

hospitality design

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the hd expo issue



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On the cover: One of four images. Top to bottom: Seamarq Hotel, Gangneung, South Korea, photo by Roland Halbe; Vandal, New York, photo by Warren Jagger; Ovolo Woolloomooloo, Sydney, photo by Nicole England; and Soho Farmhouse, Oxfordshire, England, photo courtesy of Soho House & Co.



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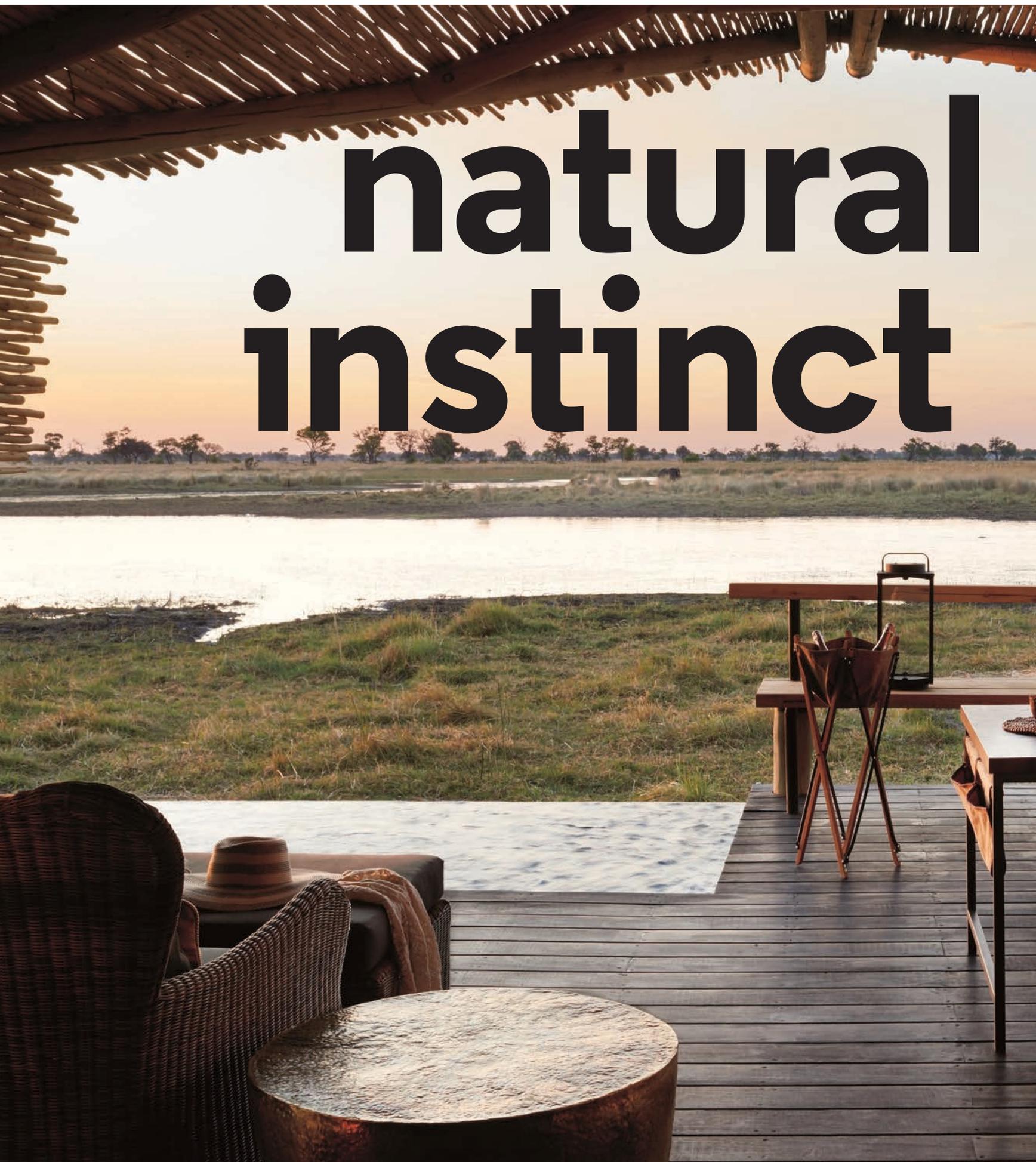


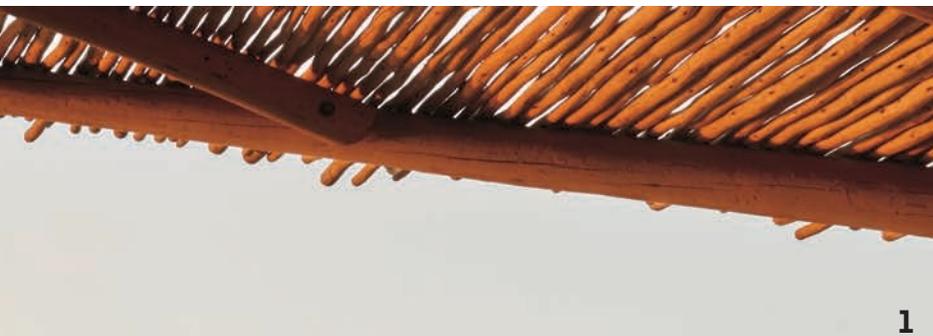
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natural instinct





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A safari lodge in Botswana is one with its surroundings

By NEENA DHILLON
Photography courtesy of BELMOND
EAGLE ISLAND LODGE



In searching for a studio to redesign its existing 12-room lodge in Botswana on the Okavango Delta, Belmond Safaris chose London-based the Gallery—led by principal and creative director Inge Moore. “While the Gallery has not designed a safari lodge before, it was clear when we met Inge that she shared a passion with us,” says Katherine Blaisdell, Belmond’s senior vice president of design and project development.

Because Belmond Eagle Island Lodge is also a sustainable resort, all of the concrete buildings on the 11-plus-acre property had to be demolished (and the resulting 1,350 tons of rubble removed via truck from the site) in line with a local management plan stipulating there be no permanent structures on the delta, Blaisdell explains, which has recently been declared a World Heritage Site. For Moore, this meant working with Johannesburg-based DSA Architects to reorient the lodge’s public spaces, forging a closer connection to the weaving water channels that characterize the landscape. “We’ve made it all about the delta, from the soft, organic lines of the retreat, which mirror the waterways, to the lodge’s new structural form”—crafted from reclaimed jarrah wood and Zimbabwean teak with

1. Belmond Eagle Island Lodge’s 12 tented guestrooms feature a 215-square-foot terrace, complete with a plunge pool, overlooking Botswana’s Okavango Delta.

2. The property’s existing structures were replaced using reclaimed timber where possible, with roof coverings made from local thatch.

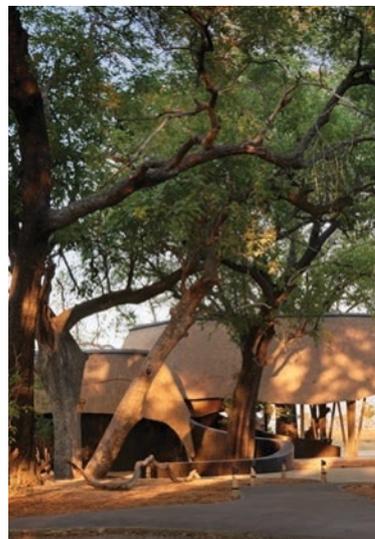
local thatching grass roof—“shaped like the termite mounds surrounding the site,” she explains.

Ancient trees have been retained and harnessed, including in the arrivals boma—a traditional African wooden enclosure—where two magnificent specimens frame an expansive vista of the grasslands beyond. With budgets tight, Moore and her team also refashioned a dead, lightning-struck tree they found in the neighboring veld as a sculptural piece of art. Plasterwork, meanwhile, picks up on tonal shades of elephant gray.

The tented guestrooms, each now with a fiberglass plunge pool and veranda, cater to the luxury traveler “seeking a slow safari with more time spent in the lodge,” says Moore. A canopied bed facing out to the landscape acts as the centerpiece, bookmarked on one end by an upholstered bench (replacing the traditional folding camp table) and on the other by a copper-finished headboard perforated with pinholes mimicking the pattern of insects buzzing around the water. Timber—some of it reclaimed teak from the original site—features heavily throughout, as does

3. Seating in shades of mustard inspired by the indigenous eagle’s beak enlivens the lounge, while a kaleidoscope of metal butterflies and cocoons “are illuminated to create an enchanting swarm.”

4. A residential-style open kitchen with wood-burning pizza oven sits at the heart of the restaurant, and lighting, inspired by the intricate birds’ nests of the wetlands, weaves shadows across the space at night.



5. An elephant gray palette with pops of yellow continues in a guestroom, outfitted with a daybed within a window nook that doubles as a child’s bed, and a stained oak table sitting beneath a copper-painted metal light.

6. Public spaces are organic in shape, curving around the site’s ancient trees and positioned to capture the myriad views.



tactile leather and canvas in taupe and gray punctuated with pops of yellow borrowed from the hue of the indigenous eagle's beak. A timber and canvas explorer's toolbox takes the place of a minibar, while furniture—most of which is locally made—has hand-stitched detailing. In place of a traditional desk, a stained oak table sits under a copped-painted metal pendant light.

With the lodge's public spaces flowing from one to another, as well as inside and out, the restaurant and lounge share bird's nest-inspired lighting features, curved copper pendants based on the leaves of the delta, and fluttering metal butterfly installations. Shades of mustard and brilliant blue, also drawn from local bird life, enliven furniture finished with camping-inspired strap detailing, arranged around curving balustrade walls and reclaimed tent poles. At Fish-Eagle Bar, an old canoe finds new life as a cocktail console, and suspended welded-metal birdcages serve as outdoor feature seating.

Ultimately, the residentially scaled retreat—filled with artisanal touches and curiosities inspired by local flora and fauna—provides “an insight into the soul of the delta,” says Moore. **hd**

hba.com; dsa-arch.com; belmondsafaris.com

Belmond Eagle Island Lodge

Okavango Delta, Botswana

Owner and Management Company

Belmond

Architecture Firm

DSA Architects International, Johannesburg, South Africa

Architecture Project Team

Clive Shepherd and Colin Fletcher

Interior Design Firm

The Gallery, London

Interior Design Project Team

Inge Moore, Marie Soliman, and Stuart Payne

Contractor

Lodge Builders Botswana

Purchasing Firm

Shelley Rorke

Project Management

FTK Design & Development and Luxury Frontiers

Eco Consultant

Ecosystem Solutions for Africa

Solar and Electrical Consultant

New Southern Energy

Water Consultant

WaterAfrica

Structural Engineering

De Villiers Sheard

Mosquito Nets

Kiwinet

Fabrics

Fabric Library, Halogen, Hertex, Kravet, Mavromac, and St. Leger & Viney

TENT

Desk, Minibar, Nightstand, Nesting Table, Dressing Table, Mosquito Net, and Tower Rail

Moorgas & Sons

Bed Bench

Fabricated by Moorgas & Sons; leather by Leather Link

Side Table

LIM

Outdoor Coffee Table

Savana Trading

Desk Chair

Fabricated by Moorgas & Sons; fabric by Sunbury Design; leather by Leather Link

Stool, Pendant, and Mirror

BB Design in partnership with Savana Trading

Stool Leather

Whatnot

Outdoor Armchair

Fabricated by Cane World; fabric by Mavromac

Outdoor Ottoman and Loungers

Cane World

Daybed Cushions

Robert Allen and Dedar

Lighting

Savana Trading, Tekna, Chelsom, and Streamlight

Bed Base and Headboard

Fabricated by Moorgas & Sons; fabric by Kravet

Mattress

Sealy

Drapery

Fabricated by Kirsch Architrac; fabric by Hertex; veil by Mavromac; and fabricated by Kirsch Architrac; fabric by Kravet

Fan

Fabricated by Savana Trading

Magazine Rack

BB Design in partnership with Savana Trading; fabric by Kravet; leather by Whatnot

Taps

Watermark Designs

DINING ROOM

Tables and Pendants

BB Design in partnership with Savana Trading

Service Station

Weylandts

Dining Chairs

Fabricated by Cane World; fabric by Hertex

Curved Sofa, Armchair, and

Barstool

Fabricated by Moorgas & Sons; fabric by Sunbury

Curved Sofa Fabric

Sunbury

Armchair and Barstool Leather

African Gameskin and Whatnot

Ceiling Fans

Sky Fans