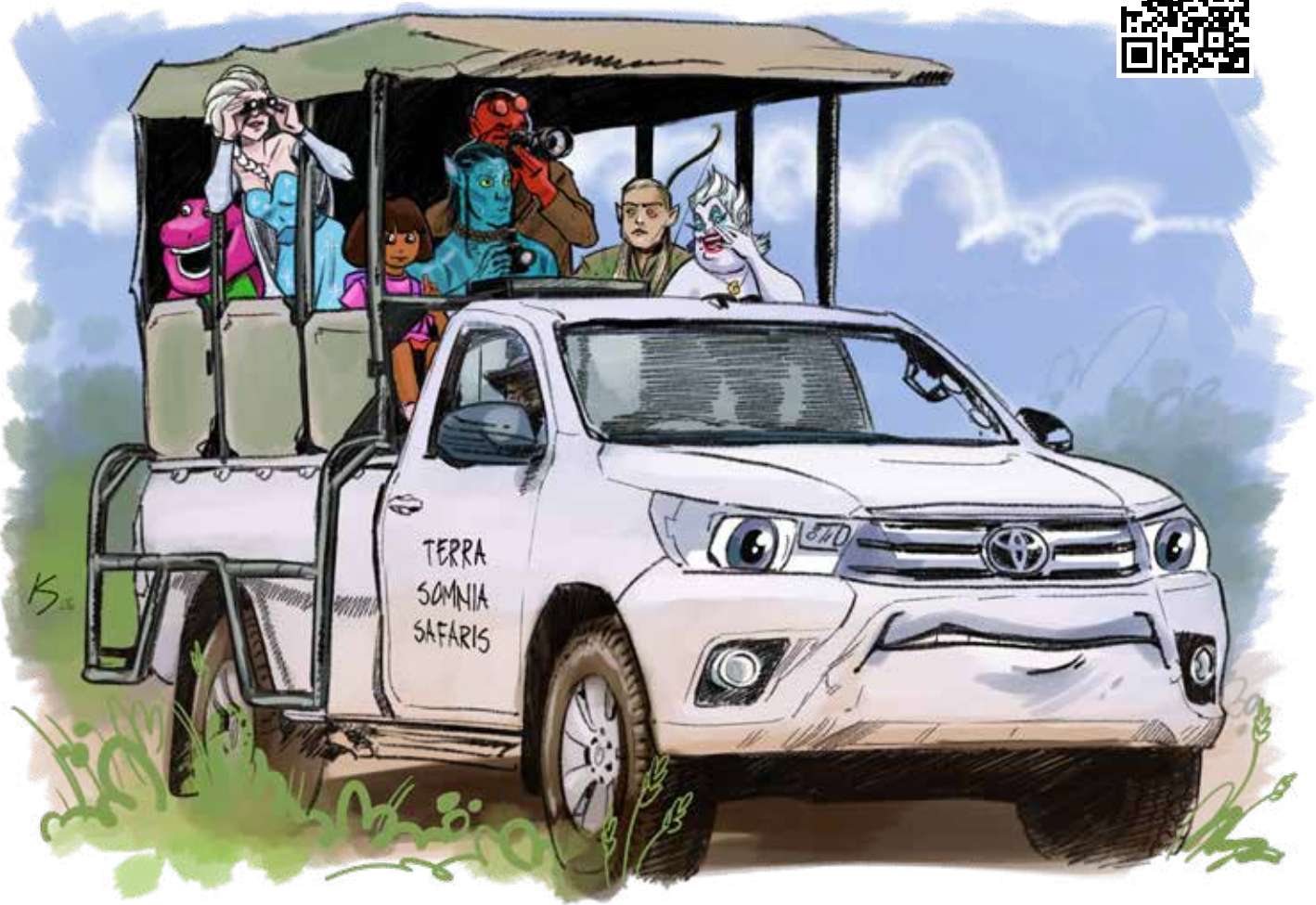
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WHERE TO FIND US

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HEART ATTACK EMERGENCY

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Every minute counts.



Terra Somnia

Namibia is no longer unknown, yet its vast landscapes still feel as though they belong to the imagination.

words & illustration by Karel Swanepoel

Atlantis, El Dorado, Lemuria, Kumari Kandam, Shambhala, Shangri-La. Places known for their beauty, wonder and mystery. Places spoken of in learned conversations and ancient texts. Places no one knows where, or even how, to find.

Life on Earth is filled with dreamers. Science has shown that most sentient creatures experience some form of REM sleep. What an elephant shrew or wandering albatross dreams of, however, remains an absolute mystery. Human dreams, on the other hand, are very well documented. One recurring sapien dream is to visit places no other being could ever reach.

Some people possess an extraordinary ability to share glimpses of these imagined worlds, allowing us to explore their paracosms. Think of Pandora from the Avatar franchise, or perhaps Westeros, Narnia or Middle-earth. Dreamscapes born in the minds of remarkable individuals with the ability to conjure entire universes.

Were the legendary lands mentioned above not perhaps the creations of similarly imaginative storytellers?

Historians and scholars generally agree that Plato used Atlantis as a philosophical allegory warning against moral decay and political hubris rather than as a historical account. Perhaps Plato was merely the James Cameron or Steven Spielberg of his time.

Humans have always been fascinated by the past. We sift through fragments of antiquity, attempting to reconstruct grand narratives of ancient lives and forgotten events. We may never know whether Atlantis truly vanished into the cold darkness of the ocean, whether Shangri-La remains hidden in some inaccessible Himalayan valley, or whether El Dorado was ever more than a gilded dream of unimaginable wealth.

What we do know is that almost every ancient culture left records of dreams and that, despite all our technological advances, the dream state remains as primitive, raw and unexplored as it was when sentience first emerged on Earth.

My fascination with dreams and imagination has often led me down unexpected paths, not only while actively imagining and dreaming, but also in studying how humanity has historically perceived the unknown.

That path eventually led me to terra incognita.

The phrase, likely introduced by Ptolemy around 150 AD, means “unknown land.” It reappeared prominently on maps during the Age of Discovery, marking regions that explorers had not yet charted. As maps became more accurate and humanity’s ability to document geography improved, the phrase gradually disappeared. The unknown receded.

Blank spaces were filled. The mysteries faded.

To me, however, terra incognita has always possessed a deeply romantic quality. Unknown land. What a marvellous mystery to dream about.

Some months ago, I found myself wondering how one might regale a complete stranger with tales of Namibia. Not merely where it is, but what it feels like. How does one describe it? After much wandering through language, history and imagination, I arrived at Terra Somnia - Land of Dreams.

For a brief moment, I considered Terra Incognita. It certainly evokes the spirit of exploration and discovery. Yet Namibia is no longer unknown. Its mountains have been mapped, its rivers charted and its roads traced by satellite. The geography may be known, but the feeling remains elusive. Vast, rolled-out plateaus stretch toward distant horizons. Unquenchably thirsty arid zones shimmer beneath crisp cyan skies. Clawed, furred, feathered and toothed denizens inhabit landscapes that often seem more imagined than real.

And so Terra Somnia seemed more fitting.

Visitors frequently describe Namibia as otherworldly. It is a place that feels both ancient and untouched, familiar yet profoundly alien. In a world where satellite imagery can reveal nearly every corner of the planet, Namibia still retains something increasingly rare: the ability to inspire wonder.

Perhaps that is why myths such as Atlantis and Shangri-La continue to captivate us. They speak to a longing that survives in every generation. A burning desire to discover places that exist somewhere between reality and imagination.

Namibia may no longer be terra incognita, but it remains Terra Somnia; a land where reality still feels just a little like a dream.

Perhaps the unknown lands traced on the maps of yestercentuary never vanished at all. Perhaps they simply moved somewhere far more difficult to chart: into the imagination. 🌀

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

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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

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Namibia Tourism Board



www.visitnamibia.com.na



The Last Word

words by Chris Coetzee

A few months ago, Michelangelo Magazine was reported to a wildlife conservation organisation in the United States for allegedly promoting the keeping of tame wildlife.

This came as quite a shock, particularly because I grew up on a farm near the Etosha border, where my father taught us from a very young age that wild animals belong in the wild — free, untamed, and preferably not chewing through your mom's curtains. His rule was remarkably simple: if it has horns, claws, tusks, or can outrun your vehicle, it does not belong on the sofa.

So, to be absolutely clear, both Michelangelo Magazine and I believe wildlife belongs exactly where it has always belonged - in the wild.

But sometimes — just sometimes — one has to be human. And being human occasionally means allowing the heart to overrule common sense.

Some 30 years ago, my brothers rescued a tiny warthog that would otherwise have starved. For a brief period, therefore, we had a tame warthog. That arrangement ended rather abruptly when it attacked my cousin with its razor-sharp tusks. It was an important reminder that affection does not necessarily cancel instinct.

My mother and her sisters had a tame giraffe when they were children. Apparently, giraffes possess extraordinarily powerful neck muscles — a fact best discovered through a book rather than personal experience.

A niece of mine, many years later, had a tame cheetah. In their home, the rule was equally straightforward: do not run unless you would like to become a snack.

These were different times — times when children received African predators instead of PlayStations.

But times have changed.

So, in an effort to embrace this safer, more modern approach to childhood pets, a dear cousin recently bought my children three goldfish.

And let me tell you, these were tiny and foul-tempered. Before long, there was only one left.

To avoid explaining the entire circle of life to two small children, I rushed to the finest pet shop in town to replace the dearly departed.

I went home with two rabbits because, after seeing the price of two replacement goldfish, they seemed the better-value option.

At this point, you may reasonably be wondering what on earth any of this has to do with this month's Michelangelo Approved destinations.

Apparently, one opinion was strong enough to cross the Atlantic. But even an opinion with a passport remains only an opinion.

Believing something deeply does not make it true. History is filled with people who were absolutely certain - spectacularly wrong. Somewhere, even now, someone is convinced that their goldfish is the greatest thing since sliced bread. It is a beautiful belief. It is simply not a fact.

One voice may offer an opinion. But when many independent voices return from the same place, moved by the same experience and telling the same remarkable story, opinion begins to carry credibility.

That is precisely what I am hearing about Timbila Lodge by N/a'an ku sê.

Not from one person, but from many.

Again and again, visitors are returning from this destination using words such as extraordinary and unforgettable. But what impresses me even more is that these experiences are built on something far more important than beautiful architecture or exceptional hospitality. They reflect a genuine commitment to Namibia's wildlife .

I am hearing fantastic stories from guests. And I genuinely mean that.

To every person who brought these experiences to life - the visionaries, designers, builders, guides, chefs, hosts, and the countless hands working behind the scenes - thank you.

Your vision, courage, and relentless pursuit of excellence are doing far more than creating remarkable destinations.

Thank you. 🙏



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