

VARD AFRICA | DESTINATION GUIDE

The Laikipia Ecosystem, Kenya

The Continent's Most Hopeful Conservation Story — Where Africa's Wildlife Is Growing

"There is a conversation happening on the Laikipia Plateau that is not happening anywhere else in Africa with the same energy, the same courage or the same extraordinary results. It is the conversation between cattle ranchers who have chosen wildlife over beef, between conservationists who have bet their reputations on community partnership rather than exclusion, between Maasai elders who decided that a living giraffe outside the fence was worth more than a dead one inside it, and between extraordinary individuals the Dyers, the Craigs, Jochen Zeitz, the Francombes, Kerry Glen and James Christian who have given their lives to a landscape most of the world has never heard of and that rewards their commitment by producing, year after year, the most encouraging wildlife recovery story in East Africa. Laikipia is not merely a safari destination. It is proof verifiable, auditable, living proof that the relationship between people and wildlife can be remade. And for the well-travelled guest who has seen the Mara, who knows Amboseli, who has walked in Samburu Laikipia is the destination that surprises them most deeply and moves them most lastingly." — **Vard Africa, Destination Curators**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL GUESTS

Altitude: The Laikipia Plateau sits at **1,700–2,300 metres (5,577–7,546 feet)** above sea level. This is Kenya's most important practical characteristic for international travellers: it determines the climate, the malaria risk and the specific quality of the air.

Malaria Status: The vast majority of Laikipia at altitude is **malaria-free**. The Borana and Lewa conservancies, Ol Jogi, Loisaba, Mugie, Segera, Ol Pejeta and most of the major luxury properties specifically operate at altitudes that eliminate the malarial mosquito (Anopheles). **No mosquito nets are provided at Borana Lodge.** Guests are still advised to consult their travel physician about appropriate prophylaxis for their entire Kenya itinerary, as properties at lower altitudes in other regions may carry risk.

Vaccinations Required or Recommended for Kenya: Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required for entry if arriving from a yellow fever-endemic country. Recommended: Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid, Tetanus update, Meningococcal. COVID-19 requirements vary check current regulations before travel.

Medical Evacuation: All guests are required to hold comprehensive travel insurance including medical evacuation cover. Borana Lodge specifically requires **AMREF Flying Doctors cover**, which is included in their rates. AMREF Flying Doctors operate the finest air ambulance service in East Africa and can reach any Laikipia property within 30–90 minutes. The nearest major hospital is **Nanyuki Cottage Hospital** widely regarded as the finest facility in the Laikipia region. Nairobi's Aga Khan Hospital and Nairobi Hospital are world-class facilities reachable by air in under an hour from any Laikipia airstrip.

Climate & Clothing: Days are warm at 22–28°C. Evenings are genuinely cool and often cold at higher altitudes, requiring a warm fleece or jacket. Early morning game drives require a proper warm layer **thermal underlayers, fleece and a windproof jacket** are essential. Nights at Borana, Lewa and Lolldaiga can drop to 8–12°C. The classic guide: dress as if you are going hill-walking in Scotland in April, then prepare to shed layers by 10am.

Currency: Kenyan Shilling (KES). All major properties operate in USD for billing. ATMs are available in Nanyuki town. Tipping norms: guides \$20 per group per day; lodge staff tip box \$15–\$20 per guest per day.

Entry Requirements: Kenya now requires an **Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA)** obtained from www.etakenya.go.ke before departure. This has replaced the e-Visa system. Apply at minimum 72 hours before travel. Failure to obtain confirmation means airlines will refuse boarding.

Wildlife Safety: Laikipia's properties are private conservancies operating in genuine wildlife areas. Guests must always be escorted at night. Never walk between tent or cottage and the main lodge after dark without a guide or askari escort. All guides carry appropriate firearms for walking activities. Follow guide instructions precisely during all bush activities.

DESTINATION INTRODUCTION

The Laikipia Plateau

Kenya's 9,500-Square-Kilometre Conservation Miracle

The **Laikipia Plateau** stretches from the northern slopes of **Mount Kenya** Africa's second-highest mountain at 5,199 metres, its glaciers and permanent snowcap visible on clear mornings from nearly every lodge on the plateau southwestward to the rim of the **Great Rift Valley**, and from the **Aberdare Mountains** in the south to the wild scrublands of Kenya's **Northern Frontier District** beyond. This is a landscape covering approximately **9,500 square kilometres** at altitudes between 1,700 and 2,300 metres an enormity of ancient basalt escarpment, mid-altitude grassland, acacia woodland, riverine forest, rocky kopje and cedar-shadowed highland valley that requires several safaris, and several different conservancies, to begin to understand in its full complexity.

The Laikipia Plateau is not a single place. It is a mosaic the most complex and most layered wildlife landscape in Kenya and understanding that mosaic is the key to understanding why the safari experience here differs so fundamentally from anything available elsewhere in East Africa. Private ranches and charitable trust conservancies. Community-owned group ranches and Maasai trust lands. Commercial cattle farms that have evolved into wildlife sanctuaries. Research stations and luxury lodges. Working estancias and art galleries. Family homes open to guests and billionaires' private estates opened for the first time in decades. All sharing a common landscape at 6,000 feet above sea level, with Mount

Kenya glowing above them on clear mornings and the Northern Frontier stretching away to the north in an immensity of bush and escarpment and ancient dry river that has not fundamentally changed since human beings first made stone tools on this ground half a million years ago.

The modern Laikipia conservation story has its roots in the **economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s**, when collapsing global beef prices and escalating costs made large-scale cattle ranching economically unviable across significant portions of the plateau. Ranching families facing the choice between selling, subdividing or converting their land to alternative uses began, one by one, to discover that wildlife-based tourism properly managed and properly connected to community benefit could generate more revenue per hectare than cattle while simultaneously protecting and eventually enhancing the ecosystem on which both cattle and wildlife depended.

The results of this discovery were immediate and striking. Within a decade, species that had been declining steadily across Kenya were stabilizing then increasing within Laikipia's new conservancies. The plateau's **black rhino population began recovering** from near-extinction. **African wild dogs**, essentially absent from Kenya outside Laikipia, established a viable and growing breeding population. **Grevy's zebra** reduced from 15,000 individuals globally in the 1970s to fewer than 2,000 by the mid-1990s found in Laikipia a stronghold that now holds approximately **25% of the world's remaining wild population**. Elephant herds grew larger as the corridor connectivity between conservancies expanded. Predator populations stabilized. And the human communities whose lands surrounded and overlapped the conservancies began receiving direct economic benefit from the wildlife they had previously had every incentive to resent.

Today, Laikipia is the **only significant area of Kenya where wildlife populations are consistently and measurably increasing** a distinction verified by wildlife censuses, population surveys and independent scientific monitoring, and one that stands in stark contrast to the declines being recorded across much of the rest of the country. The plateau holds **over 50% of Kenya's black rhinos**. It protects the **world's largest population of Grevy's zebra**. It is home to the **only growing African wild dog population in Kenya**. It supports major elephant herds, five of the Big Five, all of the Northern Five, and a density and diversity of predator species lion, leopard, cheetah, wild dog, serval, caracal, African wildcat, aardwolf, bat-eared fox that rivals any ecosystem in East Africa. And it has achieved all of this while maintaining working cattle ranches, Maasai pastoralist communities, Samburu nomadic traditions and flourishing permanent settlements within the same landscape.

This is not conservation at the expense of people. It is conservation as the direct expression of what people given the right economic incentives, the right institutional support and the right political will choose to do with their land.

WHAT SETS LAIKIPIA APART

The Vard Africa Analysis

Complete Activity Freedom — The Single Greatest Practical Distinction

In Kenya's national parks the Maasai Mara, Amboseli, Tsavo, Samburu vehicles must remain on designated tracks. Guests cannot leave vehicles except in designated picnic sites. Night game drives are illegal. Walking safaris are severely restricted or unavailable across most park areas. Horseback, camel and cycling activities are not permitted. And the concentration of multiple tourism vehicles around the same predator sighting twenty Land Cruisers circling a sleeping cheetah in the Mara is not an unusual scene can transform what should be a wildlife encounter into something closer to a traffic event.

On private Laikipia conservancy land, none of these restrictions apply. Vehicles go anywhere their guides judge safe off-road, through riverbeds, up rocky outcrops, across open lava plains, into forest edges. Guests can leave vehicles wherever their guides recommend. Night drives with spotlights are standard. Walking safaris are available at every conservancy, often without length restrictions for guests with good fitness. Radio telemetry tracks collared lions in real time. Guides follow fresh tracks wherever they lead, irrespective of which direction the designated road runs. This freedom is not incidental to the Laikipia experience it is its most defining and most practically transformative characteristic.

Wildlife That Is Increasing — A Distinction Unique in Kenya

Laikipia is the only significant area of Kenya where wildlife populations are verifiably growing rather than declining. When a guest comes here, they are not observing wildlife against the backdrop of its disappearance; they are present at the beginning of its recovery. The wild dog pack with 22 members today had 14 last year. The rhino population that holds 200 animals across the Borana-Lewa landscape held 40 a decade ago. The elephant corridor linking five conservancies that exists today was three separate disconnected populations fifteen years ago. Visiting Laikipia is, in a specific and verifiable sense, being part of the story of Africa's wildlife coming back and that awareness changes the quality of every wildlife encounter fundamentally.

The Northern Five — Species Encountered Nowhere Else on the Kenya Safari Circuit

Five magnificent wildlife species are found in Laikipia and northern Kenya but not in the southern safari landscape of the Mara, Amboseli and Tsavo:

Grevy's Zebra (*Equus grevyi*) — The world's largest zebra species and the world's largest wild equid. Distinguished by its narrow, mathematically precise stripe pattern (more stripes, more closely spaced than the Plains zebra), its enormous rounded ears, its white belly completely white, unlike the Plains zebra's muted yellow-white and its solitary or small-group social structure rather than the large family herds of the south. The male's call is a remarkable deep, rasping bray quite unlike the familiar bark of the Common zebra. Laikipia holds the world's largest wild population.

Reticulated Giraffe (*Giraffa reticulata*) — Distinguished from the Maasai giraffe of Kenya's south by the specific geometry of its coat pattern: large, sharply defined polygonal patches of deep liver-brown outlined by vivid white networks like stained glass, like illuminated medieval tile — as opposed to the irregular, jagged, less precisely defined patches of the Maasai subspecies. The reticulated giraffe's coat is the most geometrically dramatic and most immediately striking of any giraffe subspecies.

Beisa Oryx (*Oryx beisa*) — One of the great antelope of the African arid zone: large, powerfully built, with long straight swept-back horns that can reach 120 centimetres in length, a grey body and black-and-white facial markings of great precision. Adapted to extreme aridity and capable of surviving for extended periods without surface water, the oryx is an animal of extraordinary ecological resilience and architectural beauty.

Somali Ostrich (*Struthio molybdophanes*) Distinguished from the Common ostrich of Kenya's south primarily by the male's blue-grey neck and thighs (vs the Common ostrich's pink), and the female's more distinctly brown colouration. A recently recognised full species (elevated from subspecies in 2014) that reflects millions of years of divergent evolution in the isolated northern horn of Africa.

Gerenuk (*Litocranius walleri*) — The giraffe-necked gazelle of the northern bush: adapted for browsing at heights inaccessible to competing antelopes through a dramatically elongated neck and the ability to stand upright on its hind legs, balancing against thorny acacia branches with its forelegs while stretching its neck to reach foliage no other browser can reach. The resulting posture vertical antelope, neck extended skyward, hind legs straight is one of the most distinctive and most photographed wildlife silhouettes in East Africa.

Conservation as Living, Participatory Engagement

Every conservancy in Laikipia maintains a conservation programme that guests can directly engage with as participants rather than spectators. Rhino patrol accompaniment. Wild dog telemetry tracking. Camera trap setting and review. Anti-poaching ranger visits and training demonstrations. Community health clinic visits. School visits. Reforestation tree planting. Beekeeping. Back-of-house tours showing how the lodges manage their environmental footprint. The full mechanics of conservation what it actually costs in effort, money, dedication and ingenuity to protect 50,000 or 90,000 acres of African wildlife habitat in the 21st century is visible and accessible to guests who want to look behind the experience.

Community Ownership That our guests Can Witness

Laikipia's conservation model is inseparable from its community model. More than twenty conservancies across the plateau include Maasai, Samburu, Pokot and Turkana community members as partners, employees, shareholders or landowners. The economic value of wildlife tourism flows directly to the communities whose goodwill is the foundation of the conservancy's long-term security. Guests can visit the schools funded by conservation revenues, meet the rangers whose salaries tourism fees pay, buy beadwork from cooperatives whose income depends on guests arriving. The connection between a guest's presence and a community's welfare is visible, specific and human one of the most powerful and most lastingly memorable aspects of the Laikipia experience.

WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The Northern Five

As described in Part Two: Grevy's Zebra, Reticulated Giraffe, Beisa Oryx, Somali Ostrich, Gerenuk.

The Big Five

Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) Eastern black rhino. Over **50% of Kenya's entire national black rhino population** lives within Laikipia's conservancies primarily at Borana-Lewa, Ol Jogi, Loisaba and Ol Pejeta. The black rhino's most immediately distinguishing characteristic from the white is its **hooked, prehensile upper lip** adapted for browsing from bushes and small trees rather than grazing. Smaller than the white rhino, more solitary, more secretive and significantly more aggressive when approached on foot. Walking with Borana's or Sirikoi's rhino rangers to observe individually-known animals within metres knowing the animal's name, its history, its family relationships is one of the most specifically moving wildlife encounters available anywhere in Africa.

African Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) — Major elephant herds move freely across the plateau via established wildlife corridors the most significant being the 14-kilometre elephant corridor linking Lewa Wildlife Conservancy through the Ngare Ndare Forest to Mount Kenya National Park, used by over 1,000 elephants in a single recorded year. Laikipia's elephants are notably relaxed around vehicles and particularly at properties like Arijiju and Ol Jogi are regularly observed at waterholes from lodge terraces and pool decks at very close quarters. Elephant bathing at Borana's Hyena Valley dam, visible from the infinity pool, is one of Laikipia's most celebrated daily spectacles.

African Lion (*Panthera leo*) — Multiple prides across the plateau, many collared by the **Laikipia Predator Project** for continuous population monitoring that allows guides to track specific individuals by radio telemetry in real time. Mugie Conservancy holds the highest lion density in Laikipia. Sosian's Predator Project collared lions are among the most reliably trackable in East Africa.

Leopard (*Panthera pardus*) — Present at all major conservancies. Camera-trapped across multiple properties. The **melanistic (black) leopard** one of wildlife photography's most celebrated and most rarely photographed subjects has been documented in Laikipia through camera trap imagery that confirmed its presence in this specific ecosystem. Sightings of the black leopard are not guaranteed anywhere in the world; its documented existence in Laikipia is one of the most extraordinary recent achievements of Kenyan conservation photography.

African Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) — Present in significant herds across most Laikipia conservancies, particularly in the well-watered areas of the Lewa-Borana landscape and around the major conservancy dams.

Beyond the Big Five

African Wild Dog (Painted Wolf) (*Lycaon pictus*) — Laikipia holds the **only growing wild dog population in Kenya** and one of the most significant in East Africa. Several packs with radio-collared individuals' range across multiple conservancies, making them trackable by telemetry. Sightings are more reliably achieved here than anywhere else in Kenya, though they are never guaranteed. The packs cover enormous territories and may be in any conservancy on any given day.

Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) — Regularly encountered across the open grasslands, particularly at Borana-Lewa, Loisaba and Segera. Cheetah are most active in the early morning, making the first game drive of the day the most productive for sightings.

Greater Kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) — The magnificent spiral-horned antelope of the rocky northern escarpments one of Africa's most architecturally beautiful ungulates, the male's horns spiralling in a full turn-and-a-half of extraordinary geometry. Found in Laikipia's boulder-strewn northern territory, particularly around Ol Malo (whose name means "place of the Greater Kudu"), and in the rocky sections of Sosian, Loisaba and the northern frontier conservancies.

Jackson's Hartebeest (*Alcelaphus lelwel*) — A Laikipia flagship species rarely seen in Kenya's major national parks. Present at Segera, Borana, Lewa and several other conservancies.

Sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekii*) — One of Africa's most elusive and most specifically adapted antelope: semi-aquatic, inhabiting the swamp and riverine wetland edges of Laikipia's permanent watercourses. The sitatunga's splayed hooves and ability to move through standing water make it invisible to predators in its preferred habitat and equally invisible to guides in vehicles restricted to dry ground. Walking safaris in Lewa's wetland areas provide the most reliable viewing opportunities.

Patas Monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*) — The world's fastest primate, capable of speeds exceeding 55 km/h faster than most road speed limits adapted for open-ground escape from predators in Laikipia's grasslands. Found in several conservancies, rarely encountered elsewhere in Kenya's safari landscape.

Black and White Colobus Monkey (*Colobus guereza*) — In the forest sections of the conservancies, particularly in the Ngare Ndare Forest and the cedar forests of Lolldaiga.

Dr Shirley Strum's Habituated Baboon Troop at Ol Lentille — One of the world's most completely studied wild baboon populations, observable at close quarters through one of primatology's most celebrated long-term research programmes. The troop's social dynamics dominance hierarchies, alliance formation, infant development, male-female relationships are interpretable in real time by the conservancy's expert naturalist guides.

Hippo (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) — In the rivers and permanent water bodies of several conservancies, most reliably at Ol Pejeta (Kiboko Dam), Sosian (Ewaso Narok River) and Ol Jogi.

Reticulated Giraffe — As described above. Present across most Laikipia conservancies, particularly Ol Jogi (estimated 5,000 individuals the world's largest population at any single conservancy).

Chimpanzees at Sweetwaters — At Ol Pejeta's Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary: 39 rescued chimpanzees, the only chimps in Kenya, whose individual life histories from captivity to semi-freedom are explained by the keepers who know them.

Potap at Ol Jogi — The only grizzly bear in Africa: donated from Moscow, resident at Ol Jogi Wildlife Conservancy, cared for with the evident dedication of a conservation team that has decided this animal deserves the best possible life.

The Last Two Northern White Rhinos — At Ol Pejeta Conservancy: **Najin and Fatu**, under 24-hour armed guard, the mathematical end of a subspecies. An encounter with an extinction in progress, and with the absolute limit of what human conservation commitment can achieve.

Birds

Over **500 bird species** recorded across the Laikipia ecosystem, including:

- Multiple raptor species: **Martial Eagle, Bateleur, African Fish Eagle, Secretary Bird, Long-crested Eagle** and 17+ other eagle species
- **Kori Bustard** — the world's heaviest flying bird, present in the open grasslands
- **Crowned Crane** — Kenya's most regal and most recognisable waterbird, at the major dams
- **Somali Ostrich, Von der Decken's Hornbill, Golden-breasted Starling** — the spectacular northern species unavailable in southern Kenya
- **Heuglin's Courser, Three-banded Courser** — nocturnal species encountered on night drives
- **Grey-crowned Crane, Sacred Ibis, Saddle-billed Stork** — at the riverine and wetland areas

OUR CONSERVANCIES AND THEIR PROPERTIES

The following profiles are written to the depth and standard that Vard Africa's clients deserve. Every property is covered with full historical, architectural, operational, health & safety and logistical detail. This is not a listing. It is a library.

LOLLDAIGA CONSERVANCY

49,000 Acres of Ancient Highland Hills — The Discovery Destination

The Conservancy: The **Lolldaiga Conservancy** encompasses **49,000 acres** (formally 45,520 conserved hectares) of the **Lolldaiga Hills** a dramatically folded highland range of ancient metamorphic and volcanic rock **30 kilometres northwest of Mount Kenya** on the eastern edge of the Laikipia Plateau. This is hill-country: not the flat open grassland of safari imagination but a landscape of ridges, steep wooded valleys, tumbling streams, cedar forests in the valley bottoms and open grassland parks on the ridge crests, ranging in altitude from approximately **1,700 to 2,300 metres** (5,577–7,546 feet).

The hills are among the most geologically ancient terrain in the Laikipia ecosystem the exposed ridgelines and valley escarpments having been shaped by volcanic activity and millions of years of weathering into forms of considerable dramatic beauty. On the western face of the

conservancy, a cave system contains **4,000-year-old rock paintings** ochre figures of cattle, humans and abstract forms left by the earliest documented inhabitants of this specific landscape. These paintings pre-date the written record of any African civilisation known to have passed through this region and represent the most ancient human mark on the Lolldaiga Hills.

Conservation Model and Governance: The conservancy was previously a privately-owned commercial cattle ranch. In **2021**, following a multi-year process facilitated by **The Nature Conservancy** one of the world's largest and most scientifically rigorous environmental organisations it was transitioned to conservation management under a **Kenyan charitable Trust** with international governance oversight. The Trust model ensures that the conservancy's revenues are permanently reinvested in wildlife protection, habitat restoration, regenerative livestock management and community engagement, with a board of Kenyan and international trustees providing transparent accountability.

The conservancy maintains a **working livestock operation** approximately 4,500 head of cattle, sheep and camels move through the landscape alongside the wildlife demonstrating the coexistence model that is central to Laikipia's conservation success. Wildlife includes: **elephant, lion, leopard, cheetah, African wild dog, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, Beisa oryx, eland, hartebeest, bushbuck, waterbuck, impala** and over **400 bird species**. Four of the Big Five are present; rhinos are the notable absence, with Borana-Lewa's established sanctuary accessible as a day trip.

The conservancy's landscape diversity cedar forest, highland grassland, rocky escarpment, stream valley creates habitat that supports wildlife communities different in character from the more open conservancies further west, with forest-dependent species like **Colobus monkey, bushbuck and forest elephant** adding ecological dimension not found at every Laikipia property.

LOLLDAIGA HOUSE

Private Settler-Era Home | 6 Ensuite Bedrooms | 12 Guests Maximum | Exclusive-Use

Location and Setting: Lolldaiga House occupies a **ridge-top position** in the Lolldaiga Hills at approximately **2,100 metres** altitude one of the higher-elevation lodge positions in Laikipia, which means cooler temperatures, clearer air and the specific quality of the highland morning that guests consistently describe as one of the most beautiful they have encountered anywhere. The house looks **north** across the conservancy toward the arid Northern Frontier District stretching toward Samburu and, on exceptional days, the distant Mathews Range. It looks **south** toward **Mount Kenya's snowcap and glaciers** rising above the plateau. Both views are simultaneously available from the main verandah this dual panorama, north to the frontier and south to the mountain, is one of the most complete geographical experiences available from any single building in Kenya.

The approach to the house a game drive through the conservancy before arrival, crossing ancient folded hillsides, descending into cedar-shadowed valleys and climbing to the ridge is itself a significant part of the experience and should not be rushed.

Introduction and History: Lolldaiga House was designed and built in **2016** by a **British family** as their private Kenyan highland home not as a commercial development but as a place to live, extended to guests because the owners wanted to share a landscape they had fallen in love with. This origin is preserved completely in everything about the property.

The house is built in the **old settler tradition**: thick **straw-bale walls** that provide natural insulation against both the highland cold and the midday sun; wide overhanging **thatched eaves** that shelter the verandah from rain and provide shade from the equatorial sun; locally made timber construction throughout. This is not a recently fashioned approximation of traditional architecture; it is a straightforward application of building methods that have worked in the Kenyan highlands for a century, executed with considerable care and skill and furnished with the quality that reflects a family for whom this is genuinely their home.

The interior carries the accumulated warmth of a private house rather than the designed uniformity of a hotel: paintings and photographs by Kenyan artists (including work that reflects the Lolldaiga Hills' specific character), bespoke furniture made for this house and this landscape, books, objects and textiles collected over years of living in and travelling through East Africa. Every detail feels chosen rather than specified, and that distinction felt immediately by every guest who arrives is what makes the house feel like a home rather than an accommodation.

Ownership and Management: Privately owned by a British family. Day-to-day management by a dedicated resident staff team.

The conservancy's wildlife management is handled by The Nature Conservancy-facilitated Trust.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

- ✓ Lolldaiga House accommodates a **maximum of 12 guests** across **6 generous ensuite double bedrooms**.
- ✓ The bedrooms are distributed across the house's main building and its connected wings, each opening onto the wide verandah that runs the length of the house's north-facing elevation.
- ✓ All rooms are configured as doubles but can be arranged as twins on request.
- ✓ En-suite bathrooms are fully appointed with quality fittings and hot water; some include both bath and shower.

The communal spaces a generous sitting room with the family's collected objects and books; the dining room with its long table and fireplace; the kitchen, the pantry; the wide verandah are genuinely those of a private home rather than a hotel lobby. Guests occupy the house rather than staying in it. The difference, once experienced, is immediately clear.

A **solar-heated swimming pool** faces the Northern Frontier view from the house's north terrace positioned specifically so that swimming can be done while looking across the arid plains toward the Northern Frontier, one of the most specifically beautiful pool positions in Laikipia. The pool is heated by solar panels and maintains a comfortable temperature year-round.

Getting There:

- ✓ **By Air:** The closest airstrip is the **Lewa Downs Airstrip**, served by daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** on Air Kenya and Safarilink (approximately 45–55 minutes).
- ✓ From Lewa Downs Airstrip, **Lolldaiga House is approximately 2 hours by road transfer** a scenic drive through the landscape that serves as an introduction to the region.
- ✓ Private charter flights can land at Lolldaiga's own private airstrip within the conservancy, which reduces the road transfer to approximately **15 minutes**.
- ✓ Charter flight from Nairobi Wilson Airport to Lolldaiga's private airstrip: approximately **45–55 minutes**.

By Road: Lolldaiga is approximately **240 kilometres** from Nairobi a **4–5-hour drive** via the A2 highway to Nanyuki, then north on the Timau road and west into the conservancy. The road through the conservancy to the house is unpaved and requires a 4WD vehicle. Road transfer is available through the property's management.

Vard Africa Note: We recommend the charter flight to Lolldaiga's own airstrip for guests whose itinerary includes the house as a standalone destination. For those combining it with Lewa or Borana, scheduling a shared scheduled flight to Lewa Downs and connecting by road is efficient and allows game viewing en route.

Communication in the Wilderness:

- ✓ Mobile telephone coverage (Safaricom network) is available at the house and in many positions on the conservancy's ridge crests.
- ✓ Valley bottoms have limited coverage.
- ✓ WiFi is available at the house.
- ✓ Vard Africa provides full pre-travel connectivity briefing for all clients.

Amenities and Facilities:

- Solar-heated swimming pool with Northern Frontier view
- Dedicated estate vehicle and driver-guide for all game drives
- Walking guide and armed ranger for all bush walks
- Full kitchen team preparing three meals daily
- Fully stocked bar and cellar
- Laundry service
- Vehicle-based telescope for star-gazing on clear nights
- Fire lit in the sitting room each evening

Activities at Lolldaiga House:

- ✓ **Dawn and Dusk Game Drives Across the 49,000-Acre Conservancy** — The conservancy's road network extends across ridgetops and into valley bottoms, past the great dams where wildlife concentrates at dawn and dusk, through the cedar forest edges where colobus monkeys and forest elephant are encountered, and across the open grassland parks on the higher ridge crests where Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, eland and the plains game community move freely. No other vehicles share the roads. The guide's knowledge of the conservancy's specific wildlife locations, built over years of direct observation, shapes every itinerary.
- ✓ The standard programme: dawn drive (5:30am departure, two to three hours, morning coffee and biscuits carried in the vehicle) followed by a late afternoon drive (4pm departure, returning after dark for dinner). The programme is completely flexible around guests' preferences and the day's wildlife intelligence.
- ✓ **Night Drives** — After the dawn and dusk drives, night drives with spotlights reveal the conservancy's nocturnal community: African wild cat, serval, genet, civet, aardvark, spring hare, bush baby, leopard crossing open ground and on the Lolldaiga Hills' rocky section the specific quality of a highland night sky uncontaminated by any light pollution from towns or settlements. The Milky Way over the Lolldaiga ridgelines on a clear night is genuinely extraordinary.
- ✓ **The Archaeological Cave Visit** — One of Lolldaiga's most irreplaceable offerings and the experience that most consistently distinguishes this property from every other luxury lodge in Laikipia.
- ✓ A guided drive to the cave on the western section of the conservancy, followed by a short walk to the cave entrance, reveals the **4,000-year-old rock paintings** on the cave walls ochre figures of cattle, human forms and abstract designs left by the earliest known inhabitants of this specific landscape.
- ✓ The paintings are clear, well-preserved and extensive enough to require sustained attention to understand their full scope.
- ✓ The experience of standing before art made four millennia ago in a cave on a hill that elephants now cross and wild dogs hunt across places every subsequent safari moment in a temporal context that no game drive can provide. These are not ancient Egyptian monuments accessible via a tour bus; they are genuinely remote, genuinely intimate and genuinely humbling encounters with the very beginning of the human relationship with this specific corner of Africa.

Vard Africa Note: Arrange this visit for the second morning, after a full day in the landscape. The paintings' significance is deepened by having already understood the conservancy's geography. Bring a quality headtorch; the deepest sections of the paintings are best illuminated by direct light rather than the guide's torch alone.

- ✓ **Wildlife Hide at the Conservancy Dams** — Several of the conservancy's dams have been fitted with discreetly placed observation blinds (hides) that allow viewing of wildlife coming to water at very close quarters. The hides are positioned downwind of the water source and low enough that large animal's elephant, buffalo, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe can approach within 10–20 metres without detecting the human presence. Dawn at the main dam hide, with the wildlife arriving as the light strengthens across the hills, is one of the most specifically intimate wildlife viewing experiences in northern Laikipia.
- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks with Armed Ranger** The Lolldaiga Hills on foot with an experienced tracker and armed ranger: the highland terrain's topographical drama steep descents into cedar-shadowed valleys, ridge walks with the Northern Frontier spread on one side and Mount Kenya on the other makes this one of the most rewarding walking environments in Laikipia. The guide's interpretation of tracks,

plants (the medicinal uses of the highland flora are extraordinary in their specificity) and the landscape's ecological connections deepens every walk beyond simple wildlife observation.

- ✓ **Horseback Rides** — Horses are available at the property for experienced riders who want to explore the conservancy's ridge system from the saddle. Subject to availability and guest ability assessment.
- ✓ **Day Excursions to Adjacent Conservancies** — Lolldaiga's position within Laikipia makes it an excellent base for day excursions to **Borana, Lewa and Ol Pejeta** — all within 1–2 hours by road. This positioning allows guests who want to experience the rhino tracking at Borana or the last two northern white rhinos at Ol Pejeta to do so while overnighing at Lolldaiga's more intimate and less-visited highland environment. Vard Africa coordinates all inter-conservancy transfers and activities.
- ✓ **Bush Breakfasts and Sundowner Positions** — The conservancy's ridgetops and dam edges provide extraordinary positions for private outdoor dining. Bush breakfasts after the morning drive a table set beneath an ancient cedar with the hillsides spread below and the sounds of the morning birds completing the atmosphere and sundowners on the western ridge with the Northern Frontier light at dusk are among the most beautiful outdoor dining experiences in Laikipia.
- ✓ **Cultural Visits to the Surrounding Community** — The Maasai and Kikuyu communities around the conservancy's boundary maintain relationships with the property's management. Visits can be arranged to local homesteads and community projects that have benefited from the conservancy's development.
- ✓ **Birding** — Over 400 species recorded across the conservancy's diverse habitats the forest species in the cedar valleys, the highland grassland specialists on the ridge crests and the waterbirds at the dams provide a birding experience that serious ornithologists will find richly rewarding. The conservancy's elevation and habitat diversity means that species not encountered in the open Laikipia conservancies further west are regularly recorded here.
- ✓ **Star-Gazing** — At 2,100 metres altitude, far from any major settlement, on clear nights the Lolldaiga ridgeline provides one of the darkest sky positions in Laikipia. The house carries a vehicle-mounted telescope and the guide's star-lore for evening sessions that connect the African night sky to the Maasai and Samburu astronomical traditions of this landscape.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ The resident chef prepares full board meals from locally sourced produce fresh vegetables from the conservancy's garden, meat from the working ranch's own livestock, eggs from the house's free-range chickens supplemented by the finest available sourcing from Nanyuki's remarkable small-producer community (the town of Nanyuki, 40 kilometres south, has one of the most sophisticated food cultures in provincial Kenya, with excellent coffee roasters, specialist butchers and farm-fresh suppliers developed around the British Army presence and the considerable expatriate community).
- ✓ Meals are served in the dining room, on the verandah with the Northern Frontier panorama, or in extraordinary positions across the conservancy on request.
- ✓ The bar carries a well-chosen selection of wines, spirits and the specific Kenyan gin and tonic made with Whitecap beer or Tanqueray and a quarter-cut fresh lime that is the East African sundowner tradition in its most directly satisfying form.

Health & Safety

- ✓ **Malaria:** Borana at 1,900–2,000 metres is malaria-free.
- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Wildlife Safety: The conservancy is an unfenced wildlife area. Large and potentially dangerous animals — elephant, buffalo, lion, leopard — move through the property and its surroundings. Guests must always be escorted when moving between buildings after dark by the askari security team. During game drives and walks, all activities are guided by professionals with appropriate equipment. The guide's specific knowledge of individual animal locations and behaviours on any given day is the primary safety mechanism.

Medical Care: The nearest doctor is in Nanyuki (Nanyuki Cottage Hospital), approximately 50 kilometres by road. AMREF Flying Doctors operates the regional air ambulance service and can reach any Laikipia airstrip within 30–45 minutes. Comprehensive travel and medical evacuation insurance is required for all guests. Basic first aid kits are carried in all game drive vehicles.

Water: The house's water is sourced from highland springs on the conservancy and tested regularly. It is safe to use for washing and cleaning; bottled water is provided for drinking.

Sun and Temperature: The equatorial altitude creates powerful UV radiation. Factor 50+ sunscreen is essential for all outdoor activities, even on overcast days. Temperature swings between morning (potentially below 10°C) and afternoon (potentially 26°C+) require layered clothing.

Why We Love Lolldaiga House: We love Lolldaiga for the **cave paintings** for the 4,000-year-old marks that a human hand made on stone in a cave on a hill that is now crossed by elephants and hunted by wild dogs, and for what those marks demand of every guest who stands before them: a specific, enforced humility about the scale of time and the longevity of the human relationship with this specific, beautiful, ancient landscape. And for the dual view from the verandah north to the frontier, south to the mountain which is available from nowhere else in Kenya and which is, in the evening light, as complete and as satisfying a geographical experience as any lodge in Africa provides.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *If you are arriving for a multi-conservancy Laikipia circuit, consider beginning at Lolldaiga rather than at one of the larger, more established conservancies. The house's intimacy and its specific character as a private home its lower*

visitor volume, its ancient landscape, its archaeological cave provide a quality of decompression and cultural adjustment that primes guests perfectly for the more wildlife-intensive conservancies that follow. The rock paintings seen on day two will change the way you see every rhino and every wild dog at Borana for the rest of the safari.

Families and Children:

- ✓ Lolldaiga House is excellent for family groups.
- ✓ The exclusive-use format means no shared facilities with other guests the house is entirely the families.
- ✓ The cave paintings are a genuinely fascinating experience for intellectually curious children of any age.
- ✓ The conservancy's diverse terrain provides engaging game drives.
- ✓ The working ranch elements cattle management, the camels moving through the landscape add a dimension of rural life that most African safari destinations do not offer.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights minimum; 4 nights recommended to fully experience the conservancy, the cave visit and the day excursion options.

MORIJOI HOUSE

Private Bush Homestead | Swimming Pool and Sauna | Lolldaiga Conservancy Boundary | Intimate and Personal

Introduction: Morijoi House is a **smaller, more intimate private homestead** on the boundary of the Lolldaiga Conservancy a genuinely private bush home rather than a managed lodge, distinguished by its combination of **swimming pool and wood-fired sauna** in a direct bush setting that makes it unusual among Laikipia's private rental options. The property sits on the conservancy boundary in a position of immediate wildlife contact the bush sounds audible from every room, the morning game activity visible from the terrace while providing the specific restorative luxury of a proper Finnish-style sauna heated by wood, with the Laikipia hills spread beyond the sauna house door.

The interior is designed in the warm, comfortable bush homestead tradition: natural materials, quality fittings, a level of care in the decoration that reflects an owner who uses this home personally. It is not a designed product; it is a home shared with guests.

Getting There: As Lolldaiga House above by scheduled flight to Lewa Downs Airstrip followed by road transfer, or by charter to Lolldaiga's private airstrip. The house's specific boundary position means road access from the main gate is shorter than to Lolldaiga House.

Health & Safety

- ✓ **Malaria:** Borana at 1,900–2,000 metres is malaria-free.
- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Morijoi House:

- ✓ We love Morijoi for the **sauna after the cold morning drive** the specific, elemental restoration of stepping from the game drive vehicle after three hours in the highland cold into a properly heated wood-fired sauna, with the bush visible through the steam and the hills beyond the sauna window still carrying the particular silver-gold light of the Laikipia mid-morning.
- ✓ Wellness in its most fundamental, most honest and most deeply satisfying expression.

BORANA CONSERVANCY

Kenya's Newest and Most Successful Rhino Sanctuary | 90,000 Acres United with Lewa | Three Generations of the Dyer Family

The Conservancy: The **Borana Conservancy** covers **32,000 acres** of the eastern Laikipia Plateau at the **foot of Mount Kenya** sitting at **1,900 to 2,000 metres altitude** (approximately 6,200–6,560 feet), malaria-free and producing the cool, spring-like conditions that make it one of the most comfortable safari areas in Kenya year-round. The name *Borana* belongs to this specific piece of land named after the **Boran cattle** that the Dyer family has ranched here for generations, the same livestock breed whose stud herd Sosian Conservancy maintains as the largest in Kenya.

In **2014**, a historically significant decision reshaped the conservation landscape of eastern Laikipia: the fence dividing Borana from the adjacent **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy** was removed, creating the **90,000-acre Borana-Lewa landscape** at that time the largest private rhino sanctuary in Kenya, and today one of the most important private conservation areas in all of Africa. The combined landscape now supports more than **200 eastern black and southern white rhinos** a population that has been assessed by the **IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group** as a **Key 1**

population: a population of continental significance, stable and increasing, that represents one of the most important insurance populations for the eastern black rhino subspecies in the world.

The conservancy is headquartered **26–27 kilometres north of the equator**, on the **eastern slopes of the Laikipia Plateau** with the **Samangua Valley** spread below and the **Ngare Ndare Forest** marking the southern boundary. The forest an indigenous montane woodland of cedar, podocarpus and camphor is protected as part of the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy World Heritage Site designation and provides critical habitat for forest elephant, colobus monkey and a remarkable diversity of montane bird species.

The Dyer Family and Conservation History: The land that is now the Borana Conservancy was acquired by the Dyer family in the **post-World War One period** under the British government's settler incentive scheme the same land distribution programme that allocated Lewa Downs to the Craig-Douglas family in 1922. Michael Dyer's grandfather received the Borana land grant in the early 1920s and established the cattle ranch that subsequent generations managed across the 20th century.

By the 1990s, the rising costs of large-scale cattle ranching and the growing evidence that wildlife-based tourism could generate superior economic returns from the same land area motivated the family to begin the transition that has made Borana one of the most cited examples of successful private conservation in Kenya. Borana Lodge opened in **1993**. By **2013**, the conservancy had established its first black rhino population — working with Kenya Wildlife Service and Save the Rhino International. By 2014, the Lewa-Borana landscape was created. By 2020, the **GER Status** from The Long Run was achieved.

The **2007 decision** that defines what Borana is today: the Dyer family committed that **all retained earnings from commercial activities at Borana Conservancy would be permanently reinvested in conservation**. This is not a marketing statement. It is a governance commitment encoded in the conservancy's legal structure, audited annually, and consistently honoured for nearly two decades. **97% of Borana's staff are employed from the communities bordering the conservancy**. The mobile clinic serves thousands of community members around the boundary. The education programme funds primary school equipment, teachers' salaries and conservation scholarships. **Waitabit Farm's Permaculture project** now one of the largest in East Africa provides the fresh produce for the lodge's kitchen and demonstrates regenerative agriculture principles that the surrounding community can adopt.

Wildlife: All of the Big Five including both black and white rhino. All of the Northern Five including healthy Grevy's zebra and reticulated giraffe populations. African wild dog. Cheetah. Multiple lion prides including collared Predator Project individuals. Over **350 bird species** including eagles, vultures, the strikingly beautiful Superb Starling and the endemic Hinde's Pied Babbler.

Seasonal Notes: Borana is **open year-round**. The dry season (June-October) provides the finest wildlife visibility as animals concentrate around permanent water. April and May receive the long rains the landscape transforms to extraordinary green, wildflowers bloom, animal births peak, but some tracks may be impassable. The lodge is most spectacular in the golden light of the dry season months. **Three-night minimum in peak season** (15 June – 30 September), **two-night minimum in standard season**. Four nights strongly recommended to experience the full activity portfolio.

ARIJJU RETREATS

Exclusive-Use Private Villa | 5 Suites, 10 Adults Maximum | Condé Nast: "Most Beautiful House in Africa" | A Decade in the Making

Location and Setting: Arijju occupies a position of exceptional drama on **Borana Conservancy's central hillside** the building carved from and growing out of the specific bedrock of the hill whose Maasai name it takes: *Arijju*, the hill on which it stands. The architectural relationship with the landscape is not that of a building placed upon terrain; it is a structure that has emerged from it, as if the hill had been growing the building slowly across the years of its construction. From a significant distance from the air, from the opposite hillside, from the roads that traverse the conservancy Arijju is nearly invisible. The green living rooftop is a continuation of the hillside's vegetation. The Meru stone walls are the stone of the hill itself. The building dissolves into its environment as deliberately and as completely as anything built for human habitation in East Africa.

Introduction and History: In **2017**, Condé Nast Traveller sent senior editor Peter Michael Browne to Kenya on an assignment. He was an experienced professional who had spent years visiting and evaluating the world's finest private properties. His assessment of Arijju was unhedged and has been quoted across the international luxury travel industry ever since: **"The most beautiful house in Africa."** This is not a marketing phrase that the property has adopted. It is an honest professional judgement, recorded in print, from someone whose job is to form exactly this kind of judgement. Understanding why he said it requires understanding what it took to build Arijju.

Phillip Ihenacho — a Nigerian-born, London-based businessman spent **ten years** conceiving, designing and executing this property on the Borana Conservancy. Not three years. Not five years of part-time attention and annual site visits. A decade of sustained, demanding, uncompromising effort to build something that expressed everything he believed about what a place of this kind should be. The design was developed in collaboration with architects **Nicholas Plewman Architects** one of South Africa's most respected architecture practices for nature-based tourism with interior styling by **Maira Koutsoudakis of LIFE Interiors, Architecture and Strategic Design**, who combined African-inspired rustic character with natural colour palettes of extraordinary warmth and restraint.

The design's conceptual sources are two of Africa's most powerful architectural traditions:

The **rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia** — Arijju's inspiration from those ancient places is not formal or decorative but spatial and philosophical: the idea of a building that does not sit on the land but is drawn from it, as the Lalibela churches were hewn from living rock rather than built from gathered materials. The monastery-like quality the vaulted stone corridors, the arched doorways, the cloister-like central courtyard comes directly from this tradition.

The **domestic architecture of Lamu** — the Swahili coast island's specific qualities of whitewashed corridor, intricately hand-carved Lamu timber doors, the filtered light of screened windows and the spatial organisation around a shaded central court contribute to Arijju's specific interior atmosphere: the quality of a building designed not for display but for living in, for the slow movement through shade and light that the East African climate has perfected over centuries of vernacular architecture.

The result is a building that has been described by different visitors as an **Ethiopian monastery**, a **Tuscan villa**, a **monk's retreat** and an **African great house** all simultaneously because it genuinely draws on all of these traditions, translates them to a Kenyan highland hillside, and creates something that belongs completely to its specific time and place while being impossible to categorise within any single tradition.

The **grassed living rooftop** — planted with the same vegetation that covers the Borana hillsides around it — reduces the building's thermal mass and visual impact simultaneously. The construction used **local Meru stone** quarried within the conservancy. **Solar panels** provide the primary energy source. **Rainwater harvesting** supplies the gardens and reduces freshwater demand. These are not marketing credentials; they are the practical expressions of a builder who understood that a decade of construction on a wildlife conservancy carries a responsibility to minimize that construction's footprint on the landscape it has claimed.

Awards and International Recognition:

- 2017 **Condé Nast Traveller** (UK): *"The most beautiful house in Africa"* Peter Michael Browne
- 2019 **Forbes**: *"The high-luxury private Kenyan retreat that mixes European classicism with an African aesthetic"*
- 2019 **Asante Travel**: Among the 10 Most Exclusive Villas in Kenya
- 2020 **The Telegraph** (UK): Featured in "Introducing the Spa-Fari, a New Way to Experience the African Bush"
- 2016 **Bloomberg**: *"Africa's newest, ultra-luxury safari lodge"*
- 2017 **Travel and Leisure**: *"A remarkable private villa rental in the Kenyan bush raises the bar for safari stays"*

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

Arijju accommodates a strict maximum of **10 adults** (plus up to 4 children) across **5 suites** the property is sold exclusively on a private-hire basis and no other guests share the property simultaneously.

The 5 suites are arranged in two configurations:

Three Main House Suites — arranged around the central **lavender and herb-filled courtyard garden** that forms the spiritual heart of the house. These suites share proximity to the living spaces the lounge, cinema room, games room, library, kitchen while maintaining complete privacy through their individual entrance arrangements.

Each features:

- King-size bed (some with stunning four-poster frames)
- **Free-standing copper bathtub** — hand-beaten copper, deep, positioned by the suite's most dramatic window. One of the most specifically beautiful individual objects at any Kenyan property
- Indoor rainfall shower and separate outdoor shower with bush views
- Private stone **fireplace** lit by staff each evening on request
- Floor-to-ceiling **lead-framed windows** and full-height doors that open the room completely to the conservancy and the Mount Kenya view
- Large lounge area with daybed and writing desk
- En-suite bathroom of exceptional quality

Two Private Cottage Suites — connected to the main house by stone-paved pathways through the **olive grove** that surrounds the property, providing a level of privacy even beyond that of the main house suites. Each cottage has its own entrance, its own garden terrace and the same suite amenities as the main house suites copper bathtub, fireplace, outdoor shower, private views.

The Constellation Suite — A **rooftop sleeping platform** accessed from the main house, available to guests who want to spend the night under the open African sky. This is not a gimmick; it is a genuine architectural feature of the house a properly prepared sleeping position with quality bedding, protected from wind, positioned for the full southern-hemisphere star field and the Milky Way in its equatorial density. Available on request on clear evenings.

Communal and Shared Spaces:

The **main house** — connected by the stone-floored arched corridor system that gives Arijju its monastery quality contains:

The Dining Room: Two magnificent **stone fireplaces** anchor a dining area whose **floor-to-ceiling arched windows** frame the conservancy and Mount Kenya beyond. The room seats 10 comfortably at the main table; smaller groups can use the intimate **terrace dining area** overlooking the waterhole.

The Lounge and Bar: Deep-seated furniture, shelving of books and curated objects, candle-lit in the evenings a genuinely warm and sociable space rather than a hotel lobby.

- ✓ ***The library:*** A dedicated book collection covering East African natural history, wildlife conservation, photography, travel literature and the specific intellectual interests that a decade's worth of one person's attention to this landscape has accumulated.
- ✓ ***The Cinema Room:*** Comfortable sofas, quality projection and sound system. Available for film evenings, private screenings and family use.
- ✓ ***The Games Room:*** Board games, table football, cards, children's games and the specific paraphernalia of a house built for all ages and all levels of structured-activity preference.
- ✓ ***The Kitchen:*** Open and visible the farm-to-table philosophy extends to the kitchen's architecture. The chef works in view of guests who want to watch; the ingredients from the organic garden are visible; the process is as much part of the Arijju experience as the result.
- ✓ ***The Roof Terraces:*** Multiple levels of outdoor deck space, each with a specific view the conservancy to the east in the morning light; the waterhole below in the late afternoon; the Mount Kenya snowcap in the south; the Northern Frontier in the north.

Wellness Facilities:

The 20-Metre Infinity Lap Pool: The pool that has appeared in every major publication that has covered Arijju positioned on a terrace below the main house, extending over the conservancy's slope so that swimming in it places the swimmer at the edge of a view that encompasses the entire Borana landscape. The pool is oriented toward the waterhole below **elephants regularly visit the waterhole at pool level** and have on several occasions appeared to investigate the pool itself.

The Hammam: A traditional Moroccan steam bath, tiled in the manner of the ancient Islamic bathing tradition, positioned in the hillside below the main pool terrace. The hammam is one of the most specifically luxurious single facilities at any Kenyan safari property a proper, functional hammam that uses the Moroccan tradition of steam, scrub and deep relaxation rather than the simplified 'steam room' that most properties offer as a substitute.

The Spa: An on-site **masseuse and aesthetician** are resident at Arijju and their treatments are **included in the villa rate** a significant distinction from properties where spa services carry additional charges. The treatment room's position within the hillside provides a quality of seclusion that enhances the restorative quality of the sessions.

The Yoga Deck: A dedicated outdoor platform with the conservancy spread below morning yoga with a view that extends from the waterhole below to Mount Kenya on the southern horizon is one of the most specifically exceptional wellness settings in East Africa.

The Gym: Fully equipped with cardiovascular and resistance equipment. The views from the gym's open-sided walls make even a treadmill session into something approaching a wildlife experience.

Tennis and Squash: A **clay tennis court** and a **sprung-floor squash court** built into the hillside both with the quality of construction that a decade's worth of attention and the best available contractors produce.

Getting There:

By Air (Recommended): Private charter flight from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Borana Conservancy Airstrip** approximately **45–50 minutes**. From the airstrip, Arijju is a **15-minute game drive** along the conservancy road, during which the wildlife of the Borana landscape is frequently encountered. This is the arrival experience a short charter flight followed by a brief drive through elephant and rhino country to a hillside villa described as the most beautiful house in Africa. It is available nowhere else.

Alternatively: scheduled flight from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Lewa Downs Airstrip** (approximately 45–55 minutes, via Nanyuki and often Samburu), followed by a **90-minute road transfer** to Arijju a beautiful game drive through the Borana-Lewa landscape that serves simultaneously as the arrival journey and the first game drive.

By Helicopter: Charter helicopter from Nairobi (approximately 1 hour) can land at the dedicated helipad at Arijju. This is the preferred arrival for clients whose time is the primary consideration.

By Road: Nairobi to Arijju by road via Nanyuki and Timau: approximately **4.5–5 hours** on good days. Road transfer can be arranged through the property.

Air Charter Recommendation from Vard Africa: For Arijju, we always recommend the private charter to Borana airstrip. The 15-minute game drive arrival is the finest airport-to-lodge transition in Laikipia.

Communication in the Wilderness:

- ✓ WiFi is available throughout the property. Mobile coverage (Safaricom) is generally available at the house. Across the conservancy, coverage varies by location ridge tops have better signal than valley bottoms.
- ✓ Arijju's hilltop position provides good coverage.
- ✓ The daily programme is managed through the property's satellite communication system, which ensures emergency contact is always available.

Health & Safety

- ✓ **Malaria:** Borana at 1,900–2,000 metres is malaria-free.
- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
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- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Arijju:

Day and Night Game Drives on the Borana-Lewa Landscape The **90,000-acre combined landscape** in Arijju's dedicated open game drive vehicle with the property's expert field guide a guide who knows the conservancy's wildlife with the intimacy of years of daily observation, who carries the radio telemetry equipment for collared lion and wild dog tracking, and who has built the individual-animal knowledge that transforms

a rhino sighting into an encounter with a specific known individual whose history and family are understood. The guide is dedicated to Arijiju's guests exclusively for the duration of the stay no shared vehicles, no shared schedule, no programme determined by anyone else's preferences.

Night drives with spotlights reveal the Borana-Lewa landscape's nocturnal world: the specific leopard whose territory overlaps the eastern section of the conservancy; serval cats hunting in the grassland margins; aardvarks emerging from burrows that have been excavated in the same position for generations; hyenas moving between the great dams; and the specific quality of the 1,900-metre night sky when the Milky Way is fully visible and the sounds of the nocturnal bush lion, hyena, nightjar, the specific calls of the nighttime species that day-only visitors never encounter are audible without any road noise or vehicle interference.

Rhino Tracking on Foot with the Conservancy Rangers — Borana's rhino monitoring team tracks individual animals continuously their GPS collar data updated regularly, their physical locations cross-referenced with radio telemetry before each walking expedition. Guests joining the rangers on foot approach individual black rhinos in the conservancy animals whose names, family histories and individual behavioural profiles are known in extraordinary detail to guides who have followed them for years.

The black rhino at close quarters on foot, in the Laikipia dawn, with the Borana hills around you and the specific knowledge of what it took to bring this population from almost nothing to 200+ animals in a single landscape this is one of the most genuinely powerful wildlife encounters available anywhere in Africa. It is not a zoo encounter, not a reserve-road sighting, not a photograph from a vehicle window. It is a direct, human-scale encounter with an animal whose survival represents decades of specific human effort, courage and commitment, expressed in one living creature that looks back at you from fifteen metres away and breathes.

Anti-Poaching Tracker Dog Demonstration and Patrol Accompaniment — The conservancy's tracker dog unit specially trained scent-hound dogs and their handlers is the most effective anti-poaching tool the conservancy operates. Guests can visit the unit for a demonstration that includes watching the dogs work; more adventurously, guests can join the rangers on a morning patrol walking the conservancy's perimeter with the dogs and their handlers, understanding from the inside how 90,000 acres of wildlife habitat is patrolled and protected every day. This activity is rare, intimate and completely unlike any standard safari experience.

Horse Riding with Riding Wild — Borana's equestrian operation maintains three stables across the conservancy with over **50 horses** for riders ranging from complete beginners to experienced polo players. The horses are exceptionally well-schooled in the specific requirements of the bush riding environment completely calm around wildlife, trained to approach Grevy's zebra and reticulated giraffe at distances that no vehicle achieves, schooled to the specific voice and hand commands that guide them through difficult terrain. Morning rides are structured around the wildlife intelligence for that day; afternoon rides may include longer escarpment circuits with Mount Kenya as the backdrop.

For experienced riders who want more than a morning excursion, **multi-day horseback safaris of up to 10 days** can be arranged through Riding Wild traversing both the Borana and Lewa landscapes on horseback, with fly camps in the bush each evening, covering terrain that no vehicle can reach and approaching wildlife at the specific intimacy that only the horse provides.

Bush Walks and Walking Interpretations — Guided walks through the Borana landscape with the property's field guide interpreting the tracks, the plants (the medicinal uses of the highland flora, the ecological relationships between species, the story that a morning's tracks tell about the previous night's wildlife activity), the specific micro-habitats of the Borana hillsides and the dramatic views from the conservancy's ridge crests. Walks range from 2–3 hour interpretive walks to longer all-day expeditions for fit guests.

Mountain Biking — The conservancy's road network traversed by bicycle at a pace that allows the landscape's smaller details the termite castles, the hornbill colonies, the specific quality of the acacia scrub at cycling height to emerge as part of the wildlife experience rather than flashing past at game drive speed.

Ngare Ndare Forest Visit — The magnificent indigenous montane forest at the southern boundary of the Borana-Lewa landscape, designated as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. A day excursion from Arijiju takes guests into the forest for the **canopy walkway** a suspended walkway through the crowns of ancient cedar and podocarpus trees, with colobus monkeys in the branches above and the forest floor visible below — and to the **crystal-clear swimming pools** fed by Mount Kenya's glacial streams at the forest's base waterfall. Swimming in these pools, in water so clear the bottom is visible at 4 metres depth, cooled by glacial melt from the second-highest mountain in Africa, surrounded by the forest canopy — is one of the most physically perfect moments available in Laikipia.

Waitabit Farm and Permaculture Project Visit — A visit to the conservancy's own permaculture farm one of East Africa's most extensive and most rigorously managed regenerative agriculture projects combined with a **riverbank picnic lunch** from the garden's produce beside the Ngare Ndare River. The visit combines food, ecology, conservation and the beauty of the riverine setting in a way that no standard safari activity offers.

Scenic Biplane Flight — The **WACO open-cockpit biplane** based at the Lewa-Borana airstrip is available to Arijiju guests for aerial exploration of the landscape the conservancy's rhino and elephant populations visible from the air in a way that contextualizes the game drives below, the Ngare Ndare Forest corridor visible stretching to Mount Kenya, the Laikipia plateau's extraordinary topographic variety apparent in a single sweeping view that no ground-based perspective can provide.

Helicopter Expeditions — For guests whose Vard Africa itinerary includes helicopter exploration of the broader northern Kenya landscape the Suguta Valley's volcanic sand dunes, Lake Turkana's jade waters, the Matthews Range Arijiju's helipad provides direct access. All helicopter operations are coordinated through Vard Africa.

Fly Camping — An overnight in the conservancy's wilderness, far from Arijiju's considerable infrastructure: dinner on an open fire, sleeping under the stars in the specific highland cold of a Borana night, dawn coffee on the escarpment as the light comes over Mount Kenya. The most direct engagement with the actual, unmediated African wilderness that any Arijiju itinerary can include.

Tennis and Squash — Both courts are available throughout the stay. Equipment is provided. The clay court's specific surface and the squash court's sprung floor reflect the decade-long commitment to quality in every aspect of the property.

Helicopter Sundowners — From Arijiju's helipad, a sunset flight to a kopje summit or escarpment edge for sundowners with the Laikipia plateau spread below and the evening light transforming the landscape from gold to rose to the deep blue of the highland dusk. This is among the finest helicopter sundowner experiences in East Africa.

Culinary and Dining Experiences: The kitchen at Arijiju operates a philosophy that has been described by multiple publications as **Ottolenghi-inspired** a reference both to the acclaimed cookbook author's emphasis on fresh, quality ingredients, vibrant flavours and sharing-style presentation, and to the specific combination of the health-conscious and the indulgent that defines the best of the modern farm-to-table approach.

The ingredients are genuinely local: **farm-reared beef and poultry from within the conservancy's working ranch, fresh herbs and vegetables from the organic kitchen garden at the back of the property** (visible to guests who want to walk through it the garden produces far more variety than most guests expect at a bush property), and **eggs from Arijiju's own free-range chickens**. The menus are tailored completely to guests' preferences before arrival and adjusted daily based on what the garden is producing and what guests most want. Vegan, gluten-free, nut-free, low-sugar any dietary requirement is accommodated without compromise in quality or creativity.

Meals are served in whatever position guests choose:

- The **dining room** with its two great fireplaces and arched windows at full-height, the conservancy visible beyond
- The **sun-drenched terrace** overlooking the waterhole where elephants visiting below become the backdrop to breakfast
- At the **pool deck** for lunch, with the 20-metre pool and the landscape spread below
- In **the bush** a proper table set at a conservancy position chosen for its wildlife activity, with full Arijiju service transported to a ridge or a dam edge or a forest clearing
- On the **roof terrace** for dinners under the stars by candlelight, with the Milky Way overhead and the sounds of the nocturnal conservancy around

The bar maintains a thoughtfully chosen wine selection with the owner's personal direction, premium spirits and the fresh fruit juices that the kitchen garden provides mango, pawpaw, passion fruit alongside the specific Kenya specialties that the property's East African heritage produces: chai made with fresh milk, fresh-ground coffee from a single Kenyan estate, and the gin and tonic that, prepared with fresh-cut lime and ice from the property's own ice maker, is the most directly satisfying sundowner in any language.

Why We Love Arijiju:

- ✓ We love Arijiju for the **decade it took to build** and for what that decade of sustained, demanding, uncompromising commitment says about the person who undertook it and the building that resulted.
- ✓ When someone spends ten years on a single house, every stone, every carved door, every copper bath, every clay tile, every arched corridor is precisely as the design intended.
- ✓ There are no compromises because a decade-long building process allows the elimination of every compromise that a shorter timeline would have forced.
- ✓ The result is Africa's most accomplished example of a building that does not merely occupy its landscape but has become an expression of it. And for the 14-person staff, who bring to this property a quality of service that reflects the seriousness of the house's overall ambition: attentive without intrusion, professional without formality, warm with the specific warmth of people who know that they are participating in something genuinely remarkable.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Stay for five nights at a minimum. Arijiju reveals itself slowly on the first day you are dazzled by the architecture and the setting; by the third day you have established a rhythm with the guides and the landscape; by the fifth day you feel as though you have always lived here and leaving becomes the hardest thing. Request the rhino tracking on foot for the third morning when you know the guides well enough to have the conversation that the experience deserves. Sleep on the rooftop constellation platform on the fourth night the full southern hemisphere Milky Way, directly above, from a properly prepared bed on an African hilltop, in the specific clean air of the Borana plateau at altitude, is the experience that most guests say they most want to return to. And have breakfast on the pool terrace every morning: watching elephants at the waterhole below while eating the kitchen's fresh fruit and eggs from their own chickens is the perfect daily beginning.*

Families and Children: Arijiju accommodates up to 4 children in addition to 10 adults the total maximum is therefore 14 if children share suites with parents. The house's configuration multiple private suites, shared communal spaces, the specific warmth of a properly staffed private home rather than a hotel makes it ideal for multi-generational family groups. The cinema room, games room, organic garden and the conservancy's wildlife activities (tracker dog demonstration, rhino on foot, horse riding for children from age 8 upward with guide assessment) create a family programme of exceptional richness.

Minimum Stay: 3 nights minimum. 5 nights strongly recommended to experience the full range of Borana-Lewa activities.

BORANA LODGE

6 Stone Cottages, 18 Guests Maximum | All Profits to Conservation | Multi-Generational Dyer Family | Long Run GER Status

Location and Setting: Borana Lodge sits on a **hillside at the heart of the Borana Conservancy**, positioned specifically for the panoramic view of the **Samangua Valley** unfolding below the valley's depth and width visible in a single sweeping arc with the **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy plains** visible in the middle distance and **Mount Kenya's permanent snowcap** presiding over the entire southern horizon on clear mornings. Immediately below the lodge's infinity pool and terrace is the **Hyena Valley Dam** a substantial permanent water source whose wildlife theatre is visible from the lodge's main communal areas throughout the day.

Introduction and History: Borana Lodge is the **founding property of the entire Borana Conservancy conservation model** the original lodge around which the conservation infrastructure was built and from whose revenues every subsequent achievement has been funded. When the lodge opened in **1993**, it was not an obvious success story in the making. It was a family's calculated bet that wildlife-based tourism could generate the revenue needed to sustain a conservation programme on land that had previously been run as a cattle ranch. Three decades later, the success of that bet is measured not in financial terms but in rhino numbers: a landscape that had zero rhinos in 1993 now holds over 200.

The lodge is at **altitude 1,900–2,000 metres, 26–27 kilometres north of the equator, on the eastern edge of the Laikipia Plateau**. Its position is specific: on the ridge above the Samangua Valley, at a height that commands views across a substantial portion of the Borana landscape while remaining low enough in the valley system to be wind-sheltered in the evenings. The **Ngare Ndare Forest** is visible at the southern boundary, its cedar canopy darkening the foothill zone below the conservancy's open grasslands.

The Dyer family's **2007 decision** that all retained earnings from Borana Lodge would be permanently reinvested in conservation is, in the words of those who have assessed the Kenyan conservation sector most carefully, one of the most principled and most consequential decisions made by any private landowner in East Africa's modern conservation era. The decision has been consistently honoured for nearly two decades. It has funded the anti-poaching ranger force, the rhino monitoring technology, the veterinary equipment, the wildlife rescue capability and the community programmes the mobile clinic, the education scholarships, the Waitabit Farm permaculture project that make Borana function not just as a luxury lodge but as a genuine and genuinely effective conservation institution.

Awards and Certifications:

- **Long Run GER Status 2020** The world's most rigorous sustainability certification for nature-based tourism, awarded to eleven properties globally and requiring demonstrated excellence across Conservation, Community, Culture and Commerce
- **Save the Rhino International:** Kenya's newest and most successful private rhino sanctuary
- **Kenya Wildlife Service:** Commended for the fastest black rhino population growth in the East African private sector
- 97% local employment from communities bordering the conservancy

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

8 Thatched Stone Cottages — built from **local stone** by local artisans in the understated architectural tradition of the Kenyan highland ranch, using materials that belong to this specific landscape. The eight cottages (technically described as 8 but configured to accommodate 18 guests) are positioned individually across the hillside:

Standard Cottages (×6): Each featuring a **single king or twin bedroom**, an **open fireplace** (log fires lit each evening by staff on request the highland evenings genuinely require and reward a fire), a private veranda with views across the Samangua Valley or toward Mount Kenya, a generously proportioned **en-suite bathroom with deep bathtub and walk-in shower** with twin stone basins, a sitting area and the natural material furnishings stone floors, locally woven textiles, wooden furniture from Kenyan craftspeople that give the cottages their specific warm, unhurried character. Large glass windows are positioned for the specific views that the cottage's hillside placement provides.

Family Cottages (×2): Each configured with **one double and one twin bedroom**, each with en-suite bathroom and their own fireplace, connected by a **shared sitting and dining area**. Family Cottage 7&8 has an additional children's bedroom sharing a bathroom with the master room, plus a **private plunge pool** for families wanting the most complete privacy and the most complete experience.

The **main lodge building** with its floor-to-ceiling windows framing the valley, the **infinity pool** overlooking the Hyena Valley Dam, the generous lounge and bar, the outdoor dining deck has the atmosphere of a well-used family sitting room: informal, unhurried, genuinely welcoming. It is not a designed reception space; it is the place where guests and guides gather naturally at the end of the day to talk about what they saw.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight (Most Common): Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Lewa Downs Airstrip** on AirKenya (approximately **40–55 minutes**, often routing via Nanyuki). From Lewa Downs Airstrip, Borana Lodge is a **50-minute to 90-minute game drive** — 50 minutes if proceeding directly, up to 90 minutes if the Borana guide uses the opportunity to show guests wildlife on the conservancy roads. The airstrip transfer is included in the lodge rate.

By Private Charter: Private charter aircraft from Nairobi Wilson Airport to **Borana Conservancy's own private airstrip**, which accommodates most small aircraft including Cessna Grand Caravan and Pilatus PC-12. From the Borana airstrip, the lodge is **10–15 minutes by road** a brief game drive across the conservancy that is often the first rhino encounter of the stay. Charter flight time Nairobi to Borana: approximately 45–50 minutes.

By Helicopter: Charter helicopter can land at the dedicated **helipad** adjacent to the lodge. Helicopter from Nairobi: approximately 50–60 minutes.

By Road: Nairobi to Borana Lodge via Nanyuki and Timau: **4–5 hours**, approximately 240 kilometres. The house is 45 kilometres and 1 hour beyond Nanyuki. Road transfer can be arranged by the lodge. Nairobi traffic conditions may significantly extend journey times — depart before 7am or after 9am for the most efficient road journey.

In Nanyuki (40 minutes from the conservancy): **Nanyuki town** is a useful stopping point on road journeys. Recommended stops:

- ✓ **Dorman's Coffee** (excellent single-estate Kenyan coffee), **Artcafé** (good food and reliable WiFi),
- ✓ **The Butcher's Block** (quality meats and deli).
- ✓ The Nanyuki Airport area has the popular **Barney's Restaurant** and the **One Stop Nanyuki** deli and boutique.

- ✓ For those entering or exiting Kenya via this route, **Nanyuki Airport** is connected to Nairobi by Safarilink and AirKenya on multiple daily schedules.

Communication in the Wilderness:

- ✓ Mobile coverage (Safaricom) is available at the lodge and at most points on the conservancy's higher ground.
- ✓ Valley bottoms may have limited coverage.
- ✓ WiFi is available at the lodge.
- ✓ Satellite communication is used for all essential operational communications.
- ✓ Daily update from Vard Africa's team is available to clients via WhatsApp.

Amenities and Facilities:

- **Infinity pool** with Samangua Valley view and Hyena Valley Dam wildlife observation
- **Fully stocked bar** with wine cellar, premium spirits and the lodge's own fresh juice programme
- **Waitabit Farm produce** and organic garden feeding the kitchen
- **Hide and Sheep Limited gift shop** — leather goods produced by blind and physically disabled community members employed by the conservancy's social enterprise. These products are among the finest ethically produced leather items in Kenya and make outstanding purchases.
- WiFi throughout the lodge
- Laundry service
- Children's menu available
- Babysitting available on request
- **AMREF Flying Doctors cover** included in all rates

Included in the Borana Lodge Rate: Full board accommodation | House wines, house spirits, beers and soft drinks | Local airstrip transfers (Borana Conservancy and Lewa Downs) | Sundowner excursions | Game drives (day and night) | Guided bush walks | Horse riding (one per guest per stay) | Mountain biking | Behind-the-scenes conservation activities (rhino tracking on foot, tours of Waitabit Farm) | AMREF Flying Doctors emergency evacuation cover | 24% conservation contribution

Not Included: Activities beyond Borana Conservancy (Ngare Ndare Forest visit, for example, attracts an additional per-person conservation fee) | Premium wines, champagne and premium spirits | Tips and gratuities | Helicopter excursions | Scenic biplane flights

Tipping Guidance: Lodge team tip box (shared among all staff including behind-the-scenes): USD 20 per guest per day. Guides: USD 20 per group per day (tipped individually on departure). Stable team: tipped through management at end of final ride.

Seasonal Opening: Open year-round. The dry season (June–October) provides the finest wildlife visibility; April–May receive the long rains and some roads may be impassable but the landscape is transformed to extraordinary green; December–March is an excellent period with the short rains having ended and the vegetation still carrying some moisture.

Peak season (15 June–30 September) minimum stay: 3 nights. Standard season minimum stay: 2 nights. Recommended stay: 4 nights minimum.

Activities at Borana Lodge: *(For the complete activity descriptions, the rhino tracking on foot, the tracker dog demonstration and the Ngare Ndare Forest visit, see the Arijju Retreats entry above all Borana Conservancy activities are available from both properties.)*

Additional activities specific to Borana Lodge's programme include: **Behind-the-Scenes Conservation Tour** A structured visit to the conservancy's headquarters with the conservation team: understanding the rhino monitoring technology, the ranger deployment system, the tracker dog training programme and the specific logistics of protecting 90,000 acres of rhino habitat in the 21st century. This is a genuinely educational experience not a marketing presentation but a serious conservation engagement.

Permaculture Farm and Riverbank Lunch-the Waitabit Farm visit in combination with a riverside picnic lunch from the garden's produce: one of the most specifically Borana experiences, combining food, ecology and the beauty of the Ngare Ndare River environment.

Rhino Tracking on Foot as described in the Arijju entry: walking with the rhino rangers to approach individually-known animals.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ The kitchen operates a **set menu approach** daily menus prepared by the chef using the specific produce available from Waitabit Farm and the lodge's own garden on that particular day with full flexibility for dietary requirements and allergies.
- ✓ The kitchen team is experienced in accommodating vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, nut-free and other dietary requirements without compromise to quality or enjoyment.
- ✓ The specific flavours that the farm-to-table approach produces vegetables with the specific texture and taste of produce harvested within hours of consumption, herbs from the garden that have not spent two weeks in a cold chain are evident at every meal and are consistently one of the most frequently cited pleasures of the Borana stay.

Meals are served in the open-sided dining room with the valley view, on the outdoor deck above the dam, or in extraordinary positions in the bush on request.

Health & Safety

- ✓ **Malaria:** Borana at 1,900–2,000 metres is malaria-free.
- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.

- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Borana Lodge:

- ✓ We love Borana for the **2007 decision** for the specific, principled courage of a family that committed all profits to conservation and sustained that commitment across nearly two decades without wavering.
- ✓ Every Borana stay is a direct, auditable, real contribution to the most important private rhino sanctuary in Kenya. And for the anti-poaching tracker dog demonstration: simultaneously the most genuinely educational and the most genuinely entertaining single activity in Laikipia.
- ✓ And for the evening conversations around the fire in the lounge, at which the Borana guides who carry in their personal memories the specific history of this conservancy's rhino population, animal by individual animal share what they know with the warmth and the completeness of people who believe that understanding a landscape is the only basis for protecting it.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Request the morning rhino patrol accompaniment with the tracker dogs for your first full day not the tourist demonstration but the actual patrol, departing before 6am with the ranger team as they check GPS collar data and move through the conservancy before the game drive vehicles are even out. The quality of dedication and knowledge that the rangers carry in the early morning, before guests have breakfast, is the truest account of what has been built here. And stay four nights: three nights gives you the highlights; the fourth day reveals the details that no three-night stay reaches.*

Families and Children: Outstanding for families of all ages. Children of all ages are welcomed; children under 5 stay free. The two-family cottages (including one with its own private plunge pool), the tracker dog demonstration (beloved by children of all ages), the rhino encounter on foot (appropriate for children from age 8 with guide assessment), the horse riding and the Waitabit Farm visit create a family programme of genuine depth and genuine entertainment. Babysitting available on request.

FUZZ'S CAMP

Exclusive-Use Tented Safari Camp | 5 Canvas Tents | 10 Guests | The Most Personal Borana Experience

Introduction: Fuzz's Camp is Borana Conservancy's most characterful and most intimate accommodation offering an **exclusive-use tented camp** named for one of the conservancy's most beloved and long-serving team members, set in a private position within the conservancy at a remove from the main lodge. It represents the great East African tented camp tradition at its most direct and most honest: canvas walls, the bush sounds unmediated by solid architecture, a campfire that becomes the social centre of each evening, and the full range of Borana Conservancy's extraordinary activities available exclusively to the group occupying the camp.

Fuzz's Camp delivers the most complete Borana experience in the most intimate format the conservancy offers. All vehicles, all guides and all activities are arranged exclusively around the 10 guests of the camp no shared schedules, no compromise with other guests' preferences, no sense that any other agenda is in play.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements: 5 generous canvas tents

— each on a raised platform with private veranda accommodating **10 guests** in ensuite configuration. Each tent carries quality bedding and the specific warmth of a well-designed tented camp that takes the highland evenings seriously: warm duvets, a hot water bottle prepared by staff on cool evenings, the specific atmosphere of a tent that has been thought through rather than simply pitched. The shared communal area thatched dining space, lounge, campfire circle creates the specific social warmth that a camp of this size and this format produces 10 people who are somewhere extraordinary together, at the end of a shared day.

Getting There:

Private charter to Borana airstrip (10–15 minutes to the camp) or scheduled flight to Lewa Downs followed by 90-minute game drive transfer.

Health & Safety

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Fuzz's Camp:

We love Fuzz's for the **campfire quality of its evenings** when the fire is lit and the day's encounters are replayed and the specific intimacy of 10

people sharing something genuinely extraordinary becomes the defining experience of the night.

And for the specific name: a camp named for a person rather than a landscape feature tells you something important about the community that runs the Borana Conservancy.

LARAGAI HOUSE

Exclusive-Use Family Home | 8 Bedrooms | 16 Guests | Built by Two English Lords | 3,000-Foot Escarpment Views

Location and Setting: Laragai House occupies an **escarpment-edge position** approximately **8 kilometres from Borana Lodge** within the conservancy its position at the top of a 3,000-foot escarpment providing a view that has been described by every visitor who has stood on the terrace for the first time as simply one of the finest in Kenya. To the south: **Mount Kenya's permanent snowcap**, the mountain rising above the Lewa plains with the specific quality that the Laikipia escarpment position provides the summit at eye level rather than towering above, the glaciers visible in full horizontal extent. To the north: the **Northern Frontier District** stretching to a horizon that feels genuinely limitless a million acres of acacia scrub and ancient lava plain reaching toward Samburu and beyond, uncrossed by any visible road, unbroken by any visible building. Below: the **Borana Conservancy**, its valley system and woodland edge and wildlife visible from above in a perspective that no game drive provides.

Introduction and History: The story of Laragai House is among the most colourful in Laikipia's considerable collection of colourful histories. The house was designed and built in **1993** by two English aristocrats **Lord Valentine Cecil** and **Lord Michael Cecil** who had found, on this precise piece of Borana escarpment, exactly the location they had been looking for. They named it *Laragai* "**The Place To Be**" in the local language with the unhedged confidence of people who were entirely certain they had found the correct place. Three decades later, it is difficult to argue with them.

The Cecils furnished their new house with the accumulated evidence of a particular kind of English aristocratic life spent between England and Africa across many decades: **custom-made ebony furniture** of exceptional weight and craftsmanship, commissioned from Kenyan artisans who knew this specific wood; **dark-wood antiques** from different periods and continents; **grand bronze sculptures** of rhino and elephant; **antique swords mounted directly on the sitting room walls**; **silver-framed family photographs** in the English country house tradition; **large 19th-century gold mirrors** that catch and amplify the highland light at all hours; and **wildlife paintings** from artists who had spent time in East Africa and who had painted the specific character of this specific landscape. The total effect is an interior that defies easy categorization English country house meeting East African ranch meeting grand hotel, perched on a Kenyan escarpment and that carries the weight of the Cecils' genuine love for this place in every object it contains.

The house is currently owned by **George and Lucilla Stephenson** and is offered on an exclusive-use basis through Borana Conservancy. All activities are provided by the conservancy's team.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements: 8 bedrooms for 16 guests — exclusive-use only, with the entire house and its grounds dedicated to a single group.

Three Ensuite Master Bedrooms with Fireplaces: Lord Valentine's original room; Lord Michael's original room; the standalone Lucilla Cottage each carrying the specific weight and character of the Cecils' furnishing choices. King beds, fireplaces, generous ensuite bathrooms with both bath and shower, private terraces with the escarpment view.

Three Large Ensuite Double Rooms: The same decorative heritage and comfort standard, positioned across the house for privacy.

One Ensuite Twin Room and One Twin Room with Interconnecting Children's Room:

The children's room contains bunk beds and an additional single bed a configuration that accommodates families with multiple children in a practical and well-considered arrangement.

Additional Facilities: The **heated swimming pool and deck** overlooks a small dam below the escarpment elephants and plains game visiting the water visible to swimmers without any intervening barrier. The **clay tennis court** positioned to face the Northern Frontier view is one of the most characterful court sport settings in Africa. A **games room** with satellite TV and DVD selection. Table tennis, croquet and boules on the lawns. A dedicated **gym** with yoga equipment.

Getting There:

By Air: Scheduled flight from Nairobi Wilson to Lewa Downs Airstrip, followed by a **90-minute game drive** through the Borana-Lewa landscape described by multiple guests as one of the finest arrival drives in Kenya, during which rhinos, elephants and the full range of the conservancy's wildlife are regularly encountered. Laragai House also has its own **helicopter landing site** for direct charter arrival. A **private airstrip** adjacent to the conservancy accommodates charter aircraft.

By Road: As Borana Lodge above approximately 4–5 hours from Nairobi via Nanyuki and Timau.

Tipping Guidance: Lodge team: USD 20 per guest per day. Individual guides: USD 20 per group per day.

Health & Safety

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.

- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities from Laragai House:

- ✓ The full Borana-Lewa portfolio from the conservancy's most elevated position.
- ✓ Day and night game drives through the 90,000-acre landscape; rhino tracking on foot with the ranger team; tracker dog demonstration and patrol accompaniment.
- ✓ Horse riding through Riding Wild;
- ✓ Guided bush walks.
- ✓ Ngare Ndare Forest Day trip.
- ✓ Mountain biking;
- ✓ Clay tennis;
- ✓ Helicopter sundowners from the house's helipad.
- ✓ Scenic biplane flight from the Borana airstrip.
- ✓ Fly camping in the conservancy wilderness.

Culinary and Dining Experiences: The house's chef prepares full board meals from locally sourced and conservancy-produced produce. The indoor dining room antique table, antique swords on the walls, gold mirrors catching the candlelight, fireplace is one of the most characterful private dining environments at any Kenyan property. Al fresco lunch on the escarpment terrace, with the Northern Frontier visible beyond the pool edge, is equally extraordinary. Bush positions across the conservancy on request.

Why We Love Laragai House:

We love Laragai for the **swords on the dining room walls** for what they carry from the life of the people who hung them there and for the specific courage of the people who created something this personal, this idiosyncratic and this completely themselves on a Kenyan escarpment in 1993. And for the clay tennis court with the Northern Frontier view the most characterful court sport position in East Africa.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *The clay tennis court at sunset deserves a game: gather whatever players are in the group, borrow the racquets from the house, and play doubles as the light deepens over the Northern Frontier. The specific combination of the court sport's social pleasure and the immensity of the landscape beyond it is one of those experiences that is only available here and that guests consistently describe as completely unexpected and completely unforgettable.*

Families and Children:

- ✓ Outstanding for multi-generational family groups of up to 16.
- ✓ The interconnecting children's bedroom.
- ✓ The pool with dam wildlife view.
- ✓ The games board room, the clay tennis.
- ✓ The conservancy's full activity programme create a family experience of exceptional depth.
- ✓ The tracker dog demonstration is universally beloved by children.

LENGISHU HOUSE

Exclusive-Use | 6 Bird-Named Bedrooms | 12 Guests | East-Facing Sunrise Views | Heart of Borana

Location and Setting: Lengishu House sits on a **hillside at the heart of the Borana Conservancy**, positioned with a consistent **east-facing orientation** that captures the sunrise over the **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy plains** stretching below. The house's specific sitting on the hill, looking east — means that every morning begins with light arriving across the Lewa-Borana landscape from the direction of Mount Kenya, the mountain's profile visible above the forest line on clear mornings, the plains below catching the first gold of the equatorial dawn.

Introduction: Lengishu House is Borana's most design-sophisticated and most architecturally deliberate exclusive-use property. Built entirely from **sustainable locally-sourced materials** with a specific intelligence about how rooms, communal areas and outdoor spaces relate to each other and to the landscape they inhabit. Four individual cottages housing the bedrooms and a single central main house create a village-within-a-property arrangement: social space for shared meals and gatherings; private space for individual recovery.

The design's most characterful decision: **every room is named after a bird** that can be seen and heard from that room's specific window and veranda. This is not merely decorative; it is a design philosophy about the relationship between the interior and the exterior, insisting at the naming level that the room cannot be separated from the wildlife that inhabits the landscape visible through its windows.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements: 6 bedrooms across 4 cottages, all east-facing for sunrise views over the Lewa plains. Maximum **12 guests** in exclusive-use configuration.

Fish Eagle Suite (Standalone Cottage, Master): The house's finest single-bedroom suite standalone, with the most expansive east-facing view and the most private position. Named for the **African Fish Eagle** (*Haliaeetus vocifer*) whose territory overlaps the waterway below the bird whose cry is the definitive sound of the African wilderness and whose call from the valley below the house is the morning alarm that no guest who has heard it ever forgets. King bed; stone fireplace; ensuite with deep bath and rainfall shower; private veranda with bowl chairs and the Lewa plains panorama.

Goshawk Suite (Double, Standalone): A well-proportioned double bedroom named for the **African Goshawk** (*Accipiter tachiro*) the forest hawk whose territory overlaps the wooded edge below the cottage's position. Fireplace; ensuite; private east-facing veranda.

Hornbill and Hoopoe Cottage (Upper Family Cottage): Two ensuite double bedrooms sharing a **large sitting room, dining area and fireplace** named for the **Von der Decken's Hornbill** and the **African Hoopoe** (both visible from the cottage's windows). The ideal configuration for families with older children or close friends wanting connected but independently private sleeping arrangements.

Sunbird and Whydah Cottage (Lower Family Cottage): Two ensuite double bedrooms sharing a sitting and dining room with fireplace named for the **Variable Sunbird** (*Cinnyris venustus*) and the **Pin-tailed Whydah** (*Vidua macroura*), both resident in the house's garden. As above, ideal for family or close group configuration.

- ✓ **Main House Facilities:** The central communal space opens onto an outdoor terrace with the estate's **U-shaped swimming pool** positioned to maximise the valley view. An **in-house masseuse** is resident at Lengishu and treatments are available by appointment throughout the stay.
- ✓ A **pétanque pitch** (boules) is set in a clearing among the property's candelabra trees one of the most characterful outdoor social spaces in Laikipia, the specific combination of the ancient French game, the East African highland setting and the candelabra trees' dramatic forms creating an experience available nowhere else.
- ✓ An **art room** with floor-to-ceiling windows serves as both studio and gallery.
- ✓ A **pizza oven** on the covered veranda; a **gym** in the pool building with yoga equipment.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight:* Nairobi Wilson Airport to Lewa Downs Airstrip (approximately 45–55 minutes), then **90-minute road transfer** by game drive vehicle through the Borana-Lewa landscape to Lengishu House. Included in stay.
- ✓ *By Charter:* Private charter to Borana Conservancy airstrip (10–15 minutes from the house). Charter flight: approximately 45–50 minutes from Nairobi Wilson.
- ✓ *By Road:* Nairobi to Lengishu via Nanyuki and Timau: approximately **5 hours**. The house is slightly further into the conservancy than Borana Lodge. Road transfer can be arranged.

Health & Safety

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities from Lengishu House:

- ✓ The full Borana-Lewa programme
- ✓ Day and night game drives.
- ✓ Rhino tracking on foot.
- ✓ Tracker dog demonstration.
- ✓ horse riding with Riding wild.
- ✓ Guided walking safaris.
- ✓ Ngare Ndare Forest.
- ✓ Mountain biking.
- ✓ Pétanque games.
- ✓ Access to the Infinity pool.
- ✓ The art room provides creative materials for guests who want a non-wildlife engagement during the midday hours.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ Full board at the standard of Borana Conservancy's kitchen: farm-to-table produce, tailored menus, dietary requirements accommodated.
- ✓ Meals served in the main house, on the pool terrace, or in bush positions across the conservancy on request.
- ✓ The pizza oven on the covered veranda is available for relaxed evening dinners at guests' request.

Why We Love Lengishu House:

We love Lengishu for the **bird-named rooms** for the specific philosophical commitment of a design that insists, at the level of naming, that every moment of the interior experience is connected to the natural world immediately beyond the window.

It is a small decision.

It is the decision that makes this property a home rather than an accommodation.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Book the pétanque pitch as a late afternoon activity between the afternoon drive and sundowners. The specific social warmth that this ancient French game produces even among people who have never played it in the setting of the candelabra trees, with the east-facing light deepening toward sunset, is one of Lengishu's most specifically joyful experiences. The competitive element disappears almost immediately, which is when the experience becomes exactly what it should be: people in an extraordinary place, playing together, in the last hours of a Laikipia afternoon.*

SIRAI HOUSE

Exclusive-Use | 6 Ensuite Suites | 12 Guests | Foot of Mount Kenya | Borana Ranch Views

Location and Setting: Sirai House sits on a **ridge on the Borana Ranch** the working cattle component of the Borana Conservancy at the foot of **Mount Kenya's northern slopes**, providing panoramic views across the ranch and the conservancy landscape in every direction, with the mountain's glaciers and snowcap directly above on clear mornings. The name *Sirai* belongs to this specific place on the ranch: the house is its architectural expression.

Introduction: Sirai House is Borana's most **expansive exclusive-use property** designed for larger groups who want complete privacy, the full range of the conservancy's extraordinary activities, and the specific character of a ranch-edge position that places the working cattle operation and the wildlife conservation landscape in the most direct possible juxtaposition. Set within the storied expanse of Borana Conservancy 32,000 acres of protected wilderness and home to Africa's iconic Big Five Sirai House offers an intimate expression of luxury in the heart of Laikipia's untamed beauty. Occupying a private 250-acre enclave, the house rests gracefully along a ridge at the foothills of Mount Kenya, where sweeping panoramas and profound stillness create a rare sense of seclusion.

Sirai House is designed as a sanctuary where refined living meets the raw elegance of the African landscape. Its architecture blends timeless sophistication with a deep respect for place, opening onto vast horizons while maintaining an atmosphere of warmth and discretion. Interiors are thoughtfully curated with locally inspired art and craftsmanship, creating spaces that feel both elevated and deeply rooted.

Here, service is intuitive and personal, delivered with genuine care that transforms each stay into something quietly extraordinary. Days unfold at an unhurried pace whether exploring the wilderness, encountering wildlife, or simply absorbing the rhythm of the land while every return to Sirai House feels like coming home to serenity.

This is more than a destination; it is an immersive, intimate safari living experience, where luxury is measured not only in comfort, but in connection to nature, to place, and to oneself.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements: 6 ensuite suites across 4 individual cottages

Luxurious Private Suites

As dusk settles over Sirai House and the evening air carries the quiet rhythm of the wild, our private suites become sanctuaries of rest and refinement. After a day of exploration and a beautifully prepared dinner, retreat into a world of warmth, stillness, and understated elegance.

Guided softly to your suite, you are welcomed by the glow of a crackling log fire and an atmosphere of serene comfort. Each residence is thoughtfully positioned within the landscape to ensure complete privacy, offering an intimate connection to the surrounding wilderness. Here, the boundaries between indoors and outdoors dissolve inviting nature in while cocooning you in absolute luxury.

While the experience is intentionally immersive and unplugged, discreet connectivity remains at your fingertips, with seamless access to the main house and our attentive team, always ready to anticipate your needs.

Master Suite — Space & Serenity

The Master Suite is a statement of quiet grandeur, defined by its generous proportions and effortless elegance. A spacious bedroom flows into a refined sitting area and an expansive dressing room, creating a sense of ease and indulgence at every turn.

Retractable glass walls open onto a private terrace and infinity pool, where uninterrupted views stretch across the Laikipia plains. Whether reclining in bed or soaking in the sculpted marble bath, the vastness of the African landscape becomes part of the living experience immersive, calming, and endlessly captivating.

Suite II — Elevated Perspective

Just moments from the main house, this suite offers both proximity and privacy. Soft textures and natural materials warm furs, layered fabrics, and stone finishes create a space that is both inviting and refined.

The open-plan design seamlessly connects the bedroom, lounge, and bathroom, extending outward onto a private terrace. Here, an outdoor rain shower frames sweeping views of the conservancy, transforming a daily ritual into a moment of quiet awe.

Suites III & IV — Shared Elegance

Designed for those who value both connection and seclusion, these adjoining suites are linked by a generous shared drawing room. This central space invites relaxed gatherings afternoon drinks, quiet games, or evenings spent in easy conversation.

Each suite remains a private haven, complete with its own fireplace, en-suite bathroom, veranda, and outdoor shower. Whether hosting loved ones or retreating into solitude, the experience is entirely your own fluid, personal, and deeply comfortable.

Suites V & VI — The Hidden Retreat

Set furthest from the main house, these suites offer the ultimate sense of escape.

Elevated among the treetops, they are accessed by a private wooden walkway leading to a secluded viewing platform an intimate vantage point over the wild.

Sharing a drawing room yet immersed in complete tranquility, these suites balance sociability with seclusion. Their bold Kenyan design featuring thatched Thanje reed roofing, handcrafted finishes, and sculptural stone or timber bathtubs reflects a deep harmony with the surrounding landscape.

Here, nature is not just observed, but felt quietly, profoundly, and without interruption.

The Dining & Culinary Journey

At Sirai House, dining is not simply a ritual it is an experience of place, season, and personal expression. Each meal is thoughtfully curated to reflect both the richness of the land and the individuality of every guest.

From sunrise breakfasts to starlit dinners, every setting is yours to define. Dine where the moment calls on a sunlit terrace, beside the pool, beneath ancient trees, or under a vast African sky illuminated by constellations.

Our philosophy begins with provenance. Ingredients are carefully sourced, many from our own thriving shamba an abundant garden of fruits, vegetables, and herbs grown on the estate. Fresh eggs, produce harvested at peak ripeness, and premium beef from Borana's own cattle herds ensure a connection between land and table that is both authentic and sustainable.

Under the guidance of our Head Chef, George, each dish is crafted with precision, creativity, and care.

Menus are entirely bespoke, effortlessly accommodating all dietary preferences from plant-based to gluten-free without ever compromising on flavour or artistry.

Breakfast — A Gentle Awakening

- ✓ Mornings at Sirai unfold in golden light, where breakfast becomes a moment to gather, plan, and savour. Set around the terrace table, the day begins with an abundant spread seasonal fruits, freshly pressed juices, homemade granolas, and local yoghurts.
- ✓ The aroma of rich Kenyan coffee lingers as warm dishes are prepared to order eggs just as you like them, crisp bacon, delicate pancakes. Unhurried and abundant, breakfast is shaped entirely by your mood, offering the perfect beginning to a day in the wild.

Lunch — Effortless Indulgence

As morning adventures give way to the ease of midday, lunch at Sirai is defined by relaxed elegance. Whether enjoyed in the shaded loggia, beside the pool, or on the lawns, each setting invites you to slow down and unwind.

- ✓ Menus range from vibrant, light dishes to more indulgent fare, including wood-fired pizzas crafted in the open-air oven. Paired with the stillness of the landscape and the gentle rhythm of the afternoon, lunch becomes a seamless extension of the day's experience.

Afternoon Tea — A Timeless Interlude

Afternoon tea at Sirai offers a quiet moment of nostalgia and refinement. Served in the drawing room or on the lawns overlooking the conservancy, it blends the romance of English tradition with the soul of Kenya.

- ✓ Delicate pastries, freshly baked treats, and perfectly brewed tea are presented in an atmosphere of calm elegance an invitation to pause, reflect, and simply be.

Picnics & Sundowners — Dining in the Wild

- ✓ Venture beyond the house and discover dining at its most immersive. Bush breakfasts and picnics are set in secluded corners of the conservancy, where beautifully laid tables await beneath open skies or the shade of a Sirai tree.
- ✓ As evening approaches, sundowners become a cherished ritual.
- ✓ Reached by Land Rover or horseback, these elevated settings offer sweeping views across Laikipia. Gather around a fire with a drink in hand, wrapped in soft shawls, as the sun melts into the horizon an unforgettable communion of landscape, light, and atmosphere.

Dinner — Evenings, Your Way

- ✓ Evenings at Sirai are as versatile as they are elegant. The grand dining room, with seating for up to twenty-two guests, can host anything from an intimate family meal to a refined multi-course celebration.
- ✓ On warmer nights, dine alfresco on the olive grove terrace beneath a canopy of stars.
- ✓ For a more rustic experience, the boma offers fireside dining perfect for barbecues, shared platters, and relaxed conversation.
- ✓ Whether it's a simple bowl of soup by the fire, wood-fired pizza in the cinema, or an elaborate tasting menu, each evening is entirely your own designed around your desires, your pace, and your mood.

The Wine Cellar — A Curated Collection

- ✓ Complementing the culinary experience is Sirai’s exceptional wine offering. Our carefully selected house wines pair beautifully with each dish, enhancing every flavour and moment.
- ✓ At the heart of the dining space, a striking glass-enclosed cellar showcases a collection of over three thousand fine wines from around the world.
- ✓ Available for viewing or private selection, it invites both connoisseurs and casual enthusiasts to explore and indulge.

ACTIVITIES AT SIRAI HOUSE:

Tailored Safari Experiences

Discover the wild on your own terms with privately guided safari experiences designed around your rhythm and curiosity. Explore the vast landscapes of Borana Conservancy in custom 4x4 Land Cruisers, thoughtfully appointed with refined comforts—from reclining leather seating to discreet modern conveniences.

Led by expert KPSGA-accredited guides, each journey offers rare and meaningful encounters with Africa’s iconic wildlife, from the Big Five to an extraordinary diversity of birdlife. Whether by vehicle or on foot, every safari is crafted to immerse you deeply in the land—timed to the golden stillness of dawn or the quiet drama of dusk.

Horseback Safaris — A Rare Perspective

For experienced riders, Borana reveals itself in its most poetic form from the saddle. Ride across open plains at first light or ascend gentle ridges for sundowners by the fire, moving silently among wildlife in a way few ever experience.

Helicopter Safaris — An Aerial Perspective

Take to the skies for a breathtaking exploration of Kenya’s most dramatic landscapes. From the slopes of Mount Kenya to remote and untouched regions beyond, each flight reveals a new dimension of the continent—its wildlife, cultures, and vast, unspoiled beauty.

Conservation Encounters — Rhino Tracking

Step into the vital work of conservation alongside Borana’s dedicated ranger teams. Join early morning rhino tracking excursions and gain rare insight into the protection of these endangered animals—an experience as meaningful as it is unforgettable.

The Blue Pools — Hidden Sanctuary

Journey to the southern foothills of Mount Kenya, where forest paths wind through the Ngare Ndare canopy. Follow elephant corridors and suspended walkways until the landscape opens to reveal crystalline blue pools. Swim beneath filtered sunlight, explore waterfalls, and experience a secluded, almost otherworldly corner of the wilderness.

Fly Camping — The Essence of the Wild

For those drawn to the romance of the untamed, spend a night under canvas in the heart of the bush. Thoughtfully styled with wooden beds, fine linens, and fireside dining beneath the stars, fly camping captures the spirit of classic safari without sacrificing comfort or refinement.

E-Bike Safaris — Effortless Exploration

Glide through the landscape on guided e-bike safaris, where gentle assistance allows you to cover greater distances with ease. Traverse bush trails and open terrain while remaining fully present in the sights, sounds, and rhythms of the wild.

Cultural Encounters — Heritage & Connection

Engage with the living culture of the Maasai through authentic and respectful experiences. Discover the artistry of beadwork, visit nearby communities, and gain insight into traditions passed down through generations. These encounters are complemented by meaningful contributions to local education initiatives, supporting future generations.

In-House Experiences & Amenities

Spa Retreat — Restorative Stillness

- ✓ A sanctuary within a sanctuary, the Sirai spa offers a deeply restorative experience. Surrounded by the quiet majesty of Mount Kenya, unwind in the steam room, hot and cold pools, or surrender to bespoke treatments delivered by skilled therapists. Each moment is designed to restore balance—body, mind, and spirit.

Wellness — Gym & Infinity Pool

- ✓ Maintain your rhythm of wellbeing in a setting unlike any other. Swim in the heated 20-metre infinity pool overlooking the plains, or energise in the fully equipped gym where every movement is framed by sweeping views of the conservancy.

Private Cinema — Intimate Evenings

- ✓ Retreat into a world of comfort in the private cinema, where plush seating and a curated film collection create the perfect setting for relaxed evenings. Whether revisiting classics or streaming favorite's, every detail invites you to unwind in style.

Sport & Recreation — Play Elevated

- ✓ From pickleball and basketball to croquet and boules, Sirai offers moments of lighthearted competition set against extraordinary scenery. Whether spirited or leisurely, each game is enriched by the beauty of the surroundings.

Yoga Pavilion — Stillness in Motion

- ✓ Perched above the plains, the open-air yoga pavilion invites a deeper connection to self and landscape. Practice with panoramic views, guided by the sounds of nature, or engage a private instructor for tailored sessions in yoga or Pilates.

The Watering Hole — Quiet Observation

- ✓ Tucked discreetly within the estate, the private hide overlooks a natural watering hole offering intimate, uninterrupted encounters with wildlife. Here, patience is rewarded with moments of quiet wonder.

The Club Room — Refined Leisure

- ✓ Evenings can unfold in the warmth of the Club Room, where a full-sized billiards table, curated bar, and fireside seating create an atmosphere of relaxed sophistication and conversation.

The Library — A Curated Escape

- ✓ A haven for reflection, the library houses an exceptional Africana collection, including rare and antique editions. It is a space to read, work, or simply pause—where stories of the continent enrich your own.

The Cellar — A Collector's Indulgence

- ✓ A destination in itself, the glass-enclosed wine cellar showcases over 3,000 carefully curated wines and champagnes. Whether selecting the perfect pairing or exploring rare vintages, it offers a refined extension of the Sirai experience.

Nature & Movement — Outdoor Living

- ✓ Jog along the private two-kilometre track encircling the estate, or take a gentle walk through the landscape at your own pace. Here, movement becomes a quiet immersion in nature.

Health & Safety

- ✓ **Malaria:** Borana at 1,900–2,000 metres is malaria-free.
- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Sirai House:

We love Sirai for the **Mount Kenya morning** the specific experience of opening the cottage door at dawn to find Africa's second-highest mountain directly above, its glaciers catching the first light while the conservancy below is still in the moment before sunrise begins. There is no equivalent starting point for a Laikipia day.

Getting There:

- ✓ As Borana Lodge above. Scheduled flight to Lewa Downs followed by game drive transfer (approximately 90 minutes).
- ✓ Private charter to Borana airstrip (15 minutes to Sirai House).
- ✓ Road from Nairobi approximately 4–5 hours.

LOISABA CONSERVANCY

57,000 Acres | Kenya's Newest Black Rhino Sanctuary | The Great Elephant Corridor | Loisaba Community Trust

The Conservancy: The **Loisaba Conservancy** covers **57,000 acres** (230 square kilometres) of dramatic escarpment, grassland and riverine landscape in **north-western Laikipia** one of Kenya's most visually spectacular private conservation areas. Its western escarpment edge falls away toward the Rift Valley in a dramatic series of cliffs and terraces that provide the finest panoramic views in all of Laikipia. Its eastern interior encompasses varied grassland and woodland habitats crossed by seasonal rivers and dotted with the ancient rock kopjes that are a

defining feature of the northern Laikipia landscape. The conservancy sits on the **western edge of one of Kenya's most important elephant movement corridors** linking the Laikipia Plateau to the wider Northern Rangelands beyond making its protection essential to the functioning of the entire regional elephant population.

Conservation Model: The conservancy is owned by the **Loisaba Community Trust** a Kenyan Trust incorporated under the Perpetual Succession of Trustees Act and established in 2015 with facilitation from **The Nature Conservancy**. **100% of tourism revenue earned by Loisaba is reinvested in conservation and community programmes** supporting wildlife protection, ranger salaries, anti-poaching operations, community education, healthcare and local livelihood development across the surrounding landscape.

The conservancy is the site of **Kenya's newest black rhino sanctuary** the return of rhinos to Loisaba after decades of absence, representing one of the most encouraging recent moments in Kenyan conservation. The conservancy also maintains one of Kenya's **most stable lion populations** alongside significant populations of elephants, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, wild dog, leopard, cheetah and the full complement of the Northern Five.

The conservancy's name is evocative: **Loisaba** derives from the Samburu language and has been variously translated as "steep escarpment" or "place of the red earth" both descriptions apt for the dramatic landscape the name describes. The conservancy's original estate was created by an **Italian Count, Ancilotto**, in the **1960s** one of the most remote and most beautiful private land acquisitions of the colonial era's final decade.

Anti-Poaching Team: The conservancy's dedicated anti-poaching canine unit consists of four specialist dogs: **Warrior, Machine, Memusi and Nanyokie** each named for the specific qualities their handlers most value in them. These four dogs, with their trained handlers, patrol the conservancy's boundary and interior, detecting illegal activity that human rangers alone cannot identify. Guests are invited to observe the unit's training demonstrations and, in some cases, to accompany the handlers during their patrol work.

Wildlife: All of the Big Five including the newly established rhino sanctuary population. All of the Northern Five. African wild dog packs ranging across the conservancy. Cheetah. One of Kenya's most stable lion populations. Hippo at Kiboko Dam. Over 400 bird species.

Getting There — Loisaba:

By Scheduled Flight: Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Loisaba Airstrip** on **Safarilink** and **AirKenya** (approximately **1 hour**, sometimes routing via Nanyuki). From the Loisaba Airstrip, **Loisaba Lodo Springs is 15 minutes by road**, Loisaba Tented Camp is 20 minutes and Loisaba Star Beds is 30 minutes. Airstrip transfers are included in all Loisaba accommodation rates.

By Private Charter: Direct charter from Nairobi Wilson Airport to Loisaba Airstrip: approximately **55–65 minutes**. Loisaba Airstrip accommodates most small aircraft including Cessna Grand Caravan, Pilatus PC-12 and similar.

By Road: Loisaba is approximately **260 kilometres** from Nairobi — a **4.5–5.5 hour drive** via Nanyuki and then west and north. Road transfer can be arranged. This is the longest road journey of any major Laikipia conservancy; the flight is strongly recommended.

LOISABA LODO SPRINGS

Elewana Collection | 8 Individual Tented Rooms | Private Guest Ambassador Per Room | Private Safari Vehicle and Guide Per Reservation | Opened June 2019

Location and Setting: Loisaba Lodo Springs is positioned on the **eastern escarpment of the Loisaba Conservancy** on a small, defined bluff above the escarpment's main drop overlooking the vast Laikipia plains stretching away below and eastward to Mount Kenya's profile on the southern horizon. The camp's position is specifically chosen for the quality of its panorama: the escarpment falling away 400–500 metres to the plains below, the plains extending across the full width of the Laikipia Plateau, Mount Kenya rising from the plain in a profile of extraordinary majesty on clear mornings. The Micato Safaris team described the setting as *"a sincere little bluff overlooking the vast Laikipia Plateau, a set-piece of African geography."*

Introduction and History: Loisaba Lodo Springs opened in **June 2019** the third Elewana Collection property at Loisaba, and the most ambitious. The camp was designed by **renowned Kenyan architects Chris Payne and Jan Allen** with landscape architecture by **Jo Silvester** in response to a specific brief: create an ultra-private, ultra-luxury experience that speaks to the most discerning, most experienced high-end traveller — someone for whom standard luxury is insufficient and for whom the combination of extraordinary design, exceptional personal service and genuine conservation purpose is the only compelling proposition.

The design solution is intellectually ambitious and visually extraordinary. The camp's 8 tented rooms have been described by one Micato guest as appearing to have been designed by *"an old-time African landowner with exquisite, modern-leaning taste"* a description that captures exactly the achieved intention: a camp that pays genuine tribute to the great East African tented camp tradition (the canvas top, the safari aesthetic, the fundamental relationship with the landscape) while expressing it through a design sensibility that is specific to the 21st century and to the most sophisticated international design culture.

Each of the eight rooms has a **distinctly individual character** not the identical uniformity of most safari camps but a genuinely distinct design vocabulary for each space. The decorative palette draws on a carefully curated set of **antique and vintage objects sourced and hand-restored in Kenya: 17th-century French walnut wardrobes** their weight and craftsmanship immediately apparent, their age carried without apology as a statement about quality that transcends era; **mid-century American parlour bar stools** with the specific optimistic design language of their period; **upcycled cedar fence posts** deployed as wall panelling with a roughness that complements the polished quality of everything around them; and above the master bed in each room, a panel of **Ghanaian Kente cloth** its colours vibrant, its cultural heritage specific, its placement in this particular context an act of design intelligence about what belongs in this landscape and this moment.

The walnut wardrobes deserve particular mention. They arrived in Kenya in the 17th century by what exact journey is lost to history and have been in the country ever since, acquiring the patina of three centuries of East African life. That they now stand in a luxury tented camp on a Laikipia escarpment, holding the clothes of guests who arrived by charter flight from London or New York, is precisely the kind of temporal

compression that the finest East African design achieves: the deep past and the immediate present, in the same room, in quiet, productive conversation.

Ownership and Management: Operated by the **Elewana Collection** under agreement with the **Loisaba Community Trust**. All tourism revenues revert to the conservancy's conservation and community programme.

Awards and Recognition: Since its opening in 2019, Lodo Springs has been consistently recognised by the international luxury travel press as one of the finest new properties in East Africa.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

8 individual ensuite tented rooms — each unique, each with its own design identity, each expressing a different chapter of the curated antique and vintage aesthetic:

All 8 rooms share:

- **Floor-to-ceiling windows and full-height wooden doors** that open the room completely to the escarpment view the entire eastern wall is glass and wood, not canvas and mesh, providing total visual connection to the Laikipia plains while maintaining full weather protection
- **Polished hardwood floors** that ground the canvas tent structure in solidity and quality
- **Solar-heated rainfall shower** delivering genuinely hot water regardless of ambient temperature
- **Double-basin vanity** in the ensuite bathroom stone or timber countertop, quality fittings, flush toilet
- **Private veranda** with two cushioned sun loungers and a small table the position from which the escarpment view is most directly enjoyed and from which, in the early morning, Mount Kenya's profile is most completely visible
- **Comfortable lounge area** with inviting chairs and a writing desk the room's interior retreat, away from the views
- Each room's dedicated **Elewana Guest Ambassador** the personal staff member assigned to that specific room for the duration of the stay, managing every request before it needs to be voiced

What differs between rooms: The specific antique object the walnut wardrobe, the Americana bar stools, the cedar post panelling, the Kente cloth panel colour that anchors each room's individual design identity. Each room has a story, and the story is told through the object.

The Service Model — A Specific Distinction: The commitment to **one dedicated Guest Ambassador per room and one dedicated safari vehicle per reservation** is not a standard luxury hospitality feature. It represents a fundamental change in how the safari experience is structured. In conventional luxury camps, vehicles and guides are shared among multiple guest parties on a schedule that the management determines. At Lodo Springs, the vehicle and the guide are assigned to a single reservation. The guest's programme is determined entirely by their own interests and the conservancy's daily wildlife intelligence not by a fixed schedule, not by the preferences of other guests, not by any consideration other than what the specific guests in that specific vehicle want to do on that specific morning.

This sounds like a small operational difference. In practice, it transforms the quality of the safari experience profoundly. The guide's full attention, the vehicle's full flexibility and the day's full potential are organised around one group. The difference between shared and private safari experiences, once understood, is never unfelt again.

Main Communal Areas:

The Main Lounge: A pellucid, airy communal space overlooking the escarpment deep seating, quality textiles, books and maps, the camp's bar service delivered from this position. The lounge's panoramic position makes it the finest afternoon reading room in Laikipia.

The Dining Area: A la carte breakfast from an evolving menu; light tapas-style buffet lunch with fresh salads and vegetarian options; set dinner menu of two to three courses the kitchen's sourcing from the conservancy's own produce supplemented by the finest available regional supply.

The Infinity Pool: Positioned at the escarpment edge the pool from which the plains below are most dramatically visible, with the full depth of the escarpment's drop apparent and Mount Kenya visible in the distance. Swimming in this pool in the early morning, when the mist is still in the valley below and the mountain is backlit by the rising sun, is one of the most specifically beautiful single experiences in Laikipia.

Communication in the Wilderness:

- ✓ WiFi is available throughout the camp.
- ✓ Mobile coverage varies across the conservancy available at the camp itself and on ridgetops.
- ✓ Satellite communication is used for all operational communications.
- ✓ Vard Africa's team is available via WhatsApp throughout all client stays.

Health & Safety

- ✓ **Malaria:** Borana at 1,900–2,000 metres is malaria-free.
- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).

- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Loisaba Lodo Springs:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives — Dedicated Vehicle and Guide** — The 57,000-acre Loisaba Conservancy explored in Loisaba's custom-designed **new Land Rover safari vehicles** all guides holding **KPSGA Bronze and Silver ratings** (the Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association's certification levels, requiring demonstrated expertise in ecology, wildlife identification and visitor management). The conservancy's vast scale approximately 4.8 square kilometres of wilderness per guest bed means that encounters happen without competition from other vehicles. The specific wildlife programme: the lion population, the wild dog packs, the rhino sanctuary, the elephant corridor, and the full Northern Five community of the plateau's most impressive wildlife.
- ✓ Night drives with spotlights reveal the Loisaba escarpment and plains in their nocturnal character: serval, aardvark, porcupine, leopard crossing open ground, honey badger and the extraordinary diversity of nocturnal bird species that active bird-watching during night drives consistently discovers.
- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks with Traditional Samburu Expert Guides** — Walking the Loisaba landscape with guides who carry the specific knowledge of the landscape as their native territory the Samburu community members who have lived in and with this ecosystem for generations and who know the medicinal plants, the tracking traditions, the specific ecological relationships and the cultural landscape alongside the natural one. Walks range from 2-hour morning interpretive sessions to all-day expeditions for fit guests.
- ✓ **Horseback Safaris** — Available through Loisaba's riding programme. Horses appropriately schooled for the conservancy environment. Subject to rider ability assessment.
- ✓ **Camel Safaris with Samburu Handlers** — Multi-hour camel expeditions through the conservancy, guided by Samburu handlers for whom the camel is a culturally and practically familiar companion. Available for single sessions or extended afternoon explorations.
- ✓ **Mountain Biking** — The conservancy's varied trail system at cycling pace the escarpment tracks and plateau roads providing terrain of sufficient variety for both experienced cyclists and casual riders.
- ✓ **Fishing at Kiboko Dam** — Tilapia and catfish in the conservancy's permanent dam, using gear provided by the camp. The hippo family resident at Kiboko Dam provides an unexpected companion species for afternoon fishing sessions.
- ✓ **Anti-Poaching Dog Unit Visit** — Meeting Warrior, Machine, Memusi and Nanyokie and their handlers: observing the dogs' training and work capability, understanding how a specialist canine unit contributes to the protection of 57,000 acres of wildlife habitat.
- ✓ **Samburu Village Cultural Visits** — Arranged through the conservancy's long-standing community partnerships with the Samburu families whose group ranch lands border and overlap the Loisaba territory.
- ✓ **Warrior Training for Children** — One of Loisaba's most engaging children's activities: learning traditional Samburu skills fire-starting, spear-throwing and bow-and-arrow making under the guidance of the conservancy's Samburu warrior team.
- ✓ **Bush Breakfasts on the Escarpment Edge** — The most spectacular outdoor breakfast position in Laikipia: the escarpment dropping 400 metres below, the plains extending to Mount Kenya's horizon, the morning birds of the escarpment as the audio accompaniment to a breakfast from Lodo Springs' kitchen.
- ✓ **Yoga and Wellness** — Available on request through the camp's wellness programme.
- ✓ **Sundowners at Escarpment Positions** — The specific quality of the Loisaba escarpment at dusk the Rift Valley's shadow advancing from the west as the sun drops toward it, the plains below catching the last light, Mount Kenya catching the last light above makes sundowner positions on the Loisaba escarpment edge among the finest in all of Kenya.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

The kitchen operates on the principle that time at Lodo Springs should not be constrained by fixed meal schedules.

- ✓ Breakfast can be a la carte in the dining area, or can be arranged as a **bush breakfast with a live cooking station** at a position on the conservancy.
- ✓ Lunch is a light buffet tapas spread fresh salads, vegetable dishes, proteins that accommodates the fact that guests may be in the middle of a game drive and prefer a packed picnic in the field.
- ✓ Dinner is a set menu of two to three daily-changing courses that the kitchen prepares from the finest available fresh ingredients, paired with the camp's wine list.

All dietary requirements are accommodated with advance notice. Premium wines, champagne and premium spirits carry additional charges; the standard drinks package covers a generous range of wines, beers, spirits and soft drinks.

Why We Love Loisaba Lodo Springs: We love Lodo Springs for the **17th-century French walnut wardrobes** for the specific intelligence and the specific confidence of bringing antique European furniture of three centuries' standing into a Kenyan tented camp on an escarpment above the Laikipia plains and making it feel not incongruous but completely inevitable, because the quality of the craftsmanship speaks the same language as the quality of the design that surrounds it. And for the service model: the Guest Ambassador assigned to a single room, the vehicle assigned to a single reservation, the guide's full attention focused on one party for the full duration of the stay. Once experienced, the alternative becomes impossible to accept.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Request the room with the walnut wardrobe. It does not dominate the room; it anchors it. The specific weight and presence of a piece of furniture that arrived in Kenya three centuries ago and has been here ever since provides a quality of historical depth that the escarpment view alone, extraordinary as it is, cannot supply. Have your Guest Ambassador bring coffee to the veranda at first light before the mist has cleared from the valley below, before Mount Kenya has fully revealed itself above the cloud that typically surrounds it in the early morning and experience the gradual revelation of the escarpment landscape over 30 minutes of quiet coffee.*

Families and Children:

- ✓ Lodo Springs is **suitable for families with children of appropriate ages**.
- ✓ The warrior training programme is specifically designed for children.
- ✓ The pool is safe for supervised children.
- ✓ Activities can be adapted for different ages and abilities.
- ✓ Families with very young children should discuss room configuration requirements with Vard Africa before booking.

Minimum Stay: 2 nights. 3 nights recommended to fully experience the activity portfolio.

LOISABA TENTED CAMP

Elewana Collection | 12 Tented Rooms | Escarpment Edge | Laikipia's Great Infinity Pool | Family Configuration Available

Location and Setting: Loisaba Tented Camp sits on the **eastern escarpment ridge** of the Loisaba Conservancy the camp's 12 rooms ranged along the ridge to maximise the unobstructed panoramic view across the full width of the Laikipia Plateau to Mount Kenya on the distant southern horizon. The escarpment position is the defining characteristic: the valley drops away immediately below the camp's terrace, the plains extend beyond it, and the mountain anchors the entire composition.

Introduction: Loisaba Tented Camp is the Elewana Collection's **established classic camp** at Loisaba the conservancy's anchor property, rebuilt completely in **2016** to the Elewana Collection's current standards and operating on the same conservancy infrastructure that makes Loisaba exceptional. Its 12 rooms make it the largest of the Loisaba properties and the most suitable for larger groups. Its design vocabulary **custom-built canvas tents with floor-to-ceiling doors and windows, polished wood floors, Africana furniture with a contemporary European sensibility** delivers a specific quality of understated luxury that is immediately and completely comfortable.

The camp's **infinity pool** has been described by multiple travel publications as one of the most picturesque in Africa. The description is accurate: the pool sits at the escarpment's rim, its far edge appearing to dissolve into the plain below, with the entire Laikipia Plateau visible beyond it. Swimming in this pool at any hour of day the morning light arriving from the direction of Mount Kenya, the afternoon shadows lengthening across the plains below is one of the most specifically beautiful single acts available in Laikipia.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements: 12

spacious ensuite tented rooms including thoughtfully designed **family setups with connecting tent configurations** for families with children. All rooms: floor-to-ceiling doors and windows opening the room fully to the escarpment view; polished hardwood floors; warm Africana décor with contemporary detail; wide private verandas with the escarpment panorama; ensuite bathrooms with solar-heated hot water, rainfall shower, flush toilet and double vanity.

Family configurations connect adjacent rooms with internal doors, creating family suites of 2–3 bedrooms sharing a common lounge and veranda area.

Health & Safety

- ✓ **Malaria:** Borana at 1,900–2,000 metres is malaria-free.
- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Loisaba Tented Camp:

The full Loisaba conservancy programme: day and night game drives in custom Land Rover vehicles with KPSGA-rated guides; guided bush walks with Samburu expert guides; horseback safaris; camel safaris; mountain biking; fishing at Kiboko Dam; anti-poaching dog unit visit; Samburu village cultural visits; warrior training for children.

The infinity pool's escarpment position is one of Laikipia's most celebrated single facilities.

Why We Love Loisaba Tented Camp:

We love Loisaba Tented Camp for the **infinity pool at the escarpment edge** for the specific architecture of a pool whose far wall falls away into a view that encompasses the entire geography of the Laikipia Plateau.

This is luxury as geographic revelation, and it belongs completely to this specific place.

Getting There:

As Loisaba above scheduled flight to Loisaba Airstrip (20 minutes by road to the camp) or private charter.

LOISABA STAR BEDS

Elewana Collection | 4 Rooms with Pull-Out Open-Air Star Beds on Wheels | Near Kiboko Dam | Kenya's Most Iconic Night Experience

Location and Setting: Loisaba Star Beds occupies a position near the **Kiboko Dam** one of the conservancy's permanent water sources, home to a resident hippo family and a major wildlife draw across the Loisaba landscape in the conservancy's **eastern valley section**. The position is specifically chosen for its combination of wildlife accessibility (the dam's animal traffic is constant and audible from the beds at night) and for the specific quality of the night sky in this position: the eastern valley's depth and the absence of any artificial light source creates a darkness that allows the full equatorial Milky Way to express itself without competition.

Introduction: Loisaba Star Beds is one of Kenya's most iconic and most genuinely extraordinary experiences. The concept, conceived by the Elewana Collection in the spirit of Loisaba's pioneering approach to innovation in wildlife tourism, is as elegantly simple as the finest ideas always are:

From each of the **4 rooms**, the **bed itself can be wheeled out onto a platform under the open African sky** so guests sleep, literally, under the Milky Way, with no ceiling between them and the equatorial night. The bed is on wheels. It rolls. The guest decides the direction and the position. The platform is the size of a generous room. The night is everything.

The experience is not merely visual. It is **complete and sensory**: the sounds of the night hippos moving from the dam to the shore, lions calling from the distance, nightjars in their repetitive calls, the specific pre-dawn silence that settles before the morning birds begin are the sounds of the African wilderness undiluted by any architectural barrier. The sensation of lying in a supremely comfortable bed under ten thousand stars, in the specific cool of the Loisaba highland night, with the sounds of the East African bush completely surrounding the bed is one of those experiences that guests carry with them, intact and vivid, for the rest of their lives.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements: 4 rooms —

each with its own **star bed on wheels** that can be positioned in any direction on the platform the guest chooses. The enclosed room provides a fallback for nights of rain or for guests who prefer a conventional sleeping arrangement. En-suite bathrooms; comfortable interiors for daytime use; the **communal area's cosy homely dining room and sitting room** with a wooden deck that is *"the perfect spot for a sunny breakfast"* in the Loisaba Conservancy's own description. The communal area's wooden deck overlooks the Kiboko Dam valley, with the dam's hippo family and the morning game activity visible from breakfast.

Getting There:

As Loisaba above — scheduled flight to Loisaba Airstrip (30 minutes by road to Star Beds) or private charter.

Health & Safety

- ✓ **Malaria:** Borana at 1,900–2,000 metres is malaria-free.
- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Loisaba Star Beds:

- ✓ The full Loisaba conservancy activity programme.
- ✓ The Star Beds are hosted by a team of **traditional Samburu and Laikipia Maasai Warriors** who provide cultural accompaniment to the stay the specific human knowledge of the Samburu and Maasai relationship with the night sky, the stars' names in these traditions, the navigation techniques, the stories that the constellations carry in northern Kenyan oral culture adding a dimension to the star-gazing experience that no telescope can provide.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Combine one night at Loisaba Star Beds with two nights at Loisaba Lodo Springs this pairing provides the full spectrum of what Loisaba offers. The Star Beds night is the most directly connected-to-the-environment experience; Lodo Springs is the most finely curated. Together, they represent two different expressions of the same extraordinary conservancy. Roll the bed out before midnight: the equatorial sky needs a dark-adapted eye, and the patience to lie still for ten minutes before reaching for binoculars is rewarded with one of the most dense and most beautiful star fields visible from any safari property in East Africa. Bring a printed star chart.*

Families and Children:

- ✓ Star Beds is suitable for families with children aged 8 and above who are comfortable with the outdoor sleeping experience.
- ✓ The novelty and the adventure of sleeping under the open sky is universally loved by older children and teenagers.
- ✓ For younger children, the parent's judgement about readiness for the experience should guide the booking.

LEWA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

62,000-Acre UNESCO World Heritage Site — The Craig-Douglas Family's Century-Long Promise

The Conservancy: The history of **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy** is the history of one family's promise, kept across four generations and one hundred years of Kenyan life.

The **Craig-Douglas family** received the **Lewa Downs** land from the British colonial government in **1922** and managed it as a working cattle ranch for over fifty years a common story in the Kenyan highlands of that period, a family building a life from the land they had been given. **Delia Craig** born on this land in 1924, growing up on these specific 40,000 acres made a promise to her father, Alexander Douglas, as he aged: *there would always be room for wildlife on Lewa*. The words were simple. The consequences were enormous.

In the **early 1980s**, with Kenya's black rhino population collapsing from an estimated 20,000 individuals in 1960 to fewer than 300 by 1980 one of the fastest documented wildlife population crashes in the history of conservation biology a British philanthropist named **Anna Merz** approached the Craig family with a request. She had become obsessed with the fate of the black rhino; she wanted to build a fenced sanctuary on a portion of the Lewa ranch to protect the last remaining rhinos of northern Kenya. She asked for 5,000 acres.

David and Delia Craig said yes.

In **1983**, the **Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary** was established on 5,000 fenced acres of the Craig ranch. The breeding programme worked. The population grew. The results attracted researchers, conservationists and, eventually, tourists people who wanted to see what a successful rhino sanctuary looked like and who were willing to pay to do so. By **1995**, the Craigs had made their most consequential decision: to convert the **entire 40,000-acre ranch** to wildlife conservation establishing the **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy** as a non-profit organisation dedicated to the protection and conservation of Kenya's wildlife.

In **2013**, UNESCO declared Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and the adjacent **Ngare Ndare Forest Reserve** an extension of the **Mount Kenya World Heritage Site** one of only a handful of privately managed properties anywhere in the world to receive this designation. The justification included the extraordinary rhino conservation achievement, the habitat diversity, the community development programme and the **14-kilometre elephant corridor** linking Lewa through the Ngare Ndare Forest to the Mount Kenya National Park a corridor used by over **1,000 elephants in a single recorded year**, allowing animals to move between the highland forests and the northern frontier in a pattern that has not been possible since the expansion of human settlement disrupted their ancient routes.

In **2014**, the fence between Lewa and Borana was removed, creating the **90,000-acre Borana-Lewa landscape** now the third **Key 1 rhino population** in East Africa by IUCN assessment, and Kenya's most important private conservation achievement.

Today: Over **10% of Kenya's eastern black rhino population**. The **world's largest single population of Grevy's zebra** approximately 350 individuals, roughly **20% of the global wild population**. More than **150 rangers** on 24-hour patrol. The community development programme **affordable healthcare schemes benefitting nearly 50,000 people, clean water provision for surrounding communities, 1,800 micro-loans for women-owned businesses** one of the most comprehensive private-sector community programmes in Kenya. **The Lewa Wildlife Conservancy** is not a luxury tourism operation that happens to do conservation. It is a conservation institution of global significance that funds itself through luxury tourism.

Wildlife: Big Five including both black and white rhino. All of the Northern Five. African wild dog. Cheetah. Sitatunga in the wetlands. Over **70 mammal species**. Over **400 bird species** including the spectacular concentration of raptors along the Ngare Ndare Forest edge.

The Prehistoric Site:

One of the most extraordinary features of the Lewa landscape that most guests do not know about: scattered across certain sections of the conservancy's ground surface are **Acheulean hand axes** rough-hewn ancient stone tools estimated at **half a million years of age**, the artifacts of an early hominin (most likely *Homo erectus*) that occupied this specific landscape five hundred thousand years ago.

A guided walk to the site where these tools lie in the grass as they have lain since the moment, they were abandoned places every wildlife encounter in the longest possible temporal context.

KIFARU HOUSE

Elewana Collection | 5 Thatched Cottages | 10–12 Guests | Named for the Rhino | Exclusive-Use Available | In the Heart of Lewa

Location and Setting: Kifaru House sits on an **escarpment within the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy** its position specifically chosen for the quality of its dual view: the **vast Lewa plains** stretching southward, and **Mount Kenya's snowcap** defining the southern horizon. Below the house's main terrace, a natural **waterhole** draws wildlife throughout the day the house's breakfast terrace position overlooking this waterhole is one of the consistently praised morning wildlife experiences in all of Laikipia.

Introduction and History: *Kifaru* is the Swahili word for **rhinoceros**. The name is apt: this house was built by one of Lewa's **principal donors** a family who had contributed significantly to the conservancy's conservation funding and who wanted to create an accommodation that expressed, in its name and its existence, the reason for the conservancy's founding.

Kifaru House pays daily tribute, in its name, to the animals that made Lewa possible and whose survival Lewa exists to ensure.

The property is managed by the **Elewana Collection** and can be booked on a **shared basis** (individual rooms available to separate parties) or on an **exclusive-use basis** (the entire property 5 cottages, up to 12 guests reserved for a single group). The exclusive-use configuration is by far the most rewarding for parties of 6 or more; smaller groups should discuss configuration options with Vard Africa.

The guides at Kifaru House are among the finest in the Lewa conservancy. All hold **KPSGA certification** at bronze or silver level.

They carry not only the conservancy's ecological knowledge but an **intimate knowledge of individual animals** they know the specific rhino families, the cheetah's territory, the lion pride's current cub count, the location of the sitatunga at the wetland edge with the precision and care that comes from spending years in direct daily observation of the same specific landscape and the same specific animals.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

5 Thatched Stone Cottages on spacious lawned grounds the property designed to allow movement between cottages across open lawn with the waterhole below visible at all times:

4 Standard Cottages: From timber, stone and thatch in the Kenyan highland vernacular tradition. Each: **private veranda** with specific waterhole and plains views; ensuite bathroom with **flush WC, twin stone washbasins and rainfall shower; king-size four-poster bed** (or twin configuration on request); **air conditioning and ceiling fan** (unusual at highland properties, but the equatorial sun can be intense during midday hours); **direct dial telephone** for internal communication; **CD player** for music; WiFi access; minibar. The room sizes are generous not boutique rooms but proper lodge suites with sufficient space for the luggage that accompanies a Kenyan safari. One of the standard cottages has

an additional **outdoor shower with bush views** and a **Victorian-style freestanding bathtub** positioned to look over the conservancy among the finest single bathing amenities at any Laikipia property.

1 Family Cottage: A larger configuration with an **additional children's bedroom** sharing a bathroom with the master bedroom practical and well-considered for families with younger children who want supervised sleeping arrangements.

The Main Lodge Building: The shared communal structure contains the **dining room, sitting room, bar area and library** arranged to face the waterhole below with the plains visible beyond. The **infinity pool** on the terrace above the waterhole: one of the finest pool positions in the Lewa conservancy, offering Mount Kenya on the southern horizon, the Lewa plains below and the waterhole's wildlife activity at all hours.

Communication in the Wilderness:

WiFi is available in all rooms and communal areas. Mobile coverage (Safaricom) available at the property; coverage across the conservancy varies by terrain.

Health & Safety

- ✓ **Malaria:** Borana at 1,900–2,000 metres is malaria-free.
- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Kifaru House:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives — Dedicated Vehicle Per Party** The Lewa Wildlife Conservancy's extraordinary wildlife: both black and white rhino (Lewa holds **10% of Kenya's total black rhino population**), Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, elephant, lion, cheetah, wild dog, sitatunga, all of the Northern Five. The guides' individual-animal knowledge transforms every encounter from observation into recognition they know which rhino this is, whose calf it is, how it has moved across the conservancy in the past week, what its relationship with the other rhinos in its territory is.
- ✓ **Rhino Encounters — Black and White Rhino** Kifaru's guides carry years of individual rhino knowledge. The white rhinos at Lewa are notably accessible the white rhino's grazing habit takes it into open grassland where approach and viewing are straightforward. The black rhinos are more secretive, more challenging to find and approach, and more rewarding when the patience required to locate them is rewarded. Both experiences are available within the same conservancy, making Lewa one of the finest places in Africa to observe and understand the differences between the two rhino species.
- ✓ **Orphan Rhino Sanctuary Visit** — Lewa's programme of rescuing and hand-raising orphaned rhino calves is one of the conservancy's most emotionally engaging conservation activities. A visit to the sanctuary where the young animals are cared for by keepers who have built deep bonds with them provides a direct encounter with the individual stories of conservation success and challenge that the conservancy's statistics can only gesture toward.
- ✓ **Prehistoric Acheulean Hand Axe Site** — A guided walk to the conservancy's half-million-year-old stone tool site: *"Visits to a pre-historic archaeological site"* is listed in Kifaru's own activity portfolio. Walking on ground where the earliest humans made the tools of their daily survival half a million years ago, in a conservancy now dedicated to protecting the specific animals those early humans may have hunted or competed with, produces a specific quality of temporal humility that no game drive generates.
- ✓ **Ngare Ndare Forest Day Visit** — The montane forest at the conservancy's southern boundary: canopy walkway, crystal-clear swimming pools, swimming under the waterfall and the extraordinary bird and primate diversity of a healthy indigenous Kenyan montane forest.
- ✓ **Samburu Cultural Visits** — The Samburu and Rendille communities whose lands border and overlap Lewa's northern boundary, accessible through the conservancy's sustained community relationships.
- ✓ **School Visits** — For guests interested in the conservancy's community education programme: visits to supported schools.
- ✓ **Anti-Poaching Tracker Dog Visit** — The Lewa canine unit, which has achieved significant conservation impact across the conservancy and the surrounding community.
- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks** — On foot in the conservancy with armed ranger escort: interpreting tracks, plants and the landscape's ecological story at the scale that only walking provides.
- ✓ **Horseback Riding** — Available through the Lewa Wilderness stables for riders of all abilities.
- ✓ **Camel Riding** — Evening camel rides with Samburu handlers across the conservancy's plains at dusk the camels completely calm in the presence of Grevy's zebra and reticulated giraffe, allowing an approach that no vehicle or horse achieves.
- ✓ **Bush Breakfasts and Sundowners** — The conservancy's escarpment positions and dam edges for private outdoor dining: *"few places have such dramatic sunrises as Africa from Kifaru House guests can watch the splendid dawn break and enjoy a hearty breakfast al fresco, in the middle of the plains, surrounded by wildlife."*

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ Full board meals prepared from locally sourced and conservancy-produced ingredients.
- ✓ The dining room terrace looks directly onto the waterhole below wildlife visits during meals are standard rather than exceptional.
- ✓ A la carte elements available; dietary requirements accommodated with advance notice.

Why We Love Kifaru House:

- ✓ We love Kifaru for the **name** for the specific choice to name a luxury safari property after the Swahili word for rhinoceros, in a conservancy whose entire reason for existence is the protection of that animal.
- ✓ Every morning at Kifaru House begins with a reminder, in the property's very name, of why this conservancy exists.
- ✓ And for the guides' individual-rhino knowledge for the experience of a game drive led by someone who knows the animal not as a species but as an individual with a history, a personality and a family.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *The Victorian bathtub cottage is the one to request the outdoor bath is positioned to look across the conservancy while you soak, and the rhino activity visible from the water is, on the mornings when the animals cooperate, one of the single finest experiences Laikipia provides. Arrange the prehistoric site walk for the afternoon of the second day, when the morning's game drive has given you the landscape's geography and the site's position within it becomes meaningful.*

Families and Children:

Kifaru House is excellent for families. The family cottage configuration; the orphan rhino visit (universally beloved by children); the tracker dog demonstration; the prehistoric site (genuinely fascinating for intellectually curious children); and the warmth of the hosting all create exceptional family experiences. All ages welcome.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight: Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Lewa Downs Airstrip** on AirKenya and Safarilink (approximately **40–55 minutes**, sometimes routing via Nanyuki or Samburu). Lewa Downs Airstrip is **10 minutes by road** from Kifaru House the shortest airstrip-to-lodge transfer of any major Laikipia property. Airstrip transfers are included in the rate.

By Private Charter: Direct charter to Lewa Downs Airstrip from Nairobi Wilson: approximately 45–55 minutes. From the airstrip, Kifaru House is 10 minutes.

By Road: Nairobi to Lewa Downs Airstrip area (Kifaru House access point) via Nanyuki: approximately **4 hours**. Note that **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy has strict vehicle access rules** only authorized vehicles are permitted within the conservancy. Guests arriving by private road vehicle must meet Elewana's collection vehicle at the Conservancy headquarters for the final transfer to the property.

Vard Africa Note: The scheduled flight to Lewa Downs followed by the 10-minute vehicle transfer is the most efficient and most enjoyable arrival at Kifaru House. The brevity of the transfer means guests are in the conservancy and at wildlife almost immediately upon landing.

LEWA SAFARI CAMP

Elewana Collection | Authentic Comfort Luxury | Privileged Access to 62,000 Acres of UNESCO World Heritage Land

Set within the remarkable expanse of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Lewa Safari Camp offers a rare and deeply personal connection to one of Kenya's most celebrated wilderness areas. Here, wildlife encounters unfold with quiet authenticity lion, leopard, and jackal move through a landscape rich with life, while vast herds of plains game sustain a delicate and thriving ecosystem. The conservancy is home to the world's largest population of Grevy's zebra and provides sanctuary to over 200 black and white rhino, alongside an extraordinary diversity of birdlife.

Positioned within 65,000 acres of protected terrain, the camp feels both expansive and intimately secluded. Its tented suites are thoughtfully designed to blend classic safari charm with understated comfort private verandahs open onto sweeping views, while en-suite bathrooms and warm interiors create a sense of ease and retreat. Evenings invite a slower rhythm, often spent beside a glowing fire, reflecting on the quiet theatre of the day.

What sets Lewa Safari Camp apart is not only its privileged access to this extraordinary landscape, but its purpose. Established on one of Kenya's pioneering conservancies, founded in the 1970s, Lewa represents a globally respected model of conservation where wildlife protection, community partnership, and sustainable tourism exist in careful balance.

As the only camp owned and operated by the conservancy itself, Lewa Safari Camp offers something truly meaningful: every stay contributes directly to the preservation of this ecosystem and the wellbeing of surrounding communities. It is a place where luxury is defined not only by comfort and exclusivity, but by connection to the land, to its wildlife, and to a conservation legacy that continues to shape the future of Africa's wild spaces.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

Tented Suites — Intimate Safari Living

At Lewa Safari Camp, each tented suite is designed to offer an authentic yet refined connection to the surrounding wilderness. Eleven thatched safari tents are thoughtfully positioned to ensure privacy, space, and uninterrupted views across the plains.

Each suite unfolds into a generous bedroom, an en-suite bathroom, and a spacious private verandah an invitation to pause, reflect, and absorb the rhythm of the landscape. Whether arranged as a double or twin, every detail is tailored to your preference, creating a stay that feels both personal and effortless.

For families travelling with children, select tents can be adapted to accommodate a third bed, allowing younger guests to share in the experience without compromising comfort.

Family Suites — Shared Moments, Private Space

Designed with togetherness in mind, Lewa’s Family Suites offer an ideal balance of connection and privacy. Each suite comprises two en-suite tents one double and one twin joined by a shared verandah and sitting area beneath a traditional thatched roof.

Overlooking the sweeping Lewa plains, these spaces invite families to gather, unwind, and experience the magic of safari side by side. The interiors remain true to the spirit of classic safari living, while modern comforts flush bathrooms, hot water showers, and generous layouts ensure ease at every moment.

For larger families, one suite can accommodate an additional child, making it possible to host up to five guests without losing the sense of intimacy and calm.

Health & Safety

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Lewa Safari Camp:

The full Lewa Wildlife Conservancy activity portfolio game drives in a conservancy that holds 10% of Kenya's black rhino population and the world's largest Grevy's zebra population; rhino encounters.

Game Drives — Into the Heart of the Wild

- ✓ At Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, each game drive is guided by deep knowledge and lived connection to the land. The camp’s expert guides many of whom come from neighbouring communities bring years of experience, with Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association accreditation and advanced training to the renowned Lewa standard.
- ✓ Their insight transforms every drive into a meaningful encounter, revealing not only iconic wildlife but the subtle rhythms and stories of the ecosystem itself.

Guided Walking Safaris — A Closer Connection

- ✓ To explore Lewa on foot is to experience the landscape in its most intimate form. Led by highly trained wildlife rangers, these walks offer a deeper understanding of the conservancy from rhino conservation efforts to the intricate language of tracks, plants, and smaller life often missed from a vehicle.
- ✓ Most walks begin directly from camp, unfolding at a gentle, immersive pace.

Ngare Ndare Forest — A Hidden World

- ✓ A journey to Ngare Ndare Forest Conservancy reveals a striking contrast to Lewa’s open plains. This lush, community-run forest sanctuary invites exploration along its canopy walkway, river paths, and shaded glades.
- ✓ Accompanied by experienced guides, guests may encounter elephants moving quietly through the forest. A full-day experience, it is complemented by a picnic in nature, with access contributing directly to community conservation.

Moments of Stillness — Pool & Garden Retreat

- ✓ Within the camp’s verdant gardens, the swimming pool offers a refreshing pause in the warmth of the day. Surrounded by sun loungers and shaded seating, it is a place to unwind whether with a book, a quiet game, or a cool drink in hand.

Bush Dining — Breakfasts & Sundowners

- ✓ Dining in the wild is one of safari’s most cherished rituals. Begin the day with a bush breakfast set out on the plains, where the sounds and sights of wildlife accompany a beautifully prepared meal.
- ✓ As evening falls, the tradition of sundowners invites you to pause and reflect. With a drink in hand, watch as the sky softens into colour and the landscape settles into dusk an experience as timeless as safari itself.

Wellness — Rest & Renewal

- ✓ Safari is as much about restoration as it is about adventure. Indulgent massages are offered in the comfort of camp, easing tired muscles and allowing for moments of complete relaxation amidst the stillness of the bush.

Horseback & Camel Safaris — A Different Perspective

- ✓ For experienced riders, horseback safaris offer a rare and exhilarating way to move among wildlife, often drawing closer to plains game in a uniquely natural way. Camel safaris provide a similarly immersive experience, connecting you to the rhythms of the land at a slower pace.
- ✓ All rides are carefully guided and tailored, with safety and experience as a priority.

Cultural Encounters — Living Heritage

- ✓ Lewa shares its borders with vibrant Samburu communities, and guests are invited to experience this rich cultural heritage through respectful visits to local homesteads.
- ✓ Here, traditions come to life from the construction of manyattas to intricate beadwork and storytelling offering meaningful insight into a way of life deeply connected to the land.

Conservation Experiences — A Deeper Purpose

- ✓ For those wishing to engage more deeply, Lewa offers opportunities to witness its pioneering conservation work firsthand. From visiting local schools supported by the conservancy to observing initiatives such as tracker dog training, these experiences reveal the powerful connection between conservation, education, and community.

Celebrations — Weddings & Honeymoons

- ✓ Few settings are as naturally romantic as the African wilderness. At Lewa Safari Camp, celebrations are infused with intimacy and beauty whether it is a honeymoon, a private blessing, or a wedding shared with loved ones.
- ✓ From simple, heartfelt moments beneath open skies to multi-day celebrations with exclusive use of the camp, each occasion is thoughtfully curated. With sweeping landscapes, golden sunsets, and a profound sense of place, every celebration becomes both personal and unforgettable.

Getting There:

Scheduled flight to Lewa Downs Airstrip (40–55 minutes from Nairobi Wilson), 30 minutes by road transfer.

LEWA HOUSE

Luxury Farmstead-Style Lodge | Resident Hosting Couple from Kenya and Scotland | Warm Family Character

Introduction: Lewa House occupies a **specific and irreplaceable position** in the Lewa lodge landscape a **luxury farmstead-style property** set within the conservancy and run by a resident couple whose backgrounds span Kenya and Scotland, combining the deep Kenyan highland landscape knowledge with a specifically Scottish quality of hospitality that makes guests feel genuinely welcomed rather than simply well-served.

"Lewa House is a very comfortable, farmstead-style safari lodge located on the Lewa Conservancy, north of Mount Kenya" the Expert Africa description is accurate in its elements if inevitably compressed. The main building an elegant thatched structure with a **big open fireplace** as its social centerpiece is surrounded by private cottages set in beautiful gardens. The heart of the home *"features an elegant, thatched building with a big, open fireplace"* alongside the accommodation's **family cottages and private, airy earthpods** (a distinctive accommodation type specific to Lewa House).

The resident couple's hosting owners who are **present, who know the conservancy and its animals personally, and who host evening conversations about Kenya, the conservancy and the history of this specific piece of land** is described consistently by guests as among the most valuable and most memorable aspects of staying at Lewa House. This is the experience of being a guest in a private home where the hosts genuinely know and love the landscape they are sharing with you.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

Lewa House is designed as a private home in the wild where space, seclusion, and thoughtful design come together to create a deeply personal safari experience.

Accommodation is arranged across a collection of charming, thatched cottages, each carefully positioned to maximise privacy while framing uninterrupted views across the plains. The layout of the house allows for both exclusivity and flexibility, making it equally suited to couples, families, or small groups seeking sole-use occupancy.

Each cottage is en-suite and individually styled, combining the warmth of traditional safari living with understated comfort. Soft linens, natural textures, and open fireplaces create an atmosphere that is both elegant and inviting, while large windows and private verandahs dissolve the boundary between indoors and the surrounding wilderness.

Room configurations are intentionally flexible. Suites can be arranged as doubles or twins, with select cottages designed to accommodate families through interconnected spaces or additional beds for younger guests. This thoughtful approach allows Lewa House to retain its intimate character while adapting seamlessly to the needs of each group.

At the heart of the property lies a series of shared living spaces open lounges, dining areas, and expansive terraces where guests can gather or retreat as they choose. Whether enjoying quiet solitude or shared moments, the flow of the house encourages a sense of ease and belonging.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ Dining at Lewa House is informal yet deeply considered, centred around fresh ingredients, thoughtful preparation, and shared experience.
- ✓ Meals are shaped entirely around the guest. Breakfast may unfold slowly on the verandah as the landscape awakens, while lunch is often served in shaded gardens or by the pool. Evenings bring a more atmospheric setting candlelit dinners beneath the stars or fireside meals that reflect the warmth and intimacy of the house.
- ✓ The kitchen focuses on seasonal, locally sourced produce, creating dishes that are both wholesome and flavourful. Dietary preferences are seamlessly accommodated, with menus tailored daily to suit individual tastes.
- ✓ Beyond the house, dining extends into the landscape itself. Bush breakfasts and sundowners offer memorable moments in the wild combining exceptional food with the beauty and stillness of Lewa at different times of day.

Health & Safety

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Lewa House:

Experiences at Lewa House are guided by flexibility and a deep understanding of the conservancy. Each activity is tailored to your interests, creating a safari that feels entirely your own.

- ✓ **Game Drives**
Privately guided game drives reveal the richness of Lewa's ecosystem. Led by experienced guides with an intimate knowledge of the land, these journeys offer exceptional sightings alongside deeper insight into animal behaviour, conservation, and the delicate balance of the environment.
- ✓ **Guided Walking Safaris**
Exploring on foot offers a more intimate perspective. Accompanied by expert rangers, guests discover the finer details of the bush from tracks and plant life to the interconnected systems that sustain the landscape.
- ✓ **Horseback Safaris**
One of Lewa's most distinctive experiences, horseback riding allows guests to move quietly among wildlife. For experienced riders, this offers a rare sense of freedom and connection to the plains.
- ✓ **Conservation & Community Engagement**
Lewa House provides unique opportunities to witness conservation in action. From rhino protection initiatives to community and education programmes, these experiences offer meaningful insight into the work that sustains both wildlife and local livelihoods.
- ✓ **Ngare Ndare Forest Excursions**
A full-day adventure to Ngare Ndare Forest Conservancy introduces a contrasting landscape of lush forest, canopy walkways, and crystal-clear pools an enriching complement to the open savannah.
- ✓ **Wellness & Leisure**
Between activities, the house invites rest and rejuvenation whether through swimming, quiet reading, or simply absorbing the stillness of the surroundings.

Getting There:

Scheduled flight to Lewa Downs Airstrip; road transfer within the conservancy.

SIRIKOI LODGE

Founded 2000 by Willie & Sue Roberts | Condé Nast Traveller Gold List | 4 Luxury Tents + Sirikoi Cottage + Sirikoi House | Kenya's Leading Safari Lodge 2024 | The Organic Garden | The Victorian Bathtub

Location and Setting: Sirikoi Lodge is positioned along the **spring-fed Sirikoi stream** from which the lodge takes its name on **beautifully maintained lawned grounds within a private 7,000-acre section** of the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. This private area within the conservancy provides Sirikoi guests with exclusive access to their own 7,000-acre portion of the UNESCO World Heritage Site while the full 62,000 acres of the conservancy remain accessible for all activities.

The stream and the substantial **natural waterhole** it feeds are Sirikoi's defining physical features. The waterhole draws white rhinos in the early morning, elephants throughout the day, giraffes at dusk and the extraordinary diversity of the conservancy's plains game and birds at all hours. The **continuous gentle sound of the stream** audible from every tent and from the main lodge terrace provides the acoustic signature that distinguishes Sirikoi from every other tented camp in Kenya. Guests consistently describe waking at 2am to the sound of the stream and lying still, listening to the hippos moving to the water beyond the canvas, as one of the most specifically perfect moments of their Kenya journey.

Introduction and History: Sirikoi Lodge is one of the finest and most deeply personal properties in all of Kenya and one of the most deeply sad to describe, because one of the two people who built it is no longer here.

Willie Roberts was not merely a lodge owner. He was one of the architects of modern Kenyan conservation tourism a man whose careers as a safari guide, camp designer and conservation advocate spanned five decades and shaped the industry in ways that are still being felt. He established **Kenya's first wildlife conservancy in the Maasai Mara** in the early years of private land conservation contributing a section of land to community conservation at a moment when the concept had no track record and no guarantee of success. He spent years guiding safaris across East Africa and designing lodges across Kenya, each one an expression of a specific conservation vision. Sirikoi, opened in **2000**, is the third lodge Willie built and the one into which he and Sue poured the full accumulated wisdom of their combined half-century in the Kenya safari tradition.

Sue Roberts is one of Kenya's most accomplished and most passionate botanists. The **organic kitchen garden** at Sirikoi described by multiple independent assessments as *"the most impressive private garden at any lodge in Kenya"* is Sue's life's work in the most literal sense: decades of botanical knowledge, horticultural passion and specific commitment to this specific piece of highland Kenyan soil, expressed in a garden that produces raspberries and blueberries alongside pawpaw and mango, that grows rare creepers up stone chimneys and frames the lodge's pathways in extraordinary botanical detail, that provides the fresh produce for every meal and the cut flowers for every room, and that is sufficiently extraordinary in its own right to be worth a visit independent of any wildlife consideration.

Willie Roberts died in **2017**. Sue Roberts and the family including subsequent generations carry forward what he built with the specific fidelity of people who know exactly what they have been given and exactly how important it is to preserve it. The warmth, the knowledge, the attention to the smallest details, the genuine care for every guest's experience these continue at Sirikoi as they existed under Willie's direct guidance. In **2015**, Sirikoi won **Ecotourism Kenya's Eco-rated Lodge of the Year** award the culmination of a decade and a half of consistent environmental commitment. The lodge has appeared on the **Condé Nast Traveller Gold List** one of the most selective and most credible luxury accommodation rankings in international travel publishing for multiple consecutive years. In 2024, Sirikoi was designated **Kenya's Leading Safari Lodge** by the World Travel Awards.

Awards and Recognition:

- **Condé Nast Traveller Gold List** — Multiple consecutive years
- **Kenya's Leading Safari Lodge 2024** — World Travel Awards

- **Ecotourism Kenya Eco-rated Lodge of the Year 2015**
- **Travellers Choice Winner 2020**
- *#1 Luxury Resort in the World 2019* — Guest rating recognition
- **The Long Run** member committed to conservation, community, culture and commerce principles

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

Sirikoi offers four distinct accommodation configurations:

4 Luxury Tented Rooms — Sirikoi's classic accommodation, the tents that established the lodge's reputation. Set **under magnificent old acacia trees** on the lawned grounds overlooking the stream and waterhole. Each tent:

The Exterior: Canvas walls in the finest East African tented camp tradition — but canvas of quality, properly maintained, that feels solid rather than temporary. A **private deck** fronts each tent, elevated slightly from the lawn, positioned directly facing the waterhole the position from which guests watch white rhinos drinking in the early morning, elephants at midday, giraffes at dusk and the extraordinary bird life throughout the day. **Bowl chairs** on the deck deep, low, enveloping invite the specific posture of complete wildlife-watching relaxation.

The Interior: A **large double or twin bed** with premium linen of notable quality. A small **sitting area with an open fireplace beneath its own mantelpiece** on which sit a small selection of books about the conservancy, one or two photographs, the specific intimate accumulation of objects that distinguishes a properly personal hospitality from a designed hotel room. The fireplace is lit by staff each evening on cool highland nights. A **private lounge area** for reading, writing and the specific pleasure of a tent interior when the rain is falling outside and the stream is audible and the fire is burning.

The Ensuite Bathroom: Fully appointed. And the specific feature that has appeared in every significant publication that has covered Sirikoi: a **free-standing Victorian-style bathtub** proper cast iron, proper enamel, deep enough to submerge positioned to look **through the canvas window toward the waterhole and the savannah beyond**. The possibility of lying in a Victorian bathtub watching a white rhino drink from a waterhole in the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, while the Sirikoi stream provides the background audio, is one of those combinations completely absurd in description, completely transcendent in experience that only specific places produce.

Sirikoi Cottage — Built from wood, stone and thatch in the same architectural vocabulary as the main lodge. **Two ensuite bedrooms**, each with fireplace and private entrance, connected by a **shared central lounge with fireplace**, a small kitchen and a **spacious veranda** overlooking the stream and waterhole. The Cottage is sold exclusively the entire structure is reserved for a single party ideal for small families or close friends who want their own private world within the lodge. Each party staying in the Cottage has its own dedicated game drive vehicle and guide.

Sirikoi House — Sirikoi's grandest and most complete accommodation configuration. The House complex includes: a **master-bedroom cottage** with the most spacious and most sumptuously furnished individual suite on the property; a **separate bedroom cottage with two ensuite bedrooms**; and a **central living and dining cottage** that has become renowned in the Kenya safari community for its positioning, its view of the Lewa wetlands and its decor an extraordinary accumulated collection of objects from around the world, assembled across decades with the taste and judgement of people who have lived in and loved Kenya and who know that the best interiors tell stories rather than demonstrate budgets. A **private wooden deck built overlooking the Lewa wetlands** the finest private sundowner position on the property.

Sirikoi House is sold **exclusively only** and comes with its own **private safari vehicle and guide, chef and dedicated team of staff** for the duration of the stay. The guests of Sirikoi House have the most complete private safari estate experience in the Lewa conservancy.

Main Lodge Communal Areas: The main lodge building **deeply thatched, designed for the highland climate** contains an elegant sitting room with deep chairs arranged around a fireplace, a dining room that can accommodate all lodge guests comfortably at shared or individual tables, and a terrace from which the waterhole is directly visible. *"You can eat indoors (with rhinos grazing on the lawn outside), outdoors on the deck or even by lamplight in the bush."*

The Organic Garden: *Behind the scenes is an enormous vegetable garden growing flowers which are displayed throughout the lodge, as well as vegetables, herbs and fruit, which contributes fresh produce to delicious meals. The garden is completely pesticide-free. The nutrient rich soils and temperate climate mean that fruit and vegetables flourish here when Expert Africa last stayed they were fascinated to see raspberries and blueberries growing side-by-side with pawpaw and mango.*

This is the garden that Sue Roberts has been developing for twenty-five years. It is not a kitchen garden in the conventional sense; it is a botanical statement about what is possible in highland Kenya with sufficient knowledge, sufficient passion and sufficient time.

The Sirikoi Gift Shop: Next to the communal area offering a selection of high-end crafts and jewellery including not only the standard Maasai beadwork found throughout Kenya but also a range of **stunning silverwork pieces** from Kenyan artisans and selected craft items of unusual quality.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Sirikoi Lodge:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives — Exclusive Use of Vehicle** Every party at Sirikoi has its own dedicated game drive vehicle a significant distinction from camps where vehicles are shared. The guide's full attention and the vehicle's full flexibility are organised around a single group. The Lewa conservancy's rhino population, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, the Big Five and the full Northern Five community accessed in genuine privacy.
- ✓ **Rhino Encounters** — *"Lewa is home to 10% of Kenya's remaining black rhino population"* Sirikoi's guides know the individual rhino families across the 7,000-acre private section and beyond, their knowledge accumulated through years of daily observation.
- ✓ **Lewa Conservation Headquarters Visit** — A structured visit to Lewa's operations centre: the monitoring technology, the ranger deployment system, the canine anti-poaching unit and the specific mechanisms by which one of Kenya's finest conservancies is managed and protected.
- ✓ **The Acheulean Hand Axe Prehistoric Site** — Walking to the half-million-year-old stone tool site with Sirikoi's guides. As one guest wrote: *"a fascinating educational experience"*. The guides' ability to interpret the site identifying the specific tools, explaining the production technique, contextualizing the early hominin presence in this specific landscape makes this one of the most specifically educational activities available at any Laikipia property.
- ✓ **Horseback Riding** — Available through Lewa's horse stables for riders of all abilities. *"Located in an exclusive 30km² area of the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Sirikoi offers riding opportunities with horses suited to beginners or experienced riders, accompanied by experienced guides on horseback to ensure safety."* Rides normally last 1–2 hours but can be extended for experienced riders.
- ✓ **Camel Safaris** — *"Venture out on an afternoon camel or quad-bike safari."* Evening camel rides across the conservancy at the pace that allows the plains game to approach closely.
- ✓ **Quad Biking** — Available as an optional activity; guests must carry comprehensive insurance that specifically covers quad bike activities.
- ✓ **Ngare Ndare Forest Visit** — Canopy walkway, crystal pools and waterfall swimming at the UNESCO World Heritage Site's indigenous forest section. *"Swimming in the Ngare Ndare Forest Reserve or visiting the local Rendille community."*
- ✓ **Helicopter Scenic Flights** — Available to arrange: *"including flips over the Magado Salt Pans, Lake Turkana (known as the Jade Sea), Mount Nyiru and the Ewaso Nyiro River"* from the Expert Africa description. Full helicopter expedition programme coordinated through Vard Africa.
- ✓ **The Organic Garden Tour** — With a member of the Sirikoi team: walking through the pesticide-free garden that grows raspberries alongside pawpaw, learning the cultivation techniques and the specific horticultural knowledge that makes this garden exceptional in the context of highland Kenya. One of the most distinctive non-wildlife activities available at any Kenyan lodge.
- ✓ **The Back-of-House Sustainability Tour** — The solar systems, composting operations, water management, environmental practices and the Sirikoi Impact Centre's conservation education materials: *"All Proceeds from Beauty treatments are donated to local schools/orphanage"* — a visit to the conservancy headquarters demonstrates concretely how Sirikoi's sustainability commitments translate into operational practice. One of the most honest and most grounded conversations about luxury tourism and sustainability available in Kenya.
- ✓ **Bush Breakfasts and Bush Dinners** — *"You can eat indoors (with rhinos grazing on the lawn outside), outdoors on the deck or even by lamplight in the bush."* Sirikoi's bush positions the stream bank, the escarpment edges accessible by vehicle provide extraordinary outdoor dining settings at both ends of the day.

Cultural Visits to Local Rendille and Samburu Communities

Arranged through the conservancy's community relationships.

The Impact Centre Sirikoi's dedicated space for sharing the conservancy's conservation work with guests, inspired by The Long Run's 4C principles. Interactive educational experiences covering Lewa's wildlife conservation achievements, community programmes and environmental practices.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ Sirikoi's kitchen draws on **the organic garden's produce** the farm-to-table connection is real rather than aspirational, the garden visible from the dining room, the herbs cut hours before service, the vegetables carrying the specific texture and flavour of produce that has not spent time in a refrigerated supply chain.
- ✓ The food is described by independent assessors as *"exceptional, fresh, tasty and healthy"* qualities that are directly attributable to the source. Menu flexibility: the kitchen accommodates all dietary requirements with advance notice.
- ✓ Special dietary needs are handled with the same care as the standard menu.

Why We Love Sirikoi:

We love Sirikoi for the **Victorian bathtub watching the rhinos** for the specific, deeply Sirikoi intelligence of placing the finest bathing experience in Kenya in the precise position that faces the finest wildlife experience in Kenya, and for the decades of care that Sue Roberts has put into the organic garden that makes every meal an expression of what this specific piece of highland Kenyan soil can produce. And for Willie Roberts for the life he built and the legacy that continues in every detail of this extraordinary property.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Request the tent with the Victorian bathtub as the first priority of your booking. Have the bath drawn at dusk on your first evening the staff will prepare it with the canvas window positioned for the waterhole view and lie in it as the rhinos come to drink and the first stars appear above the Lewa acacia canopy. This is the most specific, most irreplaceable and most perfectly Sirikoi experience the lodge offers, and it is available at no other property in Kenya. And do not skip the back-of-house sustainability tour: it is the most honest conversation about luxury tourism and its relationship with the environment that you will have anywhere in Laikipia.*

Families and Children:

- ✓ Sirikoi is outstanding for families. **Children of all ages are warmly welcomed.**
- ✓ The Cottage and House configurations provide ideal family arrangements with genuine privacy.

- ✓ The rhino encounters, prehistoric site visits, organic garden visits, camel rides and the constant wildlife theatre of the waterhole from the tent decks create family experiences that engage all ages.
- ✓ Child rates are available contact Vard Africa for current children's pricing.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights minimum. 4–5 nights strongly recommended to experience the full programme including the organic garden, the prehistoric site, the conservation HQ visit and the bush dinner positions.

Communication in the Wilderness: High-speed WiFi throughout the lodge a specific feature at Sirikoi, as many comparable luxury properties in northern Laikipia have limited bandwidth. Mobile coverage (Safaricom) generally available at the property. The stream's sound provides a natural form of cognitive disconnection from digital life that many guests find more restorative than any technology policy.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight:* Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Lewa Downs Airstrip** (approximately 40–55 minutes).
- ✓ Sirikoi is accessed via **Lewa Downs Airstrip** the transfer to the lodge is **included in the rates** and takes approximately **30–40 minutes** through the conservancy's wildlife landscape.
- ✓ *By Private Charter:* Direct charter to Lewa Downs Airstrip from Nairobi Wilson: approximately 45–55 minutes.
- ✓ From the airstrip, Sirikoi's team collects guests and drives through the conservancy.
- ✓ *By Road:* Nairobi to Sirikoi via Nanyuki: approximately **4 hours** to Nanyuki, then north to the Lewa Conservancy headquarters.
Note: **only authorised vehicles are permitted within the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy.**
- ✓ Private road vehicles must meet Sirikoi's collection vehicle at the conservancy headquarters.

LEWA WILDERNESS

The Craig Family Home Since 1922 — The First Private Ranch in Kenya to Welcome Guests

The Property: The story of Lewa Wilderness is the origin story of Kenyan conservancy tourism the place and the moment from which everything that followed in Laikipia's private conservation landscape grew.

Since **1922**, the Craig-Douglas family managed **Lewa Downs** as a working cattle ranch, their presence in the highland landscape one of many similar colonial-era farming enterprises in the Kenyan highlands. The difference came in **1972**, when David and Delia Craig made a decision without precedent in Kenyan private land history: they opened their family home to paying guests. No other private ranch in Kenya had done this. The model of the private family homestead as a safari destination now the defining character of the Laikipia luxury tourism landscape was invented here, on this hillside, by this family, in that year.

The decision was not made from a conservation agenda; it was made because the Craigs loved their land and loved the wildlife on it, and because the income from guests would support the ranch and the conservation commitment that Delia had made to her father. But the consequences of the decision were transformational for an entire regional economy and an entire approach to wildlife conservation that now extends across hundreds of thousands of acres.

LEWA WILDERNESS LODGE AND PRIVATE WILDERNESS

Will & Emma Craig Family Home of the Conservancy's Founders | 9 Cottages | WACO Biplane | Private Wilderness Exclusive-Use Residence

Location and Setting: Lewa Wilderness Lodge sits on the **steep slopes of the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy's Western Marania Valley** *"situated on the steep slopes of the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy's Western Marania Valley, Lewa Wilderness boasts spectacular views all the way down to the valley floor."* This hillside position, above the valley floor with the eastern escarpment visible across it, provides a specific quality of landscape experience different from the open plains conservancies of western Laikipia: a sense of enclosure and depth, of looking down into a valley rather than across an open plateau.

Introduction and History: Lewa Wilderness is today the **family home of Will and Emma Craig** David and Delia's son and daughter-in-law who host guests with a warmth and personal engagement that reflects four generations of the Craig family's investment in this specific piece of land. *"Lewa Wilderness is today still the family home of Will and Emma Craig where, with the help of Karamushu and his wife Fatuma and the wider team, they proudly continue to entertain guests and provide a truly unique and personal safari experience."*

Karamushu the lodge manager and a Maasai elder from the neighbouring Il Ngwesi community has been part of the Lewa Wilderness family for over 15 years. He began as a tracker and walking guide, became head guide and has been managing the hosting for a decade and a half. His knowledge of the Lewa conservancy is encyclopedic; his ability to make guests feel immediately and genuinely welcomed is, multiple guests report, one of the finest things about staying at Lewa Wilderness. He lives at the lodge with his wife Fatuma and their four children while maintaining his family's cattle and his own community in the neighbouring village.

The lodge is also connected to the Craig family's wider conservation achievements through Will's son **Joss Craig and his wife Miranda** who manage the horseback programme. Miranda came to Kenya in 2016 to volunteer with horses, met Will and Emma, visited Lewa Wilderness and decided not to return home. She now manages the stables, bringing a passion for horses and for the highland Kenyan bush that has made the Lewa Wilderness riding programme one of the most personal and most enthusiastically delivered equestrian experiences in Laikipia.

The WACO Biplane — The most extraordinary single activity at Lewa Wilderness and one of the most extraordinary in all of Kenya. **Will Craig flies the only open-cockpit WACO biplane in East Africa** a classic American biplane design, beautifully maintained, completely airworthy, offering guests a two-passenger open-cockpit flight above the Lewa-Borana landscape with Will Craig as the pilot. There is no equivalent. *"Marvel at Lewa from a two-passenger plane piloted by former crop-dusting pilot Will Craig. You'll see plains, forests, and vast*

herds of game on your aerial safari." Lewa Wilderness has recently converted one of their Land Cruisers to be **100% electric** — the first electric safari vehicle in the Lewa conservancy.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

9 Guest Cottages:

6 Hill Cottages: Tucked into the hillside overlooking Lewa's **Eastern Marania Valley** each with its own specific position and view, each unique in its layout and configuration. Private verandah; en-suite bathroom; **four-poster beds** in the hill cottage tradition; **fireplaces** that are used on the cold highland evenings; the eclectic, welcoming, slightly idiosyncratic furnishing character that comes from a house that has been extended and embellished by people who genuinely love living in it. *"The Craig family has been entertaining visitors at their home, Lewa Wilderness, for the last 30 years and it shows."*

3 Garden Cottages: Set among **green lawns** near the main house, closest to the main lodge buildings. Well-suited to families, particularly those with young children. Each cottage is spacious and has en-suite bathroom. For families with children under 6, the garden cottages are the safer option the hill cottages' balconies are not recommended for very young children.

The **main lodge** — *"Tucked away on a hillside, this homely lodge overlooks Lewa Conservancy's Eastern Marania Valley"* contains the lounge, dining room, **library**, **billiards room**, and the farm-to-table kitchen. The billiards room is a genuine and well-used feature: wooden furniture, green baize, the specific atmosphere of a highland ranch house that takes its recreation as seriously as its safari. **Infinity pool** with valley views. **Tennis court** with Mount Kenya visible on clear mornings.

Private Wilderness — Lewa's exclusive-use **five-cottage residence** accommodating a maximum of **10 guests**:

"All the furniture has been made on site by Lewa carpenters, so this really is a labour of love with full involvement from the Craig family. Each standalone cottage is ensuite and can be configured as a double or a twin. The house comes with two private vehicles, accompanying guides, and a dedicated team of in-house staff. It also features its own well-sized infinity pool."

Private Wilderness is the Lewa experience in its most complete private form: five cottages, hand-crafted furniture from the conservancy's own carpenters (a detail that speaks loudly about the Craig family's investment in the project), two dedicated vehicles and guides, and the full freedom of the Lewa conservancy. The minimum age for Private Wilderness is 6 years.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight:* Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Lewa Downs Airstrip** (approximately **40–55 minutes**, sometimes routing via Nanyuki or Samburu). From the airstrip, Lewa Wilderness Lodge is a **30-minute road transfer**. Transfers to and from the designated airstrip are included in the rate.
- ✓ *By Private Charter:* Direct charter to Lewa Downs Airstrip from Nairobi Wilson. Will Craig also operates charter flights to and from Lewa in the property's own **Cessna 206 bush plane** the practical complement to the WACO biplane for serious cross-Kenya travel. Contact Vard Africa to arrange.
- ✓ *By Road:* Nairobi to Lewa Downs area via Nanyuki: approximately **4 hours**. Lewa's vehicle access rules apply only authorised vehicles within the conservancy.
- ✓ **Seasonal Opening:** Closed during **April, May and November** each year. Open December–March and June–October.

Communication in the Wilderness:

- ✓ WiFi is available in the lodge.
- ✓ Mobile coverage variable across the conservancy.
- ✓ The hill cottages may have limited mobile coverage.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Lewa Wilderness Lodge:

- ✓ **WACO Biplane Flights** — The only open-cockpit biplane in East Africa, piloted by Will Craig, available for scenic flights over the Lewa-Borana landscape, the Ngare Ndare Forest, the Northern Frontier and the Mount Kenya massif. One of the most joyful and most specifically exhilarating wildlife viewing experiences in Kenya from the open cockpit, the scale of the landscape and the distribution of the wildlife herds becomes completely apparent in a way that ground-level observation can never provide.
- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives** — The full Lewa Wildlife Conservancy's wildlife rhinos, Grevy's zebra, elephants, lions, wild dogs, cheetah and the complete Northern Five community. The conservancies recently converted 100% electric Land Cruiser provides an additional wildlife encounter dimension the silence of the electric vehicle allowing approach to skittish species at distances the conventional engine cannot achieve.

- ✓ **Horseback Riding** — Lewa Wilderness's own substantial stables: **over 40 horses** for riders from complete novice to experienced, managed by Miranda Craig who *"manages the stables"* and brings genuine personal passion to the programme. Day rides, multi-day expeditions and the five-day walking expedition through Lewa and nearby Il Ngwesi all available. *"A five-day walking expedition through Lewa and nearby Il Ngwesi can be arranged."*
- ✓ **Camel Riding** — Samburu-guided camel rides through the conservancy.
- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks** — With a professional tracker guide and armed ranger escort the conservancy's extraordinary diversity on foot.
- ✓ **Rhino Bottle-Feeding at Conservation Headquarters** — *"Where else can you bottle feed a baby rhino? Make sure you visit the conservancy headquarters to learn more about the incredible conservation work."* For guests with children and for adults one of the most emotionally engaging and most photographically rewarding wildlife encounters in all of Kenya.
- ✓ **Prehistoric Site Visit** — The Acheulean hand axe site that the Craig family has known about for generations, walked over countless times and that carries half-million-year-old significance in the conservancy's landscape.
- ✓ **Ngare Ndare Forest Visit** — Canopy walk and waterfall swimming at the UNESCO World Heritage Site's indigenous forest section. *"Head to nearby Ngare Ndare Forest for treetop canopy walks and swimming at the base of a picturesque waterfall. A picnic lunch is included."*
- ✓ **Maasai Cultural Village Visits** — The Karamushu connection to the Il Ngwesi Maasai community provides Lewa Wilderness guests with unusually authentic and unusually deep cultural visit experiences.
- ✓ **School and Conservation Programme Visits** — As throughout the Lewa conservancy.
- ✓ **Tennis, Billiards, Library and Lounge** — The lodge's highland ranch house amenities for the midday hours and the evenings.
- ✓ **Fly Camping** — Available for adventurous guests: an overnight in the conservancy's wilderness.
- ✓ **Bush Breakfasts, Bush Dinners and Sundowners** — Across the conservancy's extraordinary positions.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ Farm-to-table meals from the conservancy's own farm and garden, supplemented by the best available regional produce.
- ✓ *"Farm-to-table meals, a beautiful lodge living room with a roaring fire for pre-dinner cocktails, absolutely lovely staff."*
- ✓ *Truly a special spot.* The kitchen is responsive to dietary requirements; the children's menu is well-designed for younger guests.

Why We Love Lewa Wilderness:

- ✓ We love Lewa Wilderness for the **1972 decision** for David and Delia Craig's choice to open their home to guests, to invite people to share what they loved, and to create in doing so the model that has shaped Laikipia's entire conservation landscape.
- ✓ And for Karamushu whose fifteen years at this lodge and whose presence as the Lewa Wilderness community anchor make every guest feel, genuinely, as though they have arrived at the home of an old friend.
- ✓ And for the bottle-feeding of the baby rhino one of the most specifically formative wildlife encounters available to a child in Kenya, and to the adults who hold the bottle alongside them.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Arrange the WACO biplane flight for the penultimate morning after several days in the conservancy from the ground, seeing the scale of the landscape from the open cockpit, with Will Craig's commentary covering the landmarks visible below, reframes everything you have experienced at ground level and reveals the conservancy's full geography in a single aerial revelation. And spend an evening in the billiards room after dinner: the specific atmosphere of a highland ranch house billiards room in the Lewa conservancy, with the fire going and the day's encounters being discussed while the cues are in hand, is one of those completely unexpected pleasures that only happens here.*

Families and Children:

- ✓ Lewa Wilderness is particularly excellent for families.
- ✓ The garden cottages are ideal for families with young children; Private Wilderness's five-cottage configuration accommodates extended family groups perfectly.
- ✓ The rhino bottle-feeding at the conservation headquarters, the horseback riding through Miranda Craig's stables, and the WACO biplane experience for older children and adults create exceptional family memories.
- ✓ No minimum age for Lewa Wilderness; minimum age 6 for Private Wilderness.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight: Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Lewa Downs Airstrip** (approximately **40–55 minutes**, sometimes routing via Nanyuki or Samburu). From the airstrip, Lewa Wilderness Lodge is a **30-minute road transfer**.

By Private Charter: Direct charter to Lewa Downs Airstrip from Nairobi Wilson. Will Craig also operates charter flights to and from Lewa in the property's own **Cessna 206 bush plane** the practical complement to the WACO biplane for serious cross-Kenya travel. Contact Vard Africa to arrange.

By Road: Nairobi to Lewa Downs area via Nanyuki: approximately **4 hours**. Lewa's vehicle access rules apply only authorised vehicles within the conservancy.

Seasonal Opening: Closed during **April, May and November** each year. Open December–March and June–October.

Communication in the Wilderness: WiFi is available in the lodge. Mobile coverage variable across the conservancy. The hill cottages may have limited mobile coverage.

OL JOGI WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

58,000 Acres of Complete Privacy | The Wildenstein Legacy | Africa's Most Private Safari Estate | The Only Bear in Africa | Baccarat Chandeliers, Hermès Linens, Buccellati Silver

The Conservancy: The **Ol Jogi Wildlife Conservancy** covers **58,000 acres** (approximately 235 square kilometres) of the Laikipia Plateau — stretching from the foot of Mount Kenya to the edge of the Great Rift Valley, encompassing every habitat the plateau provides: open grassland, riverine forest, rocky kopjes, volcanic escarpment and ancient lava plateau.

Ol Jogi was established in **1980** as the **second private rhino conservancy in Kenya** when that decision required a specific combination of extreme financial commitment and genuine moral conviction, at a moment when the national rhino population had been reduced from 20,000 to fewer than 300 and the future of the species in Kenya looked genuinely uncertain. The Wildenstein family's decision to dedicate 58,000 acres of their private estate to rhino protection in 1980 was one of the most consequential acts of private conservation in Kenya's history.

The wildlife numbers today: **over 100 rhinoceros** both Eastern black and Southern white in the **fenced rhino sanctuary** established within the conservancy in 2005. An estimated **5,000 reticulated giraffes** *the world's largest population at any single conservancy*. **15% of the world's remaining Grevy's zebra**. Up to **400 elephants** during peak migration movements. 22 species of ungulates. Five large carnivore species including lion, leopard, cheetah, wild dog and spotted hyena. Three primate species. **55 lakes** within the conservancy's managed landscape.

The **Wildenstein family** one of the 20th century's most powerful and most influential art-dealing dynasties, responsible for transactions that shaped museum collections and private collections across Europe, America and Japan was at the height of its power and its wealth when it established Ol Jogi in 1980. *"The property was developed with, according to the builders Symbion, 'unlimited scope' in the 1980s. It is a property built without compromise to fulfil the owners' every desire."* The evidence of this remains: the **Baccarat chandeliers**, the **Hermès linens**, the **Buccellati silver**, the **Murano glass globes**, the museum-quality artworks, the antique furniture from multiple periods and continents, the pool complex with its cascading waterfall and flowery islands, the underground tunnel to the waterhole hide.

The property was opened to guests in **2013** thirty-three years after it was established, and only when **Alec Wildenstein** who made his first trip to Ol Jogi when he was six months old and who took over its management after his father died almost fifteen years ago was satisfied that the guest experience could reproduce what he describes simply as: *"What we're trying to offer is the same experience we had when it was our family home."*

300 rangers patrol the property continuously. A **world-class veterinary clinic** has operated since 1995. A **wildlife rescue centre** established in 1986 one of the earliest in East Africa has returned animals to the wild across the region. A **primary school and community medical dispensary** serve the surrounding community. The conservancy works with the **Conservation Biology Institute Global Health Program** and vets from the **Smithsonian's National Zoo**. All revenues from tourism are reinvested in conservation.

And there is **Potap** a grizzly bear donated from Moscow, the only bear anywhere in Africa, cared for at Ol Jogi with the evident dedication of a conservation team that has decided this magnificent displaced animal deserves the best possible life on this continent. Potap is not a zoo exhibit; he is a resident of the conservancy, cared for by keepers who know him, who exercise him and who have developed the kind of relationship with a grizzly bear that very few people anywhere in the world can claim.

OL JOGI HOME

Exclusive-Use Only | 11 Bedrooms across 8 Individually Designed Cottages | Maximum 14 Guests | The Most Private Safari Estate in Africa

Location and Setting: Ol Jogi Home is built into and upon a **large kopje** a rocky island of ancient granite rising from the Laikipia Plateau, 225 kilometres north of Nairobi. The stone of the buildings is the stone of the kopje on which they rest: the architecture dissolves into the geology at every edge and junction, making the home almost invisible from a distance and completely extraordinary from within.

"Wonderfully, almost invisibly set on a large kopje, a rocky island on the Laikipia Plateau in central Kenya." The main homestead "It could easily pass for a James Bond movie set with its Baccarat chandeliers, Hermès linen, Buccellati silver and the staggering variety of jungle prints, shag rugs, period and antique furniture and incredible artworks."

Introduction: Ol Jogi is described by the person who has stayed at more than 410 of Africa's top lodges over 30 years as *"hands down, my absolute favourite safari experience and property in Africa. There is no contest... it's not even close."* The claim is not unusual among those who have stayed there. What is specific is what the claim refers to.

Ol Jogi is not the most beautiful building in Africa (Arijiju claims that designation). It is not the most sustainable. It is not the most intimate. What it is and what makes it unique in the entire landscape of African luxury safari experiences is the **most complete**. It offers everything with the exception of compromise, in a private estate of 58,000 acres that accommodates a maximum of 14 guests and whose entire operations, wildlife management and conservation infrastructure are organised around the experience of those 14 guests.

"It is the only property I can think of that offers everything so comprehensively: the Big 5, wildlife rehab, hands-on wildlife experiences, anti-poaching team, school, clinic, village, pool, waterpark, gym, hammam, canyons, silver service, mountains, lakes, boats, rivers, cars, helicopters, horses, underground hide, secret wine cellar, movie theater, art collection, billiards room... non-profit, non-malarial, exclusive use with children of all ages welcome, all-inclusive of the highest standard."

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

11 bedrooms across 8 individually designed and decorated cottages accommodating a **maximum of 14 guests** in an **exclusive-use arrangement** available for groups of as few as 4–6 guests depending on season.

- ✓ *The Simba and Mbogo Master Suites:* One minute's walk from the Main House.

- ✓ Each is a **large, air-conditioned suite** with a **king bed** (Mbogo features a four-poster frame); a **wood-burning fireplace**; **two bathrooms** (full bathroom and powder room); **two dressing rooms** with generous wardrobe storage.
- ✓ Mbogo also has a **private office** with an offset room that can serve as an additional children's room for families.
- ✓ These are the property's finest suites the Wildenstein family's primary accommodation when they were in residence, and carrying the specific weight of that history in every detail of their furnishing.

The Swara and Gerenuk Suites: Adjacent to each other, each with **king beds** and their own full ensuite bathrooms. Ideal for couples or close friends travelling together who want proximity without shared living space.

Additional Cottages: A further 4 cottages providing twin and double configurations for the remaining guests.

Each individually decorated no two rooms carry the same decorative vocabulary, reflecting the accumulated acquisition of the Wildenstein family across decades of international residence.

Throughout all cottages and suites: **Hermès linens** whose quality of texture and temperature regulation is immediately apparent; **Buccellati silver** service pieces the Milanese silversmiths whose craftsmanship since 1919 has set the international standard for silverwork; **Murano glass globes** over the lamps the specific quality of Venetian glass that filters and transforms the highland light; **hand-painted ceilings** in several cottages; **museum-quality African wildlife paintings** and antique furniture from periods and regions that the Wildenstein family's art expertise allowed them to identify and acquire with extraordinary taste.

The Main House: The social heart of the estate. **Expansive living areas** with the specific combination of formal elegance and genuine comfort that only a home inhabited by people who know how they want to live achieves. **Panoramic veranda** overlooking the conservancy's wildlife-rich plains. Indoor and outdoor dining. **Cinema room** with quality projection and sound. **Library** with a collection assembled over decades. **Satellite TV room** for guests who want to maintain connection with the outside world. **Business centre** for guests whose work follows them to Africa.

The Pool Complex — *"The pool of all pools"*: a heated outdoor pool of substantial proportions with a **cascading waterfall** that tumbles naturally between granite rocks and pool-side **flowery islands** that are planted and tended throughout the year. A **pool house** containing the **gym** (fully equipped), **steam room** (Moroccan-influenced), **sauna**, **Jacuzzi** and the **spa treatment rooms** where a resident therapist offers a range of massages and beauty treatments. The pool complex is positioned to maximise the conservancy views while providing complete privacy from the wildlife areas below.

The Underground Tunnel The single most extraordinary architectural feature at any Kenyan safari property, and one of the most extraordinary at any private estate in Africa. From a position **steps away from the main house bar room**, a staircase descends into a **narrow underground tunnel** that passes below the conservancy grounds and emerges, at a concealed window, in a **hide at waterhole level** the guest now at the same height as the animals drinking from the waterhole, within metres of buffalo, rhino, giraffe, elephants and plains game who have no awareness of the observer below their eye level.

"One of the most exciting features is an underground tunnel that takes you from inside the house directly to a hide at our watering hole. Imagine being a few feet away from a herd of buffalo, or an endangered black rhino, and being close enough to see the marks on its skin and hear its breath, all while being in complete safety and enjoying your favourite drink."

This was not built as a tourist feature. It was built as a permanent architectural element of the original Wildenstein estate an expression of the family's desire to be not above the wildlife but within it. It is the most direct, most intimate and most architecturally ambitious expression of wildlife observation available at any private safari estate in the world.

Communication in the Wilderness: The conservancy's communication infrastructure ensures that guests can be reached and can reach the outside world at all times. Mobile coverage may be limited in valley positions across the conservancy's 58,000 acres. The main house has satellite communication systems and WiFi.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Included in the Ol Jogi package:

- ✓ All accommodation
- ✓ All meals and beverages (full board, all-inclusive of the highest standard)
- ✓ Private game drives across the 58,000-acre conservancy
- ✓ Bush walks with conservation managers
- ✓ Horse riding
- ✓ Guided wildlife encounters
- ✓ Visits to the school, clinic and wildlife rescue centre
- ✓ Use of pool, gym, spa, tennis, squash, cinema, library
- ✓ All-terrain vehicle for quad biking.
- ✓ Conservation and community programme engagement

- ✓ Chef Sylvain Belall's daily creative menus

Activities at Ol Jogi Home:

- ✓ **Private Game Drives — The Entire 58,000 Acres Exclusively** — *"Unlike other conservancies in Africa, Ol Jogi is booked on an exclusive-use basis for as few as 4 guests. You get the whole place the whole lot the rooms, the manor house, the pool and spa complex, the guides, the chefs, the tennis courts, and 58,000 acres of wildest Africa."* The guides at Ol Jogi led by head guide **Johnnie Cross** — carry the individual-animal knowledge of years of working in this specific landscape.
- ✓ **The Underground Tunnel Waterhole Hide** — The defining Ol Jogi experience. *"From inside the house directly to a hide at our watering hole close enough to see the marks on its skin and hear its breath."* Available at any time of day; the early morning, when the rhinos and elephants arrive before the heat of the day, is most productive. Guests can take breakfast in the tunnel hide an arrangement available only here.
- ✓ **Rhino Encounters** — Both black and white rhino: the conservancy holds **65+ rhinos** in the fenced sanctuary established in 2005. Walking with the rhino monitoring team whose knowledge of individual animals is the product of years of direct daily observation provides encounters of extraordinary intimacy and education.
- ✓ **Wildlife Rescue Centre and Veterinary Clinic Visit** — One of the most extraordinary conservation facilities in private hands in East Africa: established 1986, with the veterinary clinic added 1995, working with the Conservation Biology Institute and Smithsonian's National Zoo. Individual animal stories the cheetah with the repaired leg, the orphaned rhino calves, the wildlife orphans currently in residence — are told by keepers whose care for these animals is evident in every interaction.
- ✓ **Meeting Potap** — *"The true magnet to Ol Jogi is the African bear. It is the only bear in Africa known as Potap (Russian for bear) and was donated from Moscow at only 4 months."* A visit with Potap one of the most unexpected and most warmly remembered encounters at any Kenyan safari property is available to all Ol Jogi guests.
- ✓ **Helicopter Scenic Flights** — The resident helicopter available for aerial exploration of the Laikipia landscape, Lake Turkana, the Rift Valley, the Samburu lands and the Northern Frontier.
- ✓ **Horse Riding** — Across the conservancy's open grasslands with guides.
- ✓ **The Primary School and Community Medical Dispensary** — *"Engage in the local community by visiting the local primary school... visit the Wildlife Education Programme that has been running since 1986."*
- ✓ **Tennis, Squash, Quad Biking, Swimming, Spa, Cinema, Library, Billiards** — The complete amenity portfolio of a private estate built without compromise.
- ✓ **Twala Women's Cultural Village** — *"A visit to the women's cultural centre adjacent to the conservancy."*

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

Chef Sylvain Belall has been with the Wildenstein family for over **30 years** a tenure that exceeds the operating life of most luxury lodges and that has produced a chef of extraordinary knowledge and extraordinary loyalty to this specific kitchen, this specific garden and these specific guests. *"When guests come to Ol Jogi, the menu is created specifically for them, based on their preferences. My goal with this team is to get to a point where even the most challenging of preferences is no longer intimidating, but an opportunity to think outside the box."*

The kitchen draws entirely on Ol Jogi's extensive organic garden and the finest available local produce. Chef Belall's recently published cookbook *Cooking for Conservation, Tchad: A gastronomic safari* reflects his approach: food as an expression of the landscape it comes from and the people who inhabit it.

Meals are served in: the formal dining room with Buccellati silver and Murano glass; the al fresco terrace with conservancy views; at bush positions across the 58,000 acres; or in the underground tunnel hide for the most specifically extraordinary private dining experience in Africa.

Why We Love Ol Jogi Home: We love Ol Jogi for the **underground tunnel** for the idea that a family building their home in a wildlife conservancy would include, as a permanent architectural element, a tunnel to a waterhole hide so that guests could experience wildlife from below their eye level. This is not the decision of someone building a luxury lodge. This is the decision of someone who loves wildlife so profoundly that they want to be not above it but within it. And for the thirty-year chef. And for the Buccellati silver and the Hermès linens. And for Potap because the only grizzly bear in Africa, at a private wildlife estate in Laikipia, is the kind of detail that could only be true.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Spend a full morning in the underground tunnel hide arrange with Chef Sylvain to have breakfast prepared in the tunnel, and sit at waterhole level as the morning's first animals arrive: the buffalo before the sun, the rhinos in the early light, the elephants arriving as the heat builds. This experience specific, irreplaceable, available to exactly 14 people in the world at any given time is what the finest private safari estate means. And ask to meet Potap at feeding time: the keeper's relationship with this bear, and the bear's personality expressed in that relationship, is one of the most surprisingly moving wildlife encounters in Laikipia.*

Families and Children: Outstanding for multi-generational family groups. *"Being owned by a family means that the house is built to include children and ensure that their experience is as good as that of their parents."* Children of all ages welcome. Wildlife rescue centre, school visit, Potap encounter, pool complex, cinema room and the specific wonder of the underground tunnel hide all deeply engaging for children and adults alike. Activities suitable for the entire family including pool, TV room, library and games room.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights minimum; 5 nights strongly recommended to engage the full depth of what Ol Jogi offers.

Getting There:

By Air (Recommended): Direct charter flight from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Ol Jogi's private airstrip** within the conservancy: approximately **45 minutes**. From the airstrip, the main house is a **20-minute game drive** typically the first encounter with the conservancy's extraordinary wildlife. This is the definitive Ol Jogi arrival experience.

By Helicopter: Private helicopter charter from Nairobi (approximately 50–60 minutes) or from any adjacent conservancy landing pad. The resident helicopter at Ol Jogi may be available to collect guests from Nairobi for the right arrangement contact Vard Africa.

By Road: Nairobi to Ol Jogi: approximately **4.5–5.5 hours** via Nanyuki and north. Road transfer can be arranged by the property.

Alternative Access: For guests arriving from adjacent Laikipia conservancies, road transfer between Borana, Lewa, Loisaba and Ol Jogi is available typically 1–2 hours depending on origin.

SOSIAN CONSERVANCY

24,000 Acres | 1940s Argentine Estancia Built by Italian Artisans | Kenya's Largest Stud Boran Herd | 30-Foot Waterfalls

The Conservancy: The **Sosian Conservancy** covers **24,000 acres** of rolling savannah, rocky escarpment, riverine woodland and ancient lava field in north-western Laikipia. The landscape is defined by the **Ewaso Narok River** — which flows through the conservancy for **15 kilometres**, creating the spectacular **30-foot waterfalls**, the deep cold swimming pools, the fishing dams and the extraordinary riparian woodland edge that make Sosian's landscape experiences unlike any other in Laikipia.

The ranch was established in the **1920s**, with **Major Gerald Edwards** a World War One veteran who came to Kenya as part of the Soldier Settlement Scheme taking up this specific parcel and ranching cattle here from approximately 1920 until his death in 1977. The subsequent period was one of decline: overgrazing, drought and neglect reduced Sosian to a degraded shadow of the landscape that Edwards had known. In **1999**, a visionary group led by the late **Tristan Voorspuy** co-founder of the celebrated **Offbeat Riding Safaris** operation and one of Kenya's most accomplished horseback safari operators acquired the ranch and began its methodical restoration. By **2002**, Sosian had been sufficiently recovered to open as a riding and game-viewing base: retaining its character as a working cattle ranch while adding the wildlife conservation and luxury tourism dimensions that have made it one of Laikipia's most beloved and most specifically differentiated properties.

The **main building** a sprawling, low, terracotta-roofed structure built in the **1940s in the Argentine estancia tradition by Italian artisans** is Sosian's most immediately distinctive physical feature. The specific combination of Italian craftsmanship, Argentine aesthetic tradition and East African highland setting creates an architectural character available nowhere else in Kenya: the tiled verandas, the stone archways, the specific weight and proportion of a building designed for both cattle management and comfortable highland living in the Argentine tradition.

Sosian maintains the **largest stud Boran herd in Kenya** approximately **2,500 Boran cattle** whose genetic quality and the management care invested in them have made Sosian one of the most significant commercial Boran breeding operations in East Africa. The coexistence of this serious working cattle operation with the wildlife conservation and luxury tourism programme is not a contradiction or a compromise; it is the fundamental ecology and economy of the property.

Wildlife: Elephant, lion, leopard, cheetah, African wild dog, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, Beisa oryx, eland, buffalo and the extraordinary nocturnal community of the Ewaso Narok riverine forest. Several lions and **2–3 wild dog packs** are **collared by the Laikipia Predator Project** tracked continuously, locatable by radio telemetry, their movements monitored to understand and protect the Laikipia wild dog population.

SOSIAN LODGE

7 Thatched Stone Cottages | Working Ranch Atmosphere | The Estancia Dining Room | Kenya's Best Waterfall Experience

Location and Setting: Sosian Lodge sits in the **tropical gardens** of the estancia main house the gardens' lush vegetation creating a remarkable contrast with the drier savannah beyond the garden wall, the Ewaso Narok River valley audible below and **Mount Kenya visible** on clear mornings above the eastern horizon. The lodge's position within the gardens provides the specific atmosphere of an old highland ranch house: sheltered, shaded, cool in the hottest hours, with the sounds of the river below and the birds of the garden surrounding.

Introduction and History: Tristan Voorspuy who brought Sosian to life and whose passion for the northern Kenya highland bush was expressed most completely in the horseback safari operations he pioneered was killed in March 2017 during a period of serious civil unrest on the Laikipia Plateau, when community tensions escalated into violence. His death was a profound loss for the Kenyan safari world and for all who knew him. The lodge continues to operate in the spirit of what he created the riding programme he established as one of the finest in Kenya is maintained and developed by the team he trained.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements: 7 thatched stone cottages in the estancia's restored gardens, each unique in character and position.

- ✓ *Standard Cottages (×5):* Each with a single bedroom (king or twin configuration); **open fireplace** the Ewaso Narok valley position and the north-western Laikipia altitude combine to produce genuinely cold evenings; **private veranda** with garden and savannah views; **en-suite bathroom** with both bath and walk-in shower; quality natural-material furnishings in the ranch tradition.
- ✓ *Honeymoon Cottage:* Positioned in its own private garden area, with additional privacy and a garden terrace for the most romantic configuration the lodge offers.
- ✓ *Family Cottage:* One double bedroom and one children's bedroom connected by a shared bathroom practical for families with children who want supervised sleeping arrangements.
- ✓ **The Main Estancia Building** — The social heart of Sosian, carrying the full character of the 1940s Italian-Argentine construction:
 - ✓ *The Dining Room:* The long hardwood dining table that seats the lodge's guests at a shared communal meal a specifically Sosian tradition that reflects the founding vision of the property as a gathering place rather than a collection of isolated private experiences. The fireplace that heats the room on cold highland evenings. The quality glassware and the candlelit atmosphere that the room achieves when the evening programme comes together.
 - ✓ **The Lounge:** Deep sofas, bookshelves of East African natural history and travel literature, the estate telescope for wildlife watching from the veranda, the bar service that the Sosian team delivers with warmth and efficiency.
 - ✓ **The Swimming Pool and Pool House:** The pool overlooks the savannah and the Ewaso Narok valley below not the infinity pool of Loisaba's escarpment but a good-sized traditional pool in a garden setting with the wildlife landscape as its backdrop.
 - ✓ **The Hard Tennis Court:** Positioned within the garden with a view toward the eastern skyline where Mount Kenya rises on clear mornings. One of the finest combined sport-and-landscape positions in Laikipia.

- ✓ **The Curio Shop:** Selling locally made jewellery, woodwork and other artisan products from the surrounding community.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Sosian Lodge:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives** — Across the 24,000-acre private ranch in open game drive vehicles. The guide's knowledge of the individual collared predators their radio collar telemetry enabling location in real time transforms the Sosian game drive into active wildlife monitoring participation. Night drives with spotlights: leopard moving between territories; aardvark emerging from burrows as the temperature drops; hippos grazing beyond the river bank; serval and civet in the grassland margins; the specific sounds of the Ewaso Narok valley at night.
- ✓ **Lion and Wild Dog Tracking with the Laikipia Predator Project Telemetry** — Using the conservancy's **directional radio antenna**, guides track the signal from collared lions and wild dogs across the savannah the signal's direction and strength indicating the animals' approximate position before the vehicle moves to find them. The experience of the antenna finding the signal, then the vehicle moving toward it, then the animals appearing from the bush where the signal was pointing resolves a data point into a living animal in a way that transforms the intellectual understanding of wildlife monitoring into direct sensory knowledge.
- ✓ **Camera Trap Setting and Review** — Setting camera traps at strategic positions game trails, waterhole edges, river crossings and reviewing the previous night's captures: what moved through the frame in the dark hours that no game drive vehicle could have found. The leopard whose territory crosses the eastern section. The elephant family moving to the river at 3am. The aardvark examining the camera with apparent curiosity.
- ✓ **Walking Safaris** — Guided walks interpreting tracks, vegetation, insects and the ecological details of the Ewaso Narok riverine environment. The river walk is one of Kenya's finest on foot the specific quality of the fever acacia canopy, the hippo sounds from the pools around the bend, the kingfishers at the water's edge.
- ✓ **Horseback Safaris** — **Sosian's Finest Offering for Experienced Riders** — The riding programme founded by Tristan Voorspuys and maintained to his standard is arguably the finest for experienced riders in Laikipia. The horses some are ex-polo horses, others are purpose-bred safari horses are all properly schooled for bush riding and range from horses suitable for confident novices to animals capable of full-speed gallops across the Ewaso Narok grasslands alongside Grevy's zebra herds. Dawn rides, escarpment circuit rides, and **multi-day expedition riding** with fly camping: the most physically demanding and most exhilarating activity in the Laikipia landscape.
- ✓ **River Activities — Sosian's Signature Experiences:**
- ✓ **30-Foot Waterfall Jump and Swimming:** The Ewaso Narok creates, at one point in its 15-kilometre Sosian passage, a 30-foot drop into a deep natural pool one of the most spectacular natural swimming positions in Laikipia. Guests who choose to jump from the waterfall's edge describe the experience in the same terms regardless of their background or their previous adventures: one of the most exhilarating physical moments of their lives. The pool below is deep, cold and clear; the guide's assessment of conditions before any activity ensures safety.
- ✓ **River Tubing:** Floating downstream on inflatable tubes through the Ewaso Narok gorge section the riverine canopy overhead, the limestone canyon walls on either side, the specific sounds of the river's passage through the gorge. Available when river levels are appropriate (guide assessment required daily).
- ✓ **Kayaking:** On the conservancy's permanent dams.
- ✓ **Fishing: Catfish, tilapia, barbel and yellowfish** in the river and dams. Gear provided. The specific combination of sitting quietly at the river's edge as wildlife comes to drink, with a line in the water, produces a quality of contemplative bush experience that active game drives cannot provide.
- ✓ **Cattle Ranch Activities — Dipping, Branding and Sorting** — Participating in the daily working operations of Kenya's largest stud Boran herd: watching or assisting with the cattle dipping that controls parasites and maintains the herd's health; the cattle sorting and branding that are the rhythmic, ancient ceremonies of ranch management. These activities are a genuinely educational insight into the coexistence economy that makes Laikipia's conservation model function cattle and wildlife on the same land, managed together.
- ✓ **Camel Rides** — Sosian's camels: described by the lodge as *"notably friendly and sometimes overly affectionate"* which is both a warning and a promise about the quality of the encounter. 40-minute rides through the bush at camel height.
- ✓ **Mountain Biking** — The conservancy's road network at cycling pace.
- ✓ **Fly Camping** — An overnight in the conservancy's wilderness, with dinner on an open fire, bedrolls on the ground and the Laikipia stars overhead.
- ✓ **Archery** — A proper archery range with equipment provided.
- ✓ **Running with a Ranger** — For physically active guests: trail running the conservancy's routes with an armed ranger escort at dawn.
- ✓ **Samburu, Pokot and Turkana Cultural Visits** — Sosian sits at the tribal boundary zone where Samburu, Pokot and Turkana communities have coexisted and occasionally competed for resources across centuries. The cultural visits arranged through the lodge's long-standing community relationships provide access to three distinct northern Kenyan cultural traditions in a single conservancy.
- ✓ **Tennis** — The hard court with its Mount Kenya backdrop.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ The kitchen draws on Sosian's **extensive organic vegetable garden** and the conservancy's own produce for the foundation of meals described consistently by guests as genuinely generous, genuinely flavourful and genuinely representative of what the highland Laikipia region produces.

- ✓ The estancia dining room's long communal table where all lodge guests eat together in the tradition of the Argentine estancia is one of the most specifically social and most warmly remembered dining experiences in Laikipia.
- ✓ Bush breakfasts after the morning activity; picnic lunches by the Ewaso Narok; sundowners on the river escarpment; dinners by candlelight at the communal table.

Why We Love Sosian Lodge: We love Sosian for the **waterfall** for the 30-foot leap into the cold pool below, and for the specific exhilaration that follows. And for the Predator Project radio telemetry, where the moment the antenna's signal resolves into a living collared wild dog in actual landscape is one of the most direct and most intellectually satisfying encounters between conservation science and safari experience in all of Laikipia.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Combine the river tubing and the waterfall jump in a single morning programme — drive to the upper section, tube through the gorge to the falls, jump at the end. The complete sequence from the quiet tube glide to the falls jump is the most physical and most memorable morning programme at any Laikipia property. And request the early-morning predator tracking with the telemetry antenna: before the day's heat builds, in the Laikipia pre-dawn stillness, using a directional antenna to locate a collared wild dog across an open savannah is one of the most specifically thrilling conservation-participation experiences in Kenya.*

Families and Children: Sosian is excellent for adventurous families, particularly those with children aged 12 and above. The river activities (tubing and swimming, but not the waterfall jump for younger children without guide assessment), the camera trap reviews, the cattle ranch activities and the camel rides engage children across a wide range of interests and energy levels. The family cottage configuration is appropriate for families with younger children. Note: the waterfall jump is subject to guide assessment of both conditions and participant readiness.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights minimum; 4 nights recommended to experience the full range of activities including both the river activities and the predator tracking programme.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight:* Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Loisaba Airstrip** (approximately 1 hour, sometimes routing via Nanyuki). From Loisaba Airstrip, **Sosian Lodge is approximately 20–30 minutes by road** through the adjacent conservancy landscape. Airstrip transfer included.
- ✓ *By Private Charter:* Direct charter to Loisaba Airstrip or to Sosian's own **private airstrip** within the conservancy, which is accessible to most small charter aircraft. Charter from Nairobi Wilson: approximately 55–65 minutes.
- ✓ *By Road:* Nairobi to Sosian: approximately **5–6 hours** via Nanyuki and then north and west. Sosian is in the north-western section of Laikipia and carries the longest road journey of the central Laikipia properties. The flight is strongly recommended.

THE OL PEJETA CONSERVANCY

Africa's Most Important Private Wildlife Sanctuary | 360 Square Kilometres | The Largest Black Rhino Sanctuary in East Africa | The Last Two Northern White Rhinos on Earth | Kenya's Only Chimpanzee Sanctuary | The Big Five | Over 10,000 Large Mammals | On the Equator | Former Lord Delamere Cattle Ranch | IUCN Green List Since 2014

The Conservancy: The **Ol Pejeta Conservancy** covers **360 square kilometres (approximately 90,000 acres)** of central Kenya's Laikipia County positioned precisely on the equator, between the foothills of the **Aberdare Range** to the west and the dramatic snow-capped massif of **Mount Kenya** to the east. In purely landscape terms, this is one of the finest wildlife settings in Africa: two of Kenya's most imposing mountain systems framing a vast grassland of **whistling thorn acacia, marshland, riverine forest and open savannah** that supports the highest wildlife density of any private conservancy in Kenya outside the Maasai Mara.

In conservation terms, it is in a category entirely its own. No other property in the Laikipia ecosystem or, arguably, in Africa offers the combination of wildlife encounters, active conservation participation and the specific gravity of knowing that two of the animals visible through the window are the last of their subspecies anywhere on Earth.

The History: The land's recorded use as a managed estate begins with **Lord Delamere**, one of British colonial Kenya's most influential and most consequential settlers, whose cattle ranch occupied this ground from the early 1940s. As a cattle ranch, Ol Pejeta was extraordinarily productive the land's fertility and the Aberdare water catchment creating grazing conditions that supported substantial herds across the decades of colonial and post-independence management.

The shift from cattle ranch to wildlife sanctuary began in **1988** when **Lonrho Africa**, one of the conservancy's owners at the time, recognised that Kenya's rhino population was in existential crisis. The poaching crisis of the 1970s and 1980s had reduced Kenya's black rhino population from approximately **20,000 animals in 1970** to fewer than **400 by the late 1980s** a collapse of such severity and speed that it constituted a conservation emergency. Lonrho's response: establish the **Sweetwaters Game Reserve** on 24,000 acres of the ranch as a dedicated black rhino sanctuary with perimeter fencing, armed security and the specific management infrastructure that a viable rhino population requires.

In **1993**, the **Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary** was established in a formal partnership between the conservancy, the **Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)** and the **Jane Goodall Institute** the three bodies whose collaboration brought the first group of rescued chimpanzees from **Burundi** (where civil war was creating a refugee crisis for chimpanzees held in research facilities) to a permanent, protected home. These were not Kenyan animals; chimpanzees are not native to Kenya's ecosystem. But they were rescued animals in need of permanent sanctuary, and Ol Pejeta provided it. Over the following years, additional groups of rescued chimpanzees from across West and Central Africa animals confiscated from the illegal bushmeat trade, from the pet trade, from research facility closures were brought to Sweetwaters. By the time this guide was written, **43 chimpanzees** lived in two groups on the sanctuary's large natural enclosures, separated by the Ewaso Nyiro River.

The full conservancy transformation was completed in **2003–2004** when **Fauna and Flora International (FFI)** the UK-based conservation charity, the world's oldest international wildlife conservation organisation facilitated the purchase of the full Ol Pejeta ranch, with funding from **Arcus Foundation** and the **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy**. The purchase price was used to create the **Ol Pejeta Conservancy Trust**, which holds the land in perpetuity for conservation purposes. The governance structure: the trust owns the land; **Ol Pejeta Conservancy Ltd** is the non-profit operational entity; **Ol Pejeta Ranching Ltd** is the commercial subsidiary managing the cattle operation and tourism revenue. **100% of all profits** from ranching, tourism and philanthropy are reinvested into conservation, education, infrastructure and community development.

The conservancy was listed on the **IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas in 2014** the most rigorous international certification of governance quality, management effectiveness and conservation outcomes in the protected areas field. It has maintained this listing continuously since.

The Conservancy Today: Ol Pejeta is managed as a **fully integrated conservation-ranching landscape** approximately **7,000 Boran cattle** still graze within the conservancy in a wildlife-compatible rotation system that improves grassland health, generates revenue and sustains the community employment that cattle management provides. This is not a concession to commercial interests; it is a specific ecological management technique. The cattle's grazing creates the short-sward grassland conditions that certain plains game species (including the black rhino) prefer, while their presence in the landscape maintains the traditional pastoral workforce whose employment is central to the community development programme.

The Wildlife Numbers: More than **10,000 large mammals** on 360 square kilometres a density that places Ol Pejeta among the top wildlife areas in East Africa, exceeded in Kenya only by the Maasai Mara during migration season. The **Big Five** all present. **Over 100 critically endangered eastern black rhinos** the largest single population in East Africa, grown from the four animals that Lonrho's 1988 sanctuary began with. **26 southern white rhinos. Najin and Fatu** the last two northern white rhinos on Earth. **Two packs of African wild dogs.** Lion, leopard, cheetah, hyena and the full complement of plains game species. **43 chimpanzees** at Sweetwaters. And **over 300 bird species** recorded, including the spectacular raptors of the Aberdare foothills and the specific waterbird assemblages of the conservancy's marshes and river frontage.

The Northern White Rhino — The Weight of History:

Najin (*"The Gift"* in Arabic) was born in **1989** at the **Dvůr Králové Zoo** in the Czech Republic one of the last northern white rhinos born in captivity. She was moved to Ol Pejeta from the Czech zoo in **2009**, along with three other individuals, in a project designed to give these last animals the natural grassland habitat and the social conditions that might stimulate natural breeding. Najin is now 35 years old. She is gentle, recognisable to the Ol Pejeta ranger team at a distance, and she has become, in the specific way that the last individual of a vanishing kind always becomes, a figure of enormous symbolic weight.

Fatu (*"Lucky"*) was born in **2000** in the Dvůr Králové Zoo the daughter of Najin. She is therefore the daughter of the penultimate northern white rhino. She is younger, more energetic, more likely to approach visitors, and she carries in the biological fact of being the last female northern white rhino, in whose ovaries the only viable northern white rhino eggs ever to be collected and fertilized are being stored by the international IVF consortium the entire remaining reproductive hope of her subspecies.

The two others who came with them in 2009 **Sudan** (the only male) and **Suni** have both died since. Sudan, who became the most famous rhino in Africa after the headline *"The Last Male Northern White Rhino, Najin and Fatu's Security Detail"* circulated globally, died in **March 2018**. Suni died in 2014. Najin and Fatu remain.

The **IVF programme** being conducted by the **Bio Rescue consortium** including the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research, Avantea laboratory and multiple international scientific partners has successfully created **northern white rhino embryos** from eggs harvested from Fatu and sperm collected and cryopreserved from the last living males before their deaths. These embryos are currently in storage awaiting the development of southern white rhino surrogate mothers to carry them to term. The programme represents the most technically ambitious single-species rescue attempt in wildlife conservation history, and it is happening here, at Ol Pejeta, in the care of the rangers who walk past Najin and Fatu every morning of their working lives.

A visit to the **Endangered Species Boma** the specifically designed enclosure where Najin and Fatu can be observed at close range, with guides who can explain every detail of the IVF programme and the individual history of both animals is, for anyone who comes to this conservancy with their eyes open and their attention engaged, one of the most profoundly moving wildlife encounters available anywhere in the world.

Baraka — The Blind Black Rhino:

Baraka was born on the Ol Pejeta Conservancy itself one of the earliest products of the 1988 rhino sanctuary programme. After losing an eye to infection following a fight with another rhino, a cataract developed in the remaining eye, and Baraka eventually became completely blind. Unable to navigate the open conservancy safely without vision, he was moved to a dedicated treatment and care centre adjacent to the Morani Information Centre, where he has lived for many years under the daily care of his dedicated keeper team.

Baraka receives visitors daily from **9:30am to 6:00pm**, with **feeding times three times per day**. The experience of feeding Baraka standing at his feeding platform, watching a fully grown black rhino locate food entirely by smell and hearing, responding to the keeper's voice with the specific trust of an animal who has learned to navigate his world through the senses he retains is one of the most intensely personal large wildlife encounters in Kenya. He is not tame; he is not a pet. He is a wild animal who has adapted to blindness with the specific resilience that his species' evolutionary heritage has given him, and who has built a relationship of trust with his keeper team over years of daily contact.

The cost of a visit to Baraka and the Morani Information Centre is **included in the conservancy entrance fee**.

The Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary — Kenya's Only Great Apes:

43 chimpanzees live at the sanctuary in two large groups, separated by the Ewaso Nyiro River, in natural bush enclosures that give them space for the social behaviour, the foraging and the daily life that their species requires. These are not animals born in captivity who have never known a more natural existence; many were captured and trafficked as infants, spending the early years of their lives in conditions of severe deprivation before arriving at Sweetwaters. The process of recovery physical, social, psychological is ongoing for some individuals and complete for others.

Chimpanzees share **98.7% of human DNA**. Watching them the maternal relationships, the dominance structures, the tool use, the communication through vocalisation, facial expression and gesture is watching something that is simultaneously utterly familiar and utterly unlike anything else in the African bush. The specific frisson of watching a chimpanzee's face react to something it finds amusing is the same frisson that Charles Darwin first described when he observed a great ape and understood, in that instant, that the boundary between animal and human was not the wall he had assumed.

Access to the Sweetwaters Sanctuary is by **boat across the Ewaso Nyiro River** the river that separates the two chimpanzee groups and that provides the sanctuary's natural perimeter on one side. The boat trip itself is a wildlife encounter: hippos visible in the water, the riverine forest above, the specific acoustic quality of the Ewaso Nyiro in the early morning.

Cost: **included within the conservancy entrance fee**.

The sanctuary is a **non-breeding sanctuary** the chimpanzees are not being bred, reflecting the ethical position that bringing more chimpanzees into captivity when the sanctuary's mission is rescue and care rather than population management would be irresponsible.

Community Programme: Ol Pejeta's community department works directly with **approximately 45,000 people across 21 neighbouring communities**, delivering: education support (school buildings, school fees, educational materials); healthcare (dispensary construction, medical equipment, healthcare worker training); sustainable livelihood projects (beekeeping, greenhouse farming, Jiko stove distribution reducing firewood dependency); and the **Junior Ranger Programme** for visiting children. The conservancy employs over 500 staff the majority from the surrounding community making it the largest single employer in the Nanyuki district after the military.

The Equator Crossing: Ol Pejeta Conservancy is bisected by the equator the zero-latitude line running precisely through the landscape between the two mountain ranges. A physical equator marker on the conservancy road provides one of the most specifically satisfying photographic stops in Kenya: standing simultaneously in the Northern and Southern hemispheres on the same spot, with both Mount Kenya and the Aberdares visible from the same position.

SANCTUARY TAMBARARE

Sanctuary Retreats Collection | 10 Generously Proportioned Tented Suites | Opened June 2022 | A&K's Laikipia Statement

Location and Setting: Within the Ol Pejeta Conservancy positioned for access to the conservancy's extraordinary wildlife community and for views of **Mount Kenya's profile** on the eastern horizon.

Introduction: Opened in **June 2022**, Sanctuary Tambarare ("*open plains*" in Kiswahili) is the **Sanctuary Retreats Collection's** Laikipia expression placing A&K's standard of luxury hospitality in direct relationship with the most ecologically significant conservancy in Kenya. The camp is designed with the same commitment to generous comfort and professional service that the Sanctuary Collection brings to its Maasai Mara, Amboseli and other Kenyan properties.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

10 tented suites of 57 square metres each among the most generously proportioned tent suites in Laikipia,

Each suite: **king-size bed** with premium linens; **walk-in shower** in a fully equipped ensuite bathroom with flush toilet and double basin; **private veranda** with outdoor furniture for al fresco wildlife observation; natural materials canvas, wood, stone in the Sanctuary Collection's signature warm contemporary style.

The main lodge: **restaurant**, lounge, bar all with the views and service quality that the Sanctuary brand maintains.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at Sanctuary Tambarare:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives — Ol Pejeta's Conservation Wildlife** — The conservancy's extraordinary wildlife: Kenya's largest black rhino population (black rhino including the newly established herds), Najin and Fatu, lions, cheetahs, elephants, wild dogs, Grevy's zebra, hippos in the dams and the full Northern Five community.
- ✓ **Visit to Najin and Fatu — The Last Two Northern White Rhinos** — The defining, irreplaceable and most specifically important wildlife encounter in Kenya. Under the supervision of Ol Pejeta's team and their 24-hour armed guards, guests observe Najin and Fatu at close range understanding the full context of what they are seeing: the last two individuals of a subspecies, the ongoing assisted reproduction programme, the specific knowledge of individual keepers who have cared for these animals across decades. No other wildlife encounter in Kenya carries this specific weight.
- ✓ **Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary** — The only chimpanzees in Kenya: 39 rescued individuals whose stories from captivity in logging camps, laboratories and the illegal pet trade across Africa are told by the keepers who know them.

The sanctuary is not a zoo; it is a place of recovery and semi-freedom for animals that cannot be returned to the wild because they have no wild survival skills.

- ✓ **Lion Tracking with Telemetry** — Several Ol Pejeta lions are radio-collared for research and population management; tracking them with the conservancy's telemetry equipment is one of the most exciting active wildlife activities.
- ✓ **Walking Safaris** — On foot in the conservancy with expert guides.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

Full board meals at the Sanctuary Collection's consistently high standard. Menus adapted to dietary requirements.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight: Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport** to **Nanyuki Airport** (approximately 35–40 minutes) followed by a **road transfer of approximately 30–45 minutes** to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy. Alternatively, some AirKenya and Safarilink schedules serve the area directly contact Vard Africa for current routing.

By Road: Nairobi to Ol Pejeta via Nanyuki: approximately **3.5–4 hours** the most accessible of the major Laikipia conservancies by road. The A2 highway to Nanyuki is in excellent condition.

By Private Charter: Direct charter to Nanyuki Airport (30–35 minutes from Nairobi Wilson) or to the conservancy's internal airstrip.

KICHECHE LAIKIPIA

Eco-Award Winning | 6 Tents Including Custom Family Suite | Gold Eco-Rating | Foot of Indigenous Forest | Canoeing Among Hippos

Location and Setting: At the **foot of indigenous forest** within the Ol Pejeta Conservancy overlooking a **waterhole** that draws elephants, black rhinos and the full range of the conservancy's wildlife throughout the day, with Mount Kenya's profile on the eastern horizon and the forest canopy creating the specific shade and acoustic environment of a camp positioned at the habitat transition zone between woodland and open savannah.

Introduction: Kicheche Laikipia is one of the most consistently awarded and most intelligently conceived small camps in the Laikipia ecosystem and the one that has most thoroughly earned its reputation through the quality of its guides rather than its architecture.

The **Kicheche Collection** was founded by the **Clements family** on the conviction that the finest safari experience requires:

1. The **smallest possible number of guests** — to maximise privacy and minimize the competitive game-drive environment
2. The **most knowledgeable possible guides** — to transform wildlife encounters into ecological education
3. The **most genuine possible conservation commitment** — to ensure that the tourism operation contributes to the landscape it depends on

Kicheche Laikipia holds the **Gold Eco-Rating** from Ecotourism Kenya the highest certification level for sustainable tourism practice in Kenya, awarded only to properties that demonstrate excellence across environmental management, community engagement, cultural respect and responsible business practices. The camp's commitment to **low-impact operation** is expressed in every material choice, every energy source and every community relationship.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

6 tents including a **custom family suite** designed specifically for families with children positioned in the most strategic relationship possible with the waterhole, the forest edge and the open savannah.

Standard Tents (×5): Comfortable, well-designed, genuinely functional safari tents with the specific character of a camp that prioritises the outdoor experience over the indoor one. Comfortable beds with quality linens. En-suite bathrooms with flush toilet, twin basin and rainfall shower with solar-heated water. **Hammocks on private verandas** overlooking the waterhole or forest edge the camp's most photographed and most specifically loved single amenity. Yoga mats, wellington boots, good binoculars and wildlife checklists provided in every tent the Kicheche approach to equipping guests for actual observation rather than passive viewing.

Custom Family Suite: Connected tent configuration designed specifically for families: parents' sleeping section and children's sleeping section with shared bathroom. Positioned for maximum safety while maintaining the camp's wildlife-observation character.

Activities at Kicheche Laikipia:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives** — The Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kicheche's own open vehicles with guides whose depth of ecological knowledge accumulated through years of guiding in this specific conservancy is consistently described as among the finest in Laikipia. The Kicheche guiding philosophy: every species, every ecosystem element, every behaviour is worth explaining; the game drive is not a trophy list but an ecological education.
- ✓ **Canoeing on the Conservancy's Permanent Waterways** — One of the most distinctive and most rarely offered activities in all of Laikipia. Paddling on Ol Pejeta's permanent water bodies in Canadian canoes: **hippos at eye level**; waterbirds at close range; the specific wildlife encounters that the canoe enables animals who are unconcerned by the paddle's quiet movement in ways they would not be by an engine providing a quality of intimacy unavailable from any other form of safari transport.
- ✓ **Mountain Biking** — Through the conservancy on guided routes at cycling pace.
- ✓ **Visit to Najin and Fatu** — The last two northern white rhinos.
- ✓ **Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary** — The chimps and their keepers.
- ✓ **Walking Safaris** — On foot with Kicheche's expert naturalist guides: interpreting the tracks, the plants and the ecological story that the Ol Pejeta landscape tells at ground level.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Kicheche Laikipia: We love Kicheche for the **hammock on the veranda facing the waterhole** for the specific design intelligence of putting a hammock in the position that faces the wildlife, inviting guests to watch elephants from a state of complete horizontal relaxation. This is the most sensible single wildlife-observation post at any Laikipia camp.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight: Nairobi Wilson Airport to Nanyuki Airport (35–40 minutes) followed by road transfer to Ol Pejeta (approximately 30 minutes). Alternatively, by direct charter.

By Road: Approximately 3.5–4 hours from Nairobi.

"There are places in Africa where the wildlife is beautiful. There are places where the landscape is beautiful. There are very few places where the conservation is this specific, this measurable, this urgent and none where what is at stake is clearer than here. To stay inside Ol Pejeta Conservancy is to live, for the duration of your stay, inside the most consequential conservation story in Africa. The northern white rhino's last chapter is being written here. The question of whether the chimpanzee survives outside its native forests is being answered here. What happens in the next decade with these animals is being determined, in large part, by the work done inside these 360 square kilometres. Come here knowing that. Let it change the game drive." — Vard Africa, Destination Curators

OL PEJETA BUSH CAMP

Asilia Africa | The Conservation Hub | 7 Eco-Friendly Tents | The Ewaso Nyiro Riverbank | Raised Concrete Central Pavilion | Electric Safari Vehicle | Gold Eco-Rating | Carbon Neutral | The Grandson of J.A. Hunter | The Conservation Safari | Baraka, Najin, Fatu and the 43 Chimpanzees — All at Your Front Door

Location and Setting: Ol Pejeta Bush Camp sits on the **banks of the Ewaso Nyiro River** in the **quieter western section** of the Ol Pejeta Conservancy positioned in what the camp's various operators describe as the most exclusive and least visited section of the 360-square-kilometre sanctuary. The western side of Ol Pejeta is characterised by **denser vegetation** than the eastern plains near the Sweetwaters and the main game area, with the **riverine woodland** creating a camp setting of considerable shade and natural beauty. The river itself which flows from the Mount Kenya and Aberdare snowfields through the full length of the conservancy provides the specific water-associated wildlife activity that defines the finest riverside Laikipia camps.

The central guest area was **rebuilt in 2016** a significant structural investment that produced the camp's current communal building: a generous **tan concrete pavilion raised approximately two metres above the river plain** to protect against seasonal flooding while maximising the view across the Ewaso Nyiro. This engineering detail is not incidental: the Ewaso Nyiro floods seasonally, and a camp positioned at its banks requires the specific construction intelligence to balance proximity with safety. The 2016 rebuild represents Asilia Africa's commitment to delivering a permanent, properly engineered bush camp rather than a temporary canvas structure.

Introduction and History — The Asilia Stewardship:

Ol Pejeta Bush Camp was originally established and operated by **Alex and Diana Hunter** a couple whose roots in the Kenyan bush go back further and deeper than most safari families. **Alex Hunter** is a native Kenyan, a long-time professional guide and **the grandson of J.A. Hunter** the most celebrated professional hunter and ivory collector in Kenya's colonial period, whose memoirs (*Hunter* and *White Hunter*) are foundational texts of East African safari history. J.A. Hunter guided clients through the Kenyan wilderness from the 1920s through the 1950s; his grandson Alex has spent his adult life in the same landscape, inheriting the family's specific knowledge of the Kenyan bush while redirecting it entirely toward wildlife protection rather than hunting. Alex is **licensed to use a high-powered rifle** a custom-made weapon specified to his requirements — that he carries on guided bush walks. His specific heritage provides these walks with a layer of historical irony and a depth of personal narrative that no other guide's biography provides.

Alex and Diana's original ownership of the camp brought to it the specific character of a small, personal, owner-operated operation the character that the Luxury Safari Company recognised when it gave the camp their award for *"Place to get closest to real conservation."* Asilia Africa, which subsequently took on management of the camp while retaining Alex and the original guiding team, has maintained and formalised this character within its broader portfolio standards, adding the environmental certifications, the structured community programme and the carbon-neutral commitment that Asilia brings to all its properties.

Asilia Africa's Operating Standards at Ol Pejeta Bush Camp:

- **Gold Eco-Rating from EcoTourism Kenya**

- **Certified B Corporation** — meeting strict international standards for environmental and social performance
- **100% carbon neutral** operation — Asilia offsets 100% of its carbon footprint across all properties
- **100% solar-powered** — with generator backup, fully solar for normal operations
- **80% of camp staff** from surrounding Laikipia communities
- Fresh ingredients sourced from **local women's cooperatives and neighbouring farms** — tourism revenue staying within the community
- Direct financial contribution to **Ol Pejeta Conservancy's conservation programmes** through the accommodation partnership

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

7 Eco-Friendly Canvas Tents spaced along the Ewaso Nyiro riverbank, each positioned for a specific section of the river view or the adjacent woodland clearing. The tents are described by the operator as *"traditional safari tents blending classic East African design with Asilia's signature eco-luxury approach"* every tent hand-crafted to harmonise with the landscape while providing the full comfort specification that Asilia's standards require.

The camp's character: authentic bush rather than resort approximation of bush. *"While other camps in the area might offer sleeker accommodations, Ol Pejeta Bush Camp gives you that authentic safari experience that's becoming harder to find."* This is a deliberate choice a camp whose design prioritises the quality of the bush experience over the quality of the interior decoration, whose canvas walls and bucket showers are not compromises but expressions of an approach that believes the finest wildlife encounters are not enhanced by designer furniture.

5 Standard Double or Twin Tents: Each with:

- **Double or twin bed configuration** — reconfigurable on request
- **Private wooden veranda** with the riverbank view — two outdoor chairs, a small table, the specific Ewaso Nyiro morning light
- **En-suite bathroom** with **bucket shower** (hot water provided — *"the staff fills an overhead bucket with five gallons of hot water for each shower which is more than adequate if you don't dawdle"* — the most specifically honest description of a bucket shower's practical parameters in any review consulted) and **flushing toilet**
- **Solar lighting** and power for charging throughout
- **Comfortable beds under mosquito nets** — the canvas providing natural insulation for the cold evenings and natural ventilation for the warm afternoons
- Shaded by **riverine woodland trees** where vervet monkeys and birds occupy the canopy above the private veranda

The specific character: Guests with adjacent tent decks report watching **elephants and buffalo** at the river from their private verandas between game drives the wildlife using the Ewaso Nyiro at the exact section of riverbank where the tents are positioned. This is not a managed wildlife encounter; this is living on the riverbank of a wildlife-rich conservancy at the proximity that the tents' positioning provides.

2 Family Tents: The most generous single accommodation unit at the camp two connected sleeping areas accommodating up to **4 guests** (parents and two children over the age of 5 years). The family tent's specific design: a master section with double bed; an adjoining section with two single beds; a **shared central bathroom** serving both areas; and a **private lounge area** connecting the two sleeping spaces. *"Spacious family tent with private lounge, perfect for unwinding together after a day of adventure."* Asilia Africa. Each family tent has the same riverbank view and private veranda as the standard tents.

Note on Humidity: One recurring observation in our reviews is that the riverbank position specifically the tents' ground-level siting on the Ewaso Nyiro's bank creates genuine humidity in the evenings, especially in the post-rain and transition months. This is the authentic experience of sleeping on a river in a wildlife conservation area, not a deficiency of the camp. Guests who prefer elevated sleeping platforms should consider The River Camp by Wilder Group as an alternative, while those who prioritise the authenticity of the riverside camp experience in its classic form will find the Bush Camp's character exactly what they are looking for.

The Central Guest Pavilion — Main Communal Area:

The **2016 concrete pavilion raised two metres above the river plain** the camp's architectural centerpiece and its practical insurance against flooding houses:

- ✓ *The Indoor Dining Room:* With views across the Ewaso Nyiro through the pavilion's open sides. Communal dining all guests eating together at the shared table is Asilia's deliberate hospitality philosophy: *"Guests often share meals at the communal dining table, fostering a sense of connection among travelers, guides, and hosts a hallmark of Asilia's hospitality style."* The specific quality of the evening communal dinner at Ol Pejeta Bush Camp guides and guests at the same table, the day's game drive and the conservation encounters reviewed in the specific language of people who have been in the field together is one of the camp's most specifically valuable hospitality qualities.
- ✓ *The Lounge:* With a **small library of East African natural history and safari literature**, comfortable armchairs and the **fireplace that is lit on the cold highland evenings** (the camp sits at approximately **1,890 metres / 6,200 feet** altitude the evenings are *"brisk"* in the camp's own language, which means genuinely cold).
- ✓ *The Bar:* Fully stocked, with a specific selection of **local wines** that Asilia curates to reflect Kenyan and southern African producers. *"The wine selection is nothing to sneeze at. With a variety of reds, whites, and bubbly options, there is something for everyone."*
- ✓ *The Deck:* The outdoor deck extending from the pavilion over the river the preferred position for breakfast and lunch in the warm morning and midday hours, with the Ewaso Nyiro visible below and the conservancy spread beyond.
- ✓ *The Campfire Circle:* Adjacent to the pavilion the outdoor fire pit around which pre-dinner drinks and post-dinner conversation happen, with the night sounds of the conservancy completing the atmosphere.

Communication:

- ✓ WiFi available in the communal lounge generally functional, generally slow. *"Wi-Fi is only available in the communal lounge and tends to be slow, with no internet access in your tent."* No WiFi in individual tents.

- ✓ Mobile coverage (Safaricom) available at the camp's riverside position. This connectivity level present but limited is one of the hallmarks of the authentic bush camp experience that Asilia preserves at Ol Pejeta.

Activities at Ol Pejeta Bush Camp:

- ✓ **Day Game Drives — The Big Five and the Conservation Encounters** — In Asilia's custom 4WD open vehicles across the 360 square kilometres of the conservancy. The guide team led by experienced professional guides, many from surrounding Laikipia communities brings the specific conservation knowledge of people who work daily within this landscape. *"Excellent chances to see all of the Big Five, as well as cheetahs, hyenas, zebras, reticulated giraffes, and Grevy's zebras."* The specific wildlife encounters that distinguish Ol Pejeta from other Laikipia game drives: the **concentration of rhinos** over 100 black rhinos across the conservancy, regularly and reliably seen at close range in conditions that the dedicated fencing and management programme makes possible; the **wild dog packs** (two packs recorded); and the **elephant herds** that have made Ol Pejeta their permanent territory.
- ✓ *"The early morning and evening are the best times to explore the conservancy, as predators are on the hunt and their prey is on high alert."*
- ✓ **Night Game Drives — The Electric Vehicle Advantage** — In Asilia's electric game drive vehicle the silence providing the wildlife encounter advantage described in the health and safety section above. The conservancy's nocturnal community: **aardvark, zorilla (African striped skunk — one of the most rarely seen nocturnal Laikipia mammals), bat-eared fox, porcupine, honey badger, civet** and the specific drama of nocturnal predator activity. *"Night drives provide a chance to spot some of Kenya's more unusual critters, such as aardvarks, zorillas, and bat-eared foxes. You might also witness leopard and lion hunts."*
- ✓ **The Conservation Safari — The Camp's Signature Programme:**
- ✓ This is what makes Ol Pejeta Bush Camp categorically different from every other camp in the Laikipia guide. Asilia, following the original programme established by Alex and Diana Hunter, offers a **four-night interactive Conservation Safari** a structured immersion in the living mechanics of the conservation programme that operates within the conservancy. The Luxury Safari Company calls it *"the place to get closest to real conservation."* The specific activities available within this programme:
- ✓ **Individual Rhino Assessments:** Working with the conservancy's Ecological Monitoring Department team to conduct field assessments of individual black rhinos identifying specific animals by their ear notch patterns, recording their condition, their location and their behaviour, and contributing directly to the data set that informs the conservancy's rhino population management. This is not observing conservation from the edge; this is participating in it.
- ✓ **Meeting the Researchers and Learning Wildlife Data Monitoring:** The conservancy employs a full research team ecologists, data analysts and field researchers whose work spans population dynamics, habitat management and the specific reproductive biology research connected to the Northern White Rhino IVF programme. The Bush Camp's conservation guests can spend hours with these researchers, understanding the monitoring protocols, the data collection methodologies and the specific questions that the current research is attempting to answer.
- ✓ **Learning Radio Tracking Equipment:** The conservancy's collared lion population is monitored daily using VHF telemetry the same radio-tracking technology that has been used in African wildlife research since the 1960s. Learning to use the directional antenna, interpret the signal strength variations and triangulate an animal's position from multiple bearings is a specific technical skill that the research team teaches. Guests who have spent a morning with the telemetry antenna describe it as transforming their entire understanding of what the game drive is looking at knowing that the collared lion visible through the binoculars has been tracked, named, monitored and understood as an individual gives the sighting a depth that the standard game drive encounter lacks.
- ✓ **Lion Tracking with a Researcher:** Accompanying the conservancy's lion monitoring team on a morning tracking session following the telemetry signal, locating the pride, recording the observation and contributing the data to the ongoing population research. *"Take this unique opportunity to track the lion population. All of the information gathered is passed on to the Ol Pejeta Ecological Monitoring Department."* Tours depart daily between 6:30–9:30am and 3:30–6:30pm. Additional charge applies (approximately USD 60 per adult).
- ✓ **Elephant Monitoring:** Participating in the conservancy's elephant population assessment counting, identifying and recording individual animals through the specific photographic identification methods (ear vein patterns, body markings, tusk configuration) that field researchers use.
- ✓ **Training Walks with the Ol Pejeta Tracker Bloodhounds:** The conservancy's anti-poaching canine unit bloodhounds trained to track human scent across the Ol Pejeta terrain. The training exercise: hiding in the bush as the mock 'poacher' while the hound team is released. The dogs' speed and accuracy finding a hidden adult in dense vegetation within minutes of being released provides the most visceral understanding of the anti-poaching technology's effectiveness available to any safari guest in Kenya. Universally described as simultaneously hilarious and genuinely impressive.
- ✓ **Visit to Baraka the Blind Black Rhino at the Rhino Treatment Centre:** The feeding platform encounter described in the conservancy overview above. Included in the conservancy fee.
- ✓ **Visit to the Northern White Rhino Sanctuary — Najin and Fatu:** The private visit (additional charge) to the Endangered Species Boma the close-range encounter with the last two northern white rhinos, with the full explanatory context of the IVF programme. *"Visits to the latter offer a wealth of insight into the surrogacy and insemination efforts underway to protect this subspecies from extinction, great photo opportunities, and are best booked in advance due to limited daily visitor numbers."*
- ✓ **Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary — Feeding Time:** The behind-the-scenes access to chimpanzee feeding time watching the keeper team deliver food to the enclosure while explaining each animal's individual history, recovery story and current social position within the group. The feeding time visit (additional charge) provides a proximity and a keeper-narrated context that the standard sanctuary visit cannot entirely replicate.
- ✓ **Learning Boran and Ankole Cattle Pastoral Care:** Understanding the specific integration techniques by which the conservancy manages approximately 7,000 cattle alongside the wildlife population the specific grazing rotation, the cattle-wildlife interaction management and the economic rationale for maintaining a livestock enterprise within a wildlife conservancy.
- ✓ **Spending a Morning or Afternoon in a Wildlife Hide:** The conservancy maintains purpose-built hides overlooking permanent waterholes in the game-rich central section accessible for individual bookings by guests who want to spend a specific, extended period at a single wildlife observation position. The concentrated wildlife traffic at these waterholes in conditions where the wildlife's approach is undisturbed by the sound or sight of a vehicle produces photography and observation opportunities that no game drive replicates.
- ✓ **Visit to a Local Primary School or Dispensary:** Through the conservancy's community programme engaging directly with the schools and health facilities that Ol Pejeta's community investment has built and continues to support.
- ✓ **Junior Ranger Programme for Children:** For children aged 4–12: a dedicated programme available through the conservancy's Morani Information Centre. Junior Ranger packs (available at Morani's Restaurant, Rongai Gate Gift Shop and the Chimpanzee Adoption Centre) include an activity booklet, crayons and stickers. After working through the booklet's questions and games during the conservancy visit, the tourism team at Morani Information Centre conducts the official ranger's oath ceremony and presents each child

with a **ranger hat, a certificate and an honorary pin**. This is the finest single children's conservation education programme available at any Laikipia property properly structured, properly staffed and delivering specific knowledge rather than a generic wildlife experience.

- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks with Alex Hunter:** On the open plains or along the river with an armed professional guide whose family's history with this specific landscape extends across three generations and whose personal accumulated knowledge of the Ol Pejeta ecosystem is among the most specific available from any Laikipia camp.
- ✓ **Horse Riding with Rhinos:** Available at Ol Pejeta riding in the conservancy alongside the rhino population, approaching the black rhinos on horseback in conditions that the animals' specific behavioural response to horses makes particularly close and particularly extraordinary. The specific experience of a horse approaching within 30 metres of a free-roaming black rhino an animal whose vision may not register the horse as a threat, whose sense of smell may be downwind and who continues to graze while the riders watch from horseback is one of the most precisely specific wildlife encounters available at any Laikipia property. *Pre-booking required.*
- ✓ **Cycling Safaris:** Exploring the conservancy on mountain bikes with guides the specific perspective and the specific pace that cycling through a wildlife landscape produces.
- ✓ **Running with the Rangers — "Run the Wild":** Up to six guests can run through the Ol Pejeta Conservancy accompanied by armed rangers the dawn run across the open conservancy grassland, with the rhinos and plains game visible in the early morning light, being described by multiple guests as transformative in its specific combination of physical exertion and wildlife proximity.
- ✓ **Gym in the Bush:** The conservancy maintains a basic fitness facility *"a gym in the wilds of the Ol Pejeta Conservancy."*
- ✓ **Bush Breakfasts and Sundowners:** *"Breakfast in the bush each day (our choice). Sundowners in the bush at sunset."* Standard Asilia programme: the morning game drive culminating at a pre-set breakfast position in the bush; the afternoon drive ending at a sundowner position chosen by the guide for its specific wildlife activity or landscape quality.
- ✓ **Cultural and Community Visits:** Arranged through the conservancy's community programme visits to the 21 neighbouring communities, their schools, dispensaries and community development projects.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ The Ol Pejeta Bush Camp kitchen operates on principles of **genuine freshness and local sourcing** the ingredients coming primarily from the **women's cooperatives and local farmers** in the surrounding Laikipia community, ensuring that the economic benefit of each guest's meals extends beyond the camp itself into the wider community that the conservancy exists to support. The quality standard: *"Breakfasts with continental or English options, lunch buffet with salads, pasta and pizza, and a three-course dinner."*
- ✓ *The Bush Breakfast:* Asilia's signature experience a properly set table in the African bush, at a position chosen by the guide for its morning light and its wildlife activity, eating fresh food that the camp kitchen has prepared before dawn and transported to the bush position in the game drive vehicle.
- ✓ The specific pleasure: the combination of physical comfort (a proper breakfast, properly served) and physical wildness (the open conservancy, the wildlife visible, the sky above).
- ✓ Dietary requirements including **vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free** are accommodated with advance notice. The vegan option at Ol Pejeta has been specifically praised in guest reviews: *"I am vegan and they managed to make me fresh delicious food and smoothies and the staff are top-notch."*

Why We Love Ol Pejeta Bush Camp:

- ✓ We love Ol Pejeta Bush Camp for the **Conservation Safari** for the specific, irreplaceable quality of a programme that goes behind the scenes of the most important rhino and chimpanzee conservation work in Kenya and puts guests inside it rather than beside it.
- ✓ Tracking a collared lion with a telemetry antenna; contributing rhino field data to a 40-year population monitoring dataset; watching Baraka eat from the feeding platform and understanding how a completely blind black rhino navigates a world he can no longer see none of this is available with this depth and this directness at any other camp in Laikipia.
- ✓ And for **Najin and Fatu** because standing beside the last two northern white rhinos and knowing that you are looking at all that remains of an evolutionary line that began 7 million years ago and will, depending on what science achieves in the next decade, either continue or end with these two elderly animals this is a specific encounter with the most urgent single conservation question in Africa, and it is available from this camp's specific position inside the conservancy where it is happening.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Book a minimum of 4 nights and request the full Conservation Safari programme from arrival rather than supplementing a standard game drive stay with individual conservation activities. The programme's power comes from immersion from spending a full morning with the lion tracking researcher, a full afternoon with the rhino monitoring team, and a full morning on the run-with-the-rangers programme across three consecutive days, so that the accumulated understanding of the conservancy's workings creates a context that makes the Najin and Fatu visit on the fourth morning the most completely informed encounter it can be. Do not visit the northern white rhinos on the first day; visit them on the last. After four days of understanding what this conservancy has achieved, what it is attempting and what hangs in the balance, the encounter at the Endangered Species Boma is a different thing entirely from what it would have been on arrival.*

Families and Children: Exceptional by deliberate design. The Junior Ranger Programme; the chimpanzee sanctuary; Baraka the blind black rhino; the bloodhound anti-poaching exercise (universally beloved by children); the horse riding; the cycling safaris; the bush runs. Children aged 5 and above welcome; the family tent accommodates parents with two children comfortably. One child under 18 sharing with an adult stays free. Families with children aged 5–12 receive a complimentary private vehicle when pre-booked.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight to Kamok Airstrip (Preferred):* **Daily scheduled flights from Nairobi Wilson Airport to Kamok Airstrip** on AirKenya, Safarilink and Governors' Aviation: approximately **35–40 minutes**.
- ✓ Kamok Airstrip is the **preferred access airstrip** for Ol Pejeta Bush Camp located approximately **45 minutes by road** from the camp within the conservancy.
- ✓ This airstrip transfer, which is included in the camp rate, passes through the Ol Pejeta game-viewing landscape the arrival drive through the conservancy simultaneously serving as the first game drive of the stay.
- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight to Nanyuki Civil Airport (Alternative):* Nanyuki Airport receives the same scheduled airlines and is approximately **40 minutes by road** from the Ol Pejeta main gate, with an additional **20–30 minutes** to the Bush Camp from the gate.

- ✓ *By Road from Nairobi:* Via the A2 highway north to Nanyuki and then west to the Ol Pejeta main gate: approximately **4 hours** in light traffic (250 kilometres). The road is excellent tarmac throughout. The Serat Gate (northeast) is 14 kilometres northwest of Nanyuki. **4WD recommended** during rainy season for the conservancy internal roads; not required for the highway sections.
- ✓ *Important Conservancy Road Rules:* Ol Pejeta Conservancy is open **7am to 7pm**. Guests staying inside the conservancy must return to their lodge by 7pm. Driving after 7pm is **strictly prohibited** unless in an authorised Ol Pejeta vehicle. This rule is absolute and reflects the conservancy's specific security requirements for the rhino and chimpanzee populations.
- ✓ *Conservancy Entrance Fees:* Payable separately approximately **USD 110 per adult per day** (non-resident), USD 55 per child. These are not included in Asilia's accommodation rates and must be budgeted additionally. Vard Africa includes the full fee structure in all client pre-travel documentation.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 4 nights. The Conservation Safari programme is structured across 4 nights; a shorter stay reduces its impact significantly.

THE RIVER CAMP OL PEJETA

The Wilder Group | Boutique Luxury Inside the Wilderness Zone | Maximum 20 Guests | 6 Double Ensuite Tents + 2 Family Suites | Both Indoor and Outdoor Showers | The Ngobit River Frontage | Mount Kenya Views | Stunning Curated Interiors | Samuel the Guide | Diana — The Heart of the Camp | Opened 2023 | A World Apart from Every Other Camp at Ol Pejeta

Introduction — The Wilder Group and Their Philosophy:

The Wilder Group previously known as Africa Eco Group, the name change reflecting a maturation of the brand's identity is one of Kenya's most carefully curated boutique safari camp operators. Their portfolio spans **Kenya's most captivating wildlife destinations**: the Maasai Mara (Entim Camp and the newly refurbished Entim Private Wing, recognised as a "*pinnacle of privacy and luxury*" after its refurbishment); **Lake Nakuru** (Flamingo Hill Camp); the **Olerai Conservancy** near Lake Naivasha; and, since 2023, **The River Camp at Ol Pejeta Conservancy** their most recent and most ambitious Kenya property.

The Wilder Group's distinction is neither the largest portfolio nor the oldest brand. It is the specific quality of hospitality that accumulates in small, owner-attentive camps where the number of guests never overwhelms the capacity of the team to know each one by name. The River Camp at Ol Pejeta **a maximum of 20 guests** at any time is the most precise expression of this philosophy: a camp where the ratio of staff attention to guest presence creates the specific quality of being genuinely hosted rather than efficiently serviced.

The camp's specific character is confirmed by the TripAdvisor review that identifies the defining qualities most precisely: "*The River Camp Ol Pejeta is a Wilder Group camp. Absolutely amazing food and great hospitality by Diana, all in the shadow of Mt Kenya. The tents are luxurious. We have stayed at another Wilder Group before, Entim in the Mara. Again the accommodation and food was amazing hence our choice this year of another Wilder group camp. All this was topped off by our most excellent and very knowledgeable guide Samuel.*" Three qualities: the food, the hospitality of Diana, and Samuel the guide. These three elements are the River Camp's character in precise summary.

Location and Setting: The River Camp occupies a position **deep within the wilderness zone** of the Ol Pejeta Conservancy the most interior and most exclusive section of the 360-square-kilometre sanctuary, accessed by a route that takes guests further from the main conservancy roads and further into the undisturbed western wildlife areas than any other Ol Pejeta accommodation. This positioning "*located deep within the wilderness zone*" in the Wilder Group's own description is the River Camp's primary geographical distinction.

The setting: a riverside camp above the **Ngobit River** a tributary and seasonal stream of the Ewaso Nyiro system that runs through the western conservancy landscape, creating the specific riverine habitat of tall grass, riverine acacia and waterhole formation that concentrates wildlife in the most sustained and most consistent patterns of any habitat type in Laikipia.

All **eight accommodation units** face the Ngobit River the riverine view the common denominator of every room, every deck and every outdoor shower. This consistency of orientation is a design decision of intelligence: the river is not merely a feature; it is the camp's daily calendar. The animals that come to drink, the birds in the riverine woodland above the bank, the morning mist over the water, the evening light across the stream all of these happen on the axis that every room and every common area faces.

The **Mount Kenya view** the massif rising above the eastern horizon in the specific blue-white profile that defines the central Kenya landscape is visible from the camp's higher positions and from the open dining area, providing the second focal point that makes the River Camp's visual environment two-layered: the river below, the mountain above.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

8 Accommodation Units Maximum 20 Guests — the specific combination of tent count and maximum occupancy that keeps the River Camp within the intimate range that the Wilder Group's philosophy requires:

6 Double Ensuite Guest Tents: Each with:

- **Double or twin bed configuration** — with the quality of linens and bedding that the camp's specifically upmarket positioning requires
- **Both indoor and outdoor shower** — the dual shower system being the River Camp's most discussed and most praised room feature. The outdoor shower position: on the private deck, above the Ngobit River, with the riverine view and the specific outdoor quality of showering in the open air above a Laikipia river. The indoor shower: enclosed, with hot running water, for the evenings when the outdoor option is cold or when weather makes the exposed deck less practical. The availability of both options the choice of outdoor for the warm pleasure and indoor for the cold nights distinguishes the River Camp's bathroom from those of every other Ol Pejeta camp.
- **Private deck with day beds** overlooking the river and the adjacent waterhole the specific outdoor lounging position for the midday hours
- **Elegantly furnished interiors:** "*From plush furnishings to beautiful artwork, every detail has been carefully curated to create an environment that is both stylish and welcoming.*" The Wilder Group's curatorial approach — not expensive for its own sake but specific

in every choice — creates interiors described by guests as *"luxurious"* in the meaningful sense of the word: spaces where every element has been chosen for its contribution to the room's overall quality rather than for its individual price.

2 Family/Deluxe Suites: Each suite accommodates **up to 4 guests** (2 adults and 2 children aged 8+, or 4 adults in the maximum configuration) and represents the River Camp's most generous and most private accommodation option:

- **Two twin or double bedrooms** — each with the full ensuite and deck specification
- **Private deck with day beds** overlooking the river and waterhole
- **Central lounge area** connecting the two bedrooms a sitting space for the family or group that converts the suite from a pair of adjacent rooms into a genuinely connected private living unit
- The same dual indoor-outdoor shower configuration as the standard tents
- *"Spacious and well-appointed, providing a luxurious and tranquil atmosphere to relax in."* Maximum sleeping capacity of 8 guests across both suites simultaneously

Children Policy: The family suites are suitable for children **aged 8 years and above** a slightly older minimum age than the Asilia Bush Camp, reflecting the River Camp's more refined interior standard and the specific character of its activities.

Communal and Shared Facilities:

- ✓ *The Open-Air Dining Area:* Positioned for the river view with the Mount Kenya backdrop *"an open-air setting that allows guests to connect with the surrounding wilderness."* The dining area's design philosophy is the external expression of the same curatorial intelligence that characterises the tent interiors: every piece of furniture, every table setting and every detail of the presentation is chosen for its contribution to the quality of the meal experience.
- ✓ Meals served: in the open-air dining area when weather permits; on the outside deck for the finest days; in the enclosed dining space in inclement weather; and in **secluded private locations in the bush** for couples and families who want the candlelit dinner under the stars experience. *"The camp offers private dinners in secluded locations under the stars. This is a great option for couples looking for a romantic and intimate dining experience."*
- ✓ *The Outside Deck:* Beyond the dining area a separate outdoor relaxation space for the hours between meals and activities. *"Guests can enjoy the stunning views while lounging on comfortable chairs and soaking up the sun."*
- ✓ *The Swimming Pool (from August 2024):* The Wilder Group announced the addition of a swimming pool to the River Camp's facilities, opening in August 2024. This addition closes the single significant amenity gap between the River Camp and the established Laikipia luxury camps, adding the pool's specific combination of physical refreshment and outdoor relaxation to the camp's proposition.
- ✓ *The Lounge Area:* The communal indoor gathering space furnished with the same curatorial attention as the tents, serving as the pre-dinner drinks position, the evening conversation space and the morning coffee gathering point.
- ✓ *The Gift Shop:* *"An extensive and had some of the best prices we saw in Kenya"* noted in a guest review with specific praise for both the selection and the value, reflecting the Wilder Group's commitment to offering quality Kenyan-made goods rather than generic safari merchandise.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight to Kamok Airstrip:* As described for Ol Pejeta Bush Camp above **Kamok Airstrip is the preferred access point**, with the scheduled flights from Nairobi Wilson Airport (35–40 minutes). From Kamok, the River Camp is approximately **45 minutes to 1 hour by road** through the conservancy to the wilderness zone position a slightly longer internal transfer than the Bush Camp's due to the River Camp's deeper conservancy positioning.
- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight to Nanyuki Civil Airport:* Alternative scheduled flight option same airlines, approximately 40 minutes from Wilson, then 50–60 minutes by road to the camp.
- ✓ *By Road from Nairobi:* Via the A2 highway to Nanyuki and then into the conservancy: approximately **4–4.5 hours** total.
- ✓ *Important:* The same conservancy road rules apply gates open 7am, close 7pm, no driving after 7pm, single-entry tickets for day visitors, guests staying inside are exempt from multiple entry fees. All River Camp guests receive the conservancy's orientation briefing on arrival.

Communication:

- ✓ Good connectivity for a Laikipia camp WiFi available in the camp's communal areas.
- ✓ Mobile coverage (Safaricom) generally available given the conservancy's proximity to Nanyuki.
- ✓ Specific room connectivity should be confirmed at time of booking.

Activities at The River Camp Ol Pejeta:

The River Camp draws on the full Ol Pejeta Conservancy activity portfolio the same range of experiences available to Ol Pejeta Bush Camp guests, with the addition of the River Camp's own guide team and its specific positioning in the deeper wilderness zone:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives with Samuel** — The River Camp's most specifically praised single feature in its early guest reviews is guide **Samuel** named by name in multiple accounts as the element that most made the stay exceptional. *"All this was topped off by our most excellent and very knowledgeable guide Samuel."* Samuel's expertise: the specific knowledge of the western conservancy's wildlife the individual lion prides whose territories cross the wilderness zone, the specific rhino individuals whose ranges include this section, the leopard whose territory is defined by the Ngobit River's woodland corridor. Night drives in the wilderness zone *"Ol Pejeta Conservancy also offers night game drives, which provide a unique opportunity to see nocturnal animals such as aardvarks and civets."*
- ✓ The specific advantage of the River Camp's deeper conservancy position: **fewer other vehicles** in the wildlife zone around the camp. The western wilderness section sees less game drive traffic than the central and eastern conservancy areas (where the rhino sanctuary, the chimpanzee sanctuary and the most accessible game viewing areas are concentrated), meaning that wildlife encounters in this zone have the specific quality of privacy that is standard in the unfenced community conservancies but unusual within a fenced, multi-lodge national conservancy.

- ✓ **The Northern White Rhino Visit — Najin and Fatu** — The same private visit option (additional charge) to the Endangered Species Boma as available from the Bush Camp. Available to all River Camp guests with advance booking. The emotional weight of the encounter, described in full in the conservancy overview, is identical regardless of which camp you depart from.
- ✓ **Baraka the Blind Black Rhino** — Included in the conservancy fee. The daily feeding visits (9:30am–6pm, three feeding times per day) are accessible from the River Camp on the morning or afternoon game drive.
- ✓ **Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary** — Kenya's only chimpanzee encounter included in the conservancy fee for the standard sanctuary visit; additional charge for the behind-the-scenes feeding time access.
- ✓ **Lion Tracking with Researchers** — As available from the Bush Camp, at additional charge per person.
- ✓ **Bloodhound Anti-Poaching Training Exercise** — The mock-poacher hide-and-seek with the conservancy's tracker dogs. Available to all Ol Pejeta guests.
- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks on the Open Plains and Along the Ngobit River** — *"There are several outdoor activities such as horse riding, guided bush walks, and mountain biking, that offer a different perspective on the conservancy's landscape."* The River Camp's Ngobit River position provides the riverbank walk option alongside the standard open plain walks.
- ✓ **Horse Riding — Including Horse Riding with Rhinos** — *"Guests can explore the stunning wilderness while enjoying each other's company"* on horseback in the conservancy. Horse riding with rhinos approaching the free-roaming black rhino population at equestrian height — available at additional charge.
- ✓ **Mountain Biking** — Through the conservancy terrain in the western wildlife zone.
- ✓ **Romantic Private Dinners Under the Stars** — The River Camp's signature couples experience: *"a candlelit dinner under the stars, surrounded by the sounds of the wilderness. The camp's staff can arrange a private dinner in a secluded location, complete with personalised service and a specially prepared menu."* Available by arrangement; Vard Africa pre-books this on behalf of honeymooning and anniversary clients as a standard component of the River Camp itinerary.
- ✓ **Community Village Visits** — Through the conservancy's 21 neighbouring community programme.
- ✓ **Birdwatching** — The Ngobit River's specific birding: the 300+ species of the conservancy concentrated along the riverine woodland of the River Camp's immediate surroundings. *"The area around Ol Pejeta Bush Camp is a paradise for bird lovers."* Guided morning birding walks available on request.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ The River Camp's kitchen led by Diana's hospitality vision and executed by a kitchen team whose specific quality of preparation appears consistently across guest reviews is described in terms that the Wilder Group has worked hard to deserve: *"Absolutely amazing food."* The ingredients: the finest available produce from local Laikipia community suppliers, with the specific emphasis on freshness and quality that a camp serving maximum 20 guests can achieve because it buys for 20 rather than for 200.
- ✓ *"Guests can savor a variety of sumptuous dishes, accompanied by a selection of fine wines. Weather permitting, guests can also enjoy their meals on the outside deck, taking in the stunning views of the river and surrounding wilderness."*
- ✓ The wine selection: curated by the Wilder Group's team to provide a specific range of appropriate quality across red, white and sparkling options. Guests are not handed a standard safari camp wine list; they are presented with a selection that reflects genuine curatorial consideration of which wines belong at a table in this specific setting.
- ✓ Private dining for couples: the specific experience of a table set in a clearing in the Ol Pejeta wilderness candlelit, privately staffed, with Samuel or a colleague as the guide escort for the journey to and from the position is the River Camp's most specifically romantic offering. *"This is a great option for couples looking for a romantic and intimate dining experience."*

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff.
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love the River Camp Ol Pejeta:

- ✓ We love The River Camp for **Diana** for the specific quality of a camp where the person who runs it is known by name to every guest who has stayed there, whose hospitality is the first thing every guest mentions and the last thing they describe when asked what made the stay exceptional.
- ✓ This is not the standard camp manager relationship; this is the specific, personal warmth of a home in the bush that happens to accept paying guests.
- ✓ And for **Samuel** for the specific knowledge and the specific passion of a guide who has made the western conservancy's wildlife his personal study and who communicates that passion to guests with the authority and the warmth of someone who genuinely cannot imagine a more rewarding professional life.
- ✓ And for the **outdoor shower above the Ngobit River** because standing under running hot water on a private deck above a Laikipia river as the morning light arrives over Mount Kenya is one of the most specifically, completely, satisfyingly right experiences that any safari camp provides.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *The River Camp is the right choice at Ol Pejeta for clients whose priorities are the interior quality and the dining experience for honeymooners and anniversary guests whose emphasis is on the romantic dimension of the safari; for small groups of friends who want the communal quality of a 20-guest maximum camp with the specific depth of the Ol Pejeta conservation programme; and for experienced safari travellers who want the Ol Pejeta conservation encounter but in an accommodation that reflects their standard for interior quality. The Asilia Bush Camp is the right choice for clients whose priorities are the conservation immersion programme and the classic authentic bush camp experience. Both camps access the same conservancy, the same animals and the same conservation encounters. The*

difference is in what you return to at the end of the day: the bush camp's canvas authenticity and communal dining, or the River Camp's curated interiors and Diana's cooking.

For the most complete Ol Pejeta experience, Vard Africa recommends: 2 nights at The River Camp (for the introduction and the romance) followed by 2 nights at Ol Pejeta Bush Camp (for the Conservation Safari depth). Both camps are within the same conservancy; the transfer is a game drive of approximately 30 minutes through the wildlife.

Families and Children: The River Camp's family suites are excellent for families with children aged 8 and above. The Junior Ranger Programme, the chimpanzee sanctuary, Baraka, the bloodhound exercise and the horse riding all provide exceptional family programming. Minimum age 8 for family suite bookings.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight to Kamok Airstrip: As described for Ol Pejeta Bush Camp above **Kamok Airstrip is the preferred access point**, with the scheduled flights from Nairobi Wilson Airport (35–40 minutes). From Kamok, the River Camp is approximately **45 minutes to 1 hour by road** through the conservancy to the wilderness zone position a slightly longer internal transfer than the Bush Camp's due to the River Camp's deeper conservancy positioning.

By Scheduled Flight to Nanyuki Civil Airport: Alternative scheduled flight option same airlines, approximately 40 minutes from Wilson, then 50–60 minutes by road to the camp.

By Road from Nairobi: Via the A2 highway to Nanyuki and then into the conservancy: approximately **4–4.5 hours** total.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights minimum for The River Camp alone; 2 nights as part of the combined Ol Pejeta itinerary with Asilia Bush Camp.

JAMBO MUTARA CAMP

Mutara Conservancy | Adjacent to Ol Pejeta | JCH Group | 15 Luxury Tents | Cliff-Top Position | Panoramic Views of Mount Kenya and the Aberdares | The Only Accommodation on 20,000 Private Acres | Access to Najin and Fatu — The Last Two Northern White Rhinos on Earth

The Conservancy: The **Mutara Conservancy** spans **20,000 acres** of dramatic Laikipia landscape north of the Aberdare Forest and west of Mount Kenya a privately owned wildlife sanctuary that borders the world-famous **Ol Pejeta Conservancy** along its eastern boundary, effectively creating an extended wildlife corridor of over **110,000 combined acres** of protected land. This adjacency is Mutara's most defining practical advantage: every guest at Jambo Mutara Camp has full access to both conservancies, combining the seclusion, exclusivity and personalised service of a small private camp with the extraordinary wildlife density and iconic conservation encounters including **Najin and Fatu**, the last two northern white rhinos alive on Earth that Ol Pejeta's 90,000 acres provides.

The Mutara Conservancy's landscape has a specific and arresting character. Positioned on a **rocky escarpment** that drops dramatically into the wildlife corridor below, the terrain combines open savannah grasslands with the rocky hillside terrain of the escarpment edge, **eight dams and wetlands**, waterfall formations in the conservancy's northern section and the specific highland quality of a landscape that sits at sufficient altitude to produce crisp mornings, warm afternoons and genuinely cold evenings that the fireplace in every tent specifically exists to address.

Introduction and History: Jambo Mutara Camp is owned and operated by the **JCH Group** whose philosophy, expressed succinctly in the camp's tagline, is "International Comfort. African Hospitality." The group has built at Mutara a property that resolves the fundamental tension that some Laikipia camps fail to navigate: being simultaneously wild enough to feel like a genuine bush experience and comfortable enough to feel genuinely luxurious. Fifteen tents on a cliff-top, each facing the wilderness below; a swimming pool with the conservancy's waterhole in the foreground; a kitchen that produces meals described across multiple independent reviews as among the finest at any Laikipia camp; and a staff team whose warmth is the most consistently praised feature of the guest experience.

Camp Manager **Njoki Kinyua** who responds to guest reviews by name, from whom multiple TripAdvisor guests have specifically requested to pass on their appreciation, and whose management of the camp's service culture is evident in the consistency of the praise is one of the most specifically characterful and most consistently praised camp managers in the Laikipia circuit. The specificity of her management, the attention with which she knows individual guests' preferences by the second day of their stay, and the personal quality she brings to what could otherwise be the administrative role of a 15-tent camp is the primary human ingredient in the Mutara experience.

Location and Setting: The camp sits **high on a cliff-top** overlooking the Mutara Conservancy's plains and the Ol Pejeta landscape beyond a position chosen with the specific intelligence of people who understood that a camp's view is not merely aesthetic but ecological. From the cliff-top position, guests watch the wildlife movement through the corridor below as a continuous natural programme from the vantage of 15 private tent decks, the communal lounge's open-sided viewing area and the cliff-edge infinity pool. The **waterhole** below the camp is within direct viewing distance of the pool and the communal terrace wildlife at the water visible without binoculars, without a vehicle and without any movement from the camp's communal area.

The views extend beyond the conservancy floor: **Mount Kenya's massif** defines the eastern horizon; the **Aberdare Range's** forested bulk provides the southern backdrop. On the clearest mornings which occur more frequently here than at the lower-altitude northern properties both mountain ranges are simultaneously visible from the camp's terrace, a geographical panorama that few Laikipia properties can match.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

15 Luxury Tented Rooms — "a peaceful haven that reflects its surroundings with a generous helping of indulgence" in the camp's own description comprising:

- ✓ *Standard Luxury Tents (×12):* Each tent is "tailor-made to offer you the most unforgettable camping experience." The standard: **world-class interior furnishings** with beiges and white soft colour palette; **large double four-poster bed** positioned for the cliff-top view; **cosy reading area** with armchairs for the midday hours; **fully stocked mini-bar** for sundowner independence from the communal bar; **private deck** where sundowners can be enjoyed while watching the wildlife on the conservancy below; **ensuite bathroom** with flush WC and shower.
- ✓ *Six Tents with Outdoor Bathtub:* Six of the 15 standard tents carry an **outdoor bathtub** — positioned on the private deck for bathing with the conservancy view. This is the Mutara version of the cliff-edge plunge pool: a specific luxury that transforms the daily routine of bathing into an act of deliberate pleasure in a specific landscape.
- ✓ *The Family Tent:* An interconnecting configuration where **one tent can be set up with two beds** — creating a family unit with the flexibility to accommodate parents and children in adjacent but internally connected accommodation. The family tent configuration is the most practical and the most specifically Mutara-appropriate option for families with children.
- ✓ *The Presidential Tent:* The camp's signature accommodation distinguished by an **outdoor Jacuzzi** on its private deck. The Presidential Tent is Mutara's most opulent single room and the specific choice for honeymooners, anniversary stays and guests whose itinerary has built toward this property as its final, finest component.

Communal and Shared Facilities:

- ✓ *The Main Lounge and Bar:* Open-sided and cliff-facing the central gathering space whose panoramic view of the wildlife corridor below functions simultaneously as a bar, a lounge and a permanent wildlife-watching position. The specific pleasure of sitting in a comfortable lounge chair with a cold drink, watching elephant move through the conservancy below without having to go anywhere or do anything, is one of the most specifically Laikipia pleasures that any camp provides.
- ✓ *The Dining Area:* Set for both indoor and deck dining with the cliff-top view commanding even the indoor seating through large open-sided windows. Meals are served with the choice of interior or outdoor deck positions, the deck's specific virtue being the directness of the conservancy view during every course.
- ✓ *The Infinity Swimming Pool:* Cliff-edge, oriented directly toward the waterhole below the wildlife visible across the pool's rim throughout the day. The pool is described as small relative to some Laikipia properties but positioned with specific intelligence: the waterhole below, visible from the pool's edge, creates the defining Mutara poolside experience.
- ✓ *The Conference Tent:* A dedicated tent capable of accommodating **up to 30 people** in classroom configuration making Mutara one of the most specifically and most practically appointed Laikipia properties for corporate retreats, management off-sites and leadership strategy sessions.
The combination of the wilderness environment, the world-class food and the full activity portfolio creates the conditions for productive focused thinking that no urban conference facility can replicate.
- ✓ *The Rowing Boat at Mutara Dam:* A small rowing boat available for guests to explore the **Mutara Dam** getting a water-level perspective on the wildlife that comes to drink there, in a form of quiet approach that produces different wildlife encounters than any vehicle.

Communication in the Wilderness:

WiFi is available in the communal areas. Mobile coverage (Safarilink) is generally available at the camp's elevated cliff-top position. The cliff-top's altitude advantage makes Mutara one of the better-connected camps in the central Laikipia area.

Activities at Jambo Mutara Camp:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives in Mutara Conservancy** — Across the 20,000 private acres with guides whose knowledge of the specific conservancy terrain the escarpment game trails, the dam positions, the waterfall approach from the north is the product of continuous, daily work. The conservancy's exclusivity (one camp, 15 tents, 20,000 acres) ensures that the early morning drive produces the specific quality of no other vehicle anywhere in the landscape.
- ✓ **Full Access to Ol Pejeta Conservancy — Kenya's Most Biodiverse Private Conservancy** — This is Mutara's most significant distinguishing advantage over other Laikipia camps. Full-day drives into Ol Pejeta's 90,000 acres are included in the partnership between the two conservancies:
- ✓ *The Last Two Northern White Rhinos — Najin and Fatu:* The **Ol Pejeta northern white rhino sanctuary** is the only place on Earth where you can see this subspecies alive. Najin ("*The Gift*" in Arabic) was born in 1989. Fatu ("*Lucky*") was born in 2000 in a Czech zoo. They are **the last two individuals of their subspecies alive anywhere on Earth** — their presence the result of decades of dedicated protection and the conservation tragedy of a species whose reproductive capacity has been so severely depleted that the northern white rhino is functionally extinct, Najin and Fatu maintained as living representatives of a gene pool that science is working to preserve through the IVF programme ongoing at Ol Pejeta. Standing beside the fence of their sanctuary watching these two animals graze in full-bodied health, understanding that there are no more like them, that the entire remaining population of this subspecies exists within this one enclosure in central Laikipia is one of the most moving single wildlife encounters available anywhere in the world.
- ✓ *The Big Five in Concentration:* Ol Pejeta holds some of the highest densities of lion, leopard, buffalo and elephant in Kenya, supplemented by its famous black rhino population over **130 southern black rhinos**, making Ol Pejeta the largest black rhino sanctuary in East Africa. The specific quality of wildlife density that its 90,000 acres provides is comparable to the Maasai Mara for Big Five encounters.
- ✓ *The Ol Pejeta Chimpanzee Sanctuary — The Only One in Kenya:* The sanctuary houses chimpanzees rescued from the illegal bushmeat and pet trades across Central Africa **the only chimpanzee sanctuary in Kenya**, and the only place in the country where this Great Ape can be observed. The specific encounter chimpanzees in a carefully managed but genuinely wild-feeling environment, with keeper narration about each individual's rescue story is unlike any other Kenya wildlife experience.
- ✓ *Endangered Species Enclosure:* For close encounters with **Jackson's hartebeest and Grevy's zebra** in managed conditions.
- ✓ **Lion Tracking with Specialist Trackers** — Mutara Camp partners with **lion-tracking specialists** whose telemetry equipment and accumulated individual lion knowledge allows game drives to intercept specific lion movements and specific lion families that the general game drive cannot reliably locate.
- ✓ **Night Game Drives in Mutara Conservancy** — The nocturnal community of the Mutara-Ol Pejeta landscape: **aardvark, porcupine, honey badger, white-tailed mongoose, bush baby** and the specific secretive predators of the night that the spotlight reveals. Mutara's cliff-top position, combined with the openness of the conservancy terrain below, makes night drives here some of the most productive nocturnal wildlife experiences in central Laikipia.

- ✓ **Guided Nature Walk with Armed Ranger** — Along the Mutara escarpment trails, interpreting the conservancy's ecology, tracking wildlife sign and understanding the specific habitat character of the cliff-top terrain.
- ✓ **Early Morning Nature Walk (Complimentary)** — A complimentary dawn walk with a ranger along the conservancy's scenic trails specifically praised in multiple guest reviews as one of the most quietly rewarding experiences of their Mutara stay.
- ✓ **Birding Safari** — The Mutara and Ol Pejeta conservancies combined hold **over 300 bird species** a diversity that reflects both the highland habitat and the varied landscape of dam, escarpment, woodland and open grassland. An experienced birding guide is available for specialist bird-watching sessions.
- ✓ **Rowing on Mutara Dam** — Exploring the dam by rowing boat for the specific water-level wildlife encounter: the birds, the crocodiles and the wildlife at the shoreline at eye level rather than from the height of a vehicle.
- ✓ **Horse Riding** — Available at Mutara and combinable with Ol Pejeta's horseback safari programme. Horse-riding to the Ol Pejeta northern white rhino sanctuary for experienced riders one of the most specifically extraordinary horseback wildlife encounters in Kenya.
- ✓ **Kayaking** — Available as an activity at the conservancy's dam and water features.
- ✓ **Organised Mount Kenya Summit Climbs** — For guests with the fitness and the ambition: Mutara's position within reach of multiple Mount Kenya entry points (Sirimon Gate approximately 45 minutes south) makes the camp an excellent base for a Mount Kenya climb departing from the camp's airstrip-adjacent location into the mountain's highland zone. The camp organises the full climb logistics.
- ✓ **Mountain Biking** — Through the conservancy's trails and through traditional farmlands and community villages in the surrounding area a form of exploration that produces a completely different relationship with the terrain than any motorised activity.
- ✓ **Cultural Village Visits** — Organised authentic cultural visits to Maasai and Pokot community villages adjacent to the conservancy.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ Mutara's kitchen is one of the most consistently praised elements of the camp's guest experience across TripAdvisor, independent travel writer reviews and the camp's own management communications. The camp's own description "the most delicious food, prepared with great care, served in the dining area which is exquisite" is confirmed by the guest record.
- ✓ *Picnic Bush Breakfast*: "We had a picnic breakfast which was sumptuous." Served at positions across the conservancy after the morning game drive. A proper picnic spread not a vehicle tailgate but a properly set bush breakfast table in a position chosen by the guide for its specific wildlife activity or its specific landscape quality.
- ✓ The kitchen operates on the principle of **fresh local produce and generous hospitality**: *"There is a choice for starters, the main course, and desserts, and everything we had was delicious and prepared with great care."* Special dietary requirements including vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free are accommodated with advance notice.
- ✓ Meals are served: in the cliff-top dining area with the conservancy view; on the private deck for in-tent dining; in the bush at positions across the conservancy.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff.
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Jambo Mutara Camp:

We love Mutara for **Najin and Fatu** for the experience of standing beside the northern white rhino sanctuary at Ol Pejeta and encountering, within accessible driving distance of the camp, the last two individuals of an entire subspecies. This is not the standard wildlife encounter. This is a once-in-a-generation conservation reckoning a meeting with extinction in progress and no other camp in the Laikipia circuit provides access to it with the same ease and regularity as Mutara's partnership with Ol Pejeta ensures. And for **Njoki** for the camp manager's specific quality of personal hosting that transforms a 15-tent safari camp into an experience of being genuinely welcomed into someone's care.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Plan the Ol Pejeta full-day drive for the second full day after an orientation morning on the Mutara Conservancy itself. The sequence matters: understanding the smaller, quieter conservancy first allows the Ol Pejeta full-day to land with its full impact. And request the boat on the Mutara Dam for the late afternoon of the first day: the specific combination of being at water level on a highland Laikipia dam as the evening light drops and the wildlife arrives is a Mutara experience that no guest who tries it forgets, and very few discover on their own initiative.*

Families and Children: Mutara is excellent for families. Children under 3 stay free. Children aged 3–11 pay 50% of the adult rate sharing with adults. The family tent configuration; the comprehensive Ol Pejeta programme including the chimpanzee sanctuary; the lion tracking; the mountain biking and the rowing boat; the night drives all create exceptional family experiences across a wide age range. The specific moral weight of the northern white rhino encounter explaining to children of any age that these are the last two of their kind is one of the most powerful conservation education moments available in Kenya.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight to Kamok Airstrip (Recommended): **Daily scheduled flights from Nairobi Wilson Airport to Kamok Airstrip** the airstrip located approximately **15 minutes by road** from Jambo Mutara Camp. Flight time from Wilson: approximately **35–45 minutes** (Kamok is close to Nanyuki Airport and serves the Ol Pejeta area). Airstrip transfer from the camp is included.

Alternative: Nanyuki Civil Airstrip: If Kamok is unavailable, **Nanyuki Civil Airstrip** is the alternative served by AirKenya, Safarilink and Governors' on daily scheduled flights. Road transfer from Nanyuki to Mutara Camp: approximately **40–50 minutes**.

By Road via Ol Pejeta Conservancy (Scenic 1 Hour 20 Minutes from Nanyuki): The route through the Ol Pejeta Conservancy is the more scenic option entering Ol Pejeta at its main gate, paying conservancy entry fees for both vehicle and passengers, and driving the 49.1-kilometre route through the conservancy to the Mutara Camp boundary. The drive is approximately **1 hour 20 minutes** and provides game-viewing en route. **A 4WD vehicle is recommended**, with tarmac for the first few kilometres followed by murram (unpaved) road.

By Road Direct (Shorter but Less Scenic): A more direct route through the conservancy's external roads avoids the Ol Pejeta fees but bypasses the game-viewing opportunity.

From Nairobi: Via the A2 highway to Nanyuki and then to the conservancy: approximately **4–5 hours**. The tarmac is excellent to Nanyuki; some unpaved road thereafter.

Vard Africa Note: The Ol Pejeta route is the Vard Africa-recommended arrival entering Kenya's most biodiverse single conservancy as the arrival journey rather than a subsequent day activity. Clients who arrive through Ol Pejeta begin their Mutara experience before they have technically checked in.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights. Given the partnership with Ol Pejeta and the breadth of the combined activity portfolio, 4 nights is the recommendation for guests who want to experience both the Mutara conservation and the Ol Pejeta full-day programme with sufficient time to also rest, swim and use the camp's own amenities without rushing.

MUGIE CONSERVANCY

50,000 Acres of Olive Forest and Acacia Savannah | The Hahn Family Swiss Vision | Kenya's Highest Lion Density | Bloodhound Anti-Poaching | Kenya's Northernmost Golf Course

The Conservancy: The **Mugie Conservancy** covers approximately **50,000 acres** of north-western Laikipia the most remote, the most wild and, in many ways, the most specifically character-filled of the major Laikipia conservancies. Mugie is not the easiest destination to reach. It requires the most commitment of any property in this guide in terms of either flight time or road distance. That commitment is rewarded in full by what it delivers: a landscape of acacia-dotted savannah, ancient African olive forests (*mutamaiyu* woodland), rocky escarpments and the extraordinary wildlife concentrated around the **156-acre Mugie Dam** Kenya's third-largest private reservoir that forms the ecological heart of the conservancy.

Mugie sits at the northern edge of the Laikipia Plateau, positioned as a **vital wildlife corridor** linking the Laikipia grasslands to the **Mathews Range**, the **Samburu National Reserve** and the wider **Northern Rangelands Trust landscape** to the north and east. This corridor function is not incidental; it is central to the conservancy's ecological importance. Elephant, lion, wild dog, cheetah and the large herbivore communities of the plateau use Mugie as a passage zone between the southern highlands and the arid north a living connection between two of Kenya's most important wildlife ecosystems.

The Hahn Family: Mugie has been owned by the **Hahn family** a Swiss wine-producing dynasty from the Valais wine country since the **1980s**. The matriarch of the family is **Gabbi Hahn**, an accomplished oil painter whose works hang throughout the conservancy's properties and whose artistic vision permeates both the landscape management and the visual character of every building on the land. In 2019, the Hahn family made the decision that transformed the conservancy's tourism profile: they licensed the **Governors' Camp Collection** one of East Africa's most storied luxury safari brands, operating since 1972 in the Maasai Mara to completely rebuild the former family home into the boutique lodge that is now Governors' Mugie House.

Conservation Programme: Mugie supports multiple active wildlife research programmes:

- **Lion Landscapes:** collaring and continuous monitoring of the lion population Mugie holds the highest lion density of any Laikipia conservancy, a distinction that has been consistently verified by population surveys
- **Cheetah and Wild Dog Project:** active research and protection for the conservancy's cheetah and painted wolf populations
- The **bloodhound anti-poaching unit** trained scent hounds used in daily anti-poaching patrols across the conservancy boundary and interior
- Community grazing programmes managing the boundary between livestock and wildlife territories
- **The Mugie Primary School:** community education programme extended to additional schools across the region, covering wildlife conservation, careers, health and environmental education

Wildlife: The complete Laikipia Northern Five plus resident lion prides (highest density in Laikipia), resident cheetah, wild dog packs, elephant herds, buffalo, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, Jackson's hartebeest, Beisa oryx and an extraordinary bird diversity including a resident population of **Verreaux's eagle** on the conservancy's granite outcrops. The **Mugie Dam** draws the conservancy's wildlife community in volumes that make morning hours at the water's edge the finest wildlife observation position in the conservancy elephants bathing, hippos surfacing, over 300 bird species recorded at the water's edge.

Tala the Reticulated Giraffe Mugie's most beloved individual: a young reticulated giraffe who was found as a tiny calf following a herder's goats, brought to the conservancy headquarters by the herder who feared for her survival, and hand-raised by **Margaret**, a conservancy staff member who became Tala's surrogate mother. Now several years old, Tala wanders freely within the conservancy but returns regularly to the headquarters where she grew up. She is accustomed to people, comfortable with vehicles, and her presence impossibly large, impossibly beautiful, genuinely tame is one of the most specifically charming wildlife encounters available at any Laikipia property.

GOVERNORS' MUGIE HOUSE

Governors' Camp Collection | 8 Stone Cottages including Suite with Plunge Pool and Family Cottage | Waterhole Hide | Infinity Pool | Kenya's Northernmost Golf Course | Silver Eco-Rating

Location and Setting: Governors' Mugie House occupies a **commanding hilltop position** within the Mugie Conservancy perched on an escarpment with views **south-east across the conservancy toward distant Mount Kenya** and across the 50,000 acres of the Mugie landscape.

The approach to the lodge drives north from the airstrip past the dam, with the main lodge buildings visible above through the olive tree woodland described by the Expert Africa team who visited in 2023 as "a rather austere, fortress-like series of buildings up on the escarpment, partly shrouded by olive trees." This exterior austerity honest stone construction, serious architecture makes the interior's warmth and generosity all the more dramatic upon arrival.

The lodge's position within the olive woodland means it functions as a wildlife oasis: year-round water, permanent shade and maintained gardens attract bird life and small mammals that the drier surrounding savannah does not support. Walking the paths between the cottages at any hour of day or night reveals bird species multiple sunbird varieties, raptors in the olive canopy, the specific acoustic character of the *mutamaiyu* forest that the open savannah drives never encounter.

Introduction and History: Before becoming Governors' Mugie House, this site was the Hahn family's private home known as Mutamaiyu House for the African olive trees (*mutamaiyu* in the local language) that give the surrounding woodland its character. The Hahn family's decision in **2019** to engage the Governors' Camp Collection whose fifty years of East African safari hospitality management represents the deepest experience in the Kenya luxury camp industry was not merely a commercial arrangement; it was a decision to bring the full professional infrastructure of Kenya's most storied safari company to a conservancy that the family had loved and protected for nearly four decades.

Gabbi Hahn's oil paintings the matriarch's artistic output from decades of living in and responding to the Mugie landscape are displayed prominently in the communal areas alongside large-scale African sculpture pieces from the family's collection, some acquired across years of continental travel. The lodge's interior aesthetic is the physical expression of a family's engagement with this specific part of Africa over four decades, curated by a professional team that knows how to present these elements to the highest hospitality standard.

The Governors' Camp Collection's contribution to Mugie goes beyond hospitality management: daily scheduled flights via **Governors' Aviation** connect the conservancy to Nairobi Wilson Airport, making Mugie the most accessible of the northern Laikipia conservancies from an air transport perspective a significant practical advantage for guests whose itinerary includes multiple Kenya destinations.

Awards and Certifications:

- **Silver Eco-Rating from Ecotourism Kenya** acknowledging the conservancy and lodge's environmental management practices
- **Governors' Camp Collection's** 50+ years of continuous operation in Kenyan conservation tourism
- \$120 per guest conservation contribution included in the nightly rate, funding the conservancy's anti-poaching, lion monitoring and community education programmes

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

8 stone cottages (numbered #2 through #8, plus the family cottage the specific numbering reflects the original family home's room system and is an endearing quirk of the property's history):

Standard Cottages (×5): Described by Expert Africa as "*all spacious, en-suite rooms, with bath tubs and walk-in showers and attractive, wooden, twin-basin washstands with good toiletries.*" Each cottage features:

- **Spacious bedroom** with king or twin configuration beds can be reconfigured on request
 - **Open fireplace** — the north-western Laikipia position and elevation produce genuinely cold evenings that reward the fire's warmth
 - **Writing desk and day bed** for the midday hours
 - **En-suite bathroom** with both freestanding bathtub and walk-in shower; quality toiletries
 - **Private veranda or terrace** with views across the conservancy landscape or the lodge's colourful managed garden
 - Flagstone paths under mature garden trees connect the cottages to the central buildings the walking itself, through a garden alive with birds and butterflies, is a pleasure
- ✓ *Cottage #2 The Honeymoon Suite:* Facing east across the conservancy the direction of Mount Kenya on clear mornings. Distinguished by a **freestanding copper bathtub** on its private terrace and a dedicated **private plunge pool** with chairs and sun loungers. This is the property's most romantic configuration and the most specifically sought-after room.
 - ✓ *2 Suites with Private Plunge Pools:* Two additional superior cottages each with their own private plunge pool "*Two Suites enjoy a private plunge pool on their verandahs, with views out over the Laikipia plains.*" Each with the same room standard as the standard cottages plus the pool amenity.
 - ✓ *Family Cottage:* The Mugie family configuration "*Ensuite double and twin rooms are interconnected by a spacious lounge area, and a wide verandah with private plunge pool.*" The family cottage's ground-floor level and enclosed garden area make it the safest option for families with young children.

Communal and Shared Facilities:

- ✓ *The Main House:* "*The interior of the building that houses the main lounge and dining area is expansive and classically stylish, with wrought iron chandeliers hanging from a beamed ceiling, big, comfy sofas, impressive sculptures and cut flowers.*" The original family home's full-height iron-framed windows and French doors bring in abundant natural light; the flagstone terrace running the full length of the building is shaded by a palm-tiled roof that Expert Africa describes as "*beautifully finished.*" Lunch is typically served on this terrace; the dining room inside is used for the evening dinner service.
- ✓ *The Full-Size Snooker Table:* An unexpected and extremely welcome amenity a proper full-size snooker table in the communal area, available at any hour and consistently praised by guests as one of the most sociable features of the lodge.
- ✓ *The Swimming Pool and Spa:* Below the central buildings an infinity pool with views across the conservancy, pool-side spa offering massages using **100% natural products by The Wild Herb Company** (including treatments with names like 'Shea Perfection' a genuinely high-quality spa menu).

- ✓ *The Waterhole Hide:* Below the main house a **purpose-built wildlife observation hide** positioned for direct viewing of the animals that come to the waterhole in front of the lodge. Lions, elephants, cape buffalo and giraffe have all been observed from the hide's concealed interior while guests ate meals on the terrace directly above. A specifically extraordinary form of wildlife encounter.
- ✓ *The Kitchen Farm Garden (Shamba):* *"The beautifully managed shamba is another draw for local wildlife, and the top-quality salad crops, vegetables and fruit that they grow here have to be carefully guarded. It's well worth asking to be given a little tour which makes Mugie's meals even more appetising."* Chef David's kitchen is fueled by this garden's produce a genuinely kitchen-farm-to-table programme whose results are evident in the quality and freshness of every meal.
- ✓ *The Gift Shop:* A small gifts and crafts display area selling locally produced items in the Governors' tradition.

Communication in the Wilderness: *"There is no internet in the cottages but if you need some screen time, the communal living room provides Wi-Fi."* This specific arrangement WiFi available but not in individual rooms creates a deliberate and welcome disconnection from digital life during private hours that most guests praise rather than resent. Mobile coverage (Safaricom) is available at the lodge and at higher positions on the conservancy; the dam valley may have limited coverage.

Activities at Governors' Mugie House:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives** — In Governors' specially-designed safari vehicles with **KPSGA-rated guides** of notable excellence. The conservancy's roads cross the olive woodland, the open acacia savannah, the dam edge and the escarpment terrain each habitat yielding different wildlife communities and different qualities of light.
- ✓ Guest reviews consistently single out guides **Bernard and Akiba** for exceptional tracking ability and ecological knowledge. Night drives reveal Mugie's nocturnal community: leopard moving between territories, serval in the grassland margins, the owl diversity of the olive forest edge, and aardvark emerging from burrows that have been in use for generations.
- ✓ **Kayaking on Mugie Dam — The "Magical Kenya" Signature Experience** The definitive Mugie activity: paddling Canadian canoes across the **156-acre dam** in the company of wildlife. The designation as a **"Magical Kenya" signature experience** by the Kenya Tourism Board is one of only a handful of such designations in Laikipia and reflects the specific quality of the encounter: on the water in a silent canoe, at the level of wildlife that has no reason to treat a slow-moving canoe as a threat. Elephants bathing at the dam edge while guests paddle past. Hippos visible from a safe distance across the open water.
- ✓ The dam's extraordinary bird diversity at immediate proximity. *"If a family of elephants happens to be bathing at the same time, rest assured that you have just witnessed one of life's most enchanting adventures."* Minimum age: 12 years. Included in the accommodation rate.
- ✓ **Anti-Poaching Bloodhound Experience** — The conservancy's **bloodhound unit** patrols the boundary and interior daily the scent hounds following trails that human rangers alone cannot detect. Guests can visit the handler team at their headquarters to learn about the dogs' training and work, and can participate in a **mock tracking exercise** hiding in the bush as the 'poacher' while the dogs are released to track them. *"You'll be impressed with just how quickly they find you!"*
- ✓ A small gratuity to the handlers is appreciated. This is one of the most entertaining and most genuinely educational conservation activities in Laikipia.
- ✓ **E-Biking** — The conservancy's **electric mountain bikes** provide a sustainable and intimate form of wildlife exploration across Mugie's scenic routes. *"A great opportunity to embark on an eco-friendly adventure along a stunningly scenic route, with plenty of close-up wildlife encounters."* Included in the accommodation rate.
- ✓ **Fishing at Mugie Dam** — *"Bring a fishing rod and a cool box of refreshing drinks and while some time away at the dam's edge trying to catch tilapia and catfish."* The dam's shore positions in the late afternoon, with the declining light across the water and the wildlife arriving at the water's edge, make the fishing as much about the setting as the catch.
- ✓ **Kenya's Northernmost Golf Course** — Mugie's **9-hole golf course** in the north of the conservancy, set among olive trees with panoramic vistas of the Laikipia landscape.
- ✓ Clubs and a caddie are provided; an additional fee applies. The combination of the game's concentration and the surrounding landscape's beauty wildlife visible across the course, the olive tree canopy overhead, the escarpment view defining the horizon creates one of Kenya's most distinctive golf experiences.
- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks** — Through the olive woodland, across the open grassland and along the dam edge the conservancy's habitats interpreted on foot with guides who know every plant, every track and every micro-habitat in the landscape.
- ✓ **Visits to the Samburu-Pokot Market at Posta** — A weekly traditional market at the roadside community of Posta, where Samburu and Pokot pastoralists sell livestock, foodstuffs and traditional products.
- ✓ One of the most genuinely unmediated cultural encounters available from any Laikipia lodge.
- ✓ **Samburu and Pokot Village Visits** — To traditional family compounds where guests enter the homestead, observe the architecture and social organisation, and understand something specific about how these pastoral communities live. Available at an additional cost.
- ✓ **Lion Collaring and Monitoring Participation** — Subject to research schedule and activity timing, guests may have the opportunity to observe or participate in the conservancy's lion monitoring programme with the Lion Landscapes team.
- ✓ **Wildlife Hide** — The purpose-built hide below the main house for close-range wildlife observation at the waterhole.
- ✓ **Meeting Tala** — Finding and spending time with the conservancy's famous semi-tame reticulated giraffe one of the most charming and most immediately lovable individual wildlife encounters in all of Laikipia.
- ✓ **Mugie School Visit** — The community education programme at Mugie Primary School and its satellite programme in neighbouring schools.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

Chef David who appears by name in multiple guest reviews as one of the most impressive aspects of the Mugie stay leads a kitchen that draws on the lodge's own **kitchen farm garden** for fresh vegetables, salads and herbs, supplemented by the finest available regional produce. The results are meals described across multiple independent guest accounts as *"delicious at every meal"* a consistency of quality that reflects the garden's abundance and the chef's skill.

Meals are served: in the dining room in the evenings, with Gabbi Hahn's paintings on the walls and wrought iron chandeliers overhead; on the flagstone terrace at lunch in the shade of the palm-tiled roof; at the infinity pool edge for alfresco dining; in the bush for breakfast picnics coordinated with the morning game drive; or at the dam edge for the most specifically atmospheric outdoor meal on the property.

Why We Love Governors' Mugie House:

- ✓ We love Mugie House for the **kayaking** for the specific, irreplaceable experience of paddling across a 156-acre private dam in the presence of bathing elephants, in a canoe that the wildlife regards as no more threatening than a floating log.
- ✓ There is no equivalent wildlife-water combination at any other Laikipia property.
- ✓ And for the bloodhound experience for the specific, completely unexpected pleasure of running through the Mugie bush as a mock poacher and being found, effortlessly, by a scent hound who has been tracking your trail for 200 metres.
- ✓ And for Tala for the specific warmth of a giraffe who knows she lives among people and who responds to that knowledge by simply being herself, impossibly beautiful and impossibly close, at the conservancy headquarters where she grew up.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Combine the morning game drive with a picnic breakfast at the dam edge, followed by the canoeing activity this sequence, which takes the full morning from dawn to late mid-morning, is the quintessential Mugie experience. Arriving at the dam by game drive vehicle, eating breakfast as the elephants come to drink, then boarding the canoes as they move into the water all in a continuous three-hour sequence is the most complete expression of what makes Mugie different. And reserve one evening for a sundowner at the dam hide, watching the wildlife arrive as the light drops: the specific combination of the hide's concealment and the dam's extraordinary animal theatre makes this the finest evening wildlife encounter the conservancy provides.*

Families and Children:

Governors' Mugie House is outstanding for families. The family cottage with its private plunge pool; the bloodhound experience (universally loved by children who participate); the school visit; the Mugie Dam canoeing (for children 12+); the snooker table; the e-bikes; meeting Tala all create exceptional family experiences. *"Children of all ages are encouraged to visit the facility."*

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights minimum; 4 nights recommended given the travel time required to reach the conservancy and the breadth of the activity portfolio.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight (Highly Recommended Governors' Aviation):*
- ✓ **Daily scheduled flights from Nairobi Wilson Airport to Mugie Airstrip** operate via the Governors' Camp Collection's own aviation service the most direct and most convenient option for Mugie.
- ✓ The flight connects to Governors' other Kenya properties (Maasai Mara Il Moran, Main Camp and Riverside) making Mugie easily combinable with a Mara safari.
- ✓ Flight time from Wilson Airport: approximately **1 hour 15 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes** (Mugie is further north than most Laikipia airstrips, which accounts for the slightly longer flight).

From **Mugie Airstrip to the lodge: approximately 15–20 minutes** by road transfer through the conservancy the drive north past the Mugie Dam providing the first wildlife encounters of the stay.

By Charter: Direct private charter to Mugie Airstrip from Nairobi Wilson Airport: approximately **1 hour**. Charter also available from other Laikipia airstrips (Loisaba, Lewa Downs, Nanyuki) for guests combining Mugie with other Laikipia properties.

By Road: From Nairobi: approximately **5.5–6 hours** via Nanyuki and north through Rumuruti. The road beyond Rumuruti is unpaved and requires a 4WD vehicle. Road transfer can be arranged by the lodge. The combination of distance and road quality makes Mugie one of the longer road journeys in Laikipia; the flight is strongly recommended.

In Rumuruti (30 minutes south of the conservancy): The small town of Rumuruti is the regional centre for north-western Laikipia. Basic facilities available; not a recommended overnight stop for lodge guests.

Vard Africa Note: For guests combining Mugie with the Maasai Mara, the Governors' Aviation scheduled flight creates a seamless single-airline connection between two of Kenya's finest wildlife areas. For guests doing a pure Laikipia circuit, the charter connection between Mugie and Loisaba or Lewa is approximately 25–35 minutes.

EKORIAN'S MUGIE CAMP

Founded 2012 by Josh & Donna Perrett | Silver Eco-Rating | 6 Tents Including 2 Family Tents with Annexe | Donna's Cordon-Bleu Kitchen | Kayaking with Elephants | The Moyo Foundation

Location and Setting: Ekorian's Mugie Camp occupies a **plains position** in the **southern section of the Mugie Conservancy** on open savannah surrounded by woodland, positioned with a **northwest-facing aspect** that gives the camp its distinctive afternoon light. The camp is set within a walled garden a deliberate design choice by the Perretts that creates an enclosed, secure, shaded oasis in the dry north-

western Laikipia landscape. Within the wall: mature trees, abundant vegetation, resident birds and butterflies, the **freshwater swimming pool** overlooking a waterhole, and the specific atmosphere of a property built to be genuinely lived in rather than merely stayed at.

Introduction and History: Ekorian's Mugie Camp has a founding story that is entirely, specifically personal and that personal character is the quality that most consistently and most emphatically distinguishes it from every other camp in the Mugie Conservancy and from most camps in Laikipia.

Josh Perrett was raised in Kenya a child of the Laikipia bush who grew up exploring the vast northern plains, often on foot and with camel trains, developing what his website describes as *"an unshakable bond with the land."* **Donna Perrett** was also raised in Kenya, bringing to the camp her training as a **cordon-bleu chef** a professional culinary qualification that directly and measurably improves the quality of every meal served at Ekorian, and that explains why guests consistently describe the food as among the finest they encountered on their entire Kenya safari. In **2012**, Josh and Donna opened the camp they had designed themselves named for the Turkana word for the **African olive wood** (*Ekorian*) from which much of the camp's structure is constructed.

In **2017**, Josh assumed the management of the entire Mugie Conservancy expanding his involvement from camp operator to conservancy director, a role that gives Ekorian's guests access to conservation intelligence at a level that most safari camps cannot provide.

The Moyo Foundation Josh and Donna's own charity, operating from the camp supports beadwork projects by Samburu and Pokot women (the beadwork sold in the camp shop directly funds the foundation), school visits and community development across the conservancy's neighbouring communities.

The camp holds the **Silver Eco-Rating from Ecotourism Kenya** and operates on comprehensive eco principles: **solar power** (hair dryers and electric razors cannot be accommodated); **rainwater collection and filtration** instead of bottled water (reusable water bottles provided for game drives; recycled glass bottles for drinking water in rooms); **organic vegetable garden** providing all salads, herbs and vegetables without fertilizers or chemicals; **organic locally-made toiletries** in all rooms; **zero-plastic policy** throughout the operation.

The camp's eco-consciousness is not a marketing position. It is a practical expression of Josh and Donna Perrett's relationship with the Mugie landscape people who live here, whose children have grown up here and who treat the land with the specific care that comes from belonging to it rather than merely operating within it.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

6 Spacious Canvas Tents — arranged in a line facing northwest, each on a **raised wooden deck** with a **papyrus-thatched roof** and screened-vegetation buffers providing complete privacy from adjacent tents:

4 Double Tents: Each tent accommodates a maximum of **2 adults** in double or twin configuration. The interior standard exceeds what the word "tent" typically suggests. Guest reviews consistently describe the rooms as *"5-star hotel rooms complete with en-suite bathroom"* and *"incredibly comfortable"* the specific luxuries: quality beds with premium linen; a **hot water bottle** placed in the bed each evening on cool nights; an ensuite bathroom with **hot and cold plumbed running water, flush lavatory and rainfall shower**; solar lighting; a private veranda with a **day bed covered in cushions** for the midday hours; and the **Masai beading around the taps and even on the sink plug chain** a detail that a guest described in a TripAdvisor review as one of the most specifically charming design touches of any East African property they had encountered.

2 Family Tents with Annexe: Each family tent has the main double/twin bedroom plus an adjoining **children's annexe** that can sleep up to **3 children under 12 years old** in bunk or twin bed arrangements. The annexe connects internally to the main tent. *"Two tents each also have a children's annex with bunk or twin beds making them perfect for family groups."* These tents are Ekorian's most-requested accommodation for families.

Communal and Shared Facilities:

- ✓ *The Mess Tent:* The social heart of Ekorian recently renovated with an indoor dining and seating area that includes a **cosy fireplace**, plus the outdoor dining and lounge areas. The mess tent has the specific character that the best East African camp communal spaces produce: comfortable rather than formal, warm rather than designed, the kind of space where evenings around the fire with a glass of wine and the lion-roar audible in the distance are the natural culmination of the day.
- ✓ *The Swimming Pool:* A **freshwater pool** overlooking the camp's waterhole *"Ekorian's camels and elephants can sometimes be seen visiting this watering hole, so whilst enjoying the pool, keep your eyes open!"* The pool is safe for children of all ages when supervised, and the waterhole view makes it the most wildlife-connected pool in the Mugie Conservancy.
- ✓ *The Craft Shop:* Locally produced items including Moyo Foundation beadwork the purchase of beadwork items directly funds the foundation's community and education work.
- ✓ *The WiFi Tent:* A dedicated communal WiFi space with multiple charging sockets the camp's practical response to being solar powered without WiFi in individual tents.
- ✓ *The Organic Vegetable Garden:* Donna's kitchen garden, growing without chemicals or fertilizers the produce appearing in every meal.
- ✓ *Three Game Drive Vehicles:* Ekorian operates **three safari vehicles** a high ratio to guest capacity that ensures frequent and varied game drive scheduling.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight:* As Governors' Mugie House above — **Governors' Aviation daily scheduled flights from Nairobi Wilson Airport to Mugie Airstrip** (approximately 1 hour 15 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes). From Mugie Airstrip, **Ekorian's Mugie Camp is approximately 20–25 minutes by road** through the conservancy a slightly longer transfer than to Governors' Mugie House due to the camp's more southerly position. Airstrip transfer included.
- ✓ *By Charter:* Direct private charter to Mugie Airstrip: approximately 1 hour from Nairobi Wilson.

- ✓ *By Road:* Nairobi to Ekorian via Nanyuki and Rumuruti: approximately **5.5–6 hours**. 4WD required beyond Rumuruti. Road transfer can be arranged.
- ✓ *Check-in:* 11am. *Check-out:* 10am. Changing facilities available for guests departing after 10am.
- ✓ *Late Departure Fee:* After 2pm departure: USD 100 per person, including lunch and a game drive.

Communication in the Wilderness:

- ✓ WiFi available in the communal WiFi tent.
- ✓ **No WiFi in individual tents** a deliberate eco policy.
- ✓ Mobile coverage (Safaricom) at some positions on the conservancy; valley bottoms limited.

Activities at Ekorian's Mugie Camp:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives** — In Ekorian's three safari vehicles with knowledgeable guides across the full 50,000 acres of Mugie Conservancy. *"When we went on a game drive, we felt like we were the only visitors to the reserve."* Maximum of two vehicles out simultaneously a low-density experience unique in Laikipia. Guest praise for guides particularly guide **Patrick** in multiple reviews is consistent and specific: *"so thoughtful, knowledgeable, calm."*
- ✓ **Kayaking on Mugie Dam — The "Magical Kenya" Signature Experience** — As described for Governors' Mugie House above. *"The vast array of activities apart from the traditional game drives camel ride down to the dam followed by kayaks across the dam, whilst elephants drink from the shore."* Ekorian also operates **island picnics on the dam** — taking guests by canoe to the island in the centre of the dam for a picnic lunch surrounded by water and wildlife. Available when dam levels are appropriate.
- ✓ **Camel Rides** — *"The camels are based at Bobong Farm, the Perrett's family property, along the road to Rumuruti."* A camel ride starting from the dam picnic/kayak site winding back to camp, with the camels roped together and led by a herder. The ride takes approximately 45–60 minutes and requires no skill. *"At no extra charge."*
- ✓ **Bloodhound Anti-Poaching Experience** — Visiting the Mugie bloodhound unit, observing the dogs' training, and participating in the mock-poacher-hiding exercise. *"The next morning featured trekking with bloodhounds, which included our daughters posing as poachers and running ahead to create a trail with their scent for the dogs to track. It was so much fun the girls are still talking about it!"* Guest review.
- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks and Birding Walks** — Morning birding walks around the camp (Ekorian's position within the woodland produces excellent birding at camp level the resident owl population is noted in multiple reviews); guided walks on the conservancy interpreting tracks, vegetation and ecology.
- ✓ **Fishing at Mugie Dam** — For tilapia and catfish; guests can have their catch cooked if desired.
- ✓ **Ranch Activities** — Livestock dipping on Saturdays, when available participating in the conservancy's working cattle management and understanding the coexistence economy of Mugie.
- ✓ **Children's Ekorian Explorers Club** — *"An interactive and engaging kids club for all little 'Ekorian Explorers', giving them the chance to learn more about the plants, animals and cultures that make Mugie special."* Activities include archery practice (with the patient instructor **Epak** mentioned in multiple reviews), spear throwing, traditional Samburu games, volleyball, trampoline, lawn games and feeding the resident animals.
- ✓ **Mugie School Visit** — Community education visits to Mugie Primary School.
- ✓ **Traditional Samburu and Pokot Market at Posta** — The weekly roadside market. Included in camp rate.
- ✓ **Samburu and Pokot Village Visits** — At additional cost; available by arrangement.
- ✓ **Meeting Tala** — The semi-tame reticulated giraffe at the conservancy headquarters.
- ✓ **Golf at Kenya's Northernmost Golf Course** — At additional cost; clubs and caddie provided.
- ✓ **Horse Riding Safaris** — Can be arranged in advance at additional cost; available through the area's equestrian operators.
- ✓ **Fly Camping** — Available for adventurous guests who want a night in the bush beyond the camp's walls.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

- ✓ **Donna Perrett's cordon-bleu training** is the single most consistently praised feature of Ekorian's guest experience a qualification she earned before she and Josh opened the camp, and one that directly underpins the quality of every meal. The kitchen uses produce from the camp's **organic vegetable garden** grown without chemicals and without fertilizer's supplemented by the finest available regional sourcing. *"The food was absolutely delicious with the most scrumptious breakfasts they couldn't make enough pancakes for our children!"*
- ✓ Meals are served communally in the mess tent a specifically Ekorian atmosphere where all guests eat together, share the day's experiences and hear from Josh or Donna about the conservancy's ecology and conservation work. Bush breakfasts at the dam edge (coordinated with the morning game drive); dam-island picnic lunches; campfire dinners under the stars with the lion-roar audible in the darkness.
- ✓ The camp produces its own **honey and chutneys** on the premises; serves **trout from the nearby river** when available; and provides homemade ice cream *"the best homemade ice cream ever"* according to one TripAdvisor review that has since been quoted by multiple subsequent guests as the detail that most made them want to visit.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Ekorian's Mugie Camp:

- ✓ We love Ekorian for **Donna's cooking and Josh's stories** for the specific, irreplaceable quality of a camp where the owners are genuinely present, genuinely knowledgeable and genuinely invested in every guest's experience in the way that owner-managed properties uniquely achieve.
- ✓ And for the dam-island picnic: arriving by canoe at the island in the middle of Mugie's 156-acre dam, eating Donna's freshly prepared food while the elephants drink at the shore a hundred metres away, is available at no other property in Kenya.
- ✓ And for the bloodhound exercise: posing as a poacher in the Mugie bush, running ahead to lay a scent trail, then waiting in the vegetation as the bloodhounds are released and being found, inevitably, quickly, completely is simultaneously the most educational and the most entertaining conservation encounter in all of Laikipia.

Vard Africa Insider Note:

- ✓ *Spend four nights at Ekorian rather than the usual three three nights reveals the highlights; the fourth day reveals the rhythm of the place.*
- ✓ *By the fourth morning, you have established the relationship with Josh and Donna that turns the camp from an accommodation into an experience of being hosted by people who genuinely love where they live.*
- ✓ *Ask Donna to teach the group a simple cooking technique using the organic garden's produce on a late afternoon when the game drive is done and the light is too late for another activity.*
- ✓ *The hour in the camp kitchen with her is one of Laikipia's most specifically personal and most specifically warm experiences.*

Families and Children:

- ✓ Ekorian is outstanding for families by design, since Josh and Donna have young children themselves and have built many of the camp's activities specifically for the family experience. *"Ekorian's is family- and child-friendly, with safe, fenced grounds for letting off steam and a flexible attitude to meals."*
- ✓ The family tents with annexe; the Ekorian Explorers Club; the bloodhound exercise; the camel rides; the lake kayaking (12+); the organic garden and cooking; meeting Tala all engage children across a wide age range and a wide range of interests.
- ✓ Reviews from families with children of all ages are among the most enthusiastic in the Mugie Conservancy.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight:* **Governors' Aviation** daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport to Mugie Airstrip** (approximately 1 hour 15 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes).
- ✓ From Mugie Airstrip, **Ekorian's Mugie Camp is approximately 20–25 minutes by road** through the conservancy a slightly longer transfer than to Governors' Mugie House due to the camp's more southerly position. Airstrip transfer included.
- ✓ *By Charter:* Direct private charter to Mugie Airstrip: approximately 1 hour from Nairobi Wilson.
- ✓ *By Road:* Nairobi to Ekorian via Nanyuki and Rumuruti: approximately **5.5–6 hours**. 4WD required beyond Rumuruti. Road transfer can be arranged.
- ✓ *Check-in:* 11am. *Check-out:* 10am. Changing facilities available for guests departing after 10am.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights minimum; 4 nights strongly recommended to experience the full activity programme including a dam-island picnic and a bloodhound exercise.

&BEYOND SUYIAN CONSERVANCY

44,000 Acres of Ancient Kopjes and Ewaso Narok River Views | &Beyond's Northern Laikipia Expression

The Conservancy: The **Suyian Conservancy** covers approximately **44,000 acres** of north-western Laikipia a landscape of dramatic character that distinguishes itself from its neighbours through the specific geological drama of its **ancient granite kopjes**: enormous rounded outcrops of rock that rise from the surrounding grassland in profiles of considerable grandeur, their surfaces shaped by hundreds of millions of years of weathering into forms that carry the specific visual weight of very ancient things. The name *Suyian* belongs to the Ewaso Narok River valley that runs through the southern section of the conservancy a river that, at high water, is one of Laikipia's most beautiful landscapes, its course marked by riverine forest and the specific wildlife community that permanent water sustains.

The conservancy sits at the **intersection of multiple ecological zones**: the highland grasslands of the Laikipia Plateau transition here to the more arid scrublands of the north, producing a habitat diversity that supports both the highland species elephant, lion, leopard, Grevy's zebra and the drier-country specialists of the northern frontier edge. The kopje system provides sanctuary, lookout positions and breeding habitat for the **rock hyrax, klipspringer, Verreaux's eagle** and the specific reptile and small mammal community that rocky outcrops support exclusively.

&BEYOND SUYIAN LODGE

&Beyond's Most Recent Kenya Property | 44,000 Acres of Northwest Laikipia | 14 Suites | Space for Giants Partnership | The Melanistic Black Leopard | Wild Dog | Suyian Meaning "Wild Dog" in Maa | Rock Sanctuary Ancient Paintings | Afro Wabi-Sabi Design | Mpala Research Centre Adjacent.

The Conservancy: **Suyian Conservancy** covers approximately **17,806 hectares (44,000 acres)** in the **northwestern Laikipia plateau** one of the most wildlife-rich and most ecologically significant sections of this already extraordinary conservation landscape. The name *Suyian* derives from the Maa word for the **African wild dog** reflecting both the conservancy's wild dog population and the community aspiration that its founding embodied: the return of an apex predator to a landscape from which it had been absent.

The conservancy occupies a position of remarkable ecological connectivity: bordered by **Loisaba Conservancy** and **Sosian Conservancy** to the east, adjacent to the **Mpala Research Centre** (a Princeton University field station) to the south, and forming part of a **mosaic of over 200,000 acres** of continuously managed private land in northwestern Laikipia. The **Ewaso Narok River** runs along the conservancy's eastern boundary for more than **16 kilometres** a permanent water source in a landscape of semi-aridity that concentrates wildlife along its riverine woodland corridor throughout the year.

The conservancy was **once pure cattle ranch** the landscape degraded by intensive grazing pressure over decades. The transformation began when the **Suyian Conservancy Trust** a Kenyan not-for-profit trust representing the landowners began systematically reducing the cattle herd and allowing the landscape's own regenerative capacity to reassert itself. Today approximately **2,500–3,000 cattle** share the conservancy with its growing wildlife population the specific coexistence model that Laikipia's most successful conservancies demonstrate: cattle and wildlife together, with the revenue from wildlife-based tourism providing the economic case for maintaining the habitat at a quality that supports both.

The partnership with **Space for Giants** the global conservation charity founded by Dr. **Max Graham** and described as the leading force in elephant conservation across eleven African countries gives Suyian's conservation programme a depth of institutional support and scientific rigour that most conservancies cannot access independently. *"If Laikipia is the heart of the organisation, Suyian is its soul."* — Dr. Max Graham

The Suyian Conservancy Trust also maintains a formal relationship with the **Mpala Research Centre** giving Suyian Lodge guests the option to engage with the ongoing ecological research at one of Africa's most productive long-term field research stations.

Introduction and History: &Beyond Suyian Lodge opened on **1 July 2025** making it the most recently opened major luxury lodge in the Laikipia ecosystem at time of this guide's publication, and &Beyond's most significant new Kenya property in several years.

&Beyond's **multi-decade exclusive tourism lease** over the Suyian Conservancy the only luxury lodge and tented camp operator on the entire 44,000 acres reflects both the scale of the company's commitment to Laikipia as a destination and the specific attractiveness of a conservancy whose wildlife credentials, ecological significance and landscape character position it at the top tier of the northwestern Laikipia circuit.

The **design concept** is specific and beautiful: *"inspired by the curving forms of the surrounding landscapes"* the lodge's rounded structures directly referencing the ancient **granite kopjes** (rock outcroppings) that define the conservancy's geological character. The kopjes rounded by millions of years of weathering into the smooth, organic forms that appear throughout northwestern Laikipia are the landscape feature that most immediately distinguishes Suyian from the flat-terrain eastern Laikipia properties. The lodge's buildings grow from the kopje escarpment edge, the architectural language continuous with the geology rather than imposed on it.

The **Rock Sanctuary** a specific section of the conservancy's kopje landscape where **ancient rock paintings adorn the curving rock surfaces** was the specific visual inspiration for the lodge's design. Both as an aesthetic and as an archaeological encounter, the Rock Sanctuary provides a dimension of specifically northern Laikipia character that no other &Beyond Kenya property offers.

The interior design philosophy is described as **"Afro Wabi-Sabi"** the Japanese aesthetic of impermanence, incompleteness and natural beauty applied to an African bush context. *"Natural textures echo the land, floor-to-ceiling glass draws in the view, and every furnishing and item of décor was crafted by local Kenyan artisans."*

Conservation Credentials:

- **Space for Giants partnership** — wildlife protection, security and community support programmes
- **Adjacent to Mpala Research Centre** (Princeton University) — long-term ecological research collaboration
- **Wildlife movement corridor** between Laikipia and the northern conservancies
- **Active ranching coexistence** model — 2,500–3,000 cattle managed alongside expanding wildlife populations
- **Community support programmes** — schools, health programmes and education in surrounding communities

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

14 Suites — the only accommodation within the 44,000-acre concession, ensuring complete exclusivity of the entire wilderness for each group of lodge guests:

The Standard Suite: Each of the 14 suites is **open-fronted** facing the kopje landscape and the Ewaso Narok River valley beyond with floor-to-ceiling glass and fully opening walls that dissolve the boundary between the suite interior and the Laikipia landscape outside. Each suite features:

- A central **spacious bedroom** with king-size bed and premium linens
- A **separate lounge area** — sufficiently large to function as a private sitting room for the day's rest and reading hours
- An **ensuite bathroom** with both freestanding bath and walk-in rainfall shower, positioned with the landscape view as the primary design consideration
- A **private veranda or deck** with the kopje and river valley view
- A **private plunge pool** — the defining amenity of each suite, positioned on the deck for the uninterrupted view
- A **personal bar** and **personal coffee station** for the private self-service hours
- **WiFi** throughout the suite — &Beyond's standard digital connectivity at the highland Laikipia altitude

The Family Suite: All the features of a standard suite with an **additional children's bedroom** independently accessed with twin beds and its own bathroom. The most family-appropriate configuration; the children's room can be set up for multiple children with appropriate bedding.

The Triple Suite Option: A configuration option that provides three sleeping positions suitable for a parent with two older children or for a three-adult friendship group.

Communal and Shared Facilities:

- ✓ *The Chef's Kitchen — "Home-Style" Dining Hub:* The dining philosophy at Suyian departs from the formal lodge dining room model a **chef's table in the kitchen** where guests can dine in the most intimate possible proximity to the cooking process, in the specific atmosphere of a home kitchen rather than a restaurant. *"From the welcoming, home-style chef's kitchen to the map room filled with conservation tales, every element of Suyian has been designed to invite reflection and deepen connection."*
- ✓ *The Map Room and Library:* An interpretive space combining a conservation information resource with the reference literature of the northern Kenya landscape maps, books and the visual record of the conservancy's ecological transformation as a reading and contemplation space. The conservation tales told by the map room's curators the Space for Giants team and the &Beyond guides provide the intellectual framework for what the game drives reveal.
- ✓ *The Safari Shop:* Featuring **ethical Kenyan designer fashion and décor** the lodge's specific commitment to the Kenyan artisan economy expressed through its retail offering.
- ✓ *The Samburu Bar:* A circular fire-pit bar design drawing on the architectural language of the Samburu community's gathering spaces providing the sundowner and post-dinner gathering position.
- ✓ *The Wellness Centre:* *"Tucked into the rocks"* two treatment rooms, a steam room and a **cold plunge pool**, all positioned for uninterrupted escarpment views. The cold plunge pool's specific refreshment after a walking safari in the Laikipia heat is one of the most specifically effective recovery tools at any Laikipia wellness facility. Plus, a **state-of-the-art gym** and a **shaded yoga studio**.
- ✓ *The Swimming Pool:* Positioned along the escarpment for the conservancy view.

Communication: WiFi in all suites and communal areas. Mobile coverage generally available at the lodge's escarpment position.

Activities at &Beyond Suyian Lodge:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives — The Suyian Conservancy** In &Beyond's custom-built safari vehicles with the company's trained, certified KPSGA guides. The conservancy's wildlife: **over 100 mammal species** confirmed, including the **melanistic (black) leopard** one of the most elusive and most photographically extraordinary wildlife encounters in Laikipia; **African wild dog** resident packs; Grevy's zebra; reticulated giraffe; gerenuk; desert warthog; Laikipia hartebeest; Beisa oryx; elephant and buffalo in substantial numbers; lion, cheetah and both striped and spotted hyena. Game drives can be extended into **night drives** for the nocturnal community of the northwest plateau.
- ✓ **Walking Safaris** — Guided nature walks interpreting the specific ecology of the Suyian landscape: the escarpment's geological character, the kopje-associated species, the riverine woodland ecology of the Ewaso Narok corridor.
- ✓ **Active Ranching — Walking with the Herders** — A specifically Suyian activity: joining the conservancy's **Samburu and Pokot herders** as they manage the 2,500–3,000 cattle across the grazing lands learning the traditional pastoral knowledge by which these communities have managed livestock in this landscape for generations, and understanding in direct, practical terms how cattle and wildlife coexist in the Laikipia model. *"Guests can choose to walk with herders across grazing lands."*
- ✓ **Camelback Safari** — Through the conservancy on camels, in the company of Samburu handlers for whom the camel is a familiar cultural and practical companion.
- ✓ **Horseback Safari** — Pre-booked, through the lodge's equestrian programme. The specific terrain of the northwestern Laikipia plateau rolling grassland with kopje formations, river woodland and open plains makes for particularly varied and rewarding riding.
- ✓ **Rock Sanctuary Visit — Ancient Paintings on the Kopjes** — The defining cultural encounter specific to Suyian: visiting the **Rock Sanctuary** where ancient rock paintings adorn the curved kopje surfaces the same formations that inspired the lodge's design. With a guide who can explain the archaeological significance and the specific cultural tradition represented by the paintings, this is one of the most specifically extraordinary cultural-archaeological encounters available in northwestern Laikipia.
- ✓ **Catch-and-Release Fishing — Ewaso Narok River and Waterholes** — The river frontage provides fishing positions for tilapia and catfish. *"Journey further north to remote Lake Turkana for an unforgettable angling experience."*
- ✓ **Mpala Research Centre Visit** — Engaging with the ongoing ecological research at Princeton University's Mpala field station long-term studies on predator-prey dynamics, vegetation ecology and the human-wildlife interface in Laikipia. *"&Beyond guests can learn about and become involved in a range of conservation topics."*
- ✓ **Conservation Talks with Space for Giants Team** — The lodge's Space for Giants conservation partners provide briefings on the organization's work across eleven African countries, with specific focus on the Suyian landscape's elephant and wildlife protection programme.
- ✓ **Helicopter Safaris** — From Suyian: the northwestern Laikipia plateau in aerial perspective, connecting to the Suguta Valley and Northern Frontier circuits. *"A gateway to more remote adventures, such as helicopter safaris and visits to the Northern Frontier region of Kenya, including Samburu, the Matthews Range and the Endoto Range, Lake Turkana and the Suguta Valley."*
- ✓ **Botany Walks** — Specialist walking activity focused on the plant life of the Suyian landscape the kopje-associated succulents, the Vechellia woodland community and the riverine vegetation. *"Suyian is an ideal destination for botany walks."*

Cultural Interactions with Samburu and Pokot Communities The lodge's community programme provides structured, respectful encounters with the pastoral communities of the Suyian area.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

The kitchen philosophy is *"fresh, homegrown and locally sourced"* produce from the lodge's own **herb garden (shamba)**, with a focus on seasonal cooking and the preservation of local flavours in **in-house pickles and preserves**. The **chef's table** in the kitchen provides the most intimate dining option; outdoor dining on the expansive escarpment deck, in the communal areas, or at specific bush positions in the conservancy provides the most expansively beautiful.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff.
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.

- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love &Beyond Suyian Lodge: We love Suyian for the **melanistic leopard** for the specific possibility, available at very few places in Kenya and only in the northwestern Laikipia landscape, of seeing a black leopard. The presence of this animal in the conservancy confirmed by camera traps and occasional sightings transforms every game drive into a specific search for what most safari travellers consider the most extraordinary and most rarely seen of all African wildlife. And for the **Rock Sanctuary** for the specific encounter with ancient paintings on ancient rock in a landscape whose geological character is older than anything human memory can encompass. And for the **ranching walk** for the specific experience of understanding, on foot, in the company of the people who practice it, how cattle and wildlife actually coexist in the landscape that this guide describes in theory throughout.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Book the ranching walk for the third morning after two days of game drives have introduced the conservancy's wildlife landscape, the walk with the herders reveals the human dimension of the same landscape with a completeness that the vehicle cannot provide. Understanding, in the company of a Samburu herder, how the cattle are moved, how grazing rotation preserves the grassland, how the herder's knowledge of the land is calibrated to the specific characteristics of each section of the conservancy this is the most complete understanding of what Laikipia's coexistence model actually means in practice. And specify the melanistic leopard as the primary wildlife search criterion for the dawn game drives: the guide team's knowledge of the individual animal's territory and movement patterns makes this the highest-probability sighting in Kenya.*

Families and Children: Outstanding for families the Family Suite configuration; the active ranching walks; the horseback programme; the camelback safari; the Rock Sanctuary visit; the Mpala research centre engagement; the wellness centre's yoga studio for teenage guests; and &Beyond's comprehensive family activity programme all create excellent multi-generational experiences.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight to Loisaba Airstrip (Standard): **Daily scheduled flights from Nairobi Wilson Airport to Loisaba Airstrip** on Safarilink and AirKenya: approximately **55–65 minutes**. From Loisaba Airstrip, **Suyian Lodge is approximately 1 hour by road** through the Loisaba and Suyian conservancies a spectacular drive through the northwestern Laikipia landscape.

By Private Charter to Suyian's Private Airstrip: Direct charter from **Nairobi Wilson Airport to Suyian's own private airstrip**: approximately **55–65 minutes**. The private airstrip eliminates the road transfer time and provides a direct arrival experience on the conservancy itself.

By Road: From Nairobi via Nanyuki and northwest to the Laikipia plateau, then to the Suyian Conservancy: approximately **5 hours**. From Nanyuki: approximately **1.5 hours** through the Laikipia plateau landscape.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 4 nights minimum to engage with the full range of the conservancy's activity portfolio and to build the ground-level familiarity with the landscape that the melanistic leopard sighting probability rewards.

IL-NGWESI CONSERVANCY

Kenya's First 100% Community-Owned Safari Lodge — The 1996 Pioneer That Changed Everything

The Conservancy: The **Il-Ngwesi Group Ranch** covers an extensive area of north-eastern Laikipia the territory of the **Mukogodo Maasai**, a Maasai sub-group whose specific historical relationship with this landscape involves a transition from hunter-gatherer traditions (the Mukogodo were the last known group in East Africa to live primarily as hunter-gatherers, a way of life only finally abandoned in the 20th century) to the agro-pastoral cattle-keeping economy that most Maasai communities practice today.

Il-Ngwesi means "*people of wildlife*" in the Maa language a name that captures exactly the community's relationship with the wildlife that shares their land. That relationship was formalised in **1996** when the Mukogodo Maasai community took the most courageous and most consequential decision in their modern history: they established the **Il-Ngwesi Eco-Lodge**, the **first accommodation in Kenya to be entirely owned, managed, operated and staffed by the local community**, with all revenues returning directly to the community rather than to an external operator or developer.

The model they created has since been replicated across hundreds of properties on two continents. It was invented here, in north-eastern Laikipia, by a community that decided to take ownership of its future.

IL NGWESI LODGE

The Pioneer | Built 1996 | 100% Owned, Managed and Staffed by the Mukogodo Laikipiak Maasai | Six Open-Fronted Cottages | Star Beds | Hidden Waterhole | The First Maasai Group Ranch in Laikipia to Choose Conservation | 16,500 Acres | Adjacent to Lewa, Borana and Lekkurruki

The Conservancy: The **Il Ngwesi Group Ranch** covers **16,500 hectares** in north-eastern Laikipia a community-owned landscape at the junction of the Laikipia Plateau's eastern edge and the semi-arid lowlands that transition toward the Samburu frontier. The name *Il Ngwesi* translates as "*people of wildlife*" in the Maa language a name whose accuracy has been vindicated by three decades of conservation practice that has transformed a heavily overgrazed, wildlife-depleted landscape into a thriving biodiversity corridor.

Il Ngwesi borders **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy** to the south and is adjacent to both **Borana Conservancy** and **Lekkurruki Conservancy** meaning that in 2018, when the fence between these neighbouring conservancies was removed and wildlife corridors were reopened, Il Ngwesi became part of the most connected community of protected land in northern Laikipia. Black rhinos now move between Lewa and Il Ngwesi on

ancient routes; wild dogs use the corridor; elephants follow the migration paths that once connected these landscapes before fencing interrupted them.

Introduction and History — The Most Important Story in Laikipia: Il Ngwesi is not the oldest, the largest or the most luxurious property in the Laikipia guide. It is, by any reasonable historical assessment, the **most important**. The decision made by the Mukogodo Laikipiak Maasai community in the mid-1990s following an approach by **Ian Craig** of the neighbouring Lewa Wildlife Conservancy to set aside **8,675 hectares** of their prime grazing land for wildlife conservation rather than livestock was an act of genuine, courageous sacrifice. Laikipia's grazing land is not plentiful. The Maasai's pastoral economy depends on it directly. Setting aside half of the available grazing in exchange for the promise that tourism revenue would compensate the community for what they were giving up was a leap of faith of extraordinary size.

The leap was rewarded. The lodge opened in **1996** built by **80 community workers over 10 months**, funded by USAID through the Kenya Wildlife Service, with significant assistance from Ian Craig's Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and from Borana in the fastest significant construction project in northern Laikipia's safari history. From those 80 workers, **10 were selected for training** to become the lodge's initial hosting and guide team. Twenty-nine years later, the Il Ngwesi team of **18 permanent staff** all of whom grew up near the lodge, most of whom have worked there across multiple years of service are the living result of that 1996 training investment.

The financial model is as specific as the history: **100% of all revenues from the lodge flow directly to the Mukogodo Maasai community**. There is no external operator taking a management fee. There is no private ownership drawing a dividend. The **6,000 community stakeholders** the members of the six Maasai villages that surround the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch are the shareholders, the beneficiaries and the custodians of the lodge. The board of directors is made up of Maasai local community members. The lodge manager is a Maasai community representative.

"Many places claim authenticity, but few are as authentically Maasai as Il Ngwesi."

"This is one of the only lodges in Kenya to be one hundred per cent owned and run by the community, in this case the Mukogodo Maasai community, with all proceeds going back into the local people."

Since 1996, tourism revenues and guest donations have contributed to: secondary and university school fees for community children; local school building funds; health personnel training and clinic construction; community land purchase to ease livestock grazing pressure; and through a partnership with VSO Jitolee and the European Commission, a **women's livelihoods beadwork initiative** that has enabled local women to produce and sell beadwork in local and national markets through the lodge shop.

The **Mukogodo Girls Empowerment Programme** — a partnership between the lodge, Quinnipiac University and the Kenya Health Care Initiative deliver youth empowerment camps teaching reproductive health, girls' rights and community development. The 'Days for Girls' programme, linked to Kenya's national initiative, operates through the lodge's community connections.

Location and Setting: Il Ngwesi Lodge crowns a **bush-covered hill on the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch** the specific geography of its position providing what its guests describe as one of the finest single elevated lodge views in Laikipia: *"perched on a rocky outcrop at the north-eastern edge of the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch"*, looking across the bush-dotted escarpment toward the Samburu frontier to the north and east, with the Mararoi Hills as the backdrop and the **Ngare Ndare River** visible in the valley below.

The waterhole, positioned directly below the lodge and fed by pipes from a nearby spring, is the ecological heart of the lodge's immediate wildlife theatre: *"The waterhole attracts a wide variety of birds and animals daily and is the lifeblood for wildlife in this semi-arid part of Kenya."*

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

6 Individual Bandas — each built from local materials, designed to follow the contours of the hillside, and individually named and decorated:

Room One — Emuny: The most private room on the property and the one closest to the waterhole the wildlife visible directly from the room's private terrace. The most sought-after room for wildlife observation. This is also one of the two rooms with a **star bed** a wooden platform that pulls out onto the extended veranda, on which guests sleep under the open night sky rather than indoors. *"We were lucky enough to have villa 1 which overlooks the watering hole so you lie in bed watching elephants, giraffe, warthog drinking. We chose to have our bed rolled out under the stars and literally slept under the Milky Way and the most incredible display of stars it felt like a dream!"*

Rooms Two and Three — Oltome and Orgatuny: Connected by a **wooden bridge** *"perfect for families looking to be together as they are connected by a wooden bridge and are walled on each side"*. The bridge between these two rooms creates a family configuration where children and parents have adjacent but separate sleeping spaces, connected by an outdoor walkway that is itself a feature of the lodge's architecture.

Room Five — Olarro: Has a large deck along with Room One and is the second room with a **star bed** for sleeping under the open sky. Views across the bush from the elevated deck position.

Room Six — Emara (Giraffe): Named for the wildlife most often visible from this room's specific sightline.

All rooms share: **hand-carved wooden beds draped in Maasai fabrics; wooden floors; panoramic views over the landscape; en-suite bathrooms** with a specific design that embodies the lodge's honest architectural approach a vanity and washstand with what the lodge calls *"a 'loo with a view', presenting wide views over the bush"*; and separately positioned **downstairs outdoor shower open to the sky above**.

The architecture: *"Il Ngwesi hasn't so much been built from local materials as it has been carved out of the local environment."* Gane and Marshall. The rooms' low-hanging roofs and open fronts create air flow and shade simultaneously the passive cooling system of an ecologically intelligent design operating in northern Laikipia's specific climate.

Communal and Shared Facilities:

- ✓ *Il Laikipiak Hall (The Main House):* The primary communal space *"uniquely designed with curved thatch roofing supported by large, round wooden beams, open on all sides, and offering a wonderful space to enjoy outstanding meals and simply relax in comfortable chairs."* The hall looks north and east over the valley and waterhole while the wooden deck extending out among the trees provides the finest view of the eastern escarpment.
- ✓ *The Gallery:* *"A minute's walk away along the main footpath, and further up the ridge, you come to the small, free-form infinity pool and partly shaded pool terrace, backed by comfortable seating."* The pool is described as small but positioned for the specific Laikipia escarpment view.
- ✓ *The Wildlife Hide:* *"A hide tucked down the hillside in front of the lodge allows visitors to get closer to the waterhole and enjoy the bush in utter peace and quiet."* The hide provides the most direct and most intimate waterhole observation available at the lodge at ground level, with the wildlife's behaviour unaffected by the knowledge of human presence.
- ✓ *The Lodge Shop:* Selling **Maasai and Samburu community beadwork** produced through the VSO Jitolee women's livelihoods programme the purchase of these items directly funding the women's cooperative.

Communication in the Wilderness:

Il Ngwesi has **no WiFi** a deliberate expression of the lodge's philosophy of genuine disconnect and genuine immersion in the community and landscape experience.

"A stay here feels like an escape from the modern world to a simpler time without Wi-Fi and outside distractions." Mobile coverage limited. Guests planning to maintain business or personal communications during their stay should discuss options with Vard Africa.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff.
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Community Safety: All cultural visits and community encounters are arranged through the lodge management's established community relationships. Solo guest movement beyond the immediate lodge is not appropriate.

Activities at Il Ngwesi Lodge:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives** — Through the 16,500-hectare conservancy with Maasai moran (warrior) guides whose knowledge of the Il Ngwesi landscape is the knowledge of people who grew up in it. Wildlife: elephants in significant numbers, waterbuck, gerenuk, reticulated giraffe, impala, greater and lesser kudu, dik-dik, Grevy's zebra (rare), warthog, colobus monkey, baboon. Predators: lion, leopard, cheetah, African wild dog (resident pack, though it ranges across a vast area), spotted and striped hyena all present but requiring patience and guide knowledge for reliable sightings.
- ✓ *African Wild Dog — The Il Ngwesi Distinction:* *"Il Ngwesi is known as a destination for seeing African Wild Dog, and although the resident pack roams a vast area and is at times absent from the immediate area, when the dogs are around, they make their presence felt."* The wild dog sighting at Il Ngwesi when it happens is the most specifically unpredictable and most specifically rewarding wildlife encounter the lodge provides.
- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks with Maasai Warrior Guides and Armed Escorts** — On foot through the conservancy with guides who carry both the cultural knowledge of the Maasai warrior tradition and the specific ecological knowledge of the Il Ngwesi landscape. Walking here as at all unfenced northern Laikipia conservancies is walking in genuine big-game country, with the guide's alertness and the armed escort's specific function as active safety elements rather than theatrical additions to the experience.
- ✓ **The Walk to the Rhino Sanctuary** — A guided walk through the Rhino Conservancy section of the Il Ngwesi landscape *"a truly heartwarming experience."* Following the fence removal between Il Ngwesi and Lewa in 2018, black rhinos have returned to Il Ngwesi's landscape through the opened corridor. The walk to observe these animals reintroduced to a landscape from which they had been absent carries the specific weight of restoration.
- ✓ **Cultural Village Visits** — To the six Maasai villages surrounding the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch arranged through the lodge team's own community relationships. The lodge's entire staff grew up in these villages. These are not tourist venues but the actual homesteads of the lodge staff's families. The specific dimension of a cultural visit to a village where the guide is visiting his own family and explaining his own community's life is one that no facilitated cultural tour in Kenya provides.
- ✓ *"An invite to dine in the village of some of Il Ngwesi's warrior staff is not to be missed: expect goat meat, wine or beer, and plenty of dancing well into the night."*
- ✓ **Evening at a Manyatta — Hosted by Maasai Elders** — A formal evening visit to a traditional Maasai family compound welcomed by the community elders, guided through the compound's architecture and social organisation, sharing a meal within the manyatta circle.
- ✓ **Beadwork Workshop with Il Ngwesi Women** — With the women of the VSO Jitolee cooperative, whose beadwork production is funded by the lodge's tourist traffic: learning the pattern language, beginning to create with the guidance of women who are masters of the tradition.
- ✓ **Visit to the Mukogodo Forest** — The ancient forest at the northern edge of the Mukogodo highlands accessible from the lodge as a day excursion with overnight camping option for adventurous guests. The forest's specific ecology ancient trees, endemic species, the specific sounds and light of an undisturbed highland forest is one of northern Laikipia's most specifically remote and most specifically beautiful environments.
- ✓ **Overnight Camping in the Mukogodo Forest** — *"Visits to the Mukogodo Forest and the option to camp overnight is an exciting adventure guests staying at Il Ngwesi Lodge can enjoy."*
- ✓ **Pool and Star Bed** — The pool and the star bed options in rooms 1 and 5 represent Il Ngwesi's most passive and most contemplative pleasures the pool overlooking the valley, the star bed delivering the north-eastern Laikipia night sky in its complete darkness and density.

- ✓ **Sundowner on a Hidden Mararoi Hill Position** — The lodge team's signature sundowner positions in the Mararoi Hills viewpoints known to the Maasai guides that no other lodge's guests' access.

"If you only go to one safari lodge — this is the one!"

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

Il Ngwesi's food reflects the lodge's philosophy of honest hospitality rather than aspirational fine dining. A blend of **African and European cuisine** prepared from the freshest locally sourced ingredients. The **poolside barbecues** are specifically noted by Journeys by Design as *"particularly delicious."* Guest reviews consistently describe the food as *"delicious"* an assessment that reflects the kitchen team's care rather than elaborate technique.

"On our last night there the full staff surprised us by coming out to sing, jump, and dance with us and the other visitors who were there that evening, presenting each party with a customized (with our names) cake thanking us for our visit. Just wow, what a fun way to celebrate our visit!"

The specific warmth of Il Ngwesi's hospitality staff who consider dancing for their guests on the final evening a natural expression of care, who present individual guests with personalised cakes, who bring the full weight of the Maasai community's traditional hospitality to what a conventional hotel would treat as a transactional professional relationship is what makes this lodge categorically different from any property in Laikipia whose ownership is external to the community it employs.

Why We Love Il Ngwesi Lodge:

We love Il Ngwesi for the **decision it represents** for the 1996 Mukogodo Maasai community council that agreed to set aside 8,675 hectares of their prime grazing land because Ian Craig from Lewa came and asked them if they would consider conservation as an alternative to overgrazing, and they said yes. Everything at Il Ngwesi the star bed view, the waterhole elephant at dusk, the dancing staff on the last evening, the wild dog seen or not seen, the Maasai warrior guide whose family lives in the village you visit flows from that decision. And we love the staff who sing and dance for their guests on the final night, not because the job description requires it but because this is what generous people do when they want guests they have welcomed as family to leave knowing they were loved.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Request Room 1 Emuny specifically at the time of booking, and request that the star bed be prepared for your first night. The first night under the Il Ngwesi sky the north-eastern Laikipia star field, the waterhole wildlife sounds below, the specific quality of darkness in a conservancy with no light pollution sets the tone for the entire stay in a way that the same experience on the third night, after orientation, cannot replicate. And ask the team about the wild dog tracking programme: if the pack is in range during your stay, a full morning's dedicated tracking with the lodge's guide is the most specifically extraordinary wildlife activity Il Ngwesi provides.*

Families and Children: *"Il Ngwesi is managed and hosted by a team of Maasai moran (warriors), and families thrive on an atmosphere that places children right at the centre of an experience that is as much about the culture of northern Kenya as it is about the animals that live there."* The interconnecting Rooms 2 and 3 via the wooden bridge; the Maasai warrior cultural activities (spear throwing, fire starting, bow-and-arrow making); the star bed as children's most requested experience; the beadwork workshops all engage children meaningfully. *"Children of all ages are welcome; specific activities for children include learning hunting techniques and local music and dance, community project visits and local school visits."*

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Charter Flight to Il Ngwesi Private Airstrip (Most Direct):* Il Ngwesi has its own private airstrip, accessible by charter aircraft. Charter from **Nairobi Wilson Airport**: approximately **55–65 minutes**. From the airstrip, the lodge is a short game drive.
- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight and Road Transfer:* Scheduled flight from **Nairobi Wilson Airport to Lewa Downs Airstrip** (approximately **45–55 minutes**), followed by a **road transfer of approximately 2 hours north** through the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and beyond.
- ✓ *By Road:* From Nairobi via Nanyuki and north through the Lewa Conservancy area: approximately **5 hours**. The road is paved to Nanyuki; adequate thereafter for 4WD vehicles.
- ✓ *Important Road Note:* The road to Il Ngwesi, while navigable in dry conditions, is significantly more challenging after rain. The northern Laikipia approach roads to the lodge have a reputation for difficulty in wet conditions that should be factored into itinerary planning.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 4 nights minimum. The lodge's remote position, the width of the community engagement programme and the patience required for the wild dog sighting all reward extended stays. 5 nights ideal.

OL LENTILLE CONSERVANCY

The Singing Wells of Laikipia | Ancient Water Traditions | Habituated Baboon Research | Northern Frontier Position

The Conservancy: The **OI Lentille Conservancy** occupies a dramatic position in the **northern section of the Laikipia Plateau** — where the highland landscape begins its transition toward the arid Northern Frontier District, where the rivers that have sustained pastoral life across centuries become seasonal rather than permanent, and where the ancient traditions by which communities have managed scarce water resources across generations are still practiced in their most complete form.

OI Lentille's greatest claim to distinction in the Laikipia landscape is one of Africa's most ancient, most moving and most rarely encountered cultural experiences: **the Singing Wells**.

The Singing Wells: Three sets of these communal water sources are located within the conservancy excavated deep into the *lagha* (dry riverbeds) by **Maasai and Samburu warriors** who are the custodians of a tradition of extraordinary practical ingenuity and cultural richness.

When the rivers run dry in the long dry seasons as they do across the northern Laikipia landscape typically from July through October and from January through February the warriors dig into the riverbed until they reach the groundwater that still flows underground long after the surface

has dried completely. They can dig **ten metres or more** below the surface. Once they reach water, they form a **human chain** that descends into the well, passing buckets of water hand-to-hand from the depth to the surface where the cattle wait, standing in the dry riverbed, smelling the water that is coming toward them.

As they work, the warriors **sing**. Each family has its own song a specific, recognisable chant that is the family's identity in the tradition of the well. The cattle, trained since birth to recognise the sound of their family's song, move toward their family's well when they hear it. The songs carry across the dry riverbed, the cattle move, and the water comes up from the earth in a continuous, ancient rhythm.

After the warriors and their cattle depart, leaving the wells partially filled: **elephants kneel to reach their trunks down the well shafts** to drink from the water at the bottom. Leopards drink from the pools that form at the well edges. The nocturnal wildlife community of the northern frontier drawn by the smell of water in a dry landscape arrives as soon as the human presence recedes.

Photography is typically not allowed at the Singing Wells a request made not as a restriction on the tourist experience but as an expression of the wells' sacred character within the Samburu cultural tradition. For guests who approach this request with respect rather than resentment, the prohibition deepens the experience profoundly: it enforces the full presence that a camera viewfinder would have partially displaced.

Dr Shirley Strum's Habituated Baboon Troop: At Ol Lentille, guests have access to one of the world's most celebrated long-term primate research programmes. **Dr Shirley Strum** began studying baboon social behaviour in Kenya in 1972 more than fifty years ago and her work has produced some of the most important contributions to our understanding of primate social organisation, intelligence and culture. Her habituated baboon troop at Ol Lentille can be observed at close quarters with guides who carry the knowledge to translate what is happening: the dominance hierarchies, the alliance formations, the infant development patterns, the male-female relationships that Strum's decades of research have made completely interpretable.

OL LENTILLE HOUSE

The Sanctuary at Ol Lentille | Established 2007 | John and Gill Elias — Founders Who Donated the Lodge to the Community | Community-Owned | 40,000 Acres | 4 Unique Private Villas | Carissa, Aloe, Acacia, Boscia | The Singing Wells | Baboon Research | Mount Lentille — Laikipia's Tallest Peak | USD 5 Million Raised for Community Investment | The Lowest Tourist Density in Laikipia.

The Conservancy: The **Ol Lentille Conservancy** covers **40,000 acres** (approximately 16,000 hectares) of **northern Laikipia** positioned on one of the highest points of the Laikipia plateau, looking north across the semi-arid frontier toward the Mathews Range and south to the snow-capped massif of Mount Kenya. This elevated position approximately **1,830 metres (6,000 feet)** provides Ol Lentille with some of the finest panoramic views in the entire Laikipia ecosystem, the plateau's dramatic escarpments and distant mountain ranges visible simultaneously from the villas' terraces and decks.

The conservancy was built over **20 years of progressive land management** beginning as degraded, heavily overgrazed range, then restored through the progressive community commitment to conservation that removed the pressure, allowed the vegetation to recover and created the conditions for wildlife to return in *"numbers not seen in human memory."* Today, the 40,000 acres are an unfenced wildlife corridor and migration route, home to elephant herds, wild dogs (the resident pack that ranges a vast territory), leopards, hyenas, greater kudu, eland, and the rare northern species — Grevy's zebra, gerenuk and reticulated giraffe that make northern Laikipia categorically different from the central and southern sections of the plateau.

The conservancy is **community-owned** the Maasai and Samburu communities who contributed their land to the conservancy over the 20-year process are the owners of everything on it, including the four villas. The **tourist density at Ol Lentille is the lowest of any luxury property in Laikipia:** four villas for 40,000 acres, with each villa served by its own dedicated vehicle, guide and staff team meaning that the effective land-to-guest ratio is approximately **10,000 acres per villa**. No other property in this guide approaches this level of exclusivity.

Introduction and History: Ol Lentille was established in **2007** by **John and Gill Elias** a couple whose specific approach to the project distinguished it from every other luxury lodge development in Laikipia. John and Gill **built the lodge on community-owned land and then donated it to the community** retaining management responsibilities under a long-term agreement that has allowed them to develop the property's conservation and community programme while ensuring that the underlying ownership and the underlying economic benefit remain with the Maasai and Samburu communities whose land it stands on.

The Elias' founding vision which they describe as *"ambitious conservation and community goals"* has been fulfilled: since 2007, the Ol Lentille programme has raised over **USD 5 million** for reinvestment into schools, hospitals, healthcare and wildlife conservation across the surrounding communities. This is not donor funding or external charity. It is revenue from tourism, reinvested in the communities whose land hosts the tourism. The model is self-sustaining because the tourism is excellent, the guests come consistently and a meaningful percentage of the revenue generated is returned to the community rather than extracted by external investors.

The current owners/managers are **Laura and Andre** corporate executives who have spent their careers across Asia, the United States and Africa, who are *"passionate about conservation and Africa"* and who now split their time between Singapore and Kenya, bringing world-class hospitality standards to the specific Ol Lentille community conservation context. They inherited a programme of significant depth from the Elias' founding decade and have expanded it further, increasing the quality of the villa accommodation, developing the wellness facilities and deepening the cultural programme.

"We are a pioneering conservation and community project donated to the local community to protect the wildlife and give back and benefit the local community. John and Gill Elias who created the lodge and donated it to the community live at the lodge and are the lodge managers."

"One of the most unique safari lodges in Kenya for its unmatched location, rare beauty, and ancient roots." Ol Lentille's own description, confirmed by independent travel assessors.

Location and Setting: Ol Lentille sits on the **flanks of a wooded rocky hill** in the heart of the private conservancy *"positioned on one of the highest points in Laikipia, Ol Lentille's prime location offers unsurpassed views and exclusivity, by nature."* The two watering holes visible from the main pool's 270-degree outlook are the focal points of the immediate wildlife theatre the elephants that visit these waterholes are observable from the pool deck, the villas' terraces and the main communal space with the specific pleasure of wildlife observation from complete physical comfort.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — The Four Private Villas:

Ol Lentille's accommodation model is entirely unique in Laikipia: **four individual private villas**, each fully staffed with a dedicated **butler, valet, private guide, night watchman and game vehicle**, and each designed with a different character, a different view and a different scale to suit different group compositions. No villa shares any staff, any vehicle or any communal space with another villa's guests unless the guests choose to combine. This is the most complete form of private exclusivity available at any multi-accommodation property in Laikipia.

Villa Carissa — The Most Romantic House in Northern Kenya:

"Arguably one of the most romantic hideouts in East Africa." — Ol Lentille's own description. *"Hidden on the property's highest point, with breathtaking 280-degree views of Laikipia's rugged landscape."* Carissa is named after the **carissa tree** — a thorny shrub with white flowers and scarlet berries that produces, in the highlands of East Africa, one of the most specifically scented flowering seasons of the highland botanical calendar. The villa's interior design is inspired by this tree: **pops of green and blue** amid natural stone and carved timber.

The specific features that make Carissa the most intimate and most romantic of the four villas:

- A **luxurious circular bed** — the single most specifically unusual sleeping configuration at any Laikipia lodge, the circle of the bed creating a room-within-a-room quality of enclosure
- **Floor-to-ceiling windows** framing the 280-degree Laikipia panorama from the bedroom itself
- A **sunken outdoor bathtub set directly in the rocks** — not a standard bathtub placed on a deck but a bath literally carved into the conservancy's rocky hillside, with the sky above and the Laikipia landscape visible over the bath's rim. Multiple accounts describe eagles soaring above the bather. This is the finest outdoor bathing position available at any Laikipia property
- A **private dining room** for meals that never need to leave the villa
- A **cosy sitting room with fireplace** for the highland evenings that drop to temperatures the Samburu call *"cold"* and Europeans call *"perfect"*
- A **large wrap-around terrace** from the property's highest single point

Carissa is configured as a one-bedroom villa for couples or solo guests. It cannot be shared with another group.

Villa Aloe — The Double-Storey View Villa:

Named for the **aloe vera** plant whose sculptural form and specific medicinal significance in the Samburu traditional pharmacopoeia give it a particular cultural weight in this landscape. Aloe is the most impressive architecturally of the four villas: a **double-storey structure** with the two bedrooms on the upper floor and the living and dining areas on the ground floor.

Features:

- **Two large bedrooms** on the upper floor each with their own **dressing room, sunken bath, open-air shower** and **private terrace with spectacular views** of the Matthews Range, Mount Ololokwe and snow-capped Mount Kenya
- Ground floor **dining and living areas** with the double-storey ceiling and the generous communal space appropriate for groups of four adults wanting privacy within a shared villa
- **Private plunge pool** on the terrace
- The specific view: north to the Matthews Range and the Samburu frontier; south to the Mount Kenya massif both mountain ranges simultaneously visible from the upper-floor terrace

Aloe is the Ol Lentille configuration for two couples or for four friends who want the most generous and most architecturally impressive villa at the property.

Villa Acacia — The Rock-Built House with the Waterhole View:

Named for the **acacia tree** the defining tree of the East African savannah, the dominant botanical feature of the Laikipia plateau, the tree under whose shade the day's heat is best survived and whose thorny canopy the leopard uses as a kill hang. The Acacia Villa is *"built into the mountainside, with large rocks blending spectacularly into the house"* the construction philosophy of organic integration that makes the lodge's architecture a continuation of the hillside rather than an imposition on it.

Features:

- **Acacia tree-inspired décor:** gold and blue accents in the plush interiors
- **Two decks overlooking a waterhole** frequently visited by elephants the wildlife theatre of the waterhole visible from the villa's outdoor spaces without moving to any communal area
- **Two ensuite bedrooms** — each with the full luxury specification
- Bookable as a **complete two-bedroom villa** for groups of up to four, or as **two independent suites** for two separate couples the most flexible booking configuration of any Ol Lentille villa

Villa Boscia — The Grand Family House:

Named for the **boscia tree** (*"shepherd's tree"*) the most important tree in the semi-arid African savannah, whose deep roots tap underground water that other species cannot reach, providing shade and sustenance in the harshest dry season conditions. The boscia's legendary status in pastoral communities the Maasai depend on it; the Samburu know it's every medicinal use gives this villa's naming a specific cultural resonance.

Boscia is the largest of the four villas and the most appropriate for families and groups:

- **Three ensuite bedrooms** each with their own dressing room and full luxury bathroom
- **Multiple common areas** for gathering: the large living room with fireplace; the outdoor terrace; the barbecue area
- **Luxurious minimalist décor** in black and white tones the most dramatic interior palette of any Ol Lentille villa
- **Large wrap-around deck** with a **private plunge pool**
- **Views of Mount Lentille** — Laikipia's tallest peak, visible from most parts of the house
- *"The Sultan's House living room can be converted to a bedroom taking occupancy to 16"* making Boscia the single accommodation option in Laikipia capable of sleeping the largest group in complete villa privacy

The Gallery — Ol Lentille's Cultural Heart:

"A 50-foot-wide rotunda seamlessly integrated with the natural rock of the area" the Gallery is the lodge's communal gathering space for guests across all four villas who choose to come together. Its functions: a **library specializing in Africana, nature and conservation**; a space for board games, reading and reflection; and the stage for the lodge's evening conservation talks and cultural presentations.

The **rooftop bar above the Gallery** provides the lodge's finest communal sundowner position and the most dramatic private dining setting for guests who want to eat at height above the conservancy with the evening light transforming the landscape below.

The Infinity Pool: *"14 metres at its longest, surrounded by shaded terraces with sun loungers and seating and dining areas, enjoying spectacular 270-degree views and overlooking two watering holes visited by Ol Lentille's elephants."*

The Spa: A dedicated wellness facility offering Swedish massage, hot stone massage, aromatherapy, Indian head massage, facials, manicures and pedicures by *"a friendly and experienced team"* positioned within the lodge complex for privacy and tranquility.

Communication:

Mobile connectivity available at the lodge. Specific WiFi availability should be confirmed with the lodge at time of booking some older sources indicate limited connectivity; the current management should be consulted for the current status.

Activities at Ol Lentille House:

- ✓ **Private Day and Night Game Drives** — Each villa has its own dedicated vehicle and guide for completely private game drive scheduling. No shared vehicles; no shared sightings unless guests from different villas choose to combine. Night drives available in the conservancy. The specific wildlife: elephant herds (multiple families, some extremely large); wild dogs (the resident pack that ranges extensively but provides extraordinary encounters when present); leopard (resident but elusive); greater kudu (very good sightings in the rocky escarpment terrain); eland; Grevy's zebra (northern Laikipia position makes this a more reliable northern species sighting than at central Laikipia properties); gerenuk.
- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks with Maasai and Samburu Warrior Guides** — *"Enjoy breathtaking scenery and wildlife on our walks, guided by Samburu and Maasai warriors — this is a very special journey into their ancient lands."* The warrior guides' specific knowledge of the northern Laikipia terrain — its medicinal plants, its animal sign, its water sources and its ancient pastoral history — is the most culturally grounded walking experience in the Laikipia guide.
- ✓ **The Singing Wells — Ol Lentille's Signature Cultural Encounter:**
- ✓ Ol Lentille Conservancy is **home to three sets of Singing Wells** — a unique tradition of the Maasai and Samburu found only in this specific part of Kenya. *"The Maasai and Samburu warriors create a human chain that descends into the well so water can be passed up to the surface in buckets. The men 'sing' a hauntingly beautiful chant that reverberates through the valley. This song also acts as a signal to their cows, telling them it's time to come and enjoy a drink."* Available in dry season only. Vard Africa plans Ol Lentille visits to coincide with dry season conditions when the wells are active.
- ✓ *"One of the few lodges that offers a visit to the Singing Wells, where the local communities draw water up from the wells for their livestock."* — Guest review
- ✓ This is one of only two properties in the entire Laikipia guide that offers the Singing Wells experience (the other being Tumaren Camp in eastern Laikipia). For guests whose primary cultural priority is the Singing Wells, Ol Lentille's three wells within the conservancy make it the single property in Laikipia with the highest probability and the most accessible version of this encounter.
- ✓ **Baboon Research — Half-Day Visit to the World's Only Habituated Baboon Colony:** *"Spend an educational half a day visiting the world's only habituated baboon colony."* This is the Ol Lentille activity that most frequently surprises guests — the opportunity to observe, at close range, a troop of baboons that have been habituated to human presence for research purposes, allowing the kind of intimate behavioural observation that Dr. Shirley Strum's decades of research at this site have made interpretable. Reading baboon social behaviour — the dominance structures, the female coalitions, the infant development stages — with a guide who has learned Strum's interpretive framework transforms a baboon observation from a wildlife sighting into a primate sociology session. Available at additional cost.
- ✓ **Mount Lentille Climb — Laikipia's Tallest Peak:** *"Game drive to see the 'Northern 5'. Climb Mount Lentille, Laikipia's tallest peak. End the day with a magical bush dinner."* A guided hike to the summit of the Ol Lentille peak the highest point in the Laikipia plateau with the 360-degree panorama from the summit providing the most complete single geographical overview of the Laikipia ecosystem available from any accessible position.
- ✓ **Camel Safari — 90-Minute River Ride:** *"Marvel at the landscape, simplicity and surrounding wildlife on a scenic 90-minute camel ride to the river led by Maasai warriors."* At additional cost. The specific experience of approaching Laikipia's wildlife at camel height the animals' familiar response to the camel, the specific elevated vantage and the cultural significance of the Maasai-led camel tradition.
- ✓ **Quad Biking to the Maasai Village:** *"Quad bike from the lodge to the local Maasai village."* An ATV-assisted cultural visit to the conservancy's adjacent Maasai community combining the physical engagement of quad biking with the cultural depth of a village visit.
- ✓ **Mountain Biking:** Exploration of the conservancy and the neighbouring community lands on mountain bikes.
- ✓ **Archery with Maasai and Samburu Warriors:** *"Try your hand at archery with one of our Maasai or Samburu warriors, practicing your skills at target shooting with a modern bow and arrows."*
- ✓ **Evening at a Manyatta:** *"We invite you to enjoy a very special evening at a Maasai manyatta a traditional African village of huts hosted by the elders of an ancient community."* The definitive Ol Lentille cultural experience: a private evening inside the manyatta compound, sharing a meal with the community elders.

- ✓ **Morani Day — Children and Warriors:** *"Morani' is a Maa word for warrior. Children aged four and above will enjoy this fascinating day in the bush with a Maasai or Samburu warrior."* A full day of immersion in the warrior's daily knowledge tracking, fire making, the specific botanical knowledge of the northern Laikipia landscape.
- ✓ **Beading Workshop:** *"Kenyan communities are renowned for their beautiful beadwork using patterns and colours that tell the stories of their people."* Guided workshops with the conservancy's Maasai and Samburu women.
- ✓ **Rain Prayer (when the season requires it):** An Ol Lentille cultural encounter that appears in no other property in this guide: participation in the traditional Maasai rain prayer ceremony *"powerful and moving events, seldom experienced by visitors to Kenya."* Lightfoot Travel. The ceremony, conducted by the community elders when the rains are overdue, is one of the most specifically sacred and most specifically Maasai cultural practices available to any guest in Kenya. Its availability depends on the rains' behaviour and the community's own calendar.
- ✓ **Helicopter Excursions — Into the Northern Frontier:** At additional cost; one of the most dramatic aerial programmes in Laikipia given the conservancy's northern position. *"A paid-for extra this is an exceptional experience to enjoy wild, rugged and very remote northern Kenya."*
- ✓ **Rooftop Bar Sundowners and Private Dining:** The Gallery's rooftop bar as the communal sundowner position; private dining at any villa or in the bush.
- ✓ **Spa Treatments:** Swedish massage, hot stone, aromatherapy and beauty treatments in the dedicated facility.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

Ol Lentille's kitchen serves *"refined world cuisine"* using *"seasonal ingredients sourced from the nearby highlands and the lodge's own herb garden"*. Meals are served at each villa privately in the villa's own dining room or on its terrace or in the Gallery's rooftop bar for communal evenings. Bush dinners at positions across the conservancy; picnic lunches on the mountain or at the river; campfire cooking at the manyatta during village evenings.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff.
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Ol Lentille House:

- ✓ We love Ol Lentille for **Carissa's sunken rock bathtub** for the specific, completely unrepeatable experience of lying in a bath carved into an ancient northern Laikipia hillside with eagles overhead and 280 degrees of the plateau spread below, in a landscape so quiet that the specific sound of the water in the bath is the loudest thing around.
- ✓ And for the **Singing Wells** for the three wells in the conservancy dry riverbeds where the warriors sing water from the earth during the dry season, a tradition that is genuinely available here and genuinely available nowhere else in the Laikipia guide.
- ✓ And for the **10,000 acres per villa** for the knowledge, absolute and verifiable, that the entire morning's game drive and the entire day's walking and the entire afternoon's camel ride are taking place in a landscape that belongs, for the duration of your stay, completely to you and to no one else.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Book in dry season (July–October or January–February) for the Singing Wells this is the primary practical constraint on the timing of an Ol Lentille stay for guests whose cultural priorities include this encounter. Book Carissa for a honeymoon or anniversary stay not because the other villas are less remarkable but because the circular bed and the rock bathtub represent the highest possible concentration of Ol Lentille's specifically romantic qualities in a single room. And reserve an evening at the manyatta for the penultimate night the conservation experience of understanding, in the Maasai elders' own words, what the decision to set aside their grazing land for conservation meant for their community is the most complete expression of what Ol Lentille's founding vision produced.*

Families and Children: Excellent for families. The Boscia Villa's three-bedroom capacity is the most appropriate family configuration. The Morani Day programme for children from age 4; the archery; the quad biking; the camel safari; the mountain hike and the evening at the manyatta all engage children across a wide age and interest range.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight to Loisaba Airstrip and Road Transfer (Standard): Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport to Loisaba Airstrip** on Safarilink and AirKenya: approximately **55–65 minutes**. Road transfer from Loisaba to Ol Lentille: **USD 200 per vehicle each way**, approximately **75 minutes** a *"spectacularly scenic drive"* through the northwestern Laikipia plateau.

By Private Charter to Ol Lentille Private Airstrip: The conservancy has its own private airstrip approximately **15 minutes by road** from the lodge. Charter from Nairobi Wilson: approximately **55 minutes**.

By Road: From Nairobi via Nanyuki and northwest toward Loisaba: approximately **5 hours**. From Nanyuki: approximately **1.5–2 hours**.

Vard Africa Note: The Loisaba airstrip and road transfer is the most reliable and most consistently available option. The private airstrip accepts charter aircraft and is the fastest arrival for time-sensitive itineraries. Vard Africa books both options according to clients' specific flight requirements.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 4 nights minimum. The breadth of the activity portfolio the Singing Wells, the baboon research, the Maasai cultural programme, the mountain climb and the night drives requires 4 full days to experience meaningfully. 5 nights ideal for guests who want a full community immersion programme.

EL KARAMA CONSERVANCY

Private Ranch Beside Ol Jogi | Ewaso Nyiro River Frontage | Personal Family Hosting

The Conservancy: The **El Karama Conservancy** occupies a private ranch in **central Laikipia**, bordering the **Ol Jogi Wildlife Conservancy** to the north and the **Ewaso Nyiro River** on its southern boundary. The name *El Karama* translates in the local language as "*the grace*" or "*the blessing*" a designation that reflects something specific about the owners' relationship with this particular piece of land.

The conservancy is a genuine working ranch cattle management and wildlife conservation sharing the same territory in the traditional Laikipia coexistence model with a **dedicated wildlife area** that extends from the riverine woodland along the Ewaso Nyiro through the open grasslands and rocky outcrops of the ranch's interior. The wildlife portfolio includes elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe and the impressive bird diversity of the Ewaso Nyiro riverine habitat.

EL KARAMA LODGE

The Conservancy: **El Karama Wildlife Conservancy** covers **15,000 acres** (approximately 6,000 hectares) of the Laikipia plateau's western section positioned at the foothills of Mount Kenya with **views of both Mount Kenya and the Aberdare Range** that frame the conservancy's landscape in what multiple reviewers describe as the most complete mountain-framing of any Laikipia property. The **Ewaso Nyiro River** runs along the conservancy's boundary its permanent water drawing wildlife year-round in the pattern of river-dependent concentration that characterises the finest Laikipia game-viewing positions.

The conservancy is a **working cattle ranch** established by Murray's father **Guy Grant** after Kenyan independence and now in its **second generation of stewardship** under Murray and Sophie. The cattle and the wildlife share the same 15,000 acres in the specific Laikipia coexistence model, with conservation fees from tourism reinvested directly into the conservancy's wildlife management. El Karama is described by its own programme as "*Kenya's first privately-owned legally protected wildlife conservancy*" a designation that reflects the specific legal framework Murray has established to ensure the land's conservation status is protected beyond any single generation's commitment.

The wildlife portfolio: **over 80 mammal species**, including elephant, buffalo, leopard, lion, cheetah, hippo, Grevy's zebra, gerenuk, reticulated giraffe, African wild dog, **427 confirmed bird species** (giving El Karama Important Bird Status designation) and the specific community of plains game Grant's gazelle, impala, eland, Burchell's zebra that makes the game walk programme meaningful at every visit.

Eight dams and waterholes within the conservancy plus the Ewaso Nyiro River boundary and a **beautiful waterfall** in the conservancy's northern section create the habitat diversity and the year-round water availability that supports wildlife density at a scale disproportionate to the conservancy's area.

Introduction and History — The Most Genuinely Personal Lodge in Laikipia:

El Karama Lodge was **conceived by Murray and Sophie Grant** and built over **10 years** — not in one project but as an organic accumulation of vision, investment, community labour and personal craft. The lodge opened in **2005** and has been refined continuously in the years since, with new accommodation configurations (the sky tents; the Nilotica Private House), new community programmes (the Bush School; the Tracks and Signs short course) and a deepening conservation programme adding layers of depth to what was already one of Laikipia's most personally invested properties.

Murray Grant — described by ATTA as "*one of Africa's most gifted contemporary wildlife sculptors*" was born on El Karama in the third generation of the Grant family's stewardship. His wildlife bronze sculptures, whose subject matter is the animals of the El Karama conservancy and the wider East African ecosystem, are displayed throughout the lodge: in the communal areas, in the gallery-learning space, in the outdoor positions where their scale and their specific subject matter the exact animals visible through the adjacent window create a constant dialogue between art and landscape. Murray's artistic heritage is not separate from the lodge experience; it is the specific dimension that makes El Karama Lodge unlike any other property in Laikipia. His son's **clay sculpting activities** in the Bush School programme are the educational extension of this sculptural lineage.

Sophie Grant — the "*passionate homesteader and foodie*" who is co-creator of the lodge and its primary day-to-day host brings to the experience a combination of domestic excellence and conservation commitment that is expressed most directly in the food: the **organic garden** that provides the kitchen's fresh vegetables and herbs; the **dairy and biogas production area** that converts the ranch's animal biology into clean energy; the **free-range hens** whose eggs appear at breakfast; the **lodge cookbook** "*The Bush Kitchen: Notes and Recipes from the Wild*" that Sophie has written and published the most specifically accomplished expression of a lodge chef's relationship with her kitchen's raw materials available at any Laikipia property.

"Murray Grant, a third generation Kenyan born on El Karama, now wildlife sculptor and conservationist, and Sophie, a passionate homesteader and foodie, created the lodge together with their team over a 10-year period, developing its offering in an organic and holistic way. They continue to live next to the lodge with their two children, chickens, dogs and rabbits and enjoy meeting guests and sharing their way of life."

The lodge's architecture reflects the Grant family's aesthetic of honest, locally-sourced craft: "*airy cottages made by hand with local artisans from our region, designed by the owners Sophie and Murray, made from burnished river stone, carved fallen wood, thatch and canvas.*"

Furniture: made by the ranch carpenter. Soft furnishings: handcrafted and recycled materials. Solar-powered electricity 24 hours. Kenya's first **chemical-free, solar-powered swimming pool**. Zero waste policy throughout.

The **Bush School** is El Karama's most celebrated family programme and, at its best, one of the most genuinely educational wildlife encounters for children available in Kenya:

"Bush School activities include: Tracking and plaster casts; clay sculpting; drawing; safari diary; fishing; playing with bunnies; collecting eggs from Sophie's chickens; riding Mr B the pony; visiting the veggie patch and picking your own for lunch; wildlife monitoring; predator profiling; bush photography; cooking lessons; sports (volleyball, running, bush football); walking with rangers; school visit to Daraja Academy; fishing; bushcraft and medicinal uses of plants; behind-the-scenes tour of the lodge." These are not the activities of a wildlife tourism children's club. They are the activities of a working family farm, shared with children who arrive as visitors and leave as, in some small and specifically important way, participants in the farm's life.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

8 Cottages Total — all different, all hand-built, all with ensuite bathrooms of burnished river stone and elegantly handcrafted woodwork, all with the specific honesty of a property that chose local materials and local craft for every decision:

4 Banda Cottages: The standard El Karama accommodation each with a **spacious central double or twin-bedded room**, a **seating area with small writing table** and an **ensuite bathroom with large stone bath and overhead shower**. The bandas are built under thatch on stone platforms *"airy and rustic, made of stone, wood, thatch and canvas"* with the canvas sides that can be fully opened to the bush sounds or fully closed for privacy and warmth on the cool highland nights.

The Rondavel — Family Cottage: A circular cottage the rondavel form of traditional East African domestic architecture, adapted for comfortable, spacious family living. One of the most family-characterful rooms at any Laikipia lodge.

The Hobbit House — El Karama's Most Beloved Cottage:

"We stayed in the Hobbit House and 'our' resident Dik Diks were so fun to watch from our bed."

The Hobbit House is El Karama's signature accommodation a cottage of such specific character, built into the landscape with the specific low-ceilinged, rounded, organically integrated charm that Tolkien's architectural imagination produced, that it has its own resident dik-dik population that visits the cottage's immediate surroundings as a matter of daily routine. These animals among the most delicate and most specifically charming small antelopes in Africa have been visiting the Hobbit House for long enough that they regard it as part of their territory. The specific experience of watching tiny dik-diks from the bed of a cottage built to look like a home from *The Lord of the Rings* is one of the most specifically whimsical and most specifically remembered individual wildlife encounters at any Laikipia property.

2 New Safari Tents in the "Little Side": Recently added tented accommodation providing the most classic bush camp sleeping experience at El Karama canvas walls, proper canvas tent atmosphere, ensuite facilities.

Nilotica Private House — El Karama's Ultimate Luxury Configuration:

The most recent and most luxurious addition to the El Karama portfolio a **secluded private house** with its **own pool, art-filled lounge and views of giraffe and impala browsing at the waterhole**. Nilotica represents a significant upgrade in the luxury level of El Karama's offering — maintaining the property's specific character (art on the walls, the sculptural heritage, the organic farm connection) while providing the amenity level of a private house with dedicated service.

The Communal Areas:

- ✓ *The Main Lodge Mess and Dining Areas:* A stone, timber and thatch structure that *"merges seamlessly with the landscape"* — with two main living and dining areas, an **eco-pool** (Kenya's first chemical-free, solar-powered swimming pool), two **poolside pavilions** and an active salt lick with visiting wildlife observable from the poolside.
- ✓ *The Gallery and Learning Area:* Murray's sculptural works and the conservation interpretation materials part art gallery, part educational resource, entirely specific to El Karama's combination of artistic and ecological intelligence.
- ✓ *The Organic Garden and Bush Kitchen:* Sophie's primary domain the garden that produces the kitchen's vegetables, herbs and salads; the **Bush Kitchen barn** where cooking lessons and the Bush School's food activities take place.
- ✓ *The Farm Boma and Working Ranch Area:* The cattle management area, the dairy, the biogas production unit and the working ranch infrastructure that makes El Karama a functioning farm rather than purely a tourism operation.
- ✓ *The Rock Hide and Waterhole Observation:* A specific wildlife hide positioned at the conservancy's most-visited waterhole hippos, crocodiles, water birds and large mammals at close range.

Communication:

WiFi available.

Mobile coverage generally available.

The central Laikipia position makes El Karama one of the better-connected properties in the western section of the plateau.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.

- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Activities at El Karama Lodge

- ✓ **Game Drives (Day and Night)** — Morning, afternoon and night drives in open vehicles across the 15,000-acre conservancy. Guide **Sami** is specifically named in the most recent and most enthusiastic TripAdvisor reviews: *"Sami deserves a special mention he absolutely made our stay. His knowledge and passion really stood out. Every drive was incredible and felt tailored to us we had breakfast mid-drive by the river and sundowners where Sami explained his background and played football with our son."* The specific, personal quality of this guiding is the most direct expression of El Karama's owner-operated character.
- ✓ **Bush Walks and Long Tracking Activities** — Half-day and full-day foot safaris with professional guides and rangers: tracking lion, leopard and cheetah in the rocky escarpment terrain; reading the Ewaso Nyiro's overnight wildlife traffic in the river's sandy banks; interpreting the conservancy's extraordinary bird diversity at ground level with a guide whose 427-species knowledge is encyclopaedic.
- ✓ **Adventure Fly Camping with Sky Tents** — *"Hearty fresh organic food, paddock to plate by inhouse foodie Sophie. Fantastic fly camping experience complete with 'sky tents'."* The sky tent is El Karama's specific fly camping innovation a suspended canvas tent in the trees that elevates the standard fly camp sleeping platform into a tree canopy experience. The combination of Sophie's food preparation, the sky tent's suspended sleeping and the specific acoustic environment of the El Karama wilderness after dark produces the finest overnight bush experience available at any central Laikipia property.
- ✓ **The Bush School Kids' Programme** — As described above: mid-morning daily; clay sculpting, tracking, egg collecting, pony riding, vegetable picking for lunch, cooking, wildlife monitoring and bush photography.
- ✓ **Farm and Boma Visits** — Working cattle ranch activities: milking, calving, cattle inspection and the specific agricultural practices of a 15,000-acre highland Kenya ranch.
- ✓ **Organic Garden and Kitchen Activities** — Sophie's garden and kitchen open to guests for tours, vegetable harvesting, cooking lessons and the specific educational encounter with an organic farm-to-table programme operating at the finest Laikipia level.
- ✓ **Wildlife Monitoring and Conservation Activities** — The conservancy's ongoing wildlife monitoring: participating in predator profiling, camera trap review, and the ground-level conservation management that makes El Karama one of the few lodges where guests can genuinely assist the ranch's wildlife programme rather than observing it from a respectful distance.
- ✓ **Riding Mr B the Pony (Children)** — Sophie's pony and a children's favourite.
- ✓ **Volleyball, Running and Bush Football** — Physical activities for families who want more than wildlife observation.
- ✓ **School Visit to Daraja Academy** — The local girls' school that El Karama supports through the lodge's community programme.
- ✓ *At Additional Cost:*
- ✓ **Horseback Safari on El Karama** — Adventures on Horseback from October 2021: El Karama has developed its own equestrian programme for the conservancy landscape. The Ewaso Nyiro riverbank and the escarpment terrain provide excellent riding routes for experienced riders.
- ✓ **Day Trips by Air to Reteti Elephant Sanctuary (Northern Kenya)** — *"Day visits by air to North Kenya's elephant sanctuary"* a charter flight from the El Karama airstrip to the Namunyak Conservancy for a Reteti half-day visit.
- ✓ **Heli-Safaris** — Studio visits with Murray Grant followed by helicopter excursions to the Suguta Valley or Mount Kenya. *"A new creative collaboration"* providing the most complete expression of El Karama's artistic and conservation heritage in a single activity.
- ✓ **Heli Fly Fishing** — Helicopter to highland Mount Kenya fishing streams for the most dramatically positioned fly fishing accessible from any central Laikipia property.
- ✓ **Ol Pejeta Day Trip** — Full-day game drive to Ol Pejeta Conservancy and the northern white rhinos: approximately 40 minutes by road.

Short Courses and Special Events — The Tracks and Signs Short Course (May dates historically); guest lectures from speakers including Charley Boorman (adventurer), George Monbiot (environmental activist), Col. John Blashford-Snell (explorer) and Don Johanson (paleoanthropologist) who has appeared at the lodge. *"The lodge has been offering a unique events and short course calendar for the past 3 years."*

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

Sophie Grant's kitchen is the most completely and most consistently praised culinary programme in the mid-range Laikipia circuit. The praise is specific: *"The food was excellent; the rooms are rustic, charming and spotlessly clean."* *"You feel as if you are in some sort of film set."* The specific source of the food's quality: the **organic garden** (no chemicals, no pesticides, composted naturally), the **free-range hens**, the **on-site dairy**, Sophie's own **cookbook** and the kitchen team that she has trained and led across years of daily cooking for guests who arrive as strangers and leave having been fed with the specific generosity of a household rather than the calculated efficiency of a restaurant.

"The lodge has a strong commitment to eco-friendly practices, conservation and sustainable tourism... you can stay at El Karama safe in the knowledge that the lodge has been designed holistically to balance the comfort of guests with a minimal footprint on the natural environment."

Why We Love El Karama Lodge:

We love El Karama for **Murray's sculptures and the animals they depict** for the specific coherence of a lodge where the elephants visible through the window are the same elephants whose forms Murray has translated into bronze, where the dik-diks at the Hobbit House are the same animals whose specific anatomy he understands at the level of a sculptor rather than merely at the level of a naturalist. Art and nature in the same landscape, created by the same person, in relationship with one another. This is not available anywhere else in Kenya. And for Sophie's garden-to-table kitchen for the specific morning of harvesting vegetables from the organic shamba, watching them disappear into the barn kitchen and reappearing two hours later as the most honest and the most genuinely fresh salad available at any Laikipia lodge. And for the Hobbit House dik-diks, because they come every morning and they have never agreed to leave, and they are magnificent.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Stay at El Karama for 5 nights with a minimum of one fly camp night in the sky tents the sequence that reveals the lodge's full character is: two game drives on the conservancy; the Bush School if children are present; Sophie's garden tour; the river walk with Sami; the Ol Pejeta day trip for the white rhinos; and the sky tent night in the bush. By day 4, the lodge's specific rhythm the early morning dik-*

diks at the Hobbit House, the sunrise over Mount Kenya visible from the main terrace, Sophie's breakfast arriving with today's garden harvest is your rhythm, and you understand what the Grants have built here not as a hotel but as a specific, irreplaceable way of living in a place.

Families and Children:

El Karama is **Laikipia's finest family lodge** by consistent, cross-platform, multi-year consensus of the international travel community. The Bush School; the Hobbit House; the pony; the hens; the rabbit; Sophie's kitchen as an educational resource; Murray's art as an educational resource; Sami's tailored game drives that include bush football; the fly camp sky tents. Children aged 3 to 18 have activities specifically designed for their engagement. Multiple reviews from families with children describe El Karama as *"the highlight of our Kenya trip"* and the children's opinion, consistently, is that they want to come back.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight to El Karama Conservancy Airstrip or Nanyuki: The conservancy has its own private airstrip — accessible by charter. Charter from Nairobi Wilson: approximately **55 minutes**. The *"safari bubble package"* that El Karama offers for guests arriving by air includes meet-and-greet pickup from early morning international flights and arrival at the conservancy airstrip approximately 1 hour later.

By Scheduled Flight to Nanyuki and Road: Scheduled flight to Nanyuki (35–40 minutes), followed by a road transfer of approximately **1 hour northwest** to El Karama's position approximately **42 kilometres north-west of Nanyuki**.

By Road: From Nairobi via Nanyuki and northwest: approximately **4–4.5 hours**. *"Located in the foothills of Mount Kenya, inside a 14,000-acre private wildlife conservancy in Laikipia... approximately 42 kilometres north-west of Nanyuki, with the lodge standing at the end of a sand-and-stone track."*

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 4 nights minimum; 5 nights for families who want the full Bush School programme and a fly camp night.

SEGERA RETREATS

50,000 Acres | Jochen Zeitz's Vision | "Africa's Best Safari Spa" | The Out of Africa Biplane | East Africa's First All-Women Anti-Poaching Ranger Academy | 21 Black Rhinos Translocated 2025

The Conservancy: Segera Retreats is set on a **50,000-acre private wildlife sanctuary** on the Laikipia Plateau approximately **40 kilometres north-east of Nanyuki**, with **Mount Kenya's massif** defining the eastern horizon and the **Great Rift Valley's escarpment** visible to the west on clear days. The property occupies a position at the **heart of one of Laikipia's most significant elephant movement corridors** the animals moving between the highland forests and the northern frontier using Segera's unfenced land as a passage zone.

Jochen Zeitz **first visited Africa in 1989** and was changed by what he found. Thirteen years later, he purchased the area now known as Segera then a traditional Kenyan cattle farm consisting of a bungalow, a kraal and little else. The land was degraded: overgrazed, poached-across and ecologically depleted by decades of extractive management. Over the years following purchase, Zeitz transformed it not by exclusion or by erasure of the previous human presence, but by restoration: of the vegetation, of the wildlife populations, of the water systems, of the community relationships and of the cultural identity of the landscape.

In **2025**, the conservancy achieved one of its most significant conservation milestones: **21 eastern black rhinos were translocated to Segera** bringing rhinoceros back to a landscape from which they had been absent. This translocation, described by Expert Africa as *"an ambitious plan to spread this endangered species' range in Kenya,"* represents the conservancy's graduation from excellent wildlife habitat to Kenya's newest rhino sanctuary.

The 4Cs Framework: Zeitz's governing philosophy for Segera and for the **Long Run**, the global sustainability standard that Segera helped create is expressed in four principles: **Conservation, Community, Culture and Commerce**. Not as aspirational statements but as operational commitments, audited annually, governing every decision made at the property level.

Conservation: Solar energy exclusively. Water harvesting beneath the property feeding pools, showers and gardens, then recycled to irrigate vegetation. Game fence removal to reopen elephant corridors. **Two million trees to be planted** through the Tree of Life reforestation project (a commitment spanning a generation). East Africa's first **All-Women Anti-Poaching Ranger Academy**, established 2019 with International Anti-Poaching Foundation guidance rangers trained as mentors in their communities, empowering women beyond their direct conservation role. Wildlife monitoring. Anti-poaching canine units.

Community: The **WaterBank school** providing water infrastructure and education facilities for surrounding communities. The **SATUBO beading initiative** (SATUBO = Samburu, Turkana, Borana three tribes whose men have historically been enemies, whose women now create and sell beadwork together, their cooperation funded by the tourism programme). The **Zeitz Foundation** non-profit, established 2009, ensuring the land is protected in perpetuity.

Culture: The **Zeitz Collection of contemporary African art** — a satellite of the **Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA)** in Cape Town displayed throughout the property: in the renovated stables (now the bar and coffee lounge), the **Paddock House** (now the primary art gallery, displaying oil paintings by internationally-renowned German artists Kuhnert, Friese and Lorenz from Zeitz's private collection alongside contemporary works), the sculpture garden and the outdoor landscape. **Wire sculptures, monumental bronze, stone and steel works, outdoor projections and interventions, watercolours, video installations, prints, etchings and paintings** by Africa's most significant contemporary artists all accessible to guests who want to engage with African art at the level of a serious museum while in the middle of a safari.

Commerce: Tourism revenue funding all of the above, with the Zeitz Foundation structure ensuring long-term financial protection of the conservation mission.

G-AAMY — The Out of Africa Biplane: In 2013, Jochen Zeitz acquired **G-AAMY** at auction the original **1929 de Havilland Gipsy Moth biplane** used in the aerial filming of Sydney Pollack's 1985 Academy Award-winning film *Out of Africa*. The aircraft that Robert Redford flew as Denys Finch Hatton in the film whose aerial sequences produced some of the most celebrated cinematography in safari cinema was returned to Africa, fitted with a new engine and restored to full operational airworthiness.

Robert Redford signed a letter supporting the acquisition and return: *"This plane is a symbol of my first introduction to Kenya and its extraordinary landscapes, people, and wildlife. It also helped millions of people around the world see the beauty of Kenya on film for the first time and serves as a much-needed reminder that nature is precious and needs to be conserved before it is too late."*

The yellow biplane stands on Segera's grounds visible to arriving guests, available for flights across the Laikipia Plateau and the Rift Valley, carrying its own specific layer of cinematic and historical significance into every flight.

SEGERA RETREAT — THE VILLAS, HOUSES AND THE BIRD NEST

6 Garden Villas | Villa Segera | Segera House | The Farmhouse | The Nay Palad Bird Nest | 4-Poster Kings Throughout | "Africa's Best Safari Spa"

Location and Setting: The retreat is set in **10 acres of botanical gardens** what was once a bare cattle kraal is now *"an enormous and beautifully designed botanical garden known as the Oasis"* with euphorbia trees, palms, succulents, bougainvillea and hundreds of flowering species creating a lush green environment that contrasts dramatically with the golden savannah visible beyond the garden wall. The main communal building is a refurbished colonial-era farmstead whose character the **Paddock House, the former stables, the original farmhouse** provides the historical anchor around which the contemporary art collection and modern amenities are organised.

A **raised star deck** — a circular elevated platform with a fire pit at its centre serves as the arrival and gathering point, from which wooden walkways lead to the communal areas and the villa garden.

Introduction and History: *"Segera Retreat is something of a jewel. Owned by conservation-minded ecotourism trailblazer Jochen Zeitz and managed by once-of-North Island's Jens Kozany, it is a truly first-rate luxury eco-lodge."*

Jens Kozany — formerly operations manager at the Seychelles' legendary and legendary North Island, which set the international benchmark for private island ultra-luxury hospitality came to Segera as a co-creator rather than a hired manager. The vision of combining the most sophisticated wilderness hospitality with comprehensive conservation, community and cultural engagement was Kozany's as much as Zeitz's, and the result Segera as a place that functions simultaneously as a luxury safari lodge, a contemporary art gallery, a conservation research station and a community development centre is evidence of what happens when a practitioner of genuine hospitality seriousness and a philanthropist of genuine conservation seriousness meet.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

6 Garden Villas:

The Garden Villas: Five of the six Garden Villas are **raised on elevated wooden platforms** above the botanical garden — with makuti-thatched roofs and bleached wooden verandas that look out across the garden to the savannah beyond, with Mount Kenya's profile on the eastern horizon. One villa (*Villa Segera*) occupies a more secluded position at the garden's edge.

Each Garden Villa contains:

- A **large ensuite bedroom** with a **four-poster king-size bed** and premium linens the quality of the bed preparation at Segera is specifically praised in multiple reviews ("*dreamy*" is the word that appears most frequently)
- **Private sitting room** with comfortable chairs, coffee tables, tea-and-coffee station and cosy fireplace the high-altitude nights at Segera require and reward an actual fire
- **En-suite bathroom** with both freestanding bathtub and walk-in shower
- **Private veranda or patio** with swing seat, sun loungers and views of the garden or the savannah
- **Personal butler service** — each villa has a dedicated butler for the duration of the stay
- One of the six villas is designated as a **family villa** with additional space for children's beds

The villa interiors are described by The East African Traveller as *"filled with a mix of antique heirlooms, provocative artworks and covetable trinkets, striking a fine balance between gallery good looks and cosy comfort — it's like snuggling up in an exhibition space when there's no show on."*

Villa Segera — The most romantically positioned of the standard configurations. Sited at the garden's secluded edge with its own **private dining area** and a **large saltwater swimming pool** the only villa with a private pool of this size. A **swing bridge** connects the main villa to the ensuite bedroom building an architectural detail that is simultaneously practical and whimsical. One or two ensuite bedrooms depending on configuration. Ideal for honeymooners and couples who want maximum privacy.

Segera House — The **signature villa** and the property's most complete private accommodation. A **double-volume reception area with chandeliers**; three indoor lounge areas; **two enormous ensuite bedrooms** each with king bed, fireplace, freestanding bath and walk-in shower; a **private garden with plunge pool**; private dining areas; dedicated chef and staff. Suitable for families or groups of four adults who want the property's finest accommodation in a self-contained private house configuration.

The Farmhouse — The most domestically characterful accommodation at Segera. Three ensuite bedrooms (one master, two secondary); a genuine **farmhouse kitchen** equipped for cooking; large indoor dining room with an open fire for evening gatherings; lounge with bookshelves; a **canopied outdoor lounge**; private pool. The Farmhouse is for guests who want the experience of living in a farmhouse rather than staying in a hotel — preparing meals in the kitchen if desired, sitting around the open fire in the evenings, using the outdoor lounge as an extension of the interior. Its character is deliberately the most personal and the most lived-in of any Segera accommodation option.

The Nay Palad Bird Nest — A **360-degree treetop treehouse** built alongside the conservancy's river, accessed by a suspended wooden walkway through the riparian canopy. Available for overnight stays or afternoon escapes from the main retreat.

The Bird Nest's character: a circular platform in the trees with an **ensuite bedroom** for conventional sleeping in the enclosed interior; and a **rooftop bed** for those who want to sleep entirely under the open sky, surrounded by the night sounds of the river hippos, nightjars, the specific acoustic character of an East African night in a riverine canopy. Champagne sundowners on the walkway as the sun drops. A candle-lit, picnic-style gourmet dinner. The following morning, breakfast delivered to the treehouse doorstep while elephants and giraffe move through the landscape visible from the canopy walkway below.

Main Communal Areas:

- ✓ *The Paddock House and Conservatory:* The relaxed primary dining space cosy sofas, soft seating, artwork on every surface. The conservatory adds natural light and a connection to the garden.
- ✓ *The Former Stables — Now the Bar and Coffee Lounge:* The original stable stalls transformed into the property's bar, with the art gallery occupying adjacent space. The specific atmosphere of a bar in a converted stable structural timber, the weight of old buildings, the contemporary art in dialogue with the colonial-era construction is one of Segera's most specifically atmospheric social spaces.
- ✓ *The Sculpture Garden:* The botanical garden's outdoor art collection wire sculptures of considerable scale, bronze and steel works, stone pieces, land art and outdoor installations that a guest can explore without any guide or any programme, simply walking the garden paths.
- ✓ *The Saltwater Pool:* A generous shared pool in the botanical garden available to all villa guests, described by multiple sources as one of the finest pool settings in northern Laikipia.
- ✓ *"Africa's Best Safari Spa"* — The designation by **Travel Africa magazine**, sustained by consistent recognition from international travel publishers, reflects a spa that operates at a level genuinely distinct from the standard safari lodge wellness facility. The spa includes: **double treatment rooms** for couples' treatments; a **Rasul steam tower** the specific Moroccan-influenced steam chamber that combines steam, mineral clay and essential oils in a process of genuine physical restoration; massage, body treatment and beauty treatment programmes; and the specific quality of a bush spa that manages to be fully equipped without being urban.
- ✓ *The Wine Tower:* A dedicated wine cellar in a tower structure with the property's curated wine selection available for wine tastings and private dining.
- ✓ *The Gym and Wellness Centre:* Fully equipped with cardiovascular and resistance equipment; yoga sessions available.
- ✓ *The C4C (Centre for the 4Cs) Exhibit:* An interactive educational space covering Segera's conservation, community, culture and commerce programme in a format that guests can engage with independently or with staff guidance.

Communication in the Wilderness: WiFi is available throughout the property one of the few northern Laikipia properties with reliable WiFi in individual villa accommodation.

Mobile coverage (Safaricom) generally available. Electronic safes in all villas.

Laundry service included machine-washed and line-dried, including all items.

Activities at Segera Retreat:

- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives** — The 50,000-acre private sanctuary in Segera's custom safari vehicles with guides whose knowledge of the individual animal populations — particularly the collared lions and the resident cheetah, and from 2025 the newly established rhino population — is the product of years of direct observation. Expert Africa confirms: *"We spent a memorable afternoon watching a pride on a fresh kill as playful cubs jostled the adults for scraps."* The elephant corridor dynamics herds moving through unfenced land on ancient migratory routes — provide extraordinary sightings throughout the year.
- ✓ **The G-AAMY Out of Africa Biplane Flight** — The original 1929 Gipsy Moth, the aircraft that Robert Redford flew in the film, flown above the Laikipia Plateau with guests in the open cockpit. *"Fans of 'Out of Africa' will be pleased to know that they can experience a ride on the original G-AAMY plane used in the film, purchased and updated by Segera's owner in 2013."* Pre-bookable through the property with weather-dependent availability. This is not a tourist flight; it is a flight in a historically significant aircraft above the landscape that film portrayed, in the company of someone who returns it to that landscape every time it takes off.
- ✓ **Art Walk Through the Sculpture Garden and Galleries** — With Segera's own art curator (identified as **Jerry** in multiple guest reviews, praised for his passion and knowledge): walking through the Oasis garden to encounter the Zeitz Collection's outdoor works, then through the Stables and Paddock House galleries to view the watercolours, video installations, prints and paintings. This is a museum experience inside a safari retreat one of the most specifically unusual and specifically enriching activities available at any luxury lodge in Africa.
- ✓ **Beekeeping in Full Bee Suits** — With Segera's traditional beekeepers: *"Harvest honey from Segera's acacia trees in full bee suits."* The process — suiting up, approaching the hives, understanding the colony's structure, extracting honey is physical, educational and completely unexpected as a safari activity. The property produces its own honey and chutneys from the harvested material.
- ✓ **Tree of Life Reforestation Project** — Planting indigenous trees in Segera's ongoing land restoration programme. Each guest's trees are GPS-recorded, allowing tracking of their growth online after departure. The project is working toward **two million trees** over its lifetime — a commitment spanning a generation that each tree-planting guest participates in directly.
- ✓ **Hide-and-Seek with the Anti-Poaching Dogs** — The conservancy's anti-poaching sniffer dogs in mock-exercise mode: guests hiding in the bush as the dogs are released to track them. Training for the dogs; entertainment and education for the guests. A universally loved activity for children and adults.
- ✓ **Back-of-House Sustainability Tour** — The solar farm, composting facilities, water harvesting system, water bottling plant (producing both still and sparkling water in-house *no plastics required throughout the retreat*), organic vegetable shamba and conservation infrastructure. The most transparent and most honest conversation about luxury tourism's environmental footprint available at any Laikipia property delivered without apology and without greenwashing.

- ✓ **Water Bank School and SATUBO Beading Initiative** — Engaging with the Zeitz Foundation's community projects: the water Bank school visit; meeting the SATUBO women of three historically rival tribes who now create and sell beadwork together through the cooperative.
- ✓ **All-Women Anti-Poaching Ranger Academy** — Where schedule and timing allow, guests can visit the training facility of East Africa's first all-women ranger academy and understand the dual mission: conservation protection and women's empowerment, delivered simultaneously through the same programme.
- ✓ **Cattle Ranch Visit** — Segera manages a substantial cattle herd on the ranch. The weekly cattle dipping, managed by traditional herdsman, provides a hands-on encounter with the working ranch dimension of the Segera model. *"Visit Segera Ranch and the traditional herdsman who care for over 3,000 cattle."*
- ✓ **Camel Safari** — *"Experience the difference with a guided camel safari at Segera! Whether you decide to walk amongst the herd or ride through the Laikipia bush on these magnificent creatures a camel safari promises to deliver a totally unique African experience! A delicious gourmet picnic completes your 'Out of Africa' camel expedition."*
- ✓ **Bush Walks** — On foot in the 50,000-acre conservancy with Segera's expert guides.
- ✓ **Fishing** — From the river that flows through the conservancy's eastern section; trout available when river levels permit.
- ✓ **Wellness Programme** — Yoga sessions; full spa treatment menu; Rasul steam chamber; gym; pool.
- ✓ **Helicopter Expeditions** — Aerial exploration of the Laikipia Plateau, the Rift Valley, Mount Kenya and the Northern Frontier from Segera's private airstrip or directly from the retreat area.

Culinary and Dining Experiences: *"Never eating in the same place twice"* Segera's unofficial dining policy, implemented through the property's variety of exceptional outdoor and indoor dining positions. The kitchen team prepares every meal from **organic vegetables and herbs harvested from the property's own kitchen shamba** and the botanical garden, supplemented by locally raised and sourced meat, fish from the river, honey from the property's own hives and chutneys made on the premises.

"The food is fresh, flavorful, and creative. We could not get over the food." Guest review.

"The chefs surpassed themselves with amazing meals created with vegetables, fruits and meats all grown and reared on Segera. And the wines from the wine cellar are extraordinary." Guest review.

Individual menus for each meal tailored to each guest's preferences rather than offered from a fixed daily menu. Every meal is a fresh composition. Dietary requirements are accommodated without compromise to quality or creativity.

Dining positions: the Paddock House communal dining; the pool deck; al fresco in the garden; in the Wine Tower for wine-paired dinners; in the bush at positions across the conservancy chosen for wildlife activity; at the river for breakfast; in the treehouse for the Bird Nest guests. *"Eat al-fresco by the swimming pool, in the striking and intimate Wine Tower, or in one of several other beautiful inside and outside dining venues."*

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Segera Retreats:

- ✓ We love Segera for the **biplane** for the specific coherence of a decision that brought the Out of Africa aircraft back to Africa and puts it in the air above the conservation landscape it is now helping to protect, in the hands of a pilot who believes, as Robert Redford's letter said, that this landscape is precious and needs to be conserved.
- ✓ The romanticism and the reality have met at the same airstrip.
- ✓ And for the SATUBO beading women three tribes whose men have historically been enemies, whose women are now cooperating in a project that both earns them income and models the specific possibility of peace as a daily practice.
- ✓ And for the rhinos: 21 translocated to Segera in 2025, bringing back what was absent, making the conservancy a genuine part of Kenya's rhino recovery story.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Book the Nay Palad Bird Nest for your penultimate night not the first night, when the property's sophistication and the general overwhelming quality of the experience has not yet settled into a rhythm, but after three or four nights when the conservancy is known and its sounds are familiar. Sleeping in the treehouse on a night when you know what the hippo sound in the darkness means, when the river's specific noise has become the background music of your stay, is a qualitatively different experience from sleeping there on your first night. And fly in the biplane on the last morning: the aerial departure watching the retreat and the conservancy and the plateau shrink below the Gipsy Moth's wings as you fly south toward Nanyuki is the most complete farewell to Kenya that any departure experience provides.*

Families and Children:

- ✓ Outstanding for families. *"Children of all ages are welcome. Children under 5 are accommodated free of charge."* Families with children under 6 should note the balcony restriction and request the Farmhouse or garden-level villa.
- ✓ The Tree of Life tree-planting, the anti-poaching dog exercise, the beekeeping in suits, the art walk and the camel safari create exceptional family experiences across all age ranges.

- ✓ Children aged 8 and above who appreciate art and conservation and who will remember the biplane for the rest of their lives are particularly well served.

Getting There:

- ✓ *By Scheduled Flight:* Daily scheduled flights from **Nairobi Wilson Airport to Nanyuki Airport** on AirKenya and Safarilink (approximately **50 minutes to 1 hour**). From Nanyuki Airport, **Segera is a 1.5–2-hour road transfer** a drive through the northern Kenyan landscape that generates its first wildlife encounters within the conservancy before the lodge itself appears. Total travel time from Nairobi: approximately **2.5–3 hours door-to-door**.
- ✓ *By Private Charter to Segera's Own Airstrip:* Private charter aircraft can land at the **private airstrip alongside the lodge property** a 10–15-minute flight from Nanyuki or approximately **50 minutes from Nairobi Wilson**.
"A private airstrip is located right next to the lodge but only available for charters and not the scheduled safari flights."

This is the finest arrival option: landing on the property's own strip and being driven directly to the lodge without the 2-hour road transfer. Guests in a Cessna 182 or similar small charter describe the approach the plane circling over the retreat before landing, giving an aerial perspective on the botanical garden from above as one of the most spectacular arrival moments in Kenyan safari aviation.

- ✓ *By Road:* Nairobi to Segera via Nanyuki and north: approximately **5–6 hours**. Segera is approximately 40 kilometres north-east of Nanyuki, beyond the main Nanyuki-Rumuruti road on a well-maintained ranch access route.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 5 nights minimum. Segera is the property in Laikipia that most consistently elicits the comment *"I wish I had stayed longer"* from departing guests.

ENASOIT — LAIKIPIA

Pete & Karen Glover | Born Kenyan Hosts | Family of Rescue Animals | Ziggy the Zebra | Complete Exclusivity

The Property: Enasoit (*"a good place to stay"* in the Maasai language) is a **private exclusive-use camp** on a personal wildlife sanctuary in the Laikipia Plateau owned and actively managed by **Pete and Karen Glover**, who were born in Kenya, have lived in Kenya their entire lives and who regard hosting guests in their home as an act of genuine sharing rather than commercial hospitality.

The property is not a designed safari product. It is a home the Glovers' actual home that has been opened to guests because Pete and Karen want to share what they love, and what they love is this specific piece of Laikipia: its wildlife, its landscape, its specific highland character and its remarkable family of **orphaned rescue animals** who have been integrated into daily life at the property.

Ziggy the Zebra is the most famous member of this family: a Grevy's zebra who was orphaned as a foal, hand-raised by the Glovers and who now lives as a full member of the property's community moving through the camp grounds, approaching guests without any fear, exhibiting the specific individual personality that only an animal raised by humans and comfortable with them can fully reveal. Other rescue animals the composition varying according to who is currently in residence may include anything from orphaned antelope to birds whose wing injuries are healing to the occasional small predator in temporary care.

Meeting Ziggy is an encounter that guests consistently describe in terms that most wildlife experiences cannot produce: not the formal encounter of a scheduled "animal experience" but the genuinely casual encounter of an animal who simply lives here, who comes to the camp because this is home, and who interacts with guests because guests are interesting rather than threatening. The boundary between wildlife and household, maintained with such care at most lodges, is gently dissolved at Enasoit in the most charming possible way.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

Enasoit accommodates a small number of guests exclusive-use, with no other parties sharing the property. The cottages are comfortable, well-furnished and genuinely personal in character the Glovers' taste and their Kenyan sensibility expressed in every detail.

Activities at Enasoit:

- ✓ **Game Drives on the Private Sanctuary** — With Pete or Karen or their guides, in the property's own vehicles across the private wildlife area. The Glovers' knowledge of the specific animals on their land — individual elephants, specific lion families, the leopard whose territory overlaps the sanctuary — is the most personal and most specific animal knowledge available from any Laikipia property.
- ✓ **Time with the Rescue Animals** — The unscheduled, genuinely natural encounters with Ziggy and the other current animal residents. No schedule, no programme — they come when they come, and when they do the encounter is on their terms.
- ✓ **Walking Safaris on the Private Land** — On foot with Pete's specific knowledge of the property and its history.
- ✓ **Bush Meals and Sundowners** — Private positions across the sanctuary.
- ✓ **Cultural Visits and Community Engagement** — Through the Glovers' long-standing community relationships.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.

- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Enasoit: We love Enasoit for **Ziggy** and for what Ziggy represents: a property where the owners' genuine care for the landscape and its animals has produced an encounter that cannot be designed or scheduled, that simply exists because these people live here and love the animals that share their home with them.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight or Charter: Nearest airstrip is in the central Laikipia area flights to Loisaba or Nanyuki followed by road transfer. Private charter is the most efficient option; approximately 55 minutes from Nairobi Wilson to the nearest suitable landing strip, followed by a road transfer arranged by the property.

By Road: Nairobi via Nanyuki: approximately **4–4.5 hours**.

OL MALO LODGE

The Francombe Family | "Place of the Greater Kudu" | Northern Frontier Escarpment | A Dynasty of Kenya Hospitality | Julia and The Samburu Trust | Andrew's Helicopter

The Property: Ol Malo Lodge sits on the **northern edge of the Laikipia Plateau**, perched on a **rocky escarpment** above the **Uaso Nyiro River** looking north across the time-honored lands of Kenya's **Northern Frontier District** where the dense thorn bush is the preferred habitat of the **Greater Kudu** whose name the lodge carries: "*Ol Malo*" translates as "*place of the Greater Kudu*" in the Samburu language.

The 5,000-acre ranch and sanctuary lies along the Ewaso Nyiro River the great river of Kenya's north, whose course from the Mount Kenya snowfields through the dry lands of the Northern Frontier has sustained pastoral life in the region across all recorded human history. The river below the lodge's escarpment position creates the specific ecological edge character that distinguishes Ol Malo: the riverine woodland visible below, the escarpment air dry and clear above, the Northern Frontier spreading away to a horizon that feels genuinely limitless.

The Francombe Family: The story of Ol Malo is the story of a family across three generations and counting whose Kenya roots go back to before the First World War and whose engagement with this specific piece of northern Laikipia has produced one of the finest and most genuinely personal hosting experiences in the country.

Rocky Francombe's grandmother, Olga Watkins, immigrated to Kenya from England to start a coffee farm in the era of Karen Blixen the writer whose memoirs of colonial Kenya life became the basis of *Out of Africa*. **Colin Francombe's father, Aubrey**, was a pilot of historic significance: he flew **Queen Elizabeth II out of Kenya** after she received the news of her father's passing in February 1952 while staying at Treetops becoming the first pilot ever to fly a British Queen. Colin Francombe moved to Laikipia where he has now lived for over 50 years, managing famous author and conservationist **Kuki Gallmann's** ranch for 23 years before purchasing his own land and founding Ol Malo in **1991**.

Rocky Francombe Colin's wife, co-founder of the lodge brings complementary knowledge and equal passion to the hosting. Their partnership in building and operating Ol Malo for over thirty years is visible in every detail of the property.

Their **three children** represent the continuity of the family's commitment:

Will Francombe and his wife **Chyulu** now host most of the Ol Malo guests day-to-day Will with the naturalist knowledge and the specifically Northern Kenya landscape expertise that a lifetime in this country produces; Chyulu with her passion for horses and the management of the stables that makes the Ol Malo riding programme among the finest in the country.

Julia Francombe founded the **Samburu Trust** a charity dedicated to supporting the Samburu community's education, healthcare, water supply, women's opportunities and eco-tourism development across the northern frontier. Julia spends the majority of her time living in the bush with her team of Samburu warriors, learning the community's needs and implementing projects "*that make a real difference.*" The Samburu Trust opened the North's first nomadic school for Samburu children an education system specifically designed to fit the nomadic pastoral lifestyle.

Andrew Francombe is a **fully licensed helicopter pilot** operating under the Kenya Choppers brand whose aerial knowledge of the northern Kenya landscape is the product of a childhood spent in these skies and years of professional operation. Through Kenya Choppers, Ol Malo supports aerial conservation operations across East Africa in partnership with **Kenya Wildlife Service, Save the Elephants, Space for Giants, African Parks and the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust**. The helicopter at Ol Malo is Andrew's professional aircraft, and flying with him is flying with someone who knows every valley, every water course and every horizon of the northern frontier from the air.

The Infinity Pool—One of Kenya's **first cliff-top infinity pools**, built at Ol Malo before the concept became standard at luxury lodges across Africa. The pool sits at the escarpment edge overlooking the waterhole and salt lick below a position that Vard Africa and The Luxury Safari Company have recognised with the designation **Best Infinity Pool in Kenya** a distinction based not on the pool's scale or engineering but on the specific combination of the water's edge, the escarpment drop, the wildlife at the waterhole below and the Northern Frontier spreading to the horizon beyond.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

3 Individual Cottages + 1 Family Cottage — all built from **natural rock** quarried from the escarpment itself, with **thatched roofs** and **ancient olive wood furniture** crafted from the slow-growing East African olive that is the defining timber of the northern Laikipia landscape.

Standard Cottages (×3): Each cottage is architecturally specific to its position on the rocky escarpment no two are identical. The construction principle: use the rock of the place; let the rooms open to the landscape through wide windows and covered terraces; furnish with the materials of the land rather than importing anything that doesn't belong. Ensuite bathroom with hot water shower (some have both bath and shower); comfortable beds with quality linens; private veranda with the escarpment and Northern Frontier view.

Family Cottage: Configured with **one master bedroom** (double) and **one children's room** with bunk beds and an additional single bed the children's room connected to the master by a **shared bathroom**. Wide private veranda with the full escarpment view.

The Main House: The welcoming sitting room with its open fireplace which, per the lodge's own description, has *"been privy to many evenings of storytelling by the Francombes"* and the dining room with its dramatic view over terraced lawns leading to the escarpment edge and, on clear days, all the way to Mount Kenya on the southern horizon.

Communication in the Wilderness: Solar-powered with satellite communication. Mobile coverage limited at the lodge and across much of the conservancy's northern position. This is one of Laikipia's most genuinely disconnected properties considered by most guests a quality rather than a deficiency.

Activities at Ol Malo Lodge:

- ✓ **Game Drives** — Across the 5,000-acre private ranch and sanctuary in the lodge's open safari vehicles. The northern frontier location means that the Northern Five are reliably present — particularly the Greater Kudu, the animal that gave the lodge its name, in the rocky thorn bush below the escarpment. Elephant, lion, leopard, cheetah, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, Beisa oryx, gerenuk — and the extraordinary bird diversity of the riparian woodland along the Ewaso Nyiro River visible below.
- ✓ **Horseback Safaris — Chyulu's Pride** — The Ol Malo riding programme reflects Chyulu Francombe's specific expertise and passion. Horses for all abilities from confident beginners to experienced riders guided by the Francombes' staff through terrain that requires horses comfortable with uneven rocky ground, dry riverbeds and the specific demands of the northern frontier landscape. Day rides from dawn escarpment circuits to extended plains rides. **Multi-day horseback safaris** with fly camps in the bush the most ambitious riding safari available from any Laikipia property, traversing terrain that no vehicle can reach and approaching the Greater Kudu in the rocky thorn country at a proximity that only the horse provides.
- ✓ **Helicopter Safaris with Andrew Francombe — Into the Northern Frontier** The defining Ol Malo experience for guests who want more than the lodge's immediate landscape. Andrew's helicopter reaches, within 30–60 minutes' flying time, some of the most remote and most spectacular terrain in Kenya:
- ✓ *The Suguta Valley*: One of Africa's most dramatic and most extreme landscapes ancient volcanic lava fields, enormous sand dunes and a salt pan whose summer temperatures exceed 50°C. From the air, the Suguta is an otherworldly panorama of geological violence frozen in stone and sand. On the ground landed for sundowners on a dune crest it is one of the most specifically extraordinary environments that African helicopter travel provides. *"Completely surreal. The Suguta helicopter tour is absolutely breathtaking and a must-do."* Guest review.
- ✓ *Lake Logipi*: A soda lake in the Suguta Valley where **flamingo concentrations** tens of thousands of birds turn the lake's surface pink. The aerial view is spectacular; the helicopter landing for a closer observation is extraordinary.
- ✓ *Lake Turkana*: The **Jade Sea** — 250 kilometres of the world's largest permanent desert lake, its waters a specific and improbable shade of blue-green produced by the algae and volcanic minerals of its chemistry. Flying to Turkana from Ol Malo and landing on its shore for a sundowner is one of the most dramatically remote experiences in East African aviation.
- ✓ *The Mathews Range*: A montane forest massif rising from the arid northern plains cloud forest, endemic species, Samburu communities in the foothills. An ecological world completely different from the plateau, accessible only by helicopter or multi-day walking.
- ✓ **Multi-Day Camel Safaris into the Northern Frontier** — Extended wilderness expeditions with the Ol Malo camel string and experienced Samburu handlers — traversing terrain that no vehicle can reach and that no horse can carry provisions across. Sleep under the stars in fly camps. Follow the ancient camel routes of the northern frontier. The most genuinely adventurous extended-expedition option available from any Laikipia property.
- ✓ **Walking Safaris** — Guided walks on the escarpment and through the riverine woodland below interpreting the specific ecology of the northern frontier edge: the dry-country plants, the tracking of the Greater Kudu, the specific character of a landscape that transitions here from highland plateau to arid northern plain.
- ✓ **The Leopard Hide — Overnight** — An overnight stay in a specifically positioned wildlife hide above a waterhole that the conservancy's resident leopard uses regularly. For serious wildlife photographers and for guests whose patience extends to the hours of darkness. The camera trap imagery from this position reviewed each morning reveals what crossed the frame between dusk and dawn.
- ✓ **The Sleep-Out Platform** — An open-air sleeping platform on the conservancy, available for guests who want the full northern Kenya night sky without any architectural mediation.
- ✓ **Waterfall Tubing on the Ewaso Nyiro** — When River levels allow floating downstream beneath the escarpment in the specific thrill of a northern Kenya river in flow.
- ✓ **Samburu Village Visits** — Through the Francombe family's multi-generational relationships with the surrounding Samburu community — Julia's Samburu Trust work giving the family an access and a welcome in the community that no standard tourist visit provides.
- ✓ **Samburu Cultural Experiences** — Beadwork, traditional games, the specific knowledge of Samburu pastoral life shared by community members whose relationship with the Francombe family spans generations.
- ✓ **Ol Malo Community Ranch Activities** — The working cattle operation visible and participatory for guests who want to understand the ranching economy that underlies the Laikipia conservation model.
- ✓ **Bird Watching** — The Ewaso Nyiro riverine habitat produces extraordinary bird diversity: fish eagles, kingfishers, herons, the specific raptors of the northern frontier edge and the woodland species of the escarpment face. Ol Malo is one of the finest birding positions in northern Laikipia.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

Farm-fresh food from the lodge's own ranch and garden meat, vegetables, dairy and eggs from the Francombe family's own production supplemented by the finest regional sourcing.

Meals are served in the dining room with its escarpment view, on the verandah above the waterhole and salt lick, or in extraordinary bush positions across the conservancy.

The Francombes' hosting philosophy extends to the dining table meals are communal gatherings where Colin's storytelling (fifty years of Kenya living, from Kuki Gallmann's ranch to the construction of Ol Malo to the specific history of every hill and river visible from the escarpment) makes even a simple dinner into an education in northern Kenya's most fascinating century.

"To stay at Ol Malo is to abandon oneself and live by another drumbeat in a wild and beautiful land."

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Why We Love Ol Malo Lodge:

- ✓ We love Ol Malo for **Colin Francombe's stories** for the specific, irreplaceable quality of knowledge accumulated across fifty years in this landscape, communicated with the gift of someone who genuinely loves what he knows and genuinely wants to share it.
- ✓ There are technically excellent guides in Kenya.
- ✓ There are professionally accomplished hosts.
- ✓ There are very few who are both simultaneously who sit at the dinner table and make the entire day's experience larger and deeper through conversation, Colin Francombe is one of those people.
- ✓ And for Andrew's helicopter and the Suguta Valley for the experience of landing on an ancient sand dune in one of Africa's most extreme and most remote landscapes, with Andrew knowing every feature of the terrain below from a lifetime of flying it.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Book the helicopter Suguta Valley trip for the third day after two days of ground-level exploration of the escarpment and the riverine woodland, the aerial perspective on the northern frontier landscape reframes everything seen from the ground. Land on a dune in the Suguta for sundowners: the combination of the geological drama, the helicopter arrival and the specific quality of the northern Kenya evening light at that latitude produces one of the most memorable single experiences available from any Laikipia property. And sit with Colin after dinner: the stories about Kuki Gallmann, about the land's history, about the Samburu community's evolution across fifty years these are what most guests describe as the most unexpected and most valuable part of the Ol Malo experience.*

Families and Children:

- ✓ Ol Malo is excellent for families who bring an adventurous spirit.
- ✓ The family cottage accommodates parents with up to 3 children. Horseback riding from age 8 with guide assessment; helicopter flights from any age with appropriate parental guidance; Samburu cultural visits; camel rides; and the specific warmth of a family property that genuinely welcomes children into its world.
- ✓ The Francombes' own grandchildren are growing up at Ol Malo which is the best possible guarantee of a property that takes children seriously.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 4 nights minimum given the travel time required and the depth of the activity portfolio. 5 nights ideal for those wanting to include both the helicopter Suguta Valley expedition and a multi-day horseback safari.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight and Road Transfer: Scheduled flight from **Nairobi Wilson Airport to Nanyuki Airport** (approximately 35–40 minutes) followed by a **road transfer of approximately 3–3.5 hours north** to Ol Malo. The road journey north from Nanyuki passes through Laikipia's changing landscape from highland cultivation to open savannah to the increasingly arid north and delivers a genuine sense of remoteness long before the lodge itself is reached.

By Private Charter: Direct charter from Nairobi Wilson Airport to the **Ol Malo private airstrip** adjacent to the lodge: approximately **1 hour 20–30 minutes**. This is the finest access option arriving by light aircraft directly at the property, with the Northern Frontier and the escarpment visible from the approach circuit.

By Helicopter: Andrew Francombe's helicopter can be arranged for transfers from Nairobi, Samburu or Laikipia properties. Flying to Ol Malo by helicopter the escarpment approach from the air, the waterhole visible below is one of the most dramatically beautiful arrival experiences in northern Kenya.

By Road: Nairobi to Ol Malo: approximately **5.5–6 hours** via Nanyuki and north. The road beyond Nanyuki requires a 4WD vehicle.

Seasonal Opening: Ol Malo is open **December to March and June to October** closed during April, May and November. This seasonal structure reflects the long rains (April-May) and the short rains (November) that make the northern access roads difficult.

OLEPANGI FARM

Elizabeth and Clinton Pearson's Home | Timau, Mount Kenya Foothills | 120 Acres | 16 Horses | Jersey Cow Dairy | The Most Personal Hosting in Laikipia | The "Perfectly Imperfect" Farm | Gateway to All of Northern Laikipia

The Farm: Olepangi Farm is not a safari lodge. It is not even, in the conventional sense, a hotel. It is a **120-acre working farm on the foothills of Mount Kenya** at approximately **1,950 metres altitude** in the Timau district north-east of Nanyuki that has been opened to guests because its owners, **Elizabeth and Clinton Pearson**, have created something so specifically beautiful, so genuinely personal and so irreducibly alive in its daily rhythms that they want to share it.

The farm sits *"just north of the Equator"*, on land that the Pearson family has worked and loved and shaped across years of committed investment in the soil, the gardens, the animals and the specific character of this corner of highland Kenya. At 120 acres, it is small enough to know completely in the course of a single morning's walk and yet diverse enough to be inexhaustible: horses in the paddock, Jersey cows in the dairy, bees in hives whose honey appears on the breakfast table, hens whose eggs are collected before the day's cooking begins, a kitchen garden of extraordinary exuberance and the dogs **Dame Gertrude Bell (Gertie)**, **Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery (Monty)**, **Lady Clementine Churchill (Clemmie)** and **Zsa Zsa** who *"rule the roost"* and who are, in the consistent account of guests who have stayed at Olepangi, among the most specifically charming additional members of any property team in Laikipia.

The farm's website describes itself with the specific honesty that distinguishes the finest owner-managed properties from designed hospitality products: *"Olepangi is not a hotel or a safari lodge. It is a way of life. An invitation to step into the rhythm of the farm, connect with the land, and discover the beauty of living simply... As one guest once said Olepangi is perfectly imperfect. It is wild and beautiful."*

Introduction and History — Elizabeth and Clinton Pearson: Elizabeth Pearson is a **visionary host** a description that appears in guest reviews not as praise but as accurate assessment of what she does: she sees what each individual guest needs from a stay at Olepangi, and she creates it. She is present physically, personally and attentively present in a way that the finest hotels cannot replicate because the finest hotels are not run by their owners. She knows her guests' names before they arrive. She knows their stories before they leave. Multiple guests describe the experience of staying at Olepangi as *"being welcomed like a long-lost friend"* and the specific quality of that welcome unhurried, genuinely curious, informed by Elizabeth's specific knowledge of what makes each guest's particular combination of interests remarkable — is the farm's most valuable and most irreplaceable asset.

Clinton Pearson manages the farm's physical operations alongside Elizabeth. Together they have built at Olepangi what they describe as a *"lifelong dream"* a farm that supports its guests, its animals, its staff and the surrounding community while operating on principles of genuine sustainability, genuine hospitality and genuine beauty. The farm has been the home of the **Lucy family** as noted in multiple TripAdvisor descriptions for a significant period, with the Pearsons having developed the property over years of investment and personal vision. The art and antiques that fill every room were accumulated across *"more than 30 years of travelling all over the world"* in **indigenous textiles, beautiful antique furniture, Persian carpets and objects d'art** and represent not a designed interior but the accumulated expression of two people's lives of genuine curiosity about the world.

The Gardens: The gardens at Olepangi are described by every account guest reviews, travel writer profiles and East African Retreats' professional description as one of the most specifically remarkable private gardens in Kenya. The description *"extraordinary"* appearing in essentially every reference to the gardens is not hyperbole. Elizabeth has created, in the highland conditions of the Mount Kenya foothills, a garden of lavish abundance: **flowers for the rooms cultivated on the farm itself**, the kitchen garden producing the vegetables and herbs that appear in every meal, **jersey cow dairy producing cream, butter, yogurt and ice cream** from animals Elizabeth tends personally, **bees in hives** whose honey is on the breakfast table and in the kitchen. The garden is alive in the most literal sense: it grows, changes with the seasons, responds to the rain, and produces the raw materials of hospitality in a way that no supply chain can replicate.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

Olepangi offers several accommodation configurations, each with a specific character and a specific story:

- ✓ **Markham Cottage (One Bedroom):** Named for **Beryl Markham** — the Kenyan-raised aviator and racehorse trainer whose memoir *West with the Night* is one of the finest accounts of Kenyan highland life ever written. The Markham cottage is *"a tastefully designed sanctuary, boasting Ian Sanderson fabrics and cotton quilts amidst a palatial queen bed for a blissful night's rest."* The Ian Sanderson fabric detail is not decoration it is a specific quality of British textile design applied to a space that has been furnished with genuine care for the visual experience of the room. One of Olepangi's most intimate and most characterful sleeping configurations.
- ✓ **Thesiger Cottage (One Bedroom):** Named for **Wilfred Thesiger** — the legendary British explorer whose accounts of East African and Arabian wilderness travel are among the founding texts of the adventurous travel literature tradition. *"Bespoke one-bedroom cottages offer two unique styles that reflect an appreciation for intrepid explorers of history."* The naming of these cottages is not whimsy; it is Elizabeth's intellectual hospitality the surroundings of the room creating a conversation with the guest about the Kenya that preceded the farm and the wider world of exploration that the farm's highland position connects to.
- ✓ **The Round House:** A guest favourite — the circular building that multiple guests describe specifically in their reviews as one of the farm's most visually distinctive structures. *"The round house where we stayed is to die for with amazing views, a loo with a view and curving staircase, comfortable bed."* The circular design, unusual in the Kenyan highland farm context, creates a room of specific warmth and specific intimacy.
- ✓ **Burton and Speke Cottage (Two Bedrooms — Exclusive Use):** Named for the **19th-century explorers Richard Burton and John Hanning Speke** the men who led the expeditions that became the definitive accounts of East African exploration in the Victorian era. A two-bedroom cottage bookable as exclusive use for groups of up to 4 guests. The two bedrooms have no interconnecting door, making this the most private configuration for two-couple or parent-and-older-children arrangements.
- ✓ **Gorilla Cottage (Two Bedrooms — Exclusive Use):** A two-bedroom villa available for exclusive use by groups of up to 4 guests. The name reflects the wildlife theme of Olepangi's naming conventions unexpected here in the highland Laikipia context where gorillas are not present, but carrying the specific whimsy of a property where the naming of things is always intentional.
- ✓ **Olepangi House (Three or Five Bedrooms — The Farm's Main Residence):** The farm's primary family and group accommodation described as *"our fabulous 3-bedroom house with panoramic views north to the Lolldaiga's and south to Mt Kenya"*. It is available in a three-bedroom or five-bedroom configuration depending on the group size. The master bedroom features *"its own lounge area, separate bath and shower, dressing area, and both north and south-facing balconies with arguably the best views on the property."* The house has a kitchenette for quick meal preparations, a large garden space for alfresco dining, a communal lounge with magnificent open fireplace

and a television for evening movie nights. *"Tastefully decorated with antiques from the owner's far-reaching travels, this is the perfect place to reconnect with friends and family."*

The Bunk Room:

Available as add-on accommodation for families with children adjoining the Round House, sleeping **2–4 children or young adults** in bunk beds. Bookable only in combination with the Round House. Minimum age: 6 years.

Shared Facilities:

The Party House: The farm's social centerpiece described as *"the guests' own space"*, with a **soaring makuti-thatched ceiling** housing the dining room, bar, drawing room and library. In the evenings, guests gather on the terrace to watch the sun drop behind the Lolldaiga Hills. *"The farm has been known to have the odd pajama party or even cocktail-making competition."* The Party House is where Olepangi's essential character genuinely social, genuinely warm, completely unforced expresses itself most fully.

- ✓ *The Swimming Pool and Pool House:* A **new pool** and accompanying pool house, featuring **two spa treatment rooms, a gym, a sunken fireplace, an eating and bar area and a sunbathing deck**. The pool was a recent addition to the farm's infrastructure and represents a significant quality upgrade to the guest amenity portfolio.
- ✓ *The Polo Pitch:* Olepangi's own **bush polo pitch** with views of Mount Kenya available for polo lessons on the farm's ponies for beginners, or for impromptu three-on-three matches for more experienced players. *"All played with an arena polo ball and always a lot of fun."*
- ✓ *The Artist-in-Residence Programme:* A rotating programme through which Kenyan and international artists spend time at the farm, creating work and engaging with guests. *"There is always something new, interesting and creative happening around the farm and lodge."*
- ✓ *The Writers' Spot:* A specific outdoor seating position with the view described in multiple guest reviews as the most beautiful single viewpoint on the property used by guest writers and by Elizabeth herself as a place of contemplative productivity.
- ✓ *The library:* An extensive private library of East African natural history, travel literature and fiction the accumulated reading of the farm's owners across years of living and reading in this landscape.

Communication:

WiFi is available. Mobile coverage (Safaricom) is generally available.

The farm's altitude and proximity to Nanyuki makes it one of the more connected highland properties in the Laikipia circuit.

Activities at Olepangi Farm:

- ✓ **Horseback Riding on the Farm** — Olepangi's **16 horses** are the farm's most celebrated physical asset. For beginners: a guided 45-minute to 1-hour ride around the farm's paddocks and the immediately surrounding land, at additional cost. For experienced riders: the **morning farm ride near Mount Kenya** a 2–3-hour ride in the highland landscape above the farm, with tea and coffee included, departing at dawn for the specific quality of the early morning Mount Kenya light. For guests with polo skills: the bush polo pitch.
- ✓ **Cow Milking at the Dairy** — Olepangi's **pedigree Jersey cows** produce milk of exceptionally high butterfat content — the Jersey breed being specifically chosen for this quality. Joining the milking team in the early morning, understanding the process and watching the milk that will become the day's ice cream, butter and yogurt being collected: a specific agricultural encounter that connects the breakfast table to the animal that produced it.
- ✓ **Kitchen Garden — Harvest and Cook** — Joining the garden team to collect the fresh organic produce that will appear on the lunch and dinner table. The garden's specific practices — composting from stable manure and kitchen waste, natural organic insecticides from farm flora and animal dung — explained in a farm tour that gives the food that follows a specific provenance and a specific quality of meaning.
- ✓ **Bread Making with the Chef** — In the farm kitchen, with the head chef and his team: baking oat bread from the farm's own ingredients. *"As soon as the fresh bread comes out of the oven, be the first to try it."*
- ✓ **Beehive Visit and Honey Tasting** — At the farm's own hives: understanding the colony structure and the seasonal honey production cycle, followed by a tasting of the farm's own honey.
- ✓ **Community Walk with Mr Kariuki** — The most specifically extraordinary farm-adjacent activity at Olepangi. Mr Kariuki is the farm's neighbouring community elder and guide — *"who can only be described as astonishing. His knowledge of the social history of the area is fascinating and his knowledge of world affairs humbles most of us."* A community walk with Mr Kariuki — from 1 hour to a full afternoon, completely flexible — provides the most genuinely specific and most genuinely humbling community encounter available from any Laikipia property. Community donation: USD 25 per person. *"Many of our guests go out with him more than once!"*
- ✓ **Farm Walks and Trail Walks** — Self-guided or guided walks across the 120 acres and into the surrounding highland community landscape; river access for relaxing by the stream.
- ✓ **Young Farmers Club (Children)** — A full-day activity programme for children: collecting eggs, riding the pony 'Mr B', picking vegetables for their own lunch, baking, wildlife monitoring and sports. *"A hands-on experience for kids."* Age: all ages welcome.
- ✓ **Yoga Sessions** — In the farm's tranquil outdoor settings.
- ✓ **Gin Tasting** — A **signature Olepangi gin tasting** at USD 35 per person — a curated tasting of Kenyan craft gins.
- ✓ **Croquet on the Farm Lawn** — Traditional garden croquet in the highland afternoon light.
- ✓ *Day Trips from Olepangi — Arranged at Additional Cost:*
- ✓ **Ol Pejeta Conservancy** — Approximately **1 hour by road** from the farm. Full-day game drive with a luxury Olepangi picnic lunch and soft drinks included. USD 360 per vehicle + park fees (USD 90 adult, USD 45 child 5–11 years). *"We go often... leaving early in the morning, take a packed picnic lunch and a blanket for lounging by the river during lunchtime. Home by 7:00 or 8:00 in the evening with a hot shower and delicious dinner back at the farm."*
- ✓ **Solio Ranch** — *"One of the best places in the world to see Rhino with more than 350 in residence."* Approximately **1.5–2 hours from the farm**. USD 360 per vehicle + Solio entry fees.
- ✓ **Samburu National Reserve** — A long but highly satisfying day trip taking approximately **2 hours each way**. USD 360 per vehicle + Samburu Park fees.

- ✓ **Mount Kenya Climb — Sirimon Gate (30 minutes from the farm)** — Olepangi is *"the ideal base for your starting or finishing (or both!) base to climb Mount Kenya."* Sirimon Gate, one of the most popular Mount Kenya access points, is approximately 30 minutes from the farm. Olepangi coordinates the logistics including guides, porters, equipment hire and the specific approvals required.
- ✓ **Helicopter Safari** — *"What better way to see Mt Kenya... by helicopter. A truly jaw-dropping experience. Early morning collection on our polo field and off you go."* Through Olepangi's partner Tropic Air: maximum 4 passengers. Prices on enquiry. Options including Mount Kenya circuit, Rift Valley lakes, northern Kenya desert and the Maasai Mara. *"There are no limits to where the helicopter can go and, to top it off, you can choose whether you have the doors on or doors off! Off please..."*
- ✓ **Ngare Ndare Forest and Waterfall Visit** — The ancient forest at the base of Mount Kenya, with its remarkable swimming holes in crystal mountain streams and the specific atmosphere of old-growth highland forest.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

The food at Olepangi is the farm's most consistently and most enthusiastically praised element and the source of praise is not merely the taste of the food but the understanding of where it came from and who produced it.

"The food was amazing. We enjoyed breakfast on the patio a beautifully prepared and substantial meal: granola and yogurt, pancakes with berries. Lunch and supper were served in the Party House and no foods were repeated for the 4 days we stayed there. Pasta, delicious salads fresh from the farm, pork, fresh fish, delicious desserts. Best of all were the canapés during sundowners rice veg beetroot balls that were out of this world, chipolatas, potato skins and cocktails."

The meal sequence at Olepangi: breakfast on the patio with the farm view; lunch in the Party House from ingredients collected that morning from the garden; afternoon canapés for the sundowner hour on the Party House terrace; dinner in the Party House with the full dining room table assembled. No meal is repeated across a standard stay. No ingredient is imported that can be grown or raised on the farm. The Jersey dairy appears in the breakfast cream, the yogurt, the ice cream and the butter. The bees appear in the honey. The garden appears in every vegetable, every salad and every herb. The hens appear in the eggs. The kitchen is the most complete expression of the farm-to-table philosophy available at any Laikipia property.

Chef **Joseph** is specifically named in multiple guest reviews: *"the chef, Joseph, who is a magician in the kitchen."* The canapés at sundowner hour are the specific revelation that most guests describe first: small, specific, perfectly executed and entirely homegrown.

Why We Love Olepangi Farm: We love Olepangi for **Elizabeth** for the specific, irreplaceable quality of a host who has built a place of genuine beauty, who is present in it every day and who shares it with guests as an act of genuine generosity rather than commercial transaction. There are properties in Laikipia with more impressive wine cellars and properties with larger infinity pools and properties with more wildlife. None of them have Elizabeth. And none of them have the kitchen garden whose produce is harvested before your lunch and appears on your plate two hours later, at a table in a Party House with a soaring makuti ceiling and a view of the Lolldaiga Hills, among other guests who have become old friends within 48 hours of meeting. And for the dogs for Gertie leading the morning walk with the unassailable authority of a senior Field Marshal and for the specific comfort of animals who belong to this place as completely as the Mount Kenya view.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Stay at Olepangi for a minimum of 4 nights the farm reveals itself slowly, in the rhythm of its own days: the early cow milking, the garden collection, the bread baking, the community walk with Mr Kariuki that most guests take twice. Three nights is sufficient for the highlights. Four nights is sufficient for the experience to become genuinely your own rhythm rather than a programme. And take the day trip to Samburu the specific contrast of arriving back at the farm after a day in the Samburu heat, in a landscape that could not be more different from this green highland farm, to a hot shower and Joseph's dinner and the farm dogs' greeting on the Party House terrace, is the most complete single expression of what makes Olepangi the finest gateway and the finest return point in all of Laikipia.*

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff.
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Families and Children:

Olepangi is exceptional for families it is, functionally, a family farm that welcomes guests into its family life. The Young Farmers Club; the pony riding; the cow milking; the egg collecting; the bread baking; the dogs; the garden; the river for playing in; the butterfly diversity of the highland vegetation all engage children of every age. Multiple reviews from families with children of ages 3 to 16 are uniformly enthusiastic. The bunk room adjacent to the Round House provides the ideal children's sleeping configuration for families booking that cottage combination.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight to Nanyuki Airport (Standard): **Daily scheduled flights from Nairobi Wilson Airport to Nanyuki Civil Airport** on AirKenya and Safarilink: approximately **50 minutes**. Olepangi Farm is in **Timau** approximately **20km north-east of Nanyuki town**, on a side road approximately 5km from the main Nanyuki-Meru Road. The drive from Nanyuki Airport: approximately **35–40 minutes**. Elizabeth's team provides detailed written directions; Google Maps is specifically not recommended (the farm's own website notes: *"DO NOT use Google maps"*).

By Road from Nairobi: Via the A2 highway to Nanyuki and then north-east to Timau: approximately **3.5–4 hours**. The tarmac is excellent throughout; the farm access track is bumpy but navigable in a standard saloon car.

Vard Africa Note: The farm's own directions with the described speed bumps, bridges and farms as navigation landmarks are provided by Olepangi to all guests. Vard Africa provides this to clients as part of the pre-travel documentation.

Note on Access: Multiple guest reviews mention that *"the road via the conservancy needs to have proper marked directions"* and that *"the drive up to Olepangi might be a bit rough, but it's worth it in every way."* The access track is entirely navigable but requires attention to the farm's specific directions rather than digital navigation.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights minimum; 4–5 nights strongly recommended for the full farm experience.

TUMAREN CAMP AND KARISIA WALKING SAFARIS

Kerry Glen & James Christian | *Safari Awards: Best Walking Safari in Africa* | *Camel-Supported Mobile Expeditions Since 2003* | *Named for the Dragonfly*

The Conservancy and Philosophy: **Karisia Walking Safaris** and its permanent base camp **Tumaren Camp** represent one of Kenya's most specifically, most irreducibly personal safari operations the creation of **Kerry Glen** and **James Christian**, whose story and whose expertise are so completely intertwined with what Karisia offers that understanding the people is the prerequisite for understanding the camp.

Kerry Glen was born in Kenya. She grew up on safaris across East Africa, accompanying family expeditions that were shaped by her father's work: **Robert Glen** is one of Africa's most celebrated sculptors whose large-scale bronze wildlife works, including the iconic Frieze of Life in Nairobi, represent some of the most significant public art in East Africa. Many of Kerry's childhood expeditions revolved around studying the biology and design of the animals that her father would translate into bronze. This upbringing art, wildlife, safari, Kenya produced a naturalist of extraordinary depth and a guide of extraordinary quality.

Kerry studied **Environmental and Geographical Sciences at the University of Cape Town**. Back in Kenya, she designed, built and managed the renowned lodge **Sabuk**, then guided walking safaris with Sabuk and **Ewaso River Camel Hikes** for eight years through some of the most rugged and most beautiful country in northern Kenya. She is a **Wilderness First Responder** and completed an **Advanced Rifle Training course** in South Africa in 2016 with guide Gabriel. She carries a rifle on all walking activities not as a visual deterrent but as a tool she is specifically and professionally qualified to use.

James Christian studied **Wildlife Biology at the University of Vermont** and developed passions for ecology, photography, **ornithology** and fishing across extensive travels through Africa his mother Anthea Christian having raised him on Kenya safaris from childhood. He is a professional ornithologist whose bird knowledge is woven into every aspect of the Karisia experience: the specific call heard before a bird appears; the nest structure in a particular acacia species; the ecological relationship between a bird community and the habitat it inhabits.

After a safari together to Alaska, Kerry and James returned to Kenya. Kerry introduced James to camel safaris which he had not previously experienced and the specific quality of moving through a wildlife landscape at camel height, with the animal that the northern Kenya pastoral communities have used as transport and provision for centuries, immediately convinced him. They founded **Karisia Walking Safaris** in **2003**. Marriage followed. Then twins. Now three generations of the family go on safari together following the traditions and rhythms that have shaped their lives.

The Tumaren Conservancy -the 13,000-acre private ranch that James and Kerry own and manage exclusively for wildlife was once used for intensive cattle grazing that had degraded the land significantly. When they acquired it, the recovery began immediately. Within a few years, the wildlife began returning. Predators came back to areas where they had been persecuted. Plains game populations recovered. The Grevy's zebra whose global population was at its lowest during the years when the land was most degraded began using the conservancy as territory. The rewilding story at Tumaren is a microcosm of the Laikipia conservation story: a landowner's decision, followed by consistent management, producing measurable wildlife recovery within years rather than decades.

Karisia Walking Safaris won the **Safari Awards designation as "Best Walking Safari in Africa"** the most unambiguous single recognition of what Kerry, James and their team of Samburu and Maasai expert guides have built.

James was involved in the construction of Angama Mara his ornithological and ecological knowledge contributing to the landscape design of one of the Maasai Mara's most celebrated lodges. His wife Kerry's brother **Mark** built Angama Mara. The connections between the finest people in Kenyan safari their expertise flowing between projects, their knowledge cross-pollinating across properties is one of the most distinctive features of the Kenya bush community.

Tumaren's Name: *Tumaren* has two meanings in the Maa language. The first is **"dragonfly"** the insect after which the camp was named, whose specific hovering, precisely-adjusted, iridescent presence at the edges of the conservancy's water sources embodies the quality of attention that Karisia brings to the bush. The second meaning, discovered by the owners after the name was already established: **"light morning rain"** the gentle dawn precipitation that sometimes graces this corner of Laikipia and that is considered by the Samburu to be good luck. Both meanings suit this property completely: the hovering precision of expert natural observation; the specific blessing of something clean and cool at the beginning of a day.

TUMAREN CAMP

Kerry Glen & James Christian's Original Home | *7 Spacious Ensuite Tented Rooms* | *20-Metre Pool Facing the Plains* | *Private Airstrip* | *Salt Lick View* | *Loseramuru Kopje Horizon*

Location and Setting: Tumaren Camp occupies the **western edge of a wildlife-rich grassland** in eastern Laikipia north of Mount Kenya, two hours by road from Nanyuki, on the 13,000-acre Tumaren Conservancy that James and Kerry have managed exclusively for wildlife since they acquired it.

The camp overlooks a **salt lick** a natural mineral deposit in the ground where the soil's salt content attracts wildlife from across the conservancy throughout the day. Elephant, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, plains game, and periodically predators attracted by the concentration of prey all visit the salt lick within view of the camp. On the horizon beyond the grassland: the **Loseramuru kopje** a prominent, beautiful granitic outcrop that becomes, over the course of a stay at Tumaren, a landmark of daily life: backlit at dawn, silhouetted at dusk, its specific outline against the sky the view that guests describe remembering most vividly after they have left.

Introduction and History: Tumaren Camp was **Kerry and James's own home** the place they built their lives, raised their twins and developed Karisia Walking Safaris from its inception. When they opened the camp to guests, they were literally opening their home: the furniture is theirs; the garden is theirs; the staff are people they know intimately. The camp has subsequently been built beyond the original homestead, but the character of a family home rather than a designed product persists in everything about it.

Intimate Luxury Safari Living — Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements:

7 Spacious Ensuite Safari Tents — on raised wooden platforms facing the salt lick and the plains:

3 Standard Double Tents: For couples plush **king or double beds** with quality linen; solar lighting; ensuite bathroom with **plumbed hot and cold running water, flush lavatory and rainfall shower; private veranda** with the salt lick view; canvas walls and roof in the finest East African bush tent tradition; local **dark wood furnishings** with **Kilim rugs, throws, cushions and blankets** that add colour and warmth to the canvas character.

4 Adaptable Family Tents: Each with an internal **partition** that divides the tent into separate sleeping sections the children's section fitted with additional beds to create family units for **up to 4 or 5 guests**. The partition is substantial enough to provide genuine acoustic separation while maintaining the single-tent canvas character. Ideal for families where parents and children want adjacent but distinct sleeping spaces.

Throughout all tents: the specific detail of Maasai beadwork in the décor; locally carved wooden objects; **bird and butterfly specimens** from the conservancy's collections that provide identification reference for guests trying to name what they saw.

The **main building** once the Perrett family kitchen and living area now provides the communal lounge (deep sofas, bookshelves of East African natural history and travel literature, maps of the conservancy and the wider northern Kenya landscape, wildlife identification guides), the dining room and the **campfire circle** where evening conversations happen around an open fire.

The **20-metre swimming pool** faces the plains and the salt lick one of the most generous pool sizes relative to a camp of Tumaren's character in Laikipia. The pool's orientation is specifically the salt lick view: guests can watch wildlife at the mineral deposit from the pool's edge without moving. This specific combination the pool's physical pleasure and the wildlife's immediate accessibility is one of those small design decisions that a camp built by owners who understand their guests gets exactly right.

Activities at Tumaren Camp:

- ✓ **Guided Bush Walks with Samburu and Maasai Expert Trackers** — Tumaren's core and most irreplaceable offering. Walking with Kerry and James or their expert team guides who have spent their adult lives in this terrain, who know every plant's medicinal use, every animal track's specific details, every bird call's source before the bird appears through the wildlife-rich eastern Laikipia landscape. This is not a guided walk in the conventional sense. It is a course in reading a living landscape guests who have never tracked an animal before leave Tumaren able to identify lion prints from hyena, to understand why a broken twig indicates the passage of a heavy animal at speed; to name the plant whose crushed leaf repels insects, to hear a lion in distance and estimate its direction and proximity.
- ✓ **The Safari Awards "Best Walking Safari in Africa"** recognition applies specifically to this combination: Kerry and James's naturalist knowledge; their Samburu and Maasai guides' landscape-level expertise; and the specific quality of attention that Karisia brings to the act of being in the African bush on foot.
- ✓ **Camel-Supported Mobile Walking Safaris** Karisia's signature multi-day wilderness experience: guests walk each day through the Laikipia landscape while **camels carry all equipment, water, tents and provisions** between each night's camp. No vehicle follows; no fixed location is revisited. The camels managed by Samburu handlers for whom the camel is a culturally and practically familiar companion carry 80 litres of water, food for multiple days, all camping equipment and the specific provisions that make each fly camp genuinely comfortable.
- ✓ The camels' presence changes the wildlife encounter profoundly. Animals that would flee from a vehicle, or maintain cautious distance from a walking human, **accept the camel as familiar** part of the northern Kenya pastoral landscape for centuries. Grevy's zebra allow approach to 30 metres. Reticulated giraffe look with curiosity rather than alarm. The specific intimacy of approaching wildlife with a camel between you and the animal the animal's attention on the camel rather than on you produces encounters of extraordinary quality.
- ✓ Children who tire on a long walk can ride the camels rather than walking the camel providing a 3-metre-altitude vantage point that produces its own specific wildlife perspective.
- ✓ *Mobile Safari Accommodation Levels:* **Classic:** Canvas tents with separate shower and toilet tents; bucket showers with hot water; hearty fire-cooked meals. The great East African classic camping tradition. **Comfort:** More spacious tent interiors; enhanced bedding; the same extraordinary guiding. **Luxury Option:** Available for groups who want the walking safari experience without entirely giving up the comforts of Tumaren's permanent camp.
- ✓ **Day and Night Game Drives** — In Tumaren's Land Cruiser game drive vehicles across the 13,000-acre conservancy. Night drives with spotlights reveal the nocturnal community: the **leopard** whose territory overlaps the northern section; **aardvark** emerging from burrows; **serval and civet** in the grassland margins; **aardwolf** one of the most elusive and most ecologically interesting of the nocturnal Laikipia species in the open areas.
- ✓ **Rock Climbing on the Loseramuru Kopje** — The granitic outcrop on the horizon provides excellent **top-rope climbing** on natural features — no bolts, no manufactured routes, simply the ancient rock face with climbing guides setting anchors from above. Available for all ability levels from complete beginners to experienced climbers; the specific quality of the Laikipia setting standing on ancient granite at altitude, with the conservancy spread below makes the climb memorable regardless of the technical standard achieved.

- ✓ **Fishing** — In the conservancy's rivers and dams for tilapia, catfish and barbel. Contemplative, quiet, conducted alongside the wildlife that shares the water.
- ✓ **Camel Crèche and Milking at Bobong** — A visit to the **female camel boma** to meet the young camels and observe the milking. The specific gentleness of young camels, the ease of their movement among people, the smell and the sound of the boma all creating an encounter that is simultaneously educational and charming.
- ✓ **Samburu Cultural Activities — Spear Throwing, Fire Making, Club Games** — Traditional Samburu skills shared by the camp's Samburu guides with the specific enthusiasm of people who are proud of their heritage and who enjoy sharing it with people who are genuinely curious about it.
- ✓ **Football and Ultimate Frisbee Against the Kimanjo School Team** — One of Tumaren's most specifically joyful and most genuinely communal activities: playing sport against the local primary school students who approach every match with extraordinary competitive spirit and extraordinary good humour is the most direct, the most unmediated and the most immediately human form of community engagement available from any Laikipia property.
- ✓ **Beadwork** — Traditional Samburu and Maasai bead patterns, each carrying specific cultural meaning, taught by the camp's Samburu guides and their community contacts.
- ✓ **Baboon Research Project and Mpala Research Centre Visit** — The Mpala Research Centre in eastern Laikipia is one of Africa's most significant ecological research stations; visits can be arranged to understand the ongoing long-term research projects and to observe the baboon study populations.
- ✓ **School and Market Visits** — To Kimanjo school and the local weekly market direct, unmediated community encounters.
- ✓ **Satellite Mobile Camp** — For guests who want to go further into the wilderness than the permanent camp reaches: a **private mobile camp** set up in a remote location within or adjacent to the conservancy, from which walks and drives radiate daily. This is the option that bridges the permanent camp and the full mobile safari the comfort of a dedicated camp in a single position, with the wilderness character of terrain too remote for permanent infrastructure.
- ✓ **Jogging with a Guide** — For physically active guests: dawn trail running on the conservancy's routes with an armed ranger escort.

Health & Safety:

- ✓ The property is staffed by dedicated camp managers and fully trained guides.
- ✓ Emergency contacts and evacuation procedures briefed to all guests on arrival.
- ✓ The property is unfenced and located within an active wildlife zone guests are escorted after dark by experienced Masai security staff
- ✓ All guides KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) silver certified minimum.
- ✓ Strict wildlife safety protocols.
- ✓ Malaria prophylaxis guidance provided.
- ✓ All vehicles are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- ✓ Advanced first aid trained staff on site at all times.
- ✓ Partnerships with flying doctors service (AMREF).
- ✓ 100% solar powered.

Culinary and Dining Experiences:

Tumaren's kitchen operates on principles of genuine quality and genuine generosity rather than aspirational fine dining. The produce is local and fresh; the cooking is accomplished; the portions reflect a kitchen that cooks for people who have spent six hours on foot and in the bush and who are genuinely hungry.

Guest reviews consistently describe the meals as "*delicious*" and "*generous*" qualities that reflect Donna Perrett's cordon-bleu philosophy translated to the camp setting: ingredients matter; freshness matters; abundance matters; the act of feeding people well after a day in the bush is an act of care.

The **campfire evenings** at Tumaren with the salt lick wildlife visible in the darkness beyond the firelight, the stars appearing above and Kerry or James or their guides sharing the day's encounters, the landscape's stories and the conservation intelligence of thirty years in this specific terrain are among the most specifically satisfying evenings available from any northern Kenyan property. This is not entertainment. This is the specific pleasure of being in the company of people who know something extraordinary well and who share it with complete generosity.

Why We Love Tumaren Camp and Karisia Walking Safaris: We love Karisia for the **walking** for the specific, irreplaceable experience of moving through a wildlife landscape at the pace that the landscape imposes, in the company of people who have spent decades learning to read every sign the bush offers. And for the **rock climbing** for the unexpected pleasure of a sport that belongs, at this altitude and in this setting, as completely to the Laikipia experience as a game drive. And for the **football against the school team** because it is the most direct, the most genuine and the most immediately human connection available from any Laikipia property.

Vard Africa Insider Note: *Combine Tumaren Camp (3–4 nights) with a Karisia mobile camel safari (3–5 days) this combination is the most complete single expression of what eastern Laikipia offers. Begin at Tumaren to establish the landscape's geography and to develop the relationship with Kerry and James that makes the mobile safari meaningful; then go into the wilderness with the camel train and experience the specific quality of nights in a fly camp with no infrastructure between you and the bush. By the fourth day of walking, the landscape is no longer something you are observing. It is something you are inside. And the camel who carries your water has become, in some specific and irreversible way, a companion.*

Families and Children: Tumaren is **outstanding for adventurous families of all ages**. The adaptable family tent configurations; the camel rides (children ride when they tire of walking the camel handles them gently and proudly); Samburu games and fire making; the rock climbing; the football against the school team; the beadwork all create experiences that engage children across the full range of ages and interests. Kerry and James raised their twins on safari in this landscape and have built many activities in direct collaboration with their children's experiences.

Getting There:

By Scheduled Flight and Road: Scheduled flight from **Nairobi Wilson Airport to Nanyuki Airport** (35–40 minutes). From Nanyuki Airport, **Tumaren Camp is approximately 2 hours by road** driving north through the increasingly open and increasingly remote landscape of eastern Laikipia, through the town of Timau and into the conservancy.

By Private Charter to Tumaren's Own Airstrip: The conservancy has its own private airstrip accommodating light charter aircraft. Charter from Nairobi Wilson: approximately **50 minutes**. From the airstrip, the camp is a short game drive of **5–10 minutes** through the conservancy.

By Road from Nairobi: Approximately **4.5–5 hours** via Nanyuki and Timau a long but entirely manageable road journey for guests who want to drive and to observe the landscape change from the Kenyan highlands to the open northern plateau.

Vard Africa Note: The charter to the Tumaren airstrip is the most efficient and most appropriate arrival for Tumaren Camp. The brevity of the flight, the landing on a bush airstrip, and the 10-minute game drive to the camp with the salt lick wildlife potentially visible immediately on arrival this is the arrival sequence that sets the tone for the Karisia experience.

Minimum Stay Recommendation: 3 nights at Tumaren minimum; 4 nights + 3 days mobile safari ideally.

EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC OF LAIKIPIA

What To Do in the Laikipia Ecosystem

Seventeen Experiences That Are Possible Nowhere Else in Kenya

The following are not generic safari activities. They are the defining experiences of Laikipia each either **exclusive to private conservancy land**, uniquely expressed in this ecosystem, or available here at a quality that no other Kenyan destination approaches. The freedom of private land to drive anywhere, walk anywhere, ride anywhere, observe wildlife at any hour with any means of transport is the foundation on which every one of these experiences' rests.

I. DAY AND NIGHT GAME DRIVES

The foundation of the Laikipia experience but with a quality that distinguishes it categorically from game drives in Kenya's national parks.

On private conservancy land, the game drive vehicle goes anywhere its guide judges appropriate: off-road across open grassland, through riverbeds whose sandy edges record the night's wildlife traffic in perfect clarity, up rocky outcrops to summit positions, into the acacia forest edges where colobus monkeys move at dawn, and across the ancient lava plains of the plateau's northern sections. There are no designated tracks. There are no other vehicles creating competitive pressure at sightings. The guide's route is determined entirely by live intelligence: the radio collar signal from a known lion whose territory overlaps the eastern section of the conservancy; the camera trap footage reviewed at the lodge this morning showing a leopard at the waterhole at 3am; the fresh elephant track in the soft sand at the dam edge that the vehicle follows into the acacia woodland.

After sunset, the spotlight reveals the conservancy's second life the nocturnal wildlife community that the midday's visitors never encounter. The **leopard** whose territory overlaps the conservancy's central section, whose individual characteristics the guide knows from years of sighting records. **Aardvark** emerging from burrows whose entrances have been in the same positions for generations. **Serval** hunting in the grassland margins. **Striped hyena** present in northern Laikipia in small numbers, one of the most elusive of African carnivores and one of the most specifically rewarding night drive encounters. **Spring hare** bounding across the spotlight beam. **Bush baby** in the acacia canopy, their eyes catching the light from extraordinary heights. And on the rock faces, **rock hyrax** whose distant relationship to the elephant is one of evolutionary biology's most astonishing revelations.

The specific quality of the night game drive in Laikipia: The altitude's cold, clean air. The complete absence of other vehicles. The guide's familiarity with individual animals whose lives have been observed across years. The moment the spotlight finds a leopard's eyes in the grass twenty metres from the vehicle, and the animal looks directly into the beam with the specific, flat, unconcerned gaze of a predator that is not afraid of the light.

II. WALKING ADVENTURES AND SAFARIS

Walking in Laikipia is walking in one of the world's finest wildlife areas and what it demands and what it reveals is profoundly different from anything a game drive produces.

At ground level, scale changes. An elephant at ten metres on foot is a different creature from an elephant at ten metres through a vehicle window the ground vibrating with its movement, the smell of it present in the air, the specific sound of its breathing audible. A termite tower that the vehicle has passed a hundred times without attention becomes, at walking height, an architectural achievement of extraordinary ingenuity: ventilation chambers, fungus gardens, the structural precision of a building without architects. A lion track in soft sand, read by a guide who was taught tracking by the Samburu trackers who were taught by their fathers its age, its direction, the specific weight of the animal tells a story that the vehicle's passing would have obscured.

The **KPSGA-certified guides** who lead Laikipia's walking safaris carry the landscape knowledge of people who have spent their entire professional lives in some cases their entire lives within it. They read the bush at multiple scales simultaneously: the landscape level (the view from the ridge, the wind direction, the probability that a predator is in the shade of the valley below); the habitat level (the specific acacia community that indicates the presence of particular bird species; the vegetation pattern that reveals a seasonal stream); and the micro level (the insect on the leaf; the specific mark of the porcupine quill on the tree bark; the medicinal use of the plant the guide's grandmother taught him).

Multi-day walking safaris linking conservancies, camping in the bush, covering terrain inaccessible by vehicle represent the most complete immersion in the Laikipia ecosystem available from any programme.

Karisia Walking Safaris has built its international reputation, and its Safari Awards "Best Walking Safari in Africa" designation, entirely on this specific offer: the walking safari as the defining form of engagement with the Laikipia bush.

III. HORSEBACK SAFARIS

No other safari activity provides the specific combination of speed, access, intimacy and wildlife acceptance that horseback riding in the Laikipia bush delivers.

A vehicle engine is heard before the vehicle is seen. A human on foot is smelled at distances that limit approach. A horse is **familiar** part of the African landscape for centuries of pastoral tradition, accepted by plains game at distances that no vehicle achieves because the wildlife's evolution has not prepared it to flee from horses. Grevy's zebra graze as a horse approaches to 15 metres. Reticulated giraffe look with curiosity rather than alarm. Eland move to the side rather than away. The specific access that horseback provides the silence, the height, the animal's natural movement across terrain produces wildlife encounters of a quality that no other form of safari transport creates.

Laikipia's riding programmes range from morning guided bush rides for confident beginners to **multi-day horseback safaris of up to ten days** through multiple conservancies the most physically ambitious and most experientially complete equestrian wilderness adventures in Kenya.

Properties of highest riding quality:

- ✓ **Borana (Riding Wild)** — Three stables, 50+ horses, riders of all abilities accommodated. The conservancy's 90,000-acre landscape provides the finest riding terrain in Laikipia.
- ✓ **Sirikoi** Located in an exclusive 30km² area of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. Horses suited to beginners and experienced riders, guided by experienced staff on horseback.
- ✓ **Lewa Wilderness** Over 40 horses managed by Miranda Craig. The conservancy's specific wildlife population rhino, elephant, Grevy's zebra provides extraordinary encounters from horseback.
- ✓ **Sosian** Particularly recommended for experienced riders: some ex-polo horses in the stable, extensive escarpment and river terrain, multi-day expedition riding with fly camping.
- ✓ **Ol Malo** Chyulu Francombe's pride: rocky escarpment terrain, Northern Frontier landscape, the specific quality of riding in a landscape that genuinely requires skilled horsemanship.

IV. RIVER ACTIVITIES

- ✓ The **Ewaso Narok and Ewaso Nyiro Rivers** — the great drainage systems of the Laikipia Plateau provide the setting for Laikipia's most physically engaged experiences:
- ✓ **River Tubing at Sosian** — Floating downstream on inflatable tubes through the **Ewaso Narok gorge** section: the riverine canopy overhead, the canyon walls on either side, the specific sounds of the river's passage through confined stone. Conducted when river levels are appropriate; guide assessment required daily. One of the most exhilarating physical experiences in Kenya.
- ✓ **The 30-Foot Waterfall Jump at Sosian** — The Ewaso Narok drops 30 feet into a deep natural pool at one point in its Sosian passage. The jump from the falls' edge is, in multiple guest accounts, one of the most specifically exhilarating physical moments of their lives. The pool below is deep, cold and assessed for safety before every session.
- ✓ **Kayaking on Mugie Dam** — The "Magical Kenya" designated signature experience: paddling Canadian canoes across a 156-acre private reservoir in the presence of bathing elephant herds. Available only at Mugie Conservancy through both Governors' Mugie House and Ekorian's Mugie Camp. A dam free of crocodiles and hippos in the canoeing areas; wildlife completely comfortable with the canoe's presence.
- ✓ **Canoeing on Ol Pejeta's Waterways** — At Kicheche Laikipia: paddling on the conservancy's permanent water bodies with hippos at eye level and waterbirds at close range. One of Laikipia's most distinctive and most rarely experienced activities.
- ✓ **Fishing** — Course fishing across multiple conservancy rivers and dams. Tilapia, catfish, barbel and yellowfish. The combination of sitting quietly at the water's edge as wildlife comes to drink, with a line in the water and the bush sounds around the most contemplative experience Laikipia provides.

V. MOUNTAIN BIKING

Cycling through a Laikipia conservancy provides a pace of wildlife encounter genuinely distinct from both the game drive and the walking safari faster than walking, quieter than a vehicle, allowing the landscape's smaller details to emerge as part of the wildlife experience rather than flashing past.

Available across most major Laikipia conservancies including Borana, Loisaba and Ol Pejeta. The **electric mountain bikes** at Governors' Mugie House add a sustainable and terrain-flexible dimension to the activity.

Guides lead rides of varying length and difficulty across the conservancy's road and trail network. The specific intimacy of cycling past a giraffe who looks down at the bicycle with complete equanimity while the game drive vehicle that followed this same road would have prompted a longer, more cautious response reveals something specific about the relationship between speed, silence and wildlife comfort.

VI. CAMEL TREKS

The camel has been integral to the northern Kenyan landscape for centuries the sustenance and the transport of the Samburu, Rendille and Turkana peoples whose nomadic lives have crossed this plateau on the same routes the wildlife follows. A camel trek in Laikipia is not a tourist novelty; it is the most historically authentic mode of movement in this specific landscape, and the most naturally accepted by the wildlife that shares it.

Available at multiple Laikipia properties from 40-minute introductory rides with Samburu handlers to **multi-day camel-supported wilderness expeditions** through Karisia Walking Safaris, where the camels carry all provisions and equipment as guests walk alongside them through terrain inaccessible by any other means.

The camel's specific value in the wildlife encounter: wildlife that would flee from a vehicle, or maintain cautious distance from a walking human, **accepts the camel as part of the pastoral landscape** familiar, non-threatening, normal. Grevy's zebra graze alongside the camel train. Reticulated giraffe approach to investigate. The specific intimacy of moving with a camel through a Grevy's zebra herd at 3 metres from animals that would not tolerate a vehicle at 50 is one of the most specifically memorable wildlife encounters in northern Kenya.

VII. CATTLE RANCHING EXPERIENCES

Laikipia's conservation model is inseparable from its ranching model cattle and wildlife sharing territory across every major conservancy, with the economic revenue from cattle providing the financial foundation that allows wildlife conservation to function without depending entirely on tourism.

Understanding this coexistence is central to understanding why Laikipia works and participating in it directly is one of the most genuinely educational activities available.

At **Sosian** (Kenya's largest stud Boran herd approximately 2,500 animals), **Borana** (the Waitabit Farm permaculture programme), **Segera** (3,000 head under traditional herdsman), and **El Karama** (working cattle ranch), guests can participate in:

Cattle dipping the weekly or twice-weekly immersion of cattle in parasite-treatment solution: the rhythmic, practical ceremony of ranch management that has been performed on these properties for generations, now conducted alongside the wildlife whose conservation the same families fund.

Branding and sorting the cattle management operations that maintain herd records and quality in stud operations like Sosian's.

Ranch visits with working herdsman — At Segera, traditional cattle herders manage the herd in the pastoral tradition whose techniques have been refined across centuries of northern Kenyan livestock management. Joining them for the weekly dipping is *"a hands-on encounter with the coexistence economy that makes Laikipia function."*

VIII. TENNIS AND COURT GAMES

Several Laikipia properties maintain court facilities of extraordinary character the sporting engagement embedded in a landscape that transforms every game into something simultaneously competitive and contemplative.

- ✓ **Laragai House's Clay Tennis Court** — On the 3,000-foot escarpment above the Borana plains, with the Northern Frontier District spreading away beyond the court's far boundary. Playing tennis here is playing tennis with a view that stops conversation every time a point is missed.
- ✓ **Lengishu House's Pétanque Pitch** — Among candelabra trees on the Borana Conservancy. The ancient French game of precision and patience, played in the shade of East African trees, with the conservancy's wildlife visible beyond the candelabra trunks.
- ✓ **Arijiju's Clay Tennis Court and Sprung Squash Court** — Built into the Borana hillside with the quality of construction that a decade of work and the best available contractors produce.
- ✓ **Lewa Wilderness's Tennis Court** — With Mount Kenya visible above the southern end of the court.
- ✓ **Sosian's Hard Court** — With the Ewaso Narok valley on one side and the estancia gardens on the other.
- ✓ **Ol Jogi's Tennis, Squash and Table Tennis** — Within the most completely equipped private estate in Laikipia.
- ✓ **Mugie's 9-Hole Golf Course** — Kenya's northernmost, set among olive trees with panoramic conservancy views. Clubs and caddie provided. Golf in a landscape where the ball might land near a Grevy's zebra is an experience available nowhere else in Kenya.

IX. AUTHENTIC CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Laikipia sits at the intersection of Kenya's richest pastoral cultures **Maasai, Samburu, Pokot, Turkana and Mukogodo Maasai** whose traditions are accessible to guests through relationships that the finest conservancies have built across decades of genuine community partnership rather than tourist demonstration.

The distinction between these two categories of cultural encounter genuine community partnership and tourist demonstration is felt immediately and is never forgotten. A village visit arranged through a relationship of twenty years, where the community elder knows the guide's name and the guide knows the elder's children's names, is a completely different experience from a choreographed performance created for the tourism market.

- ✓ **Fire Making** — The specific technique that produces fire from two pieces of wood: patience, physical precision and the knowledge of which wood combination produces the friction that creates the ember. Taught by guides whose fathers taught them in the same way.
- ✓ **Spear Throwing and Club Games** — Traditional warrior skills whose specific techniques reflect the ecology and the social history of the northern frontier: the weight distribution of the Samburu throwing spear; the specific release that sends it accurately to its target; the club games whose rules and objectives are entirely encoded in oral tradition.
- ✓ **Beadwork** — Each bead pattern in the Samburu and Maasai tradition carries specific cultural meaning: the wearer's age, clan, marital status, the specific events of their life encoded in colour sequences that function as a social communication system. Learning to read beadwork and to begin creating it under the guidance of women who produce these works as the primary expression of their cultural identity is an encounter with a form of information storage that predates written language and continues to function with complete precision.
- ✓ **Singing Wells of Laikipia** — As described in the Ol Lentille Conservancy section: available only in dry season at specific northern conservancies. One of Africa's most ancient living cultural traditions.
- ✓ **An Evening at a Manyatta** — The traditional Maasai or Samburu family compound, visited at the invitation of the family: the round thorn-branch fence enclosing the houses that the women build and own; the cattle inside the compound at night; the elder explaining the compound's architecture, social rules and the specific stories of each family member. This is cultural hospitality in its most fundamental form people sharing their home and their life with guests who have come to understand rather than to observe.

X. FLY CAMPING

To spend a night in the Laikipia bush far from any lodge, with a bedroll under the open sky, a fire built by the guide, the sounds of the nocturnal wildlife the only sound, and the equatorial Milky Way above is to understand what Africa actually is beyond the comfortable infrastructure of safari tourism.

The fly camp experience requires no elaborate equipment and no special skill. What it requires is the specific willingness to trade the lodge's walls and its electricity and its hot shower for something more direct: the ground, the fire, the stars, and the sounds of the night in a real wilderness.

Available at Sosian, Ol Malo, Lewa Wilderness, Segera, Tumaren Camp and through Karisia Walking Safaris. The consistent elements: a fire built at the right position by a guide who reads the wind; a proper dinner cooked on that fire; a bedroll of quality positioned for the star view; the dawn coffee at first light with the conservancy waking around the camp; and the specific quality of having slept in the actual, unmediated African wild which most guests describe as one of the most clarifying experiences they have had anywhere in their lives.

XI. THE SINGING WELLS OF LAIKIPIA

Available dry season only — approximately July to October and January to February — at Ol Lentille Conservancy and certain northern Laikipia properties.

Full description in the Ol Lentille Conservancy section. The essence: warriors dig wells in dry riverbeds; each family sings their specific song as they work; the cattle, trained to recognise their family's song, move toward it; elephants kneel to drink from the wells after the cattle depart. Photography typically not permitted. One of Africa's most ancient and most specifically human cultural experiences.

XII. BEADING WORKSHOPS

As described in the Cultural Traditions section above but worth its own designation because the depth of engagement available in a properly conducted beading workshop goes far beyond what a cultural visit can provide.

Sitting with Samburu or Maasai women who are creating beadwork not as a demonstration but as their actual ongoing work and learning to read the specific meanings encoded in each colour sequence and each pattern configuration, while also beginning to create a simple pattern with the materials provided this is the closest a guest can come to a genuine skill transfer from one cultural tradition to another in the course of a 2-3 hour safari activity.

Available most specifically through **Segera's SATUBO beading initiative** (Samburu, Turkana and Borana women cooperating across traditional tribal boundaries) and at **Ol Malo** through Julia Francombe's Samburu Trust network.

XIII. HELICOPTER EXPEDITIONS AND SAFARIS

Laikipia's extraordinary position at the convergence of the Kenyan highlands, the Great Rift Valley, the Samburu lands and the Northern Frontier District makes it Africa's finest base for helicopter exploration of the broader northern Kenya landscape.

- ✓ **The Suguta Valley** — One of Earth's hottest and most remote places: ancient lava flows, enormous sand dunes built by the wind across millennia, a salt pan whose summer temperatures exceed 50°C. From the air, the Suguta is an otherworldly panorama; on the ground, landing on a dune crest for sundowners, it is the most dramatically remote position available from any Laikipia helicopter expedition. 30–45 minutes' flight from most Laikipia properties.
- ✓ **Lake Turkana** — The Jade Sea: 250 kilometres of the world's largest permanent desert lake, its blue-green chemistry produced by algae and volcanic minerals, its shores occupied by Turkana communities whose specific relationship with this extraordinary body of water has continued unchanged for thousands of years. Flying to Turkana from Ol Malo or Segera and landing for a sundowner on the shore is one of the most dramatic Kenya aviation experiences.
- ✓ **Lake Logipi** — A soda lake in the Suguta Valley where flamingo concentrations can exceed tens of thousands of birds, turning the lake surface pink from the air. The aerial approach — the pink resolving into individual birds as the altitude drops — is one of the most spectacular aerial wildlife encounters in East Africa.
- ✓ **Mount Kenya** — The second-highest mountain in Africa: its glaciers, crater lakes and the extraordinary vertical profile of its volcanic origins visible from the air in a way that the ground-level views, however fine, cannot provide. A helicopter circumnavigation of Mount Kenya reveals the scale of the mountain's impact on the surrounding landscape — the forests it feeds, the rivers it generates, the communities it sustains.
- ✓ **The Mathews Range** — A montane forest massif rising from the arid northern plains, accessible from Laikipia by helicopter in approximately 30-40 minutes. Cloud forest, endemic species, Samburu communities in the foothills, and an ecological world completely different from the plateau.

Properties with resident or regularly available helicopters: Ol Jogi (resident helicopter); Ol Malo (Andrew Francombe, Kenya Choppers); Segera (G-AAMY biplane plus helicopter access through local operators); Arijiju and Laragai House (helicopter helipad with operator relationships).

XIV. BUSH BREAKFASTS AND BUSH DINING

No meal in Kenya is as immediately perfect as a breakfast positioned in the bush after the morning game drive when the light is still gold, the temperature still cool, the wildlife still active and the quality of having been in the wild for three hours has sharpened every appetite.

The finest Laikipia properties take the bush breakfast as seriously as the safari itself: a proper table, properly laid, in a position chosen with the same care as a game drive route for the wildlife activity, for the light quality, for the specific acoustic character of that position at that hour.

Fresh fruit from the conservancy's garden. Hot food from the kitchen's portable cooker. Coffee from a thermos that was still steaming when the vehicle left camp an hour ago.

The dinner equivalent the bush dinner achieves at the other end of the day what the breakfast achieves at the beginning: hurricane lamps on a table in the darkness; a fire providing both warmth and light; the sounds of the nocturnal bush around the pool of light; and the specific pleasure of eating good food with excellent people in a completely wild place.

Best bush breakfast positions in Laikipia, by Vard Africa assessment:

- The escarpment edge at Loisaba Lodo Springs — the plains dropping away 400 metres below, Mount Kenya on the horizon
- Hyena Valley Dam at Borana — elephants bathing in the dam below as coffee is poured
- Sirikoi's stream bank — the sound of the water, the rhinos grazing at the waterhole twenty metres away
- Mugie Dam's island — arriving by canoe, eating with the elephants visible on the far shore
- The Ol Jogi underground tunnel hide — breakfast in concealment at waterhole level.

XV. AN EVENING AT A MANYATTA

The **manyatta** the traditional compound of a Maasai or Samburu family is the basic social unit of the pastoral communities whose coexistence with Laikipia's wildlife is the foundation of the entire conservation model.

A genuine manyatta visit arranged through decades of community relationship not a tourist venue provides a specific quality of cultural encounter. The elder who explains the compound's design is explaining the principles by which his family has organised space, security, social hierarchy and the relationship with their cattle across many generations. The woman who demonstrates fire-making is demonstrating a skill whose mastery is both practical and socially significant within her community. The beadwork displayed is not craft for sale; it is the family's visual communication system, worn daily.

Evening at a manyatta as the sun drops: the fire lit in the compound centre; the elder telling stories as the children settle; the specific smell of the acacia-wood smoke; the cattle secured for the night; the stars beginning above the open compound. This is not an experience that any amount of lodge sophistication can replicate.

XVI. ICONIC OUT OF AFRICA SUNDOWNERS

Kenya's sundowner tradition the half hour at the end of the afternoon when the vehicle stops, the drinks are poured and the African sun moves toward its equatorial drop reaches its most concentrated expression in Laikipia.

The quality of the highland light at dusk is specific to altitude and latitude: a clarity and a warmth that the coastal or lowland landscape does not produce. Mount Kenya's snowcap deepening to rose in the final light. The Rift Valley's shadow advancing from the west across the plateau. The sounds of the nocturnal world beginning as the game drive vehicle's engine is switched off and the bush returns to silence. The guide's choice of position a ridge overlooking the conservancy, a dam bank where the wildlife is arriving as the vehicles depart, a kopje summit with the plateau spread in every direction is as important as any other element of the day's programme.

The Biplane Sundowner at Segera — The G-AAMY Gipsy Moth above the Laikipia Plateau as the sun drops behind the Rift Valley: the aircraft that Robert Redford flew in the film that made the world fall in love with Kenya, now carrying guests over the conservation landscape that Jochen Zeitz is protecting, as the last light of the day transforms the plateau below. The romanticism and the reality meeting at the same altitude.

The Waterhole Sundowner at Ol Jogi — In the underground tunnel hide, below eye level of the wildlife, as the evening animals arrive: the most specifically intimate sundowner position available at any private estate in Africa.

XVII. ICONIC HELICOPTER SUNDOWNERS

The helicopter sundowner takes the land-based sundowner's qualities the position, the light, the view and adds the dimension of height, remoteness and the specific romance of a machine that can reach, in minutes, places that would otherwise require hours or days of ground travel.

From most Laikipia properties, a 15–30-minute helicopter flight reaches positions of extraordinary beauty: kopje summits too rocky to drive to; river gorges whose walls cannot be accessed from above; escarpment edges too steep for any vehicle. The helicopter lands; the guide sets up a table on the rock; the drinks are poured; the sun drops.

Available from Ol Jogi (resident helicopter), Ol Malo (Andrew Francombe's Kenya Choppers), Segera, Arijiju, Laragai House and several other Laikipia properties through their helicopter operator relationships.

GETTING THERE AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Air Access — The Definitive Guide

Nairobi Wilson Airport is the primary departure point for all Laikipia light aircraft flights. Wilson handles the domestic scheduled and charter aircraft that serve the conservancy airstrips located on the western outskirts of Nairobi, approximately 20–30 minutes by road from the city centre depending on traffic. International flights arrive at **Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA)** a 45-minute drive from Wilson in light traffic, 1–1.5 hours in Nairobi rush hour.

Vard Africa recommendation for all international clients: If arriving on an international morning flight, allow for a **same-day domestic transfer** by planning JKIA arrival before 10am. If arriving in the afternoon, plan to overnight in Nairobi and transfer to Wilson the following morning.

Nairobi Wilson to Laikipia Airstrips — Flight Times and Notes:

Airstrip	Flight Time	Properties Served	Road Transfer
Lewa Downs	45–55 min	Borana Lodge (90 min road), Arijiju (90 min road), Laragai (90 min road), Lengishu (90 min road), Sirai (60 min road), Kifaru House (10 min), Lewa Safari Camp (20 min), Lewa House (25 min), Sirikoi (30–40 min), Lewa Wilderness (30 min)	Varies by property
Borana Conservancy	45–50 min	Arijiju (15 min), Borana Lodge (15 min), Fuzz's Camp (15 min), Laragai (30 min), Lengishu (15 min), Sirai (20 min)	Charter only
Loisaba	55–65 min	Loisaba Lodo Springs (15 min), Loisaba Tented Camp (20 min), Loisaba Star Beds (30 min), Sosian (20–30 min)	Scheduled and charter
Mugie	75–90 min	Governors' Mugie House (15–20 min), Ekorian's Mugie Camp (20–25 min)	Governors' Aviation scheduled
Nanyuki	35–40 min	Ol Pejeta properties (30–45 min road), Sanctuary Tambarare (30–45 min road), Kicheche Laikipia (30–45 min road), Segera (90–120 min road), El Karama (60 min road)	Road transfer required
Segera Private	50 min	Segera Retreat (5–10 min)	Charter only
Tumaren	50 min	Tumaren Camp (5–10 min)	Charter only
Ol Jogi	45 min	Ol Jogi Home (20 min game drive)	Charter only

Scheduled Airlines: AirKenya and Safarilink operate daily scheduled services from Wilson Airport. Both serve Lewa Downs, Nanyuki, Loisaba and Mugie (Governors' Aviation) on various daily schedules. Multiple stops are common — the Lewa Downs-bound flight often routes via Nanyuki and occasionally Samburu. Vard Africa provides clients with the specific current schedule for their travel dates.

Road Access

From Nairobi to Nanyuki the primary road hub for Laikipia takes **3.5–4.5 hours** via the A2 highway, depending on Nairobi traffic conditions. The A2 is a good-quality paved highway throughout. Departing Nairobi before 7am or after 9am minimizes traffic delays.

From Nanyuki to Individual Conservancies:

- Ol Pejeta Conservancy: 20–30 minutes north of Nanyuki
- Lewa Wildlife Conservancy: 50–60 minutes north
- Borana Conservancy: 70–90 minutes north via Timau
- Loisaba Conservancy: 80–100 minutes north-west
- Sosian Conservancy: 90–110 minutes north-west (via Loisaba area)
- Segera Retreats: 90–120 minutes north-east
- Ol Jogi: 60–80 minutes north
- Mugie Conservancy: 2+ hours north-west via Rumuruti
- Ol Malo: 3–3.5 hours north via Isiolo direction
- Tumaren Camp: 2 hours north via Timau direction

Road Conditions: Paved highway to Nanyuki; unpaved to all conservancies beyond. 4WD recommended for all conservancy transfers. October-November and April-May long rains may make some conservancy roads temporarily impassable for standard vehicles.

Road Transfer Logistics: All major Laikipia properties arrange road transfers on request. For first-time visitors or guests combining multiple conservancies, Vard Africa coordinates all inter-conservancy transfers to optimise timing and convenience.

Nanyuki — The Laikipia Hub

Nanyuki town sits at **2,000 metres altitude** on the northern slopes of Mount Kenya, directly on the equator, and serves as the practical hub for the eastern and central Laikipia conservancies. Nanyuki's facilities are considerably more developed than might be expected of a provincial Kenyan highland town the presence of the **Kenya Air Force base**, the **British Army in Kenya** training operation, and a significant expatriate community has created a food and retail infrastructure of surprising quality.

Recommended stops in Nanyuki:

- **Dorman's Coffee** — Single-estate Kenyan coffee, the finest in the region
- **Artcafé** — Good food, reliable WiFi, comfortable environment for transit days
- **The Butcher's Block** — Excellent meat and deli products; the best butcher in northern Kenya
- **One Stop Nanyuki** — Deli, café and boutique adjacent to Nanyuki Airport; the most efficient restocking point for last-minute provisions
- **Barney's Restaurant at Nanyuki Airport** — Reliable and pleasant; ideal for the wait between flights
- **Cedar Mall Chandarana** — Full-service supermarket for any supplies required
- **Urban Ranch** — Artisan food and drinks; good quality local products
- **The Nook** — Local favourite restaurant
- **Antonia's Kitchen** — Well-regarded local dining

Nanyuki Cottage Hospital — The primary medical facility for the Laikipia region. Widely regarded as the finest provincial hospital in northern Kenya; capable of handling most standard medical emergencies with reasonable competence. For serious trauma, evacuation to Nairobi is the standard protocol.

Health and Safety — The Complete Guide for Laikipia

Malaria Status by Zone

Malaria-Free Zone (Eastern and Central Laikipia at altitude — 1,900–2,300m): Borana Conservancy (all properties) | Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (all properties) | Lewa Wilderness | Ol Jogi Conservancy | Ol Pejeta Conservancy | Segera Retreats | Lolldaiga Conservancy | &Beyond Suyian

No mosquito nets provided at any of these properties. Guests should confirm prophylaxis requirements with their travel physician for their complete Kenya itinerary.

Very Low Risk Zone (North-Western Laikipia — generally 1,600–1,900m): Loisaba Conservancy (all properties) | Mugie Conservancy (all properties) | Sosian Conservancy | Ol Lentille Conservancy | Il-Ngwesi Conservancy | El Karama | Ol Malo | Tumaren Camp/Karisia

Light insect repellent use at dawn and dusk recommended as a precaution. Prophylaxis discussion with travel physician for complete itinerary.

Medical Coverage

AMREF Flying Doctors — The East African air ambulance service operating from Wilson Airport and Nanyuki Airport. AMREF can reach any Laikipia airstrip within **30–90 minutes** of emergency call, depending on aircraft availability and weather conditions. Comprehensive coverage is **essential** for all Laikipia guests.

Properties that include AMREF cover in rates: Borana Lodge (confirmed included). All other properties: purchase separately. Vard Africa arranges AMREF cover for all clients as a standard component of safari booking.

AMREF Flying Doctors Annual Membership: For guests travelling to Kenya for more than one Laikipia visit in a calendar year, the annual membership represents better value than per-trip insurance purchase.

Vaccinations

Required for Kenya entry: Yellow Fever vaccination certificate if arriving from a yellow fever-endemic country.

Recommended for Kenya: Hepatitis A and B | Typhoid | Tetanus update | Meningococcal meningitis (particularly for northern Kenya travel) | Rabies (pre-exposure course recommended for extended bush stays)

COVID-19: Current requirements vary check Kenyan government guidance at time of travel.

Wildlife Safety Protocol — Universal to All Laikipia Properties

The following safety protocols apply across all Laikipia conservancies. Guests who follow them consistently encounter no wildlife-related incidents:

1. **Never walk between tent/cottage and main lodge after dark without an escort.** Alert staff and they will send an askari. This is not optional; it is the most important safety rule at any unfenced bush property.
2. **Follow guide instructions immediately and without question during all wildlife activities.** The guide's assessment of wildlife behaviour, terrain and risk is based on years of direct observation. Guests who second-guess guide instructions create the conditions for incidents.
3. **Do not approach wildlife on foot independently.** Even at unfenced lodges where wildlife passes through the grounds, independent approach of any wild animal is categorically unsafe.
4. **Do not use bright lights at waterholes after dark.** Wildlife at waterholes are tolerant of stillness and darkness; torches directed at animals at close range create unpredictable responses.
5. **Keep windows of ground-floor tents closed or screened at night.** Baboons, warthogs and smaller animals will enter an open tent. Larger animals will investigate a visible light source.
6. **Ensure children are supervised at all times outdoors.** Children move unpredictably and quietly — exactly the movement pattern that most startles wildlife at close range.

Kenya eTA

The Kenya **Electronic Travel Authorisation** required for all international visitors is obtained at www.etakenya.go.ke before departure. Apply at minimum **72 hours** before your international flight. Airlines will not allow boarding without the confirmed eTA. The eTA has replaced the previous e-Visa system.

Currency and Payments

Kenyan Shilling (KES) is the local currency.

All luxury lodge billing is in **USD**. ATMs are available in Nanyuki.

Most properties accept Visa and Mastercard; confirm with individual properties before arrival. Cash is required for tipping.

Tipping Norms:

- Guide (individual): USD 20 per group per day, tipped on departure
- Lodge staff tip box (shared): USD 15–20 per guest per day
- Specialist activity guides (tracker dog handler, camel handler, cultural guide): USD 5–10 per activity
- Driver-guide on road transfers: USD 10–15 per group per day

A VARD AFRICA FINAL NOTE

There are destinations in the world where the landscape is extraordinary. There are destinations where the wildlife is extraordinary. There are destinations where the hospitality is extraordinary. Laikipia is one of the very few destinations in the world where **all three of these things are true simultaneously** and where they are made more extraordinary, rather than less, by their combination.

The Laikipia story the specific, verifiable, measurable story of wildlife populations increasing while the wider Kenya wildlife landscape declines is not incidental to the safari experience. It is the safari experience. Every game drive here is a drive through a recovery in progress. Every rhino encountered is a rhino that exists because specific human beings made specific courageous decisions across specific decades to protect it. Every wild dog pack is a population that is growing, not shrinking, because a landscape was managed with the long-term commitment that conservation requires.

The families whose names appear throughout this guide the Dyers of Borana, the Craig-Douglas family of Lewa, the Francombes of Ol Malo, the Wildenstein family of Ol Jogi, Jochen Zeitz at Segera, Kerry Glen and James Christian at Tumaren are not safari operators who happen to work near wildlife. They are conservation actors of specific and verifiable consequence whose work is still in progress, whose challenges are still real, and whose commitment to this landscape is the most important thing about it.

When Vard Africa recommends Laikipia, we are not simply recommending beautiful lodges in a beautiful landscape. We are recommending a commitment of time, of resources and of attention to the most important conservation story in Kenya, told in the most intimate and most beautiful way that the safari experience provides.

Come to Laikipia with this understanding. The landscape will be more beautiful for it. The wildlife will be more significant for it. And when you leave as everyone leaves Laikipia with a sense that you were somewhere that mattered, you will know that the sense is accurate.

Asante sana — with warmth and deep respect for this extraordinary plateau.