

Charismatic
**CHISA
BUSANGA
CAMP**

IN ZAMBIA'S KAFUE
NATIONAL PARK

| BY HELÉNE RAMACKERS



Representing a pioneering example of sustainable, nature-inspired safari architecture, Chisa Busanga Camp offers guests a truly unique and environmentally conscious experience in the heart of Zambia's remote Busanga Plains.

Forming part of the Kafue National Park in Zambia, [Chisa Busanga Camp](#) sits in the northern part of the park and is exclusivity at its finest. With only four nests paying homage to the weaver birds of Busanga Plains, guests are guaranteed the most exceptional service from the staff here. Arriving at the Busanga airstrip on a Sunday afternoon with [ProCharacter](#), guide Harry and spotter Robby decide to embark on a game drive en route to camp.

We encounter the very shy oribi, a small antelope who dashes off into the distance. Having read about the different prides of lions at Busanga Plains, I ask Harry about them, and he is keen to tell me. "We have the Main Pride, The Papyrus Pride, The Kasonso Pride, The Vega & Savannah Pride, Killing Machine, The Princess Pride, Yaya's Pride, Mohawk and Alex. There are so many prides it's hard to keep up, and guests at Chisa Busanga Camp will most likely set eyes on a pride of lions during their stay."

When [Green Safaris](#) Managing Director and Founder Vincent Kouwenhoven initially visited Busanga Plains, the remote wilderness truly captured his heart, and the decision to build Chisa Busanga Camp materialized once he put pen to paper by sketching his vision for what is clearly an architectural marvel. "The architecture of Chisa Busanga Camp is truly remarkable," Vincent tells me. "It was the weaver bird nests, which particularly caught my eye in this area of the Busanga plains that inspired me to create human sized versions. The camp has just four of these elevated 'Nest' rooms that I wanted to blend seamlessly into the surrounding environment and give guests a bird's eye view from their own 'nests'. These trailblazing structures were designed/sketched by myself and brought to life by architect Bert Meerstadt to resemble giant bird nests, with a large circular opening at the front to maximize the views over the Busanga Plains and allow wildlife to pass through the camp undisturbed."

Chisa Busanga Camp opened in June 2021 and celebrates the natural and cultural heritage of this stunning location. It was specifically built in the Busanga Plains to offer guests a unique experience in one of Zambia's most beautiful and wildlife-rich areas that had little to no visitors. Situated in a tiny grassy island surrounded by seasonal floodplains and dotted with date palms, Chisa's setting was the perfect locale to build something unique and special. Sustainably built, the camp runs completely on solar power and has a composting and



recycling process. Chisa is the local Nyanja word for 'birds nest', an ideal moniker for the camp's name.

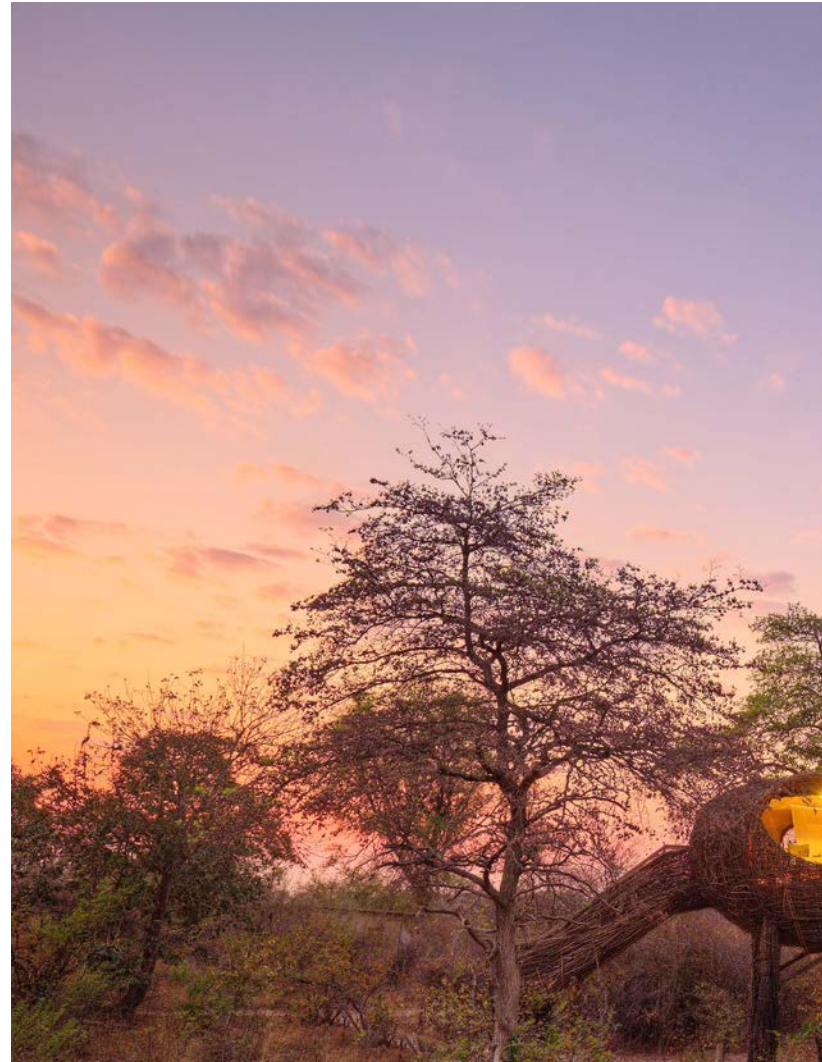
The challenge to create a nonintrusive camp that doesn't detract from the local ecosystem but still has an absolute wow-factor was fraught with challenges. To minimize impact on the local ecology and wildlife, and survive the floods from November to April, the unique design of the Nest rooms were carefully integrated into the existing trees, albeit four meters off the ground. Local artisans used fallen twigs, vines, and sticks from the immediate area to weave around each framework, hiding non-natural elements like structural timbers, electrical wires and water pipes.

The interior design incorporates natural elements and textures to reflect the surrounding environment. Nests are lined with sustainably made canvas, the handmade chandeliers from Katundu in Malawi form a focal point, comprising strings of seeds, adding a subtle nod to the weaver bird theme. Efficient use of space was achieved through careful planning and innovative design along with Vincent's architect's expertise. Each Nest room includes a queen-sized bed, an indoor-outdoor shower, and a cozy seating nook, all oriented around the most amazing

central view over the floodplains. Light and airiness were prioritized in the design through the large circular openings in each Nest, which placed strategically allow natural light to flood the space. The elevated position of the rooms also contributes to the light and airy feel, providing guests with those all-important panoramic views of the surrounding Busanga plains.

The uniqueness of Chisa Busanga Camp makes it a special place to visit, if not for its groundbreaking biomorphic design, but also for its minimal environmental impact. As the only camp in the Busanga Plains to operate Silent Safaris with electric game drive vehicles, Chisa offers a truly immersive low impact wildlife experience. What struck me is the exclusivity of the location, the incredible architecture and the hospitable team in camp. With plentiful game, even from my birds nest, a myriad of species can be seen in and around camp. Not forgetting the famous lions of Busanga Plains, and with just five lodges in this vast area, guests will be guaranteed to encounter many of the current 70 lions on a game drive without a single other vehicle in sight.

Experiencing a game drive in Busanga Plains is completely different and very exciting. Not only is the





terrain vastly distinct due to the floodplains, but the wildlife here is iconic. Encountering a number of the lion prides during my 3-night stay at Chisa Busanga Camp, it's clear that these are no normal lions – they are muscular since they have to survive during the rainy season by swimming through the water! Highlights include loads of hippos, wildebeest coming to drink at the waterhole in front of camp, a pair of crowned cranes, and the cutest lion cubs. Chisa Busanga Camp really is the place to be if you ever want to be part of something remarkable, the Green Safaris way.

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