

## Two new products in Namibia

**Chobe Water Villas**, an exclusive and intimate "boutique" lodge is located in Namibia at the eastern tip of the famous Caprivi Strip now known as the Zambezi Region. The lodge is due to open 1 July. The lodge is situated on the banks of the Chobe River, opposite the renowned Chobe National Park and Kasane in Botswana. It affords unobstructed views into the Chobe National Park and over the world-renowned Sedudu Island.

The lodge is located under magnificent shading Acacia Trees and exclusively hosts only 32 guests in its 16 luxurious Water Villas, Lounges, Bar, Restaurant, Infinity Pool, African Boma and Pool Deck.

The lodge is accessible by boat only, a 15-minute safari-boat transfer from Kasane, Botswana. There are direct flights from Johannesburg to Kasane or connect via Livingstone in Zambia. The lodge offers fully inclusive rates including all safari activities, either land or water based. This product can be perfectly combined with a visit to Victoria Falls, either in Zambia or Zimbabwe.



**Strand Hotel Swakopmund** which is to open 1 August is to be located on the Mole, a historic and iconic site surrounded by ocean on three sides. There are a total of 125 rooms of which 90% have beach and sea views and 10% garden and park views.

The Strand Hotel will offer its guests three exciting restaurants, bars and sea facing terraces as well as a Lobby Lounge, beer garden and beach kiosk with its own private pavilion on the beach. All three restaurants and kiosk will have direct access from the Mole.

The hotel is best accessed via Walvis Bay International Airport (then a 40min road transfer).

## Air Namibia reintroduces Cape Town / Walvis Bay flight

From 1 April 2015, Air Namibia will reintroduce its direct flight from Cape Town / Walvis Bay and Johannesburg / Walvis Bay. This will be a two hour flight utilising the 37-seater Embraer ERJ 135. For larger groups they will consider the Airbus A319 (112-seater) on request.

Cape Town / Walvis Bay daily  
14h35 // 15h45  
Walvis Bay / Cape Town daily  
10h35 // 13h45

Johannesburg / Walvis Bay daily  
08h45 // 10h00  
Walvis Bay / Johannesburg daily  
16h55 // 20h10

Walvis Bay is the gateway to Southern Namibia, including Swakopmund and Soussesvlei. This new flight offers an opportunity to create interesting South Africa and Namibia in combinations for both groups and leisure.

## Marataba Trails Lodge opens

The new Marataba Trails Lodge recently opened to much excitement. This “digital-detox” lodge forms part of the malaria-free Marataba Private Game Reserve, just three hours drive from Johannesburg. The lodge was built as an extension of the natural environment which inspired its creation. It is built ‘of the earth’ around sound ecological methods and principles.

It boasts five luxury tents for 8 guests. Children of 16 and older welcome. It features an open plan lounge and dining area. There is no electricity, wifi or cell phone reception at the lodge but limited solar power is available to charge batteries.

Morning and afternoon walking trails depart from the camp each day, with the option of enjoying a full-day hike and picnic in winter. Trails range from trekking over the top of the Kransberg range, to traversing through gorges. Regardless of the route, the one thing that remains consistent is the likelihood encountering wildlife along the way.



## Brief updates from Southern & East Africa

SAA has resumed a non-stop service on its daily flight from **Johannesburg to New York’s JFK International Airport**. While SAA’s daily flight from New York to Johannesburg has operated on a non-stop basis for several years, the return flight made a one-hour stop in Dakar, Senegal, during the low-season winter months.

Cape Town has two new bragging rights - **Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden** came out tops in the recently announced 2015 International Garden Tourism Awards presented by the International Garden Tourism Network (IGTN) in Toronto, Canada. The city came 10th overall in the **TripAdvisor Travellers Choice Top Destinations of 2015**.

**Boschendal Wine Estate** near Franschhoek has launched their new function barn, **The Olive Press**, with exposed natural poplar roof trusses, floor to ceiling glass doors and stunning views over meadow gardens to the Groot Drakenstein Mountain. The Olive Press can seat up to 250 guests inside, depending on set up and a further 100 guests in a covered outdoor area. Boschendal is located a 50-minute drive from Cape Town.

**Le Touessrok Resort in Mauritius** will close for renovations on April 15 before being reflagged and launched as a Shangri-La property on 1 November 2015. **Shangri-La’s Le Touessrok Resort and Spa** will begin taking reservations on March 30.