

# SWEPT AW

WITH ENDLESS WAVES OF AQUA BLUE AND WAVY SOFT SAND,  
THE RAW BEAUTY OF MOZAMBIQUE'S BAZARUTO ARCHIPELAGO—AND  
ITS EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF STUNNING ABSTRACT PATTERNS—IS  
FINALLY EMERGING AS THE NEXT MUST-SEE LUXE DESTINATION.

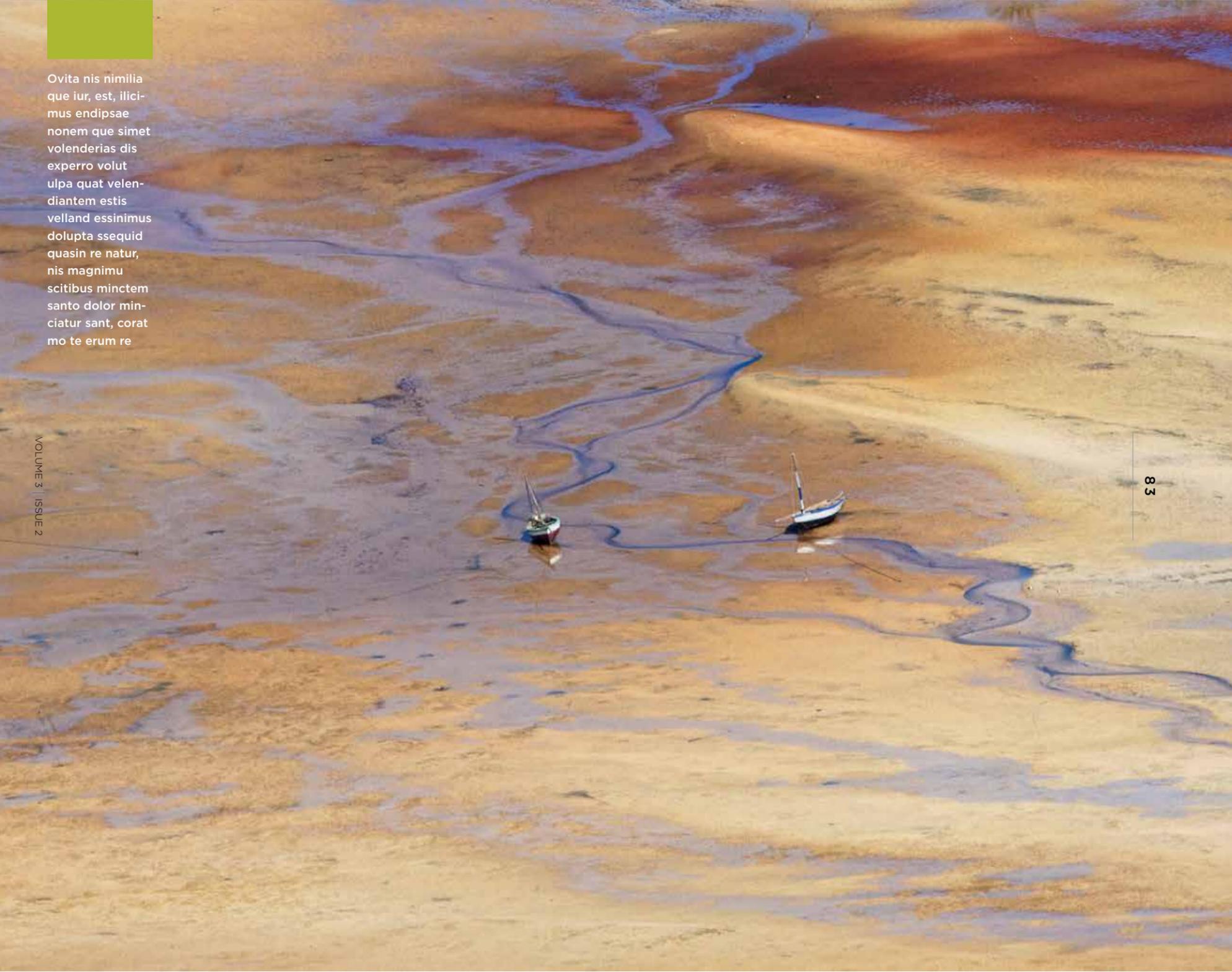
# Ay

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
SKYHAWK PHOTOGRAPHY

CADILLAC MAGAZINE

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 2

Ovita nis nimilia  
que iur, est, ilici-  
mus endipsae  
nonem que simet  
volenderias dis  
experro volut  
ulpa quat velen-  
diantem estis  
velland essinimus  
dolupta ssequid  
quasin re natur,  
nis magnimu  
scitibus minctem  
santo dolor min-  
ciatur sant, corat  
mo te erum re



Ovita nis nimilia  
que iur, est, illici-  
mus endipsae  
nonem que simet  
volenderias dis  
experro volut  
ulpa quat velen-  
diantem estis  
velland essinimus  
dolupta ssequid  
quasin re natur,  
nis magnimu  
scitibus minctem  
santo dolor min-  
ciatur sant, corat  
mo te erum re

Ovita nis nimilia  
que iur, est, illici-  
mus endipsae  
nonem que simet  
volenderias dis  
experro volut  
ulpa quat velen-  
diantem estis  
velland essinimus  
dolupta ssequid  
quesin re natur,  
nis magnimu  
scitibus minctem  
santo dolor min-  
ciatur sant, corat  
mo te erum re





CAO LIA MIAO



VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 2

Ovita nis nimilia  
que iur, est, illici-  
mus endipsae  
nonem que simet  
volenderias dis  
experro volut  
ulpa quat velen-  
diantem estis  
velland essinimus  
dolupta ssequid  
quasin re natur,  
nis magnimu  
scitibus minctem  
santo dolor min-  
ciatur sant, corat  
mo te erum re

# WANDERING

around the Bazaruto archipelago, its appeal is instant. It sits on the southernmost reaches of Mozambique's coastline, which stretches for more than 1,500 miles along the southeastern edge of Africa. Almost all the coastline remains undeveloped, tropical and pristine, with golden, palm-fringed beaches that empty into the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. But it's in and around the Bazaruto archipelago that the landscape most resembles an African outtake from Wertmüller's

## SWEPT AWAY

BY NAME GOES HERE

"I call it the undiscovered Caribbean of Africa," explains Deborah Calmeyer, who grew up nearby and now runs luxury travel firm Roar Africa; she's sent dozens of honeymooners here as an alternative to the luxury factories so common now elsewhere in the Indian Ocean, like the Seychelles, "There's raw beauty here, clean water and lovely white beaches." Calmeyer's comparison with the Caribbean seems particularly apt when hopping a helicopter from the mainland – the easiest transit to most islands resorts from the small airport in the nearby mainland village, Vilanculos. At low tide, the sea floor morphs into a slab of malachite, green, turquoise and aquamarine swirled with tawny sand; the water looks like a Pantone match for 'color of the sea'. Golden dunes stretch for miles while local fishing boats, or dhows, sit idle, marooned by the receding tides and waiting patiently for the waters to return.

Largely thanks to a fortunate quirk of bureaucracy, Santa Carolina was the only lodging built here for decades. In 1971, four years before the Province of Mozambique earned its independence from Portugal and at much the same time as the Alves were driven from their hotel, these islands were designated as the region's first national marine park. This had dual benefits, both preventing development while ring-fencing the teeming ocean life here. The islands were safeguarded even during the civil war into which the country descended in the 1980s; the few villages on the islands became self-sufficient, withdrawing from the mainland and sustained by freshwater lakes, fertile soil and subsistence fishing.

By the mid 1990s, Mozambique was emerging

from that civil war and began rapidly rebuilding, becoming a rare success story in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa. With Santa Carolina already a ruin, the first new rustic lodge appeared in the Bazaruto archipelago. Accommodations there were basic, though, and mostly aimed at weekending aid workers or fishing-mad South Africans.

But it was only when a devastating cyclone tore through the area a decade ago [ED NOTE: JANUARY 2007] that the islands' fortunes began, finally, to turn again. In its wake, buildings were slowly yet solidly reconstructed, and tourism returned – albeit a visitor more akin to those whom the Alves once welcomed. Early visitors to this new Mozambique included British socialites like arts magnate Chris Foy or Clemmie Hambro, who was a bridesmaid to Princess Diana, as well as Leonardo di Caprio and Mexican TV presenter Rebecca de Alba. They conferred guilt by association.

o o o

The epicenter of Bazaruto's rebirth was arguably the second largest island in the cluster, Benguerra (Ben-gwerra). Accommodation

there is now anchored by the new AndBeyond, which opened in 2015. This \$5.5m renovation repurposed an older resort into a lavish hideaway with 14 ocean-front casitas, each with its own private plunge pool, outdoor shower and shaded daybed on the beach; the colonial-inspired interiors were by Michaelis Boyd, the same firm responsible for many outposts of Soho House. There's even a old dhow permanently moored on the sand as a beachfront bar.

Just 7 miles long, Benguerra is a full-time home to just over 1,000 people. Driving around the island in a rugged jeep, only the smell of charcoal fires flags the site of one of their three villages. Otherwise, the landscape is picturesque, with rolling hills and isolated beaches. On one such beach, framed by steep sand dunes, a crowd of men and women stand braced against the water, hauling a huge net in by hand while one man, in snorkel and mask, guides them from further out. Sadly, today's catch is paltry; it's a rare disappointment, and a woman skulks off to a corner of the beach, decompressing alone. Fortunately, there are shoals of fish in the freshwater lakes nearby, too, plus a healthy colony of crocodiles; perhaps it's wariness of those predators that leads a flock of flamingoes to pick gingerly through the water, as if tiptoeing through a minefield. Fishing, especially deep water angling, remains a huge lure for many visitors to Bazaruto; charter a boat for a day, and it's easy to catch sailfish, striped marlin or bonito, though the marine preserve operates a strict policy of catch and release. Birdwatching goes beyond those flamingoes: more than 180 species flit between the islands, cawing noisily in the trees and seagrape at dawn.

The fish-filled waters around here also host impressive coral formations – Two Mile Reef is the best snorkel site, a few hundred yards off Benguerra's eastern shore – as well as the chance to track whales during migration season (August until late November). Year-round, the waters are home to dolphins, which often nosily patrol beside motorboats and dhows, plus leatherback turtles and a community of rare wild dugong. Old mariners supposedly used to mistake these manatee-like animals for mermaids – surprising, perhaps, given that they more resemble slightly overweight, flipperless dolphins. In temperament, dugong are peaceful and shy, spending most of the time lurking in sea grass. Hunted almost to extinction for their meat, the community of wild dugongs worldwide is limited to

a patch of ocean near Egypt and a colony of around 250 in this archipelago. Be patient to try and spot one of these creatures; if you do, it will likely be a bull in the herd who has grown less skittish than his mates – look for the two dents in his fins, which make him instantly recognizable when he swims up to investigate local boats.

Don't be surprised to see horses cantering along the beaches or stalking through the bush on Benguerra, either. They're not indigenous, of course; rather these are the holdouts from dozens of ponies rescued by Mandy Retzlaff and her husband from Robert Mugabe's collapsing Zimbabwe (a story she tells in detail in her book, 104 Horses). Seven are stabled on the island now, including Princess; the scar in her neck is a remnant of wounds she suffered before she was rescued. Don't ask her to race along the beach, laughs her trainer, a British pharmacist-turned-equestrian. She's never taken to the water, so Princess will always lead the treks around the dunes.

o o o

Five minutes' away from AndBeyond by helicopter is another redeveloped resort, also newly reopened, the 44-room Anantara. It sits on the largest island in the chain, 22-mile long Bazaruto; try the local tongue-twisting name of Wwsuilitua if you dare. The landscape here on Bazaruto island is less bucolic than on Benguerra, and more dramatic – take the steep sand dunes that form a breakwind along the length of its eastern coast, rising more than 300 feet to offer stunning views across the water from their peak. The beaches on Bazaruto are also larger, especially at low tide, when there's a mile or more to walk to the waters on the sandy ocean bed – just take care and wear flip flops when strolling it, as razors clams are plentiful here.

With more than 3,500 residents in its various villages, there's a bigger population, too. On a typical Sunday afternoon, locals stream onto the beaches – dressed in suits and ties or long dresses, they aren't fishing or swimming but rather walking from church. Is there rivalry between the islands, between here and Benguerra, perhaps? No, shrugs one villager, explaining that any tension between communities is played out via regular soccer matches; island teams battle each other in regularly local derbys.

Those soccer-mad islanders have directly

benefited from much of this new redevelopment – they rent out their dhows, for example, to use on afternoon cruises, simple trips with a cooler full of beer that offer the chance to soak up the sunset. These boats bob close to land, sculling through the calm water with a leaky creak. On one, a lanky teenager scampers like Spiderman over its hull, adjusting the sail and steering with a punt-like paddle when

*AT LOW TIDE,  
THE SEA FLOOR  
MORPHS INTO  
A SLAB OF  
MALACHITE,  
GREEN,  
TURQUOISE AND  
AQUAMARINE  
SWIRLED  
WITH TAWNY  
SAND; THE WATER  
LOOKS LIKE A  
PANTONE MATCH  
FOR 'COLOR  
OF THE SEA'.*

the wind dies down. Music from the shore leaks out over the water, Sunday night celebrations now that church is over – some reggae, local drums and a snatch of fado.

That mournful music is one lingering holdover from the Portuguese, who left surprisingly few legacies on their former colony. Another, though, is in Mozambique's cuisine. At breakfast at Anantara, alongside universal staples like cereals or omelettes, sit bowls of the garnet-red, fiery piri-piri sauce made from African bird's eye chili; it can be slathered on chicken or the fish for which the coast is also known – and

indeed, there's a huge bowl of chilled prawns there, too. "For us Africans, the lure of the of the good food in Mozambique is huge," explains Roar Africa's Deb Calmeyer, "When we see the words 'Mozambican prawns' it scream flavor – they're colossal shrimp, as huge as lobsters." She pauses. "Look, hey, they are the best prawns in the world."

Nearby, in the main building at Anantara, there's another colonial-era throwback: the piano from Santa Carolina where Bob Dylan picked out the strains of Mozambique was requisitioned from the ruins and is now safeguarded here. The owners intend to return it there as and when the site is redeveloped. Rumors of its rebirth have surfaced regularly in the last decade – at one time, businessman Billy Rautenbach, a known associate of Robert Mugabe, was apparently circling the project – but it now seems likelier that Anantara will turn the abandoned site into a satellite for its property on the main island. Then again, it could be snapped up by Nina Flohr, daughter of VistaJet founder Thomas. The Switzerland-based Nina is midway through construction of an enormous 300-hectare new eco-resort on Benguerra, which she's dubbed Kisawa and should open within a couple of years. Don't rule out safari specialist Singita, either: its owner Luke Bailes has just snapped up a stretch of land on the mainland south of Vilanculos where he's developing a new marine and wildlife resort with a strong emphasis on local conservation.

Whether or not the looming boom here revives Santa Carolina, it's likely to benefit the local community (Flohr's construction project, for instance, has become a major employer in the area) Tourism's revival still baffles much of the local population, according to Lisa St Aubin de Teran. The British author and filmmaker now lives on the Mozambique coast and runs an educational charity, the Teran Foundation. "The villagers don't really understand tourism. They ask, 'If no one is chasing them, why would a tourist choose to leave their family and friends to go somewhere they don't know and actually pay for it? When you stay here, it is easier to understand such a question, because this is probably one of the last slices of paradise left on the planet.'"

Perhaps Alexandra Champalimaud sums up Bazaruto's beauty best, though. The world-famous interior designer grew up in nearby Swaziland; Mozambique and its coast have long been one of her favorite hideaways. "I adore the place. The