



From left: Four Seasons Resort Seychelles; Matetsi River Lodge in Zimbabwe; Six Senses' Seychelles resort, Zil Pasyon

## AFRICA UPDATE

Safari camps and island resorts debut around the continent, and Cape Town's dining scene comes into the spotlight.

BY CHERRI BRIGGS

I'm in Zimbabwe at the new **Matetsi River Lodge** (rooms from \$995), which sat empty for six years until &Beyond took it over last year. It has been reborn. Of course, it still sits on the banks of the Zambezi River, 25 miles from Victoria Falls. The conservation area is now up to 123,500 acres. We saw buffalo, elephants, leopards, and a movie-star-perfect pride of lionesses with cubs, all on one game drive. The 18 contemporary suites have plunge pools and extensive views. The Victoria Falls area—called the Switzerland of Zimbabwe—has always been safe. The other big news here is that South African filmmakers Dereck and Beverly Joubert plan to open two lodges next year through their company, Great Plains Conservation. One is above Victoria Falls, and the other is in Sapi, a remote area near Mana Pools that was a hunting hot spot. Now it will be a great conservation area.

Before Zimbabwe, I was in Tanzania, scouting newer lodges and revisiting old favorites. **Mwiba Lodge** (rooms from \$1,370) opened in the Serengeti in 2014 and knocks the socks off pretty much all the competition for food, design, and service. Singita's **Sasakwa Lodge** (rooms from \$1,560), in its private Grumeti Reserve, is a good encore to see abundant wildlife. The Serengeti Highway now cuts through the reserve and presents poaching challenges, but Singita will soon have the most sophisticated

protection team in Africa. Guests can participate in exclusive conservation immersion programs too. Another Tanzania secret is **Chem Chem** (rooms from \$870), owned by Fabia Bausch and her partner, hunter turned conservationist Nicolas Negre. It's a stylish oasis in an important wildlife corridor between Tarangire National Park and Lake Manyara.

In the Seychelles, Six Senses just opened **Zil Pasyon** (rooms from \$1,680), a fantastic resort on the private island of Félicité. Its 30 villas have pools and mind-blowing Indian Ocean views. Later this year, **Four Seasons** will open its second Seychelles resort on Desroches. It will have 40 suites, 11 villas, two restaurants, and nearly nine miles of beaches.

Let's talk about Cape Town. Everyone is anticipating Liz Biden's 28-room **Silo Hotel** (rooms from \$870), which opens in March, at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa. But the other story is that right now the city has the best food in the world. At **Villa 47** you can get octopus carpaccio on the ground floor, arancini on the second, and divine fine-dining seafood on the top. **The Stack** is an elegant restaurant run by Nigel Pace, whose tenure as manager of the Cape Grace Hotel made it what it is today. At **Mulberry & Prince**, Capetonian Cornel Mostert and Brooklynite Cynthia Rivera pay homage to New York, where they met. I go to **Chalk & Cork** for local wines and tapas. In Constantia, Irish chef Liam Tomlin opened a branch of his Bree Street **Chefs Warehouse & Canteen**, at Beau Constantia winery. Native chef Scot Kirton, behind the acclaimed **La Colombe**, now has a second restaurant, **Foxcroft**. My husband and I raided the menu for seafood after four weeks on safari. The tuna tartare and yellowtail ceviche were incredible. ♦

*Contributing Editor Cheri Briggs is owner and president of Explore Inc., which operates in 18 African countries.*

### BACK TO THE KITCHEN

This spring, chef and businessman **Wolfgang Puck** adds to his

impressive list of restaurants the Wolfgang Puck Test Kitchen in West Hollywood, a testament to the modernist vision of his late business partner, Matt Bencivenga. The weekly dinners of 12 to 18 ever-changing courses will feature a rotating roster of chefs, including Puck himself. Tickets for the first dinner, on April 5, become available online March 1. Visit [departures.com/pucktestkitchen](http://departures.com/pucktestkitchen) for the inside scoop.



### STARTING THE NEW YEAR OFF RIGHT

Great job giving an up-to-date picture of the status of Bermuda in your January/February 2017 issue. It was concise, informative, and showing of real quality. Congratulations!

—Michael Douglas  
NEW YORK, NY  
MEMBER SINCE 1997

I was born and raised in Bermuda, and while my home for decades has been New York City, my native island is still beloved. I am always thrilled to see positive articles about Bermuda, such as Michael Gross's piece. For future coverage, please note, residents of the island are Bermudians, not Bermudans.

—Tracey Thatcher  
NEW YORK, NY  
MEMBER SINCE 1983

I took special note of your story "How to Stop Smoking in Spain," in the January/February 2017 issue. As a former smoker, I can relate to your experience. I smoked on and off for 20 years, and eventually a sinus infection motivated me to put out my last Benson & Hedges 100. The urge to smoke comes occasionally, but I have only had to manage a few relapses.

—Randy Munguia  
BEVERLY HILLS, MI  
MEMBER SINCE 1984

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