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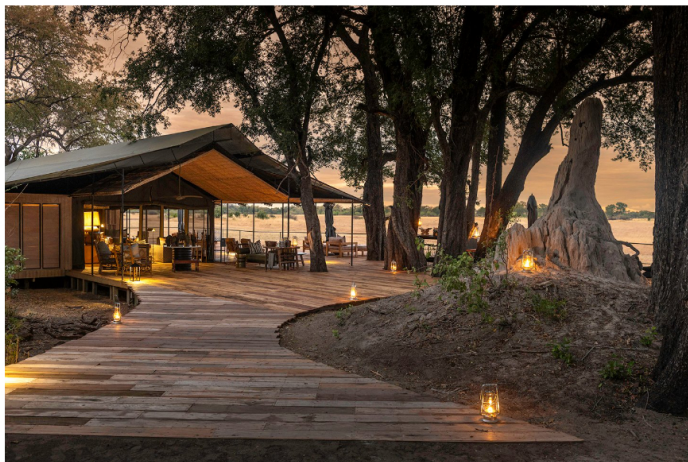
Contemporary Kiri Camp in Botswana's Okavango Delta

By Helene Ramackers · 08/24/2024



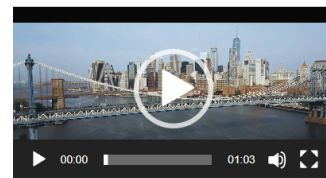
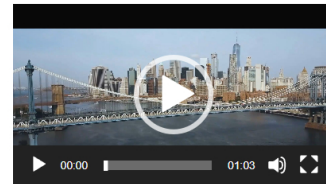
Since its inception in 2012, [Machaba Safaris](#) has grown at a steady rate, covering two African countries with the most exceptional lodges in Botswana and Zimbabwe.

There are few things in the world that can rival the magnificence of the Okavango Delta. Departing Cape Town International Airport on a Monday morning with [Airlink](#), Southern Africa's most reliable and punctual airline, the [Embraer ERJ-140](#) touches down at Maun International Airport just two and a half hours later. Standing at the counter to have my passport stamped by a friendly immigration official, it's heartwarming how enthused visitors to this beautiful country are to return or embark on their first trip to take in the splendor that is Botswana. Once through customs, I am met on the other side by a welcoming representative from [Mack Air](#), who ushers me to the check-in counter where my luggage gets tagged for my internal flight to my destination, the stunning Kiri Camp!



A termite mound at Kiri Camp's arrival area forms a natural focal point for the lodge and surrounding wilderness. Photo courtesy of Machaba Safaris / by David Rogers

I can hardly contain my excitement as this is my second time staying at a Machaba Safaris lodge, having sojourned at their [Gomoti Plains Camp](#) in 2018. Knowing that their ethos encapsulates remote camps in iconic destinations, with conservation and community at the core, all of the Machaba Safaris properties hold the allure of the most spectacular accommodation, coupled with being immersed in raw and untamed nature. Seated in the Mack Air Cessna Grand Caravan EX, Captain Dave takes to the skies, and seeing the wonderment on safari-goers' faces when they spot wildlife from their elevated vantage point



is a joyous experience.



Different herds of elephants visit the front of the lodge's waterhole on a daily basis to quench their thirst. Photo by Helène Ramackers

Landing at the Kiri airstrip, I am collected by lodge manager Kobus and my guide for the duration of my glorious three-night stay, Nthobatsang, better known as Tops. The drive to the lodge takes only six minutes, depending on what wildlife might make an appearance along the way. Welcomed with song and dance by some of the staff, I feel immediately at home, and as I exit the game drive vehicle, a herd of elephants passes by the front of the lodge to drink from the nearby watering hole.



The tented suites blend into the bush, and each suite has astounding views over the floodplains. Photo courtesy of Machaba Safaris / by David Rogers

My domicile is Tented Suite no 6, which has astounding views over the floodplains from my private veranda. With only ten suites and a maximum of 24 guests when the lodge is full, the overwhelming feeling of peace and tranquillity is very real when staying at Kiri Camp. The striking suites were constructed by [Lisa Rorich Architects](#), with the ingenious use of canvas for the tented portion of the structure, and reclaimed railway sleeper timber implemented for the floors. Reed ceilings were assembled by a rural woman's group who collected and stripped the reeds to achieve the pale color, which melds perfectly with the hue of the luna wood timber walls, keeping in line with the sustainability that the Machaba Safaris properties are renowned for.



The bathrooms are gorgeous, with his & hers mirrors (hers has a light). Photo courtesy of Machaba Safaris / by Andrew Howard Photography

The glorious interiors were the handiwork of Interdeco, headed up by Andrew Irving and Mario Rodrigues. Tasked to fashion a camp with comfort, style, and classic contemporary twists, they achieved that with great aplomb. Taking their cues from the surrounding wilderness, grass tones were used that are the same shade as the plains, intertwined with earthy tinges of terracotta and black.



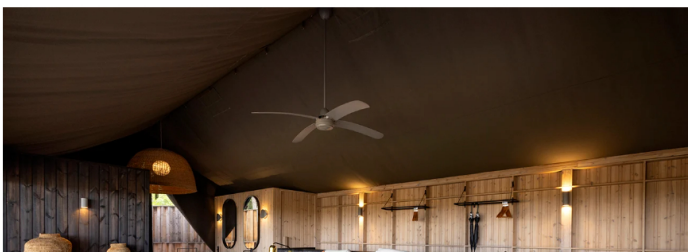
Kiri Camp's main lounge area has lots of different seating options. Photo courtesy of Machaba Safaris / by Andrew Howard Photography

Realizing their incredible capabilities, Machaba Safaris has called upon the same architecture and interior design team for all their lodges. "When conceptualizing a new property, we go to the site, put up a fly camp, and spend a few days designing and imagining the lodge around a campfire, with a wonderful chef cooking on an open fire under the trees," Lisa tells me. "This is possibly the secret of Machaba." Andrew echoes her sentiments. "We work with an amazing team. It's give and take, and everything just gets done as we all have one purpose in mind – to create a camp that is ready for the Machaba Safaris clients to enjoy."



The most beautiful leopard as seen on a game drive. Photo by Helène Ramackers

Walking from my resplendent suite to the main area where High Tea is being served, there are large footprints along the sandy pathway, a sign that elephants have passed through camp on the way to or from the watering hole. It is a magical sight to see these gentle giants up close or from a distance, taking in the life-giving sustenance of water. Leaving for our afternoon game drive, Tops goes in search of the wildlife that inhabits Kiri Camp's private concession. His favorite animal is an impala, and he lovingly refers to them as his 'bush flowers'. Twice daily game drives never disappoint, and highlights include a shy male leopard in a sausage tree, a pride of lions next to the Boro Channel, a family of bat-eared foxes, and a pack of African Wild Dogs.





The tented suites at Kiri Camp have a sumptuous king-sized bed. Photo courtesy of Machaba Safaris / by Andrew Howard Photography

The suites have everything a guest at Kiri Camp can hope to have on safari, and so much more. Imagine a king-sized bed, different seating areas, an indoor and outdoor shower, double vanities, and a freestanding outside bath. Creature comforts come in the form of the softest bedding, fluffy towels, and a Nespresso machine with a milk frother! It has been an outstanding adventure and as I say goodbye to the hospitable staff, I promise to return one day to create more lasting memories, the Machaba Safaris way.

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Adventure and exploration company Journeys by Design assisted in arranging Helene's trip. A top ten 'super agent' and run by a small group of African specialists with extensive experience working in the field, Journeys by Design delivers extraordinary journeys for a range of travelers, from individuals right through to multi-generational families. To book, visit [Journeys by Design contact](#) or call US: +1 646 652 0489 or +44 (0)1273 623 790.

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Helene Ramackers

Heléne Ramackers is a freelance journalist who enjoys interviewing local and international celebrities but thinks she has found her calling amongst the travel writing fraternity. A creature comforts girl at heart, she loves all things opulent.

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