

Rwanda – Gorillas in our Midst



In 2015 we made the first announcement of our exciting community- and conservation-based venture into Rwanda. A year down the line, we have made significant progress. Set against dramatic views rearing up through the Afro-alpine forests of adjacent Volcanoes National Park, **Bisate Lodge** – opening in 2017 – promises to bring a new standard of sustainable luxury to lodges in the area, offering the perfect base for mountain gorilla trekking.

A maximum of 18 guests will stay in nine sumptuous en-suite rooms that maximise comfort, warmth and views while retaining environmental principles and reflecting the proud cultural heritage of Rwanda.

So what have we been up to in the last year?

Bisate is set to become the next Noah's Ark Project (North Island) where we are looking to rehabilitate a fragile ecosystem back to its abundant former glory. This takes time; in order for us to open our doors in 2017, we have been hard at work with the following:

- Engaging and forming a close partnership with the neighbouring Bisate Community and former landowners.
- Establishing two indigenous tree nurseries where we are cultivating thousands of seedlings.
- Planting out more than 2 000 indigenous trees ranging in size from 1.5 to 2 metres.
- Employing people to run and manage the site, the nurseries and the planting and care of tree saplings.
- Fine-tuning the cultural relevance of the architectural design and interiors.

Did you know?

- We've purchased **27.9 hectares** from **103 community members**
- We've injected approximately **US\$500 000** into the **local economy** and **created employment**
- We've established two indigenous **tree nurseries**
- We've planted out more than **2 500 indigenous trees** (1 990 *Arundinaria*; 411 *Hagenia*; 184 *Dombeya*; 30 *Neoboutonia*)
- Our **ongoing tree planting** project will cover the entire plot in the next few months



Artist's impression: Bisate Site



Artist's impression: Bisate Main Area

What now?

Infrastructure is our next step! Once the rains have subsided in early May 2016 we will start the construction of the access road which begins near the well-known cultural site, the Iby'iwacu Village at Nyabatsinde. At the same time, we will set about connecting services such as water and power from the nearest source points several kilometres away. With this in place, the luxurious Bisate Lodge will rise from the ground – embodying all the principles of environmentally-sensitive camp architecture that we are known for.



Wilderness and Governors' announce strategic *partnership*

In April we were delighted to announce a new strategic partnership with the **Governors' Camp Collection** as a result of an acquisition of equity in this premier East African safari brand through Wilderness Holdings.

In addition to being one of East Africa's oldest and most respected safari brands, the Governors' safari camps are located in **undoubtedly the best locations in two of Africa's bucket list destinations**, Kenya's Masai Mara and Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park.

"With over 40 years' experience in pioneering safaris and ecotourism in East Africa and a very similar approach to our core 4Cs ethos of Commerce, Conservation, Community and Culture, Governors' are the perfect, likeminded partners for us to extend our sustainability and authentic ecotourism footprint into the region. This will in turn help us to achieve our vision to continue building further sustainable conservation economies in Africa," says Keith Vincent, Wilderness Safaris CEO.

"Not only do the Governors' brand and the Grammaticas family share our values and vision for the role ecotourism can play in African conservation, but our two companies operate in complementary geographic areas, do not compete and can both enhance each other's businesses. We are therefore proud to invest in this well-known and long-established family-run business, and to partner with **one of the oldest and most respected brands in the region**," Vincent adds.

According to Dominic Grammaticas, Managing Director of Governors' Camp Collection, this powerful partnership of two strong brands in African ecotourism will not only provide the Governors' Camp Collection with the capital required for an exciting investment programme, but will create great benefits for all stakeholders in many different areas. "It's a very exciting time to be part of Governors'," he says. "We have been a very successful family-owned safari operator for almost 45 years and have pioneered many aspects of luxury safari tourism now taken for granted across the continent. This strategic partnership with Wilderness allows us to retain **the unique benefits of a family-owned and run company**, whilst at the same time offering an exciting future for growth opportunities within East Africa and other regions."

Governors' and Wilderness Safaris, with over 75 years of combined experience in the industry, share deep roots in owner-managed operations, and share a vision that commercial operations can and must support community and conservation initiatives that protect and sustain some of the greatest wildlife areas remaining on the planet. Both organisations will maintain their individual identities, brands, structures and independence. **Governors' will remain owner-run** and will continue to conduct all its own marketing, sales and reservations activities. For its part, Wilderness Safaris will sell Governors' as a preferred partner in Kenya and Rwanda. Agents with an existing relationship with Governors' will continue to deal with Governors' directly.

GOVERNORS' CAMPS

Masai Mara, *Kenya*

Il Moran

– 10 tents

Little Governors'

– 17 tents

Governors' Camp

– 37 tents

Governors' Private Camp

– 8 tents

Volcanoes, *Rwanda*

Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge

– 8 cottages



Mana Pools – What's the Buzz at Ruckomechi?



Two “new” camps: the old favourite and a new kid on the ... *Zambezi!*

The private **Ruckomechi Concession**, on the periphery of famed Mana Pools National Park, remains true to the Wilderness Safaris promise of offering authentic journeys in the best wild areas of Africa. With its range of activities, many not possible inside the park itself, as well as the certainty of exclusivity and privacy, this Mana Pools favourite is a must for every safari enthusiast.

Same – but *different!*

Ruckomechi Camp – Opening May 2016



Our much-loved **Ruckomechi Camp** will reopen as a brand-new camp in May, maintaining all the best traits of the camp you knew and loved, as well as adding some fresh touches to the experience. Totally rebuilt and revamped, it still overlooks the same wide stretch of the Zambezi River, and the dramatic purple-hued escarpment of Zambia in the distance. All the tents as well as the central dining, bar and lounge areas face this evocative scene – often with elephant obstructing the spectacle. The pool, hammocks, star-gazing deck and outdoor ‘bath with a view’ stay too.

Classic Camp • 10 tents (2 family*) • game drives • nature walks
• boating • catch-and-release fishing • canoeing

*Family rooms will open August 2016.

Something *new!*

Little Ruckomechi – Opening July 2016

A little further downstream from its sister camp, **Little Ruckomechi** will be just that, small and intimate! Keeping to our excellent Classic standards, this camp will offer an authentic and nostalgic sense of safari. Little Ruckomechi’s scenic location epitomises Mana Pools in all its abundance. The camp is all about the intimacy of being close to nature amongst the iconic albida trees that characterise the area. Built on wooden decks, the handsome en-suite tents are airy and elegant, a reminder of a bygone explorer era. The living spaces include a dining room and lounge as well as a plunge pool all looking out over the mighty Zambezi River and the Zambian foothills in the distance.



Classic Camp • 3 or 4 tents* • game drives • nature walks
• boating • catch-and-release fishing • canoeing

*3 FIT tents available with a 4th for private guides/hosts.