FROM ZANZIBAR TO THE WORLD - THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL

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# CONSTRUCTION ONE HOUSE IN **SEVEN WEEKS**

PAGE 02 | NEWS



**HERITAGE BEAUTIES OF** STONE TOWN

PAGE 04-05 | SPECIAL



# LIVING **ACTION TIME IN FUMBA**

PAGE 07 I MY LIFE



# A STAGE FOR THE WORLD

Fumba Town welcomes artists and visitors from everywhere



rtists, music lovers and market visitors; the beau-Liful, the bold and the curious - all descended on Fumba Town, the expanding seaside community just outside of Zanzibar City, during this year's 20th anniversary of Zanzibar's worldrenowned "Sauti za Busara" music festival. For the first time a Busara+ live gig was staged outside the Old Fort in Fumba (see our story on page 7).

Majestad Negra (Black Majesty) from Puerto Rico (photo) thrilled the audience with a colourful dance and music performance. The 10-people 'bomba' band from the Caribbean reminisces about slave trade routes from Africa to the Caribbean in its artful and vivacious show

The community spirit, the live shows, the popular monthly KwetuKwetu street market taking place the same day and Fumba's architectural novelties formed the perfect backdrop for picturesque moments. Visit Fumba and see it for yourself!



Ramadan KAREEM

The highlight of the Muslim calendar, the month of Ramadan (also: Ramadhan) falls into the publishing timespan of this issue of THE FUMBA TIMES. Islamic culture and hospitality are at their peak during the Holy Month. It's a most special time to visit Zanzibar, when residents deeply reconnect with their culture. What is it all about and how can visitors fit in? A prominent Zanzibari woman, Hafsa Mbamba, gives us her insight into the essence of Ramadan on page 3, this year due around 22 March - 20 April, depending on the sighting of the moon. Serving a wide and diverse readership, THE FUMBA TIMES wishes all its Muslim readers a blessed Ramadan Kareem!

**WILL SMITH IN** 

Will he come or not? Local Instagram

hero @jessjamal has announced that

American Hollywood star Will Smith,

55, has accepted his invitation to visit

Zanzibar. Just like Kenyan Oscar-win-

ning actress Lupita Nyong'o before,

Smith is supposed to join Zanzibari

makachu-divers in Forodhani. The

actor and rapper would arguably be-

come the biggest showbiz celebrity

yet to visit Zanzibar. His autobiogra

phy "Will" is now available in East

African book shops. Watch out for

him at Foro's night market!

**DUBAI: PRINT** 

YOUR MOSQUE!

Dubai, the city of innovation, wants

to build the world's first 3D-printed

mosque - in short: a building com-

ing out of a printer. Plans for the

2,000-square-metre mosque to hold

600 worshippers were released recent-

ly. In 3D printing technology sequen-

tial layers of material are laid down by

the printer until the object is complet-

ed. The printing in Dubai will take 4

months only; including interiors the

printed mosque is set to open in 2025.

**ZANZIBAR?** 

# 1000 HOMES AND COUNTING

Creating vibrant living space new town is born in Zanzibar

# By Andrea Tapper

From nowhere to white shining apartment spaces. From coral land to a tropical garden environment. Fumba Town has recently sold its 1000th living unit. Reason enough to celebrate.

brass band came marching in. 400 employees of town developer CPS and sister firms slipped-on red T-shirts with a white logo printed for the occasion. "We could see from our financial records when the jubilee sale was approaching, so we prepared ourselves to commemorate the day", says Tobias Dietzold, one of

CPS' directors. It was a dream come true: Fumba Town in Zanzibar - a mix of residential and holiday homes, of townhouses, villas and budget flats on a 150-acre sea plot - is not only the fastest-growing development in Tanzania, but with 1000 units sold to owners from more than 60 nationalities also the first masterplanned residential development on the holiday island.

"Nobody has built and sold more houses here", acknowledged James Prevost, director of RE/MAX in Tanzania, one of the world's largest real estate agencies: "Fumba Town has opened the residential market on the island." Several hundred residents already living in the 'city from the drawing board' were feeling the

momentum, too: "Suddenly you don't know all your neighbours any more", said Sara Hemed, one of the early residents.

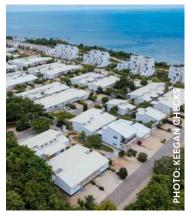
# How it all started

There were coral rocks and bushland and not much else when it all started in 2015. Almost no shops within the to Fumba, the peninsula south of Zanzibar city. Nowadays, new dukas and petrol stations are opening by the day along Fumba Road. People selling blenders, baskets and mangoes target the evening go-home-traffic at the Mombasa roundabout.

From the beginning, Fumba Town was meant to cater to all income groups, and create ecologically sound living space. "With a strategy called ethnogardening we have planted trees which will produce food for 500 years such as breadfruit trees", explained Frank Goehse, responsible for landscaping. Marked as a strategic investment, foreigners were and still are allowed to buy. "When we started we did not plan more than 450 units, now we are looking at 5000", said CPS CEO Sebastian Dietzold.

Did the town grow rapidly? "Yes and no", the developers say, "to fulfil the needs of an ever-expanding population we'd have to build even much faster." Tanzania requires 280,000 new homes every year; Zanzibar 10,000. "Our aim would be to offer units for less than 15 million shilling", Tobias Dietzold said. What was most remarkable? "To find so many clients worldwide to trust us in a virgin market and follow our vison."





1000 homes sold, 400 jobs created: employees form the number 1000 for an aerial shot (top); a view of Fumba Town (below)

# BESTSELLER

TYPE OF PROPERTY SELLING

- 1. Townhouses
- 2. Mwangani studios for singles and couples
- 3. CheiChei 1 bedroom
- 4. Mwangani flats 1-2
- 5. Bustani Villas

**BEST IN FUMBA** 

- bedrooms
- 5 bedrooms

# **BESTBUYERS**

**COUNTRIES WHERE MOST BUYERS COME FROM** 

- 1. Tanzania and
- 2. USA 19%
- 3. Oman 13%
- 4. Kenya 9% 5. Germany,
- Zanzibar 27%



Drawing of the printed mosque planned in Dubai

# FLY MORE, SHOP BETTER



Zanzibar finally has a worldclass shopping and duty-free zone at the airport.

t's shiny, luxurious and modern but still has a distinct Zanzibari Ltwist: 13 retailers and two loung-

es are now open for business at Zanzibar's new Terminal 3 at the Abeid Amani Karume International airport (AAKIA). The whole departure zone leaves an impression of international standards. A new duty-free store holds a variety of perfumes and cosmetics at competetive prices (check Hermès...).

Homegrown boutiques like Frasiafrica and Elias offer classy last-minute souvenirs like designer fashion and jewellery. There is Africa Art Deco and Javed Jafferji's new Recycle shop. The new terminal was finally officially opened by Zanzibar's President Hussein Mwinyi at the end of January. The island had 1,8 million arrivals in 2022, he said. 39 million meals, three million tons of cargo and 500.000 aircrafts were handled in 2022, and 500 jobs created. The airport completion was delayed for eight years. Just opened, it seems already too small: The president announced plans to build a fourth

# ADVERTISEMENT

UK + UAE 17%



Born and raised in Denmark to Zanzibari parents, Hafsa Mbamba, 39, is Executive

Secretary of the Commission for Tourism in Zanzibar and was voted Woman of the year 2022 by a Scandinavian

organisation. She is married to Slim S. Abdallah, 43, lawyer and President of the

Zanzibar Law Society (photo below). The couple has two daughters, Jaddah-Sharifa,

6, and Jasmine, 3







# A HOUSE IN **SEVEN WEEKS**

Prototype wooden homes for Zanzibar built in record time

he boss followed his nose. "Doesn't the wood just smell amazing", Sebastian Dietzold couldn't help noticing when visiting the construction of new "Vizazi" homes in Fumba Town. Vizazi - meaning generations in Swahili - is an all-wooden approach to modern building, an ultra-ecological way of construction. One of the many advantages: prefab wood houses are mounted in no time, a huge plus for Zanzibar where disruptions in supply chains have caused substantial delays in the building industry in the past.

Fumba Town, the new eco settlement being built just outside Zanzibar City, already has a good number of timber bungalows alongside conventional stone houses. But the three-storey Vizazi homes, a modern version of Victorian row houses entirely

made of cross-laminated timber hold the wooden wall elements for the Fumba peninsula employs more (CLT), are still pioneering ground, a the first block of four houses with six project to be realised here, the world's only conventional part of the whole highest timber apartment building, the Burj Zanzibar with 28 floors. Thus it became almost a competition, a Present on the site, carefully watching race against time on the construction the process, was engineer Wolfgang ground when the first block of four Hebenstreit of Binderholz, one of the

seven weeks later in

LEGO or a 3D-puzzle", commented architect Leander Moons, a Dutch professional practising in New York and main designer of Fumba Town, "every element has to find its exact place." Week No.1 began with preparing the concrete foundation to carpentry factory located right on

living units. The concrete base is the

world's largest and manufacturers building (see story below). with LEGO" company has been

contracted as one of the suppliers for Fumba's wooden ambitions. For now, prefab timber parts are imported from Europe. In the future Tanzania is expected to expand its own re-growable wood plantations as well as production facilities. "Wood cultivation can create many jobs in Tanzania", said Thomas

almost 200 carpenters and builders – a whole new and much-needed industry Lifting entire walls

Week 2 to 5 on the Vizazi construction

NEWS

site saw an 18-metre-crane and human muscles lift, fit and adjust entire wall panels, stairs and window frames. Walls are pre-fitted with electric installations and water piping in the Volks.house company. At night the lego-style building went to sleep under huge plastic canvasses to prevent rain pouring in. "Wood should not lay open during the construction",

Building with cement and steel causes 1/3 of all CO2 emissions worldwide. From outside, the Vizazi homes, with huge panoramic windows and private Just, timber expert and Volks.house company owner in Fumba Town. His cabins at all. White cement fibre board



Timber buildings are more healthy - for

# **GLOBAL SUCCESS WITH WOOD**

Austrian company revolutionises construction in Zanzibar



Role model: Eleven floors high, the Frytornet building in Sweden is under construction. The planned Burj Zanzibar will have 28 floors

It started out as a humble family sawmill and became one of the world's biggest and ambitious timber manufacturers - now active in Zanzibar.

he Binderholz company, founded in the idyllic green hills of Austria, has become one of the partnering firms in Fumba Town, constructing timber houses exclusively with local Zanzibari and Tanzanian workers. "It was amazing to see how quickly the team on the Fumba construction side adapted to use our timber products", remarked Binderholz engineer Wolfgang Hebenstreit when he recently came here to supervise the first assembly of a new timber house (see article above).

6300 employees worldwide

The company is considered 'the Mercedes of wood producers' worldwide, its history is unique. It was 70 years ago, when Franz Binder senior turned his passion for wood into a profession, opening a tiny sawmill business in the mountains of Austria. Today, in the third generation, his company has become the leading European wood company, with its headquarters still in the town of Fuegen in Austria but with 60 other production sites and 6,300 employees in Europe and the US, all sharing the founder's passion for wood. It has taken over firms in

and built hundreds of residential, public and commercial buildings all over the world from Singapore to Cuba, among them amazing of 63 football fields in Germany. could a family-owned company grow so vastly? For one, wood has a renaissance. With growing environmental awareness all over the world, the oldest building material in the world has turned into the construction material of the future. "And we stand for a sustainable, intelligent use of the raw material wood and act according to the zero waste principle", engineer Hebenstreit

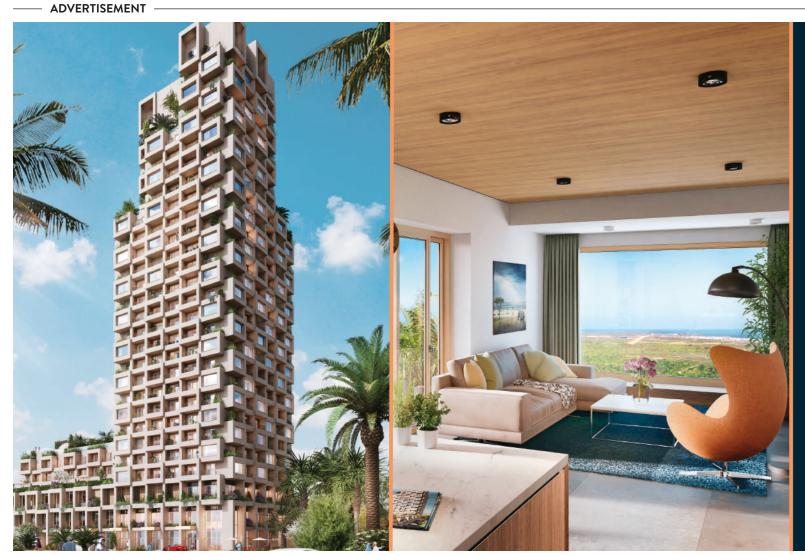
Finland, Florida, Britain and Latvia

60 million people in Dar?

This includes the entire value chain from the cultivation of seedlings and forest management to timber harvesting and processing in the sawmills, from simple shelves and planks for the do-it-yourself

although the wood industry is immensely growing, forests are not diminishing. Austria has more structures like a water park the size forest than 30 years ago, and wood metres every year, statistics say. Waste wood at Binderholz is processed into densified biofuels, green electricity and pressboard pallets. "We re-utilise 100 percent of the renewable raw material wood", Hebenstreit explained. "It is all about responsibility for mother earth", Fumba Town developer Sebastian Dietzold said. "With huge urbanisation in Africa, and Dar es Salaam expected to have an incredible 60 million inhabitants by 2100, we cannot continue to build only with concrete", he added. Today in Africa 56 million homes are lacking. Building with timber may jump-start a forest industry in Tanzania, it is hoped. There is already an agroforestry area twice the size of New York near Iringa.

sector to affordable housing

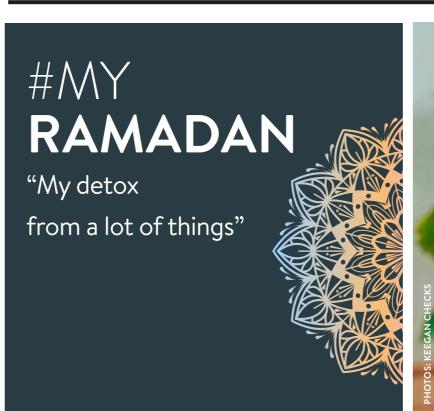




# Luxury Living

In Zanzibar

Starting at 79,000 USD



Is it hard to stay without water? Can you actually work? Are tourists welcome? Hafsa Mbamba, prominent Zanzibari career woman and mum, gives us an insight into her life during the holy month, taking place around 22 March to 20 April this year.

# Please tell us about your Ramadan routine - between office and family?

A lot of things change during Ramadan. It helps living in Zanzibar where the whole society adapts to this spelowed to leave work earlier, usually at 2:30pm and by then you may ac- 2014.

tually feel a bit worn-out and tired, having had no drinks and food since sunrise. So we go home, prepare iftar, the daily fast-breaking meal. I am not much into cooking and am happy to have a household help. Sometimes I cook one special dish. The evening is a special time for family gatherings and visiting relatives In my family we stay mostly at home

for iftar during week days, but on weekends we join my only living grandmother and other relatives at our family house. I come from a lineage of very strong women and a father you could say was a feminist, but I am also very spiritual. We hold night prayers, read the Quran. Ramadan is a time to be more giving. As a family, we started a "Ramadan basket" to support the less fortunate in

I usually go to bed early, and after a short night it's getting up at 4am when you can take your breakfast before the sun rises. My small daughters at their age do not practise Ramadan yet, but the older one has tried

# "I connect to my inner soul and my creator"

once by missing out on a meal; you

slowly introduce your children to it. It's like trying for a marathon. Fasting is an almost invisible act. It makes me feel connected to my inner soul and my creator. I feel really elevated. It's certainly not sleep-all-day, and eat-all-night. Who could do that holding a job? I still have to be alive

whole day?

In Zanzibar it's actually only 12 body hydrated. I drink at least eight my fast and waking up for suhur, the meal before starting again. I also take vitamins and other supplements. We have delicious rich smoothies with healthy fruits with moringa and baobab, or oat milk with banana and dates, that keeps me going up to 2pm.

# What is the essence of Ramadan to

For me it's like a detox. A detox from a lot of things. I become more conscious about what I say, think and do. It's like a reset button for my thoughts and action. Isn't that why people go to wellness retreats? It's me-time. I grew up in a very libertarian society

people in English, communica-

tion skills, e-learning, bike mechanics for an off-shoot business

and as cooks. "We have got an

army out there", says Degeling

guide or in housekeeping there.

But it's still the old malaise: only

a third of hotel employees are

cent. The majority of waiters, re-

ceptionists and office staff come

Language deficits, lack of educa-

historical school premises in a

merchant building in Kiponda,

"research skills" is the next les-

son: "Be critical about the in-

formation you get", says teacher

Degeling. The class room win-

dows are open, the students are

barefoot, the noise of Stone Town

hardly enters this oasis of learn-

ing. In an adjacent room, guest

teacher Leslie, one of 12 teachers

and staff, lectures business skills,

here renamed life skills. "What is

What makes the director happy?

"Meeting my ex-students every-

where, having families, hav-

Kawa Training Center,

Ph 0777 957995, Kiponda

Street, info@kawatraining-

ing houses." The Kawa system

profit, what is loss?", she asks.

director Degeling.

**Barefoot lessons** 

"Whenever I visit a hotel, I see a

from using tools to painting a house. Islam gives women the freedom to be active, contrary to what many believe. My husband also supports me greatly in my job.

### Are tourists welcome during this

Certainly, why not? With 20 years of experience in tourism I would actually say, Ramadan can showcase the authentic Zanzibar. Cultures are more

to prepare beautiful iftars. Of course you don't run in a bikini through Stone Town, but you don't do that in the Vatican either! Tourists also ask me about my veil sometimes. I did not cover up before I came to Zanzibar. Instead I had an Afro before it was in fashion! Now I wear the hijab

like a crown. I feel my personality

has come out more wearing a scarf,

I am not constantly defined by my

# MIND MY BUSINESS

# **TOURISM AS A CAREER**

Beach clean-ups pay school fees

LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Widen your world: Dutch teacher Suzanne Degeling working on a globe with training students

# By Andrea Tapper

The Kawa Training Center has educated more than 1000 tour guides, receptionists and chefs over the years. "We've got an army out there", says director Suzanne Degeling.

he day is still young, the air crispy. Along the city ▲ beach of Zanzibar, where Livingstone dwellers will have their sundowners in the evening, young men and women, wearing gloves and carrying recycling bags, slowly scan the sand for plastic and other waste that the sea and careless humans have left behind. They are earning their school fees that way. But assuming they'd dislike their morning duty would be an error.

To the contrary: "We enjoy starting our day like that", one of the girls says who wants to become a receptionist. Ibrahim, dreaming of a position as a chef, agrees: "It teaches you about life and the environment. It clears your mind." Their self-made recycling bags have three chambers; one for fabrics, flip-flops and other reusable leftovers, which they will turn into earrings and doormats at their own upcycling station; one for "gold" as the teacher calls sellable plastic caps of water bot-

tles, and one for simple waste. Rubbish bins and containers for plastic and "Konyagi" bottles - a popular cheap drink in Zanzibar - have been deployed along a four kilometre stretch of beach from the ferry port to Kilimani with the help of the Kawa institute. 60 students collect around 300 kilogrammes of waste. Every

accounting, tour guiding and other entrepreneurial skills mainly for the tourism sector. The courses last 15 months. Part of the school fees - TZ\$100,000 or \$40 monthly - are waived against the beach cleaning. Director Suzanne Degeling, who founded the Kawa Training Centre in 2010, has brought her dog along today and says, she continues the green morning exercise even on Sundays: "It's somehow addictive."

They study housekeeping, cooking,

Does she make a difference? lasting? Non-Governmental-Organi-

sations (NGO's) and other development agencies are increasingly facing though questions. Kawa is financed partly by the TUI Care Foundation, a social responsibility program of Europe's largest travel operator. In 10 years Kawa has educated 1000 young

But then, Dutch-born Degeling, a tall

and slender woman of words more

than of deeds, is not your typical so-

cial worker either. Every fisherman.

every beach boy and every tour guide

in Stone Town knows and respects

her. She has brought up two children

in Zanzibar and has lived in Hurumzi

for 18 years. Her business is to ena-

ble young Zanzibari to start their own

business. She keeps the student ratio

strictly 50:50 for boys and girls.



Collecting trash on the beach helps to finance school fees: Kawa students and their teacher at the city

# MUSICAL HIGHLIGHT

# **VIOLIN DELIGHTS**

n early cultural highlight ladies' chamber Quartet Salonnière from New York City, aspiring local violin star Felician Mussa in Zanzibar and other musicians of the Dhow Countries Music Academy (DCMA). Violinists Aniela Eddy Natalie Kress, Rebecca Nelson and Cullen O'Neil on cello have toured internationally with their bar through contemporary performances The month-long trip in Tanzania with stops in Arusha and Dar es Salaam was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy

The purpose of the tour were collaborations with local musicians and performances in schools and workshops.

Zanzibar violinist Felician Mussa can be seen, heard and booked at the DCMA's new premises in Vuga, and during Sunday lunches at Jungle Paradise in Mbweni. Not to be



Zanzibar's Felician Mussa (above) and Salonnière from N.Y.

# TECH IN ZANZIBAR

# "TALENT WANTED"

'Silicon Zanzibar' is on its way with several workshops conducted in Fumba Town, and a public-private task force set up to articulate legal requirements. The initiative has been formed to bring young tech companies from all over Africa to Zanzibar.

Tech company Wasoko, a commerce platform for kiosks, has already moved its headquarter to Fumba. At a recent meeting of tech start-ups from several African countries here, "finding talents

Wasoko has offered to train young Zanzibari in computer coding and other skills and to help develop university curricula. "We want to involve young Zanzibari and offer opportunities to them", said Wasoko CEO Daniel Yu. Presently, a three-month "altruism program" is bringing together 17 participants from East African countries in Fumba Town to define effective charity

programs and ways to collaborate.

and government support" were cited as

nain challenges in Africa. Especially

work visa are important.



Workshop time: in large new offices at the Pavilion in Fumba Town tech leaders from several African countries discussed collaboration

WELCOME NOTE

# **HERITAGE MATTERS**



ANDREA TAPPER Editor-in-chief THE FUMBA TIMES

Recently I moved to another house in our growing community in Fumba Town, barely 80 metres away from my old one and yet so different. It's amazing how a tiny change of position can change your outlook on life, and may even enrich your understanding of the

The new house has larger windows, letting me feel more part of the nature in Fumba Town. I see the sun rising from one bedroom, and setting towards another. In my back garden, two newly planted coconut palm trees seem to hug each other, supported by a temporary scaffolding to help them grow. Right from the living room I watch planes coming in, registering different airlines at different times - as Ramadan on page 3. you can read on page 1, Zanzibar's air traffic is hugely picking up.

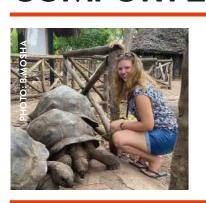
I love feeling that connectivity with And in this issue of THE FUMBA TIMES we focus on heritage and connectivity, two sides of the same coin. Without Stone Town, the ancient trading post between Africa, Arabia and India, there would be no Zanzibar. And without Stone Town there would be no Fumba Town. Our Stone Town special on this double-page explores how modernity and history can blend.

I was very pleased to work with some outstanding female public leaders for this edition. The new Director of the Department of Museums and Antiquities, Maryam Mansab, went on a walk-about in Stone Town with us. Another prominent Zanzibari woman, Hafsa Mbamba, Executive Secretary of the Commission for Tourism, freely shares her personal experience of

Rooted in tradition while intensifying connections to the rest of the world, such women give Zanzibar sensible support to expand, just as the palm trees do receive it by Fumba's fabulous gardening team.

**GUEST COMMENT** 

# **OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE**



oung people from all over the vorld flock to Zanzibar as volunteers and interns. Who benefits? Nursing student Pascale Joosten, 22, from Holland says, both sides. She enjoyed the turtoise, too,

to time and individuality

asked when moving to another country is: what were your expectations and were they met? I find this a difficult question because, to be honest, I had no expectations when I came to Zanzibar. I knew it was going to be different from home, but how much, no idea!

On a personal level, my start was not very smooth. My bank card was not working. I did not know anyone. No contacts, no money - what a beginning. Luckily, when I went looking for the clinic where I was going to spend the next six months of my life, my future colleagues proved very helpful.

They took me to an ATM and the nearest supermarket. - both ventures are not as easy as it may sound. At the teller, if you are lucky, you can draw some cash. But often a warning flashes "temporarily out of order".

Since I was a kid I always wanted to travel around the world. A family friend worked as a nurse with Doctors without Borders and I grew up with her

An internship abroad is recommended in my profession. My nursing school in Eindhoven, Holland, suggested several places from Belgium to Aruba, but I wanted to do something completely out of my comfort zone That's how I landed in Zanzibar. The internship for clinical nurses

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The Fumba Limes

an important part of the nursing job and is meant to be reciprocal. Both sides, the intern and the place of her internship, should benefit. One of the things I practised a lot in Zanzibar is venepuncture, collecting blood for laboratory screening and following up the test results in the lab. I was impressed to see that a relatively small clinic like Urban Care in Fumba Town has its own laboratory. It was a good learning experience, in Holland most samples are handled in outside labs.

lecture. I witnessed a different aptruly authentic conservation. proach to time and individuality in Zanzibar. In the West, doctors are often criticised for not spending enough time with patients. We are given a maximum of ten minutes to dress a wound, in Zanzibar it would often take longer. In the midst of all technology there's a human factor. I found this actually surprising since Tanzania has only one doctor per 10,000 patients, according to UNICEF, while the Netherlands count four doctors per 1,000 patients!

raima, P.Josten, Bernadette Kirsch, Hafsa

Mbamba, Baraka S, Mosha

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Learning to be patient was another

spring-clean", said Len Horlin, director And still a nurse in Zanzibar would of the Emerson Group. "It was a labour of love, involving a major upscaling." show more empathy Any other observations during my Her task was to leave the crumbling internship in Africa? My main impreswalls of the mystery patio untouched sion: everyone is kind and welcomes speaking of history, dreams and drama during the Sultans' era - while creating a dramatic backdrop for the al-fresco you with open arms, a foreigner in their country. Surely, we in Europe can safe and comfortable seating areas for restaurant. The premises are the brain-

An inlaid staircase handmade by Zanzibar bespoke furniture maker Scanza now leads to a covered balcony looking down on the original courtyard. From above as from below, audience and diners have a good view of the stage where live music and other cultural shows are presented twice weekly. Lavish chandeliers, Contributors to this issue: Dr. Jenny Bouart, peacock murals and original old

porcelain decorate the place.

**A GARDEN** 

Stone Town has a new must-

go place, a most unusual

al-fresco restaurant in a

lushly landscaped hidden

ruin – a rare example of a

alled Secret Garden, the newly

extended and refurbished

restaurant is part of the

legendary Emerson brand, and offers

fine dining & cocktails on two levels.

It lies adjacent to the iconic Emerson

Spice Hotel, a grand former Indian

merchant palace, towards Darajani

"This was not an ordinary mid-season

**FULL OF SECRETS** 

Where tradition and entertainment meet

# Time tunnel

in Stone Town The Secret Garden feels like a time tunnel and has a magic aura - but what actually took place here historically? The courtyard is said to have been a Print: Mwananchi Com. Ltd, Dar es Salaam market place as monsoon winds for centuries brought traders from Arabia

and India to the shores of Zanzibar. Broken ivory cutting tools have been found in the rubble. At one stage, during the British protectorate of Zanzibar, the yard is said to have housed teachers of the King George School, which later became Lumumba school, when Zanzibar and Tanganyika formed Tanzania after the 1964 revolution. The well in the small courtyard is among the first ever recorded in Zanzibar

and coloured glass windows - just

like Emerson Spice and the Secret

Garden. The colourful windows and

blue-washed neeru walls now provide

At home in

Zanzibar:

students

Malia (large

photo) and

Tessa have

found their

History has it, that at the beginning of the 19th century, Indian traders Nowadays, at the Secret Garden, customers find Zanzi-Beer on tap at were still largely outnumbered by the bar, quirky cocktails and a rich Arab traders in Stone Town and most of them of "limited means", as local Zanzibar-influenced à la carte menu. historian Abdul Sheriff puts it. But "Here the timeless blends with the gradually the Indians moved up the mystical", first visitors commented. ranks of merchant classes, building elegant houses with carved balconies

Secret Garden. Lunch: 12am-4pm Dinner: 5pm-10pm 4044 Tharia St, Stone Town Reservations WhatsApp +255 774 483 483 emersonzanzibar.com

child and legacy of Zanzibar pioneer

Emerson Skeens, a resident of Zanzibar

for more than 25 years, who died on

his beloved island at the age of 65 in

2014. With love and understanding for

a multicultural society, the American

opened one of the first private hotels

in Stone Town in 1989 and placed the

island – which had been locked behind

the iron curtain for 25 years - on the

travel map. The two hotels carrying his

Hurumzi, are still thriving.

name, Emerson Spice and Emerson on



Fine dining at the Secret Garden: off the balcony, set-apart, is a large airy room with inlaid artwork above the windows perfect for quieter dining, groups or parties

# **HERITAGE TIMELESS BEAUTY**

Photography by Keegan Checks

Tow do century-old history and modernity go together? "No problem" for Malia and Tessa, Zanzibar's next cosmopolitan generation, who modelled for us at one of the most intriguing spaces of Stone Town, the Secret Garden. How to preserve the past and yet aim at the future, is a question often asked in traditional societies like Zanzibar - on this double-page THE FUM-BA TIMES looks at some aspects of it. Scientists trying to save ancient palaces. Policy-makers challenged by little budgets. But for our modelling students Malia and Tessa, at home in Fumba Town and Stone Town, all this is simply IRL-"in real life", as local youth slang has it. With their families, they have become a part of Zanzibar, as generations of immigrants before them

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Heritage coming alive: the authentic flair of the Secret Garden with tall, old walls and stunning vegetation creates a picturesque setting for a restaurant - and our model shoot

# "WE MUST SAVE OUR HISTORY NOW"

EXCLUSIVE New Director of Museums and Antiquities speaks out during walk-about in Stone Town

By Andrea Tapper

More than 1000 years of vibrant history. World Heritage status. Stone Town is a unique treasure, a priceless tourism jewel. Maryam Mansab, the new young director of all museums in Zanzibar, is set to save the "living museum".

Ter office, for now, is aptly stunning buildings in Stone Town, the "tunnel house" in front of Forodhani, formerly part of the Sultan's palace, later an orphanage. Hundreds of museum assets, from oil portrayals of 11 Sultan dynasties to tiniest conserved butterflies, have found temporary shelter here while Zanzibar's museums are undergoing repair. Four of five state-owned museums - usually heavily frequented by tourists – are presently closed after decade-long deterioration made them a safety hazard. When Maryam Mansab, 45, steps out of her director's office onto the elegant balustrade of the oriental-style Saracenic building, the Indian Ocean and a sea of 2000 historical Stone Town dwellings lay at her feet. But the magnificent view does not warm her heart. "I could cry when I look over to the House of Wonder", she says.

New hope for House of Wonder But now there might be a solution for the collapsed former Sultan's palace to be restored to former glory. Tourism Minister Simai M. Said just returned from Oman sealing a deal for the resurrection. Oman will spend an estimated 21 million dollars to rebuild the monument. A Tanzanian firm, Nandhra Engineering and Construction, was awarded the contract. Zanzibar has new hope. Mansab's portfolio covers 86 historical sites and six museums in Unguja and Pemba, the two main islands of the Zanzibar archipelago. Since taking over the crucial government depart-





Walk-about in Stone Town: Maryam Mansab, Director of the Department of Museums and Antiquities in Zanzibar, pauses in front of a local shop with traditional craft and old stamps (large photo); inspects a digging site (left) while being interviewed by FUMBA TIMES editor Andrea Tapper (right)

ment - part of the tourism ministry -, A walk through the past the computer scientist, heritage expert and astute woman leader, who lived in London most of her life, has begun to renovate the dilapidated museums of Zanzibar. She already made her mark by opening the Kibweni Museum in Bububu north of town. And she placed street lanterns in the dark Forodhani tunnel – a shining symbol of her new reign in the antiquities department.

just outside the historic Old Fort built When THE FUMBA TIMES asked by Omani Arabs in 1698. "Any un-Mansab to join us on a frank, investiderground repair or building in Stone gative and soul-searching walk-about Town has to be reported to our departin Stone Town, she did not hesitate ment", she explained, holding up some a minute, leading the way in a white glistering porcelain splinters against summer dress, a safran-coloured blouthe sunlight, "we scan the ground for son and a white head scarf. "We have archaeological traces". Every square to make sure there is a story to tell for metre of Stone Town, inscribed as a the next generation", she said, first World Heritage site by UNESCO in directing us to some workers digging 2000, is historical ground, "and histo-

ries and even an oil

painting of Austrian

empress Sissi

Is Stone Town being sold out? "Private investors can help saving our antiquities and heritage", says Maryam Mansab gle on the western shore of Zanzibar history - falls under the Stone Town City, is at least one thousand years old, Conservation Authority. "The most

*'Stone Town* a protected monument

Stone Town is a protected national monument", points out Maryam Mansab.

Stone Town for sale:

although most

of the remaining

buildings stem

from the 18th

and 19th century

"The whole of

Is Stone Town being sold out? As we navigate narrow alleyways providing shade. Mansab defends the current wave of sales of properties to hotels and other tourism businesses. "We would not sell, if we did not have to" she says. It's a muddled situation: Some Stone Town tenants still pay as little as TZS10,000 (less than five dollars) rent in the antique quarters, "nobody can help them with renovation", Mansab pointed out. "But new regulations are being worked on to ensure and enable participation of local buyers and local renters in Stone Town", she assured. One innovative scheme aims to publicly fund the ren-

ry comes in layers", explains Maryam ovation of 30 buildings to be rented Mansab, adding, "there was life here out to middle-class tenants. It would The whole process - nothing less than forming a one-square-kilometre trian- a re-definition of how to deal with

> important is that the old quarters remain inhabited and lived in", says Mansab while we carefully forge our way under

huge wooden suppor pillars. History professor Sheriff, 83. one of the most acknowledged conservationists of Zanzibar could not agree more. "Stone Town is not a number of buildings, it's the people who live



Scaffolding protecting houses

# NEW MUSEUM KIBWENI PALACE

Sultan's seaside gem now open



hile four public museums are undergoing repair in New museums' director Maryam Mansab has moved many exhibits from all over Zanzibar here, while Museum near Bububu is a new highother museums are undergoing repair. light for culturally minded tourists. Directly by the sea, the hidden gem Opened to the public last year, the has a great view, a garden and horse breezy seaside summer palace of Sultan Seyyid of Zanzibar was built

um as a child? " Absolutely the Natin 1915 about 7,5 kilometres north of town. The leisurely ural History Museum", she says: "I palace exhibits lifeloved the turtles wandering around." style artefacts such Then the dynamic director adds: "Heritage is the soul of Zanzibar, we spanning two centu-

must keep it alive." When visiting the Kibweni museum, take some sodas with you while a cafeteria is in the making

When will more museums reopen? • House of Wonder - rebuilding to

take at least 3 years • Palace Museum - restoration com plete earliest in 2 years • Peace Memorial Museum - the art museum near Mnazi Mmoja hospi-

tal is to reopen shortly Natural History Museum - a family favourite opposite Peace Memorial, to reopen shortly, renova-

tion is completed Open private museums:

• Freddie Mercury Museum - showcasing the rock legend's roots in

Shangani Princess Salme Museum - lovingly curated exhibition about Zanzi bar's most famous female • East African Slave Trade Exhibit

next to Anglican Cathedral

palace furniture

Kibweni Palace Museum Bububu, open 7 days a week 8am - 6pm. Information: maryam.mansab @zanmuseum.go.tz



# HOW TO MANAGE A TOWN IN ZANZIBAR

Fumba Town backstage: from streets to schools to solar energy

The city of the future,

urbanisation on a global scale - these topics are hotly debated all over the world. Katrin Dietzold, co-founder and new town manager of Fumba Town

in Zanzibar, explains priorities and challenges - on the ground.

HE FUMBA TIMES: A mosque or a beach, a school or a sea pier – what is needed most in a new town on the island of

unique. A real estate project to create utterly needed living space in Zanzibar and Africa in a sustainable and equitable way, at the same time being the new satellite town near Zanzibar City, with studios, apartments and villas for all budgets, our masterplan set the rules in the beginning. In the future, homeowners should participate in the decision-making process.

What exactly is a town manager? I'm like the head of the municipality.

Your investors and homeowners come from 60 different nationalities. Can there ever be common ground on taste, standards, cultural values? Investors can agree to disagree. They can also agree to agree. Even if I don't like somebody's opinion, I can still accept it as relevant, maybe even useful. There will always be a compromise Regulations and organisational procedures ensure majorities.

What makes people buy in Fumba? Motives of investors are as varied as their backgrounds. Some invest purely for financial returns, others for emotional reasons, for instance, buyers

Who speaks for the house owners? We are just starting an Owner's Association (OA) as stipulated by Tanzanian law and have planned a first official Town Hall meeting. One of the tasks will be to formulate community bylaws which cover just about everything from window covers to pets' access.

Let's be specific. From quality standards to gardens, who sets priorities, who makes the rules?

Every little issue sets the tone in a

In the beginning, the project developer and architects decided what to build and how, based on demand and economic calculations. Clean water, electricity, environmental landscaping and waste recycling came first for us. Other real estate projects may have different

from Oman wishing to return to their ba Town is to be green, accessible and

Not to worry, we are working on a beautiful lighting design but without light pollution! Inside Fumba, we will pave our streets this year. We have

Water shortages and blackouts are a challenge. Why is there no solar energy in the green city?

Big news on solar! After years of debate, we have found a solution with the government to make it economically feasible. Solar will come to Fumba.

power cuts, even in 2023. I understand that some homeowners priorities, like massive street lights and are wondering why we don't just use move here. a highway access but no trees. We have generators to cover these power outag-

38, Front Desk

a different concept; the value of Fumes, but we don't think it's a worthwhile investment. The dimension for a whole town would be just enormous and contradict our claim to build a green, sustainable town. Here the right solution Some residents complain about missing street lights and dusty is better than a quick one.

Some infrastructure problems re-

quire immediate attention...

That's true. In the short lifespan of Fumba Town, we have realised very much that it's not only about creating bought our own cobblestone machine infrastructure but maintaining it. We for it, so that rain water can drain. have just initiated new departments to monitor and speed up repairs of infra-

MYHOME

structure (see below) Can I rent at reasonable rates? Very much so! Long-term rentals at affordable rates are key. We are not a hol-

iday location in Eldorado but a suburb of the capital. Airbnb's are allowed but But when? Zanzibar is often facing should not dominate. For our own employees, we just started housing subsidies. It is already prompting many to

Interview: A. Tapper

Godfrey Mganda,

32, maintenance

# MAKING RESIDENTS & OWNERS HAPPY!



28, property

2 BEDROOMS, FAIR PRICE!

"We take care of private propertv. whether the owner is around or not. We offer long-term rental services (1 month+), property management, service on demand and tax submissions services."

"Everyone is welcome at my front desk. I maker sure inquiries and service requests from town residents are remedied quickly.

I decide whether a matter is

private or public."

**Get in touch:** Town Operations Company (TOC) | Mo-Fr 8am-5pm, Sat 9am-1pm |

Call/Whatsapp 0778 331 144 | 24/7 emergencies 0682 412 488

HEARING THE GRASS GROW

"The service line behind your townhouse is rough? The metre not working? I keep track of infrastructure maintenance and channel complaints to the right

**INSIDE FUMBA TOWN** 

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# "I NEED TO **SEE THE SEA"**

A South African captain has shipped a beautiful Katamaran to Fumba Town – excursions can be booked.

ets's go and look at your new Mwangani flat in

full of fishing rods, surfboards and come home to sleep.

What made you move here? Long story. It starts in Mozambique where I used to run a camp with my girlfriend Liane. Then we had a boat transfer, a so-called delivery for a client from Maldives to South Africa. We hit a tree in the ocean, de-rooted by a storm in Mozambique, and nearly sank. To my rescue came a job offer in Zanzibar with Eric Allard's famous company 'Blue Water Extreme

Why Fumba? I always want to live by the sea. like Fumba. I think it's a town of great potential. It only needs a cou-

Spearfishing'and here I am.

ple of more years to be established. Are you missing anything here? A pool! The town is missing a pool Why not construct a tidal pool just near the shore? We have many of those in South Africa.

You have brought your boat "Sand Piper" along, a beautiful 40-foot Katamaran. I was first anchoring in Nungwi. That did not work out. My boat is now in Fumba for bookings. Day trips or 2-hour sunset trips,

How wonderful, the Fumba community has been waiting for that! I'm open to what people want to do, let's see. A full day charter, for in-

everything is possible.

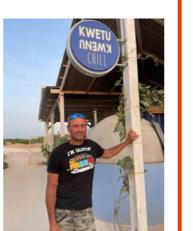
stance, is 1750 dollars with snacks, beer, wine for up to 25 people.

Stop now, or THE FUMBA TIMES must plan a reader's out-

Do you like your 2-bedroom flat in Fumba Town?

I do, but I will soon move into a Moyoni house; I hear they are also For heaven's sake, please not. It very nice. Actually, I spend most of presently looks like a boat storage, my time on or in the water. I only

> Information and bookings WhatsApp +255 773 839 362





Steve Brent holds a RYA Yatch master licence, the top captain licence in the leisure trade

he first Busara+ in Fumba Town, a satellite gig of the music festival at the Old Fort, was a full success. Mixing with visitors at the KwetuKwenu market, a popular regular event every first Saturday of the month, a thrilled crowd of several hundred people enjoyed the beats, craft shopping and various food stalls all day. Three acts took to the newly built stage, Carribean inspired colourful Majestad Negra from Puerto Rico, Sudanese vocalist Asia Madani and Zanzibar's own star Siti and the band, rocking the show with a pumping performance.

Fumba Town has become one of the main sponsors of the Sauti za Busara Festival for the next three years. "We are delighted to be in partnership with Fumba Town. We can now plan with confidence", said festival director Yusuf Mahmoud. This year's 20th anniversary event was attended by 13,000 people

Next "Sauti za Busara" 9 - 11 February 2024

Next KwetuKwenu markets in Fumba: 4 March 2023 6 May 2023

No market in April because of Ramadan Information and bookings: +255 776 055 801

KwetuKwenu Chill, from 5pm: Pizza, Shisha smoking, great sunsets, chill-out and enjoy

FUMBA

Beauty tips for Zanzibar

FIRST SPA IN



# AND MARKET FUN

KwetuKwenu market days for 2023





# LIFESTYLE NEWS

# GOOD VIBES, MUSIC



Busara +: A free bus shuttle brought music lovers to Fumba Town and the popular KwetuKwenu market

The first beauty salon,

at the Fumba Town

Malika Spa, has opened

Pavilion – we have tested it.

small water bowl, near winter towels and a partitioned mas-

sage cabin: the first impression of re-

cently opened Malika Spa at the Pavil-

ion in Fumba Town is clean and neat,

only the mall's backward staircase

leading to it could do with a touch-up.

A young team of three beauticians

works at the spa, with masseuse Raya

probably the most experienced having

trained at Cinnamon Spa and Seacliff.

While she is doing a soft aromathera-

py relaxation massage, customers can

happily doze off. Malika - "queen" in

Swahili - also offers pedicure, mani-

cure, facials and hairstyling. Hairdress-

er Atu, an expert for African styles, is

presently training to do European hair;

if you'd want a nice straight blow-dry

ask for "Bernadette style". Akim is

skilful in manicure and pedicure. The

staff speaks mainly Swahili, but in the

land of beauty language matters least.

The salon was started by Pili Malika,

36, a general practitioner by profes-

white frangipani flower in a

small water bowl, neat white

Al Cashbah in Paje

# **SONIA'S GOODIES**

Selling out during every farmer's market in Fumba Town is Mama Sonia's self-made cashew milk. Her newest endeavour: the "Raw + Fresh" juice bar in Paje.

rom the day Sonia Banner arrived in Zanzibar from Panama some 2 1/2 years ago, became a super-active, greenliving and by now well-known New-Zanzibari. She shared with us the recipe for her legendary cashew milk. Just like almond or soja milk, it's a non-dairy, plant-based drink ideal not only for people who are lactose 2 servings cashew milk:

1 cup raw cashews/3 cups of filtered water (dates can be added for desired blender for 2-3 minutes. Refrigerate and enjoy with cereal, coffee or just straight. Shelf life is 3 days max





### **LAMB** piece of lamb? Look no further than the Algerian Al Cashbah on Paje's main road, close to The Soul apartments. Slow cooking is the secret of French-Algerian Cherif

auce, grilled green peppers

WhatsApp +49 159 01422301

# **STARRY SAUSAGES**

in Jambiani and Luyska of Spice Palace in Stone Town, have already made a difference in Zanzibar with their management talents and beautiful spirits - now the mum follows suit. Displaced by the war in Ukraine, Prof. Alla Nikolaieva came to stay

with her twin girls and did not hes-

stylist Bahaa for good blow-drys Ph 0774 888 222 Balinese Spa, Shangani, opp. Serena Hotel, small, cosy salon Ph 779 181 440 Faith Spa & Beauty, Shangani, opp.

sion. As a newcomer to beauty treat-

ments, she says, she is being coached

by the Platinum salon at the Hyatt

and asserts: "We take every customer

comment seriously to improve our ser-

vices." First impression: What the sa-

lon may still lack in professionalism,

is made up by friendliness, and as a

relax station close to home, Fumbians

Some recommendations in Zanzibar:

Ph 0772 574 288 or 0756 034 012

Well-trained therapists, best spa

Massages at Park Hyatt

Malika Beauty Spa, Fumba Pavilion,

have already taken to it.

Archipelago, inviting atmosphere, fair Lisa Ph 0787 144 702 Nuru Spa in Jambiani Zanzibar's most magic al-fresco spa at Sharazad Hotel

Her daughters's, Nuru of Nuru Spa

named Milky Way: "I love the stars at night", she says. Try the traditional kovbasa, half a metre of spiced sausage, or khinkali meat dumplings and feel embraced by comforting service. Ukranian style. THE FUMBA TIMES loves the Milky Way! Open 11am till late, closed during WhatsApp +380 99 668 4364

in Jambiani next to Sharazad hotel



Ukranian outpost in Jambiani: the Milky Way beach restaurant

# Happy&Healthy

# ASK DR. JENNY BOURAIMA READERS' QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY OUR OWN MEDICAL EXPERT

# **CREEPY NEIGHBOURS**

Stress relief: a facial or massage at Malika Spa can work wonders.

Owner Pili Malika promises: "We take our customers seriously"

Critters to be aware of



Betsy Haman, Fumba Town Dearest Dr. Jenny,

we have moved to Fumba Town and enjoy living close to nature. Please advise on any not-so-harmless creatures we may encounter.

Bernadette Kirsch and Dr. Jenny Bouraima answer:

Dear Betsy, our head of Permaculture Design Company, Bernadette Kirsch, with her vast tures, and myself will jointly answer

knowledge of plants and living crea-

Here some critters to look out for:

Centipede Centipedes - not to harmless millipedes are nocturnal critters, distinguishable by their long body and numerous legs. They come in reddish and black shades.

Centipede bites rarely cause health complications in humans but their sting can be quite painful and cause allergic

Scorpions are a predatory species of the spider family with tail with a stinger at the end. Two of the scorpion's eight legs are in the form

rimeter of your home

eight legs and a long of pincers that look a bit like lobster claws. Most scorpion stings don't require treatment, though it can be a good idea to see your doctor as a precaution. There is evidence that lavender may repel scorpions. Plant it around the pe-

The Battersby's Green Snake (Philo thamnus battersbvi) is a harmless, non-venomous, medium-sized, green snake from East Africa. It is a diurnal snake, active during the day. It eats lizards and frogs

and grows to 70 centimetres (about 2

**Battersby Green** 

Brown House The Brown House

name, frequents human dwellings where it feeds largely on rodents and lizards. This non-venomous snake is active at night and is relatively slow-moving. Inspect your lawn and home for pools of water, By removing these, snake varieties will find another area to nest.

Itchy caterpillar Caterpillars - Kiwavi in Swahili - are insects, just like their parent butterflies or moths. Some caterpillars have hairs or spines which are connected to poisonous glands. In contact with human skin,

is more severe.

In Fumba over the past four years we had only very few incidents with bites or stings from any of these

creatures needing medical attention. Mostly, the reaction can range from a local, painful sensation to a localised allergic reaction to a more severe systemic allergic reaction. However, when you notice a quick change in size of the swelling, a tingling sensation on your tongue, start feeling light-headed, experience difficulty in breathing or in case the bite was around your neck or head, it is always safe to consult the Urban Care clinic or other doctor immediately. He or she will evaluate what stronger anti-allergic or other

Against all these critters, some general precaution will get you a long way: keeping food waste in closed bins and emptying them regularly, keeping windows covered with a net, keeping doors closed and regular cleaning of drains are just a few simple measures that

supportive medication is needed

while monitoring your condition.

they can cause itching, burning, will help to keep not only animals out swelling. Occasionally, the reaction of your house that might sting or bite but other bugs and rodents as well. Also lighten-up your path at night so that you don't accidentally step on anything.



groundfloor, Fumba Town, Nyamanzi

Contact: +255 622820011 contact@urbancare.clinic

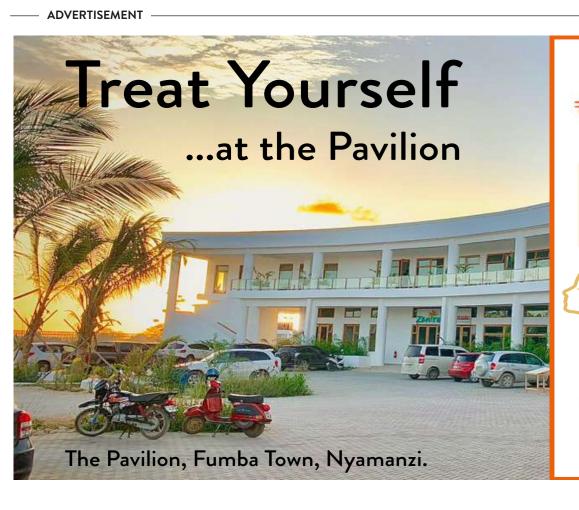
Opening hours: 9am - 8pm

Monday to Friday; Saturday

and Sunday on call www.urbancare.clinic

This column is for general

information only and not intended to replace individual consultation with a medical professional.



t ashitag

Good Food, Good Mood! Healthy soup for breakfast? Or hearty Swahili Dish for Lunch and Dinner? Hashtag Restaurant at the Pavilion offers you the best and most affordable dishes in Town - prepared in a delicious Swahili Style Cuisine. Open Monday to Saturday 7 am to 10pm. Contact: +255 773 210 305 or +255 654 911 318. Free Delivery in Fumba Town!

Get a fine selection of imported coffees from the East African Region at

Kona Coffee Shop. Taste freshly brewed coffee, home made cakes, and

light snacks such as pizza and quesadillas. Opening hours from 8am to 6pm

Mo-Saturday. Contact Shabaan: +255 755 058 058

+255 756 034 012. Visit the Gram @malikabeautyspa

KONA

Time to get pampered! Visit Malika Spa for hair cuts, hair styling & color, spa facial, scrubs, massages, manicure & pedicure nail art and waxing. rofessional treatments right at your doorstep in Fumba Town. Opening hours Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 7pm. Contact +255 772 574 288 or

G&A BOUTIQUE

Visit Fumba's Boutique clothing shop and get yourself a new, stylish outfit! Shopping for men's, women, children, underwear, hats, shoes or make-up? At G&A boutique you find Boohoo (UK Brand), Prettylittlething and Primark branded clothes at great prices. Opening hours Mon - Sat 8.30am to 7pm, Sun 10am - 4pm. Contact: Aisha on +255 654 520 022

# LAMU: ZANZIBAR'S SMALL, CHIC SISTER Where the rich and beautiful holiday

A triangle-shape coastline just like Stone Town: Lamu in Kenya has many

similarities but a different vibe. A hippie lifestyle (right) is still treasured

### By staff writer

No mass tourism, no cars – that's the most visible difference between Zanzibar and Lamu, both ancient Swahili settlements along the East African coast. We explored what the hidden beauty offers today.

he donkey is growling. The sun has just come up, sprinkling the morning sea with circling light effects. A group of jolly visitors is boarding a dhow taxi to commute from Shela, the village of western palatial residences, to the island's main settlement Lamu Town - a UNESCO heritage site, as Stone Town in Zanzibar. For many regulars it's Lamu revisited. The archipelago off the Kenyan coast, about 180km north of Mombasa, has been on the travel trail much longer than Zanzibar. "By the late 60s and early 70s Lamu became famous for its reputation as an exotic, remote and self-contained society. It became Kenya's Kathmandu", says Carol Korschen, owner of the legendary Peponi Hotel in Shela, "it was the end of the African Hippie trail and a stop-over on the way to India".

We are sitting on her iconic hotel's terrace, situated at the beginning of 12 kilometres of sand dunes and beach. The beach area used to be totally uninhabited; nowadays more and more buildings in dune pockets are endangering the water supply of the island's fragile eco-system.

### Classy and casual

Opened in 1967 by the Korschen family from Denmark, Peponi is an institution. With 28 rooms and a top restaurant if offers a mature mix of classy and casual only to be found in safari-savvy Kenya. Guests and village inhabitants, foreign and local, mingle on the terrace. Whether you'd need a room, a guide or a party invitation, you'll find it here. Lamu has the bohemian vibe of Spanish island Ibiza in its early, quieter days; it's a close-knit society of cosmopolitan locals and visitors dealing with each other on eye level. When one of the two Korschen daughters married just before Corona hit, a "Mama Mia"like Swahili wedding for 1800 guests was celebrated under the stars.

There's lot's to do and see in Lamu although the island is less than 13 by six kilometres large. The Omani-built Lamu Fort and a beautiful museum exhibit modern and traditional artefacts. Abdullahi Sultan guides us on a tour through the alleyways of Lamu Town, inhabited by about 20,000 people, and explains that the labyrinthine streets are built upward along a slope, letting the rains wash the city clean.

As if remotely controlled, around 3000 Donkeys haul tomatoes, coconuts and baskets of building materials from the port to town. We doze off in the shade of Makuti thatched roof terraces of proud city palaces. The grand mansions made of coral stone allow the wind to circulate pleasantly, testifying to high architectural art. Lamu flourished under 200 years of Omani rule until the end of the 19th century, just like Zanzibar. Typical vidaka lime stone carvings and neeru walls are trademarks of richly decorated palaces. The sheer beauty has attracted foreign investors and celebrities among them the Peugeot family, London photo agent Katy Barker and German Prince Ernst August of Hanover. The holiday spot, close to Somalia, has never developed mass tourism - it's just too hard to get there. From a small airport located on neighbouring Manda island, one of 65 islets forming the archipelago, new arrivals are brought over by boat.

# **Resilient diversity**

they feel safe on Lamu despite earlier local Islamist insurgencies in the area. Herbert Menzel, a relative newcomer and well-known German entrepreneur from Hamburg, has built and restored four houses in Lamu since 2006. "I simply fell in love with the atmosphere and the aesthetics of Swahili design", says the art expert who has enriched Lamu with a bi-annual "Hat Festival" and a hand-illustrated map of Shela and its 90, mostly western holiday homes and boutiques – a helpful orientation for a small, but rapidly growing cosmos.

# **LAMU TRAVEL TIPS**

How to get there: Zanzibar-Nairobi-Lamu is your best option; a direct safari flight between Lamu and Zanzibar is dearly missing Where to stay: Peponi Hotel: former Sultan's residence Subira House in Old Town; Diamond Beach Village on Manda; Jua House in Shela

Not to miss: Become a bird watching!

Residents and regular visitors say,

expert on a tour of exotic bird-

# Cosy hotel with view of the catholic o

SHARAZAD WONDERS HOTEL

**JUST DISCOVERED** 

# **BRINGING CHARM BACK TO STONE TOWN**



Italian-born Francesca Scalfari has a passion for Zanzibar and a great talent for design - her newest endeavour, a modern boutique hotel in a historic building in Stone Town, combines both.

Stone Town renovation can take many different turns, Land many wrong ones from careless modernisation to low-budget improvisation to opulent stuffiness. Sharazad Wonders avoided all of that. With the right dose of subtlety and freshness, the recently opened boutique hotel brings the charm back to Stone

A nude-pink colour scheme, traditional wall plastering and modern concrete floors set the tone for a stylish new Stone Town experience. And surely here, on Gizenga Street 351/352, the guest is in the midst of it. Nowhere gets the historical quarter denser. Just like in Naples or Marrakesh, one can open a window and almost touch the house façade on the other side of the narrow street.

# The story of nationalisation

The intimate boutique hotel with eight rooms on three floors was opened with a cosy reception last December. History was tangible at the event. "They must have overlooked this building", revealed the original owner, Masoud Al Riyami, present for the occasion. Of 62 houses his grandfather possessed in the area, the vast majority was nationalised during the 1964 revo-



lution, the family fled. Is he bitter? "But no", Riyami remarked, "who knows if I would have had the same education I received in Oman here in Zanzibar?" His house, he says, has a long history and was listed in town documents as early as 1927.

### 4 years, 3 architects

"It took us four years and three architects to bring the historical building back to life", says Francesca Scalfari, who also owns the Wonders boutique on the ground floor. In the light and airy hotel rooms, some with beautiful large balconies, local kanga material and modern bedside lamps harmonise. "We want to be in harmony with our surroundings", says Scalfari,



Beautiful courtyard restaurant for breakfast and dinner

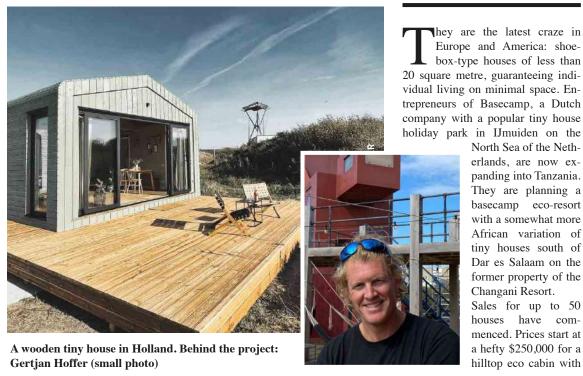
who lives in Zanzibar with husband Simon and son Luca. When guests settle for dinner with calamari and cauliflower puree, the call of the muezzin is heard - lest they forget they are in the heart of heritage.

**Sharazad Wonders Boutique** Hotel, from \$120 sharazadboutiquehotel.com



# TINY HOUSES IN TANZANIA

Dutch pioneers of Tiny Houses have set their eyes on Africa



Swahili culture preserved: Peponi Hotel in Lamu (above) is the first

choice for visitors. Celebrities have built dream villas in Shela (right)

They are the latest craze in Europe and America: shoebox-type houses of less than 20 square metre, guaranteeing individual living on minimal space. Entrepreneurs of Basecamp, a Dutch company with a popular tiny house holiday park in IJmuiden on the

North Sea of the Netherlands, are now expanding into Tanzania. They are planning a basecamp eco-resort with a somewhat more African variation of tiny houses south of Dar es Salaam on the former property of the Changani Resort. Sales for up to 50 houses have comterrace. Another basecamp might come to Mafia Island.

"In a sustainable tiny house near the beach you are working without any interruptions, meeting inspiring people while living completely self-sufficient", said Gertjan Hoffer, 46, one of the masterminds behind the project. Similar to Fumba Town in Zanzibar, the "Basecamp Dar", situated about 30 kilometres from the city, will be built on sustainability and eco-principles, the initiators say. The portfolio, however, is more tourism-oriented targeting global travellers, digital nomads and eco-conscious tourists.

The Basecamp IJmuiden with 33 different tiny houses, windmills and solar, was built on a re-naturalised former parking area by the sea near Amsterdam starting 2018. Every house has a unique design, some with fully-mirrored windows, others entirely made of wood. The camp runs on solar energy.

