

KAFUE CALLING

RISING FROM THE ASHES

ILA SAFARI LODGE BURNED TO THE GROUND LAST YEAR, BUT RETURNS BETTER THAN BEFORE

Around midnight on a Thursday in June last year, a fire started at Green Safari's Ila Safari Lodge in Kafue National Park, Zambia. By sunrise the entire boma area (reception, dining, bar and pool) was gone. Fortunately, the guest rooms remained intact, the guests were unharmed and the blaze didn't spread to the surrounding national park.

Green Safaris is passionate about preserving some of the most pristine wildlife areas in Africa, and its goal is to leave the areas where it operates as untouched as possible.

It all started with Ila Lodge in 2016. The Ila boma, on the banks above the Kafue River, was the first big thing Green Safaris built. Its distinctive semi-circular structure was constructed using a pioneering sandbag eco-building technique. Also at the core of Green Safaris is the understanding that true sustainability is based on the ability to grow and adapt.

And so, they set about re-imagining a new structure, deciding to use this as an opportunity to implement new techniques and knowledge and to build something fresh and relevant that represents what Green Safaris is today.

Vincent Kouwenhoven, the founder of Green Safaris, said: 'I started thinking about the reconstruction... I vividly remember a brainwave of an infinity sign forming in my mind the weekend after the fire. It represents my wish for the new Ila to remain forever and a day.' Vincent worked with architect Bert Meerstadt, who turned his ideas into a functional design and brought them to life.

The new main building – in the shape of an infinity symbol, of course – was constructed in South Africa and slightly resembles the architecture of



Ila's sister lodge, Chisa Busanga, on the Busanga Plains, where the rooms are reminiscent of giant birds' nests. The building came disassembled and was re-erected on site, with buildings such as the kitchen, office and toilets built using hydraform bricks. They're made with clay from old termite mounds abundant around the lodge.

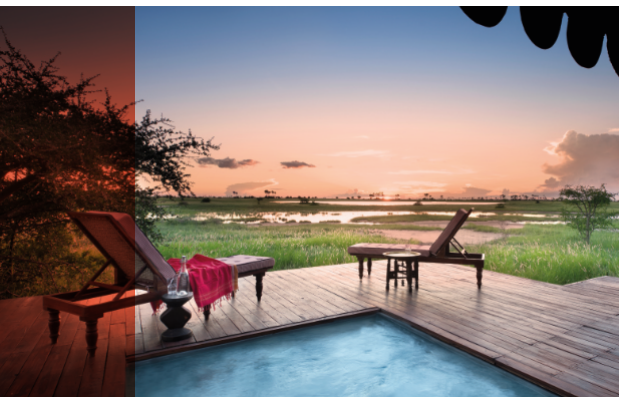
A key priority for Green Safaris is to blend in with nature and build in such a way that, if the lodge ever closed, the company could hand the land back to nature without leaving a trace. By designing a lodge that touches lightly on the earth and is built from local, natural and sustainable materials and methods, Ila Safari Lodge is a perfect example of Green Safaris' ethos brought to life.

Kafue National Park is Zambia's oldest and largest national park and one of the continent's wildest. At 22 400 km², it's larger than some countries (Jamaica, Qatar, Eswatini and more) and represents 36% of Zambia's reserves – a staggering 9% of the country's total land mass. Kafue is also a significant part of the vast five-country Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area.

Surprisingly, given its size, the park remains one of Africa's best-kept secrets. It's little-known and little-visited, with massive tracts of still-pristine bush. You probably won't encounter another vehicle while on a game drive.

There are at least 161 species of mammals, 22 of which are antelope (Kafue has the highest antelope diversity of any African park). There are six cat species, about 500 species of bird, and nowhere else in Africa can you see blue duiker, sable, roan, red lechwe, Lichtenstein's and Defassa hartebeest, elephant, buffalo, leopard, wild dog, hyena, hippo and yellow-backed duiker all in one park.



**BOTSWANA BLISS****Makgadikgadi Fit for a King**

**PRIVATE, LUXURIOUS,
EXTRAORDINARY – ALL THE
GOOD ADJECTIVES**

There is no place on Earth quite like Botswana's Makgadikgadi Pans. In the dry season, it is an alien landscape of nothingness, empty of sound and life, except for the extraordinary stars.

In the wet season, you're on another planet. The rains bring powder-blue lakes and kilometres of green grasslands, attracting the truly impressive zebra migration, with herds of up to 20 000 and flocks of flamingos numbering in the hundreds of thousands. There are also big herds of springbok and wildebeest, which of course attract predators.

Natural Selection has a new way to drink it all in. Jack's Private Camp opened last month, adding style, exclusivity and flexibility. It's designed to cater for the particular demands of discerning multi-generational travellers, adventurous families, privately guided small groups – and those who just want to get out into the desert far from noisy people.

There are only two tents, each with an en-suite bathroom and private deck, and the camp can only sleep four, plus daybeds for two children.

You get a private guide, a host and a private chef, and full staff complement to curate each day. You can simply lie on your daybed and be one with nature, or you can choose adventure. There are walks with Zu/'hoasi San, quad biking, horse riding, game drives and night drives.

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FESTIVAL NEWS**Peace, Love and Tents**

**NEW THIS YEAR: CAMP
AT WOODSTOCK**

In 1969, the world changed. Hello Woodstock, three days of music and peace, and mud that has never seen its equal. It didn't take place in the town of Woodstock but in the nearby town of Bethel, despite its name.

Today, the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts manages the space, where people still gather for the music – on the roster this year is Hootie & the Blowfish, Limp Bizkit and for the Woodstock generation, Santana and Lynyrd Skynyrd, among plenty of others.

But for the first time, there will be camping. Yes, from May to October, you can pull in and stay for the night, this time with ablutions and facilities, and no mud. But you can probably roll around on the grass if you want.

There are options: Basic Glamping gets you a two-person bell tent with bedding and electricity to charge devices; Luxury Glamping ups the game with safari tents, complete with a bathroom and outdoor deck seating. Premier tent-only camping is just that – a place to pitch your tent.

Because this is America, there are also Best Road Camping options. That's camping in the loosest sense, in RVs. Premier gets you electric hook-up, water and access to sewer pump out. There's also Primitive, and Car Camping. Think Landie with a rooftop tent. Or a van.

You have to have a ticket to an event to book a camping spot.

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**HIGH AND FAST****Supersonic Flights Return**

**WHO HAS TIME FOR HOURS IN
A PLANE**

In years gone by, you could hop on a Concorde in NYC and be in London in time for brunch. A three-hour trip. Bliss. Like Woodstock, the first flight was also in 1969. But the noise (sonic boom, anyone?) and the fuel bill were heavy – 2 179 km/h will do that. And 26 November 2003 was its swansong.

But supersonic flight Mark II may be just a test flight away. Two aviation projects are working to overcome those trifles: Boom Supersonic and a partnership between NASA and Lockheed Martin will both launch test flights of their innovative aircraft for the first time later this year. The rules are still the same: no flying faster than the speed of sound over land. NASA and Lockheed Martin are trying to design a jet that creates a noise more like a 'sonic thump' than a roaring boom. Their experimental plane, the X-59, is expected to fly 1.4 times faster than the speed of sound – or 1 488 km/h. Quite speedy.

Boom's first test aircraft, the XB-1, will take off later this year. Its passenger aircraft, Overture, is expected to fly at speeds of up to Mach 1.7, or about 2 099 km/h. It'll have a more exclusive atmosphere, seating just 65 to 80 passengers, with a business-class look and feel, and will even have a first-class, lie-flat option. For a three-hour flight.