

The Fumba Times

FROM ZANZIBAR TO THE WORLD – THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL

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**NEW WOOD
TIMBER WITH US
IN ZANZIBAR**



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"Among first buyers"



Arif Mazrui, 56, Zanzibar:
"Locals can afford it"



Preeti Aghalayam, 50, India:
"People are lovely here"



Cristina Franco, 48, Spain:
"Daily flight connections"



Gerard Lokossou, 51, Kenya:
"Investment to identify with"

PHOTOS (4): PRIVATE, KEEGAN CHECKS

FIRST RESIDENCE PERMITS ISSUED

The very first residence permits based on property investments were issued by the Zanzibar government, hundreds more are underway.

The first four recipients are from the Netherlands and home owners in Fumba Town, the sprawling eco city development near the capital. The so-called "Golden Visa" has been long and eagerly awaited by foreign homebuyers in Zanzibar. Mudrick Soraga, the present Tourism Minister and former Investment Minister, initiated the bold new arrangement for which immigration laws in Tanzania had to be changed (read the full story on page 3).



Happy faces: Dutch Fozia and Gerrit de Jong, Petra van Bommel with the new permits

FUMBA'S FABULOUS FIVE

Why the whole world is migrating to Zanzibar - Who suits the island best?

By Andrea Tapper

Who wants to live in Zanzibar? We asked five people from different backgrounds who have a residential or holiday home in Fumba Town. Maybe you discover yourself in them?

Tourism is booming and with it, foreign investment on the isles. The premier residential and holiday green city Fumba Town on the western sunset coast has sold more than 1400 houses and apartments. But who are the people investing on the tropical island and what are their motives? Housing developer CPS wanted to know it better and contracted two research analysts, the renowned German Technical University (TU) of Berlin and Valantic, a digital transformation company, to pin-point exactly which customers are interested in making the big move to the up-and-coming island.

Results? Among the homebuyers from near and afar, five prototypes dominate: locals, members of the diaspora (for instance from Oman), foreigners who come for business or work, global investors and people who simply want a holiday home. But all have something in common:

"Safe, convenient, sustainable and community-minded – that's the key allure of Fumba Town", says Tobias Dietzold, one of the CPS directors. THE FUMBA TIMES spoke to five typical new residents. Here's their personal story.

DIASPORA Nafiah Abdullah Al Bahry, from Oman, retired: "I had been looking for exactly the type of home in Zanzibar that Fumba represents; in Oman and Dubai we have similar ready-made communities and I like them. I was born and raised in Stone Town but we live in Oman. I have four children and two grandchildren. For all of us I wanted a second home in Zanzibar, but I was afraid to build on my own or with relatives. On the other hand, I was not scared to return or invest here unlike others who do not want to invest in Zanzibar given its history. I was 13 when my parents left the island. I bought three houses, renting out two of them. I am happy when I'm here. Zanzibar is a part of us."

LOCAL Arif Mazrui, GM of Fisherman Tours, the oldest travel agency in Zanzibar: "I am a Zanzibari and I love Fumba! It's not true what some say, that Zanzibaris cannot afford to buy a home here. I know quite a number of middle- and upper-class locals who could buy 40 homes in Fumba! Some just

don't like a shared communal life. A house without walls around - still religiously unthinkable for some. My wife and I think differently, we love our 3-bedroom townhouse. It's simple, relaxed and blends with nature. I bought early knowing it's a good investment. I also like the fishermen of Fumba. This part of the island is not yet destroyed. Fumba is the future of Zanzibar."

WORK Preeti Aghalayam, the first female director of Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM): "It feels like a miracle that

the first international branch of our famous university landed in Zanzibar not even a year ago. We had the choice of several African countries but the strong support of the government and the vibe of Fumba got us! We feel a palpable warmth here. Around 12 professors and myself needed residencies, a supermarket, security. The variety of buildings in Fumba Town, the proximity to the airport convinced us. Here, we live close enough but not on top of each other."

"Always happy when I'm here"



Avatars of Fumba: a virtual reality image of typical Zanzibar investors - from grandfather with baby to digital nomads to diaspora offspring

HOLIDAY HOME Cristina Franco, "Topsy Gypsy" fashion designer based in Dubai: "During a safari in Serengeti I fell in love with Africa, and when a friend pointed out to me that there are reasonable and pretty holiday homes available in Zanzibar, I said: yes! I use my holiday home in Fumba to escape the heat of Dubai with daily flight connections, or come here directly from Spain, my home country. When I am not in Fumba, I rent out. I have placed a lot of emphasis on creative decoration and quality interiors for visitors to have a unique experience. What's missing? Maybe a world-class holiday rental service."

INVESTMENT Gerard Lokossou, investor from Ivory Coast/Kenya: "Close to the international airport and to the capital on a rapidly developing island – you can't go wrong. Fumba for me is a holistic place. I originally come from Ivory Coast, and have fallen for East Africa in Nairobi. My principle: invest in real estate at an early stage and only in a quality environment. I would never buy where I don't want to live myself."

Homebuyers of 60 nationalities have invested in multicultural Fumba Town. 30% come from East Africa, 20% from Europe, 20% from US and 15% from Middle-East.

ANTI-SLAVERY HOLIDAY



Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and spiritual leader of 85 Million Anglicans worldwide, called for "repentance and reconciliation" in Zanzibar.

During a joint festive service at Christ Church in May, Zanzibar's President Hussein Mwinyi announced that a new national holiday against slavery will be commemorated on 6 June. The impressive church was built on the site of a former slave market in 1879. Welby visited the Slave Trade Exhibition calling it "heart-breaking and very powerful". Also present was retired bishop Suheil Dawani from Palestine condemning "any religion misused to incite political violence." Zanzibar's slave market was closed on 5 June 1873 after British pressure.

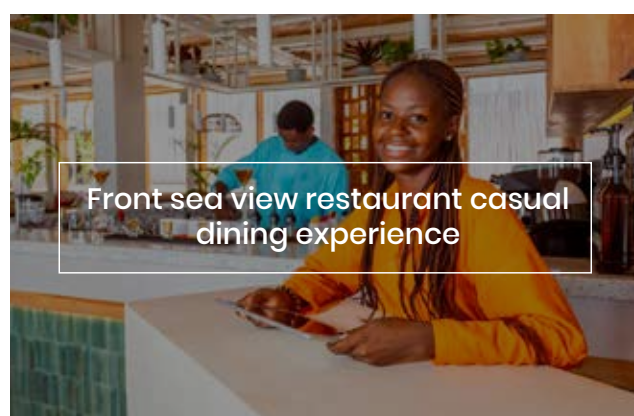
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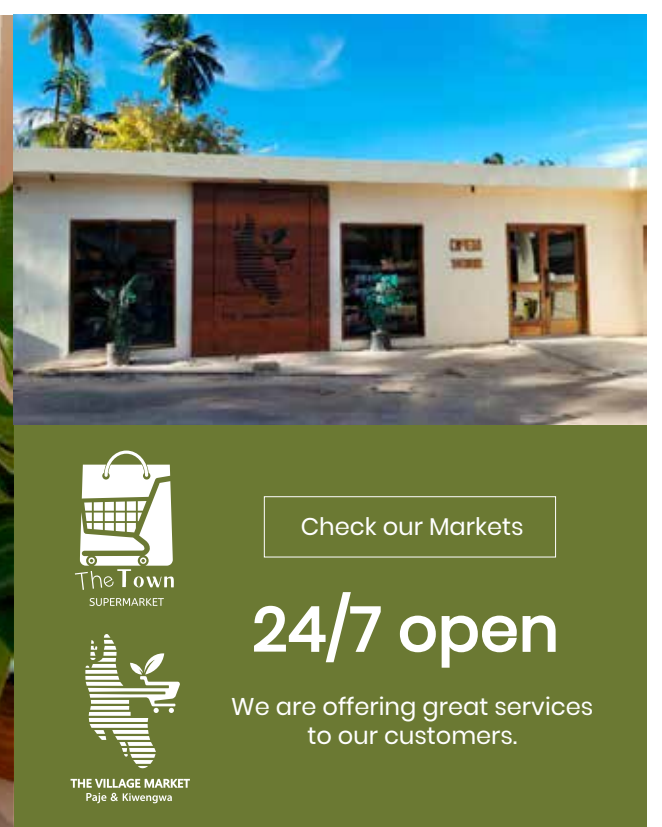
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TIMBER WITH US!

The wooden vision of Zanzibar

Paving the way for sustainable timber buildings: model of a new family home (left), and young visitors at a wood exhibition in Fumba. CPS employee Ho-Suk Mann explains the benefits of timber construction.



By staff writer

Fumba Town is betting on wood. More and more houses in Zanzibar's first eco city are built using engineered timber – from stylish holiday homes to practical low-cost-shops and studios. Dreaming of a natural timber home? Here's an overview of its benefits.

The exhibition was explained. "People hear about the renaissance of wood as a building material, but many questions remain. How fire-proof is engineered timber really? How can it be environmentally-friendly to cut down trees? What about the termites in Africa?" Zanzibar wants to become greener. New homes and holiday homes on the tourism dream island should be built more ecologically.

But how? Timber construction can help. Backed-up by international visitors and actually allowing visitors to touch and compare different high-tech timber samples – from cross laminated timber (CLT) to "glue-lam" –, a recent exhibition in Fumba Town did provide answers.

A show house for the planned Burj Zanzibar skyscraper will also be erected soon. The Burj Zanzibar (see story on the right) by developer CPS is set to

be the tallest timber apartment building in the world. Why are timber buildings experiencing a renaissance? In Germany, already a fifth of residential houses have been constructed with engineered timber in the last few years. With growing environmental awareness, the oldest building material in the world has turned into the darling material of the future. There are many good reasons, the exhibition demonstrated.

■ Dirty cement: The conventional construction industry with cement and steel is responsible for 37 per cent of greenhouse emissions because of its high-energy production and transport, while wooden buildings do just the opposite and store CO2 like a battery. A 4,000 cubic metre building

like the planned Burj Zanzibar with 28 floors would bind 3,200 tons of carbon dioxide, stored in the wood forever.

■ Healthy forests: Wood is a fully regrowable raw material. Contrary to what one may think, the wood industry is growing but forests, when correctly reforested, are not diminishing. Austria for instance has more forest than 30 years ago.

■ Speed building: Timber construction is faster and more precise than conventional building because of its pre-fab elements. "In Zanzibar we can assemble one floor per week", forecasts engineer Prof. Thorsten Helbig, an expert in the international building consortium which will oversee the construction of the Burj.

■ Natural AC: Wood insulates ten times better than concrete – equally ideal in hot and cold climate.

■ Smarter timber: Wood fell out of favour when ever larger buildings required stronger materials. But the development of durable high-tech mass timber – with pieces of wood glued, nailed and otherwise processed together into working panels – has proven a solid 21st century alternative.

■ Firefighter qualities: Mass timber gets charred, and other than even steel does not lose its structural strength under fire, it has been established in extreme testing.

■ Lightweight beauty: One cubic metre of concrete weighs 2,7 tonnes, one cubic metre of CLT-wood only 400 kg – six times less, but it has the same structural strength. And what about the termites? Wet wood would indeed attract them, therefore mass timber undergoes an industrial drying process; ventilation and concrete foundations provide further security.

www.fumba.town
www.burjzanzibar.com



CheiChai AFFORDABLE

It's raining and Leander Moons, a leading architect of Fumba Town, is inspecting the construction site of the CheiChai. Named after a traditional Swahili greeting, and standing at the outer boundary of the 150-acre Fumba Town project, we see concrete foundations, rapidly growing wooden wall elements – and "anchors". Anchors? The metal screws in wooden beams are "the detail which took most thought", Moons explains. "We had to make them fire- and rain-resistant". Galvanised steel "feet" serve a similar purpose: to protect against



Mayoni flats & Vizazi family homes STYLISH

Also made of engineered timber, additional Mayoni Bay homes and Vizazi Oasis family units are on the way – new variations of already existing house types in Fumba Town. The Mayoni flats (Swahili for "in the heart"), now starting at \$139,900, have turned out to be a secret bestseller. The new Mayoni Bay homes are nestled along a waterway-like residential pool and a wooden deck – a real tropical oasis in the heart of Fumba. The three-storey Vizazi homes grow and shrink with the family, have room



Burj Zanzibar HIGH-END

96 metres high, 27 floors, poised to become the highest timber tower in the world – that is Burj Zanzibar. The outstanding global environmental landmark will be widely visible from from high in the sky aboard a passenger plane once erected – not to talk about 360-degree Indian Ocean views for the lucky inhabitants. First announced in December 2022, more than 40 percent of the 138 tower apartments have already been sold off-plan, disclosed developer CPS. "Ground-breaking could take place later this year or towards the beginning of 2025 when we expect to have 60-70 percent of the units sold", CEO Sebastian Dietzold said. Prices for the stunning holiday and residential apartments with panoramic views presently range from \$137,900 to \$1.15 million. There will be studios, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments and (the most expensive) penthouses. The concrete 6-floor-foundation of the Burj will be occupied by a new hotel brand, Canopy by Hilton to open in 2028.

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THE NEW EAST COAST
Modern restaurants, light vibes and first village roads

The new Shanga restaurant (big photo) is airy and modern, bringing new style and top cuisine to Paje at the East Coast. A twisted palm tree (photo right) marks the new Be Zanzibar hotel in Jambiani

By Andrea Tapper

The next generation of East Coast fun is here. Less makuti, more glass, bamboo and lightness seem to be the new beach vibe. Gamechanger restaurants, start-up cafes and daring hotels are sprouting up from Jambiani to Michamvi.

News on the beach: The 22-kilometre stretch of the southern East Coast, dotted with fishing villages, budget and boutique accommodation is stretching its wings – this season ever more. Wings also play a role in a most-photographed art installation by Tanzanian artist Linda at the brand-new Shanga (Swahili for "beads") restaurant, the big surprise newcomer at the northern end of Paje.

The restaurant with a two-storey modern glass-and-wood structure seats 200 people, adding a fresh breeze of natural materials, earthy tones and top cuisine to Zanzibar. A beautiful interior plant design was done by Fumba's permaculture team. Owner Nikitas Simion will add an equally modern, bohemian hotel with 26 rooms and a large 30m-pool shortly, he tells me when we catch up a few days later. The 39-year old Romanian owns Zanzibar's best supermarkets, and plans to establish the Shanga brand in Dar es Salaam and other African countries. "We are modern, but African

art and culture is very important to us", he said. Another hotel newcomer, "Be Zanzibar" towards the southern end of Jambiani, is recognisable by a unique twisted palm.

Syrian developer Tarek Maatouk, 40, and his wife Alexandra designed 16 jungle-look deluxe cottages; casually, they serve pasta with lobster sauce on the cliff. The Bamboo Boutique hotel next door with ultra-modern architecture holds another great restaurant and one of Zanzibar's best spas, The Elements, operated by versatile, well-known Vietnam entrepreneur Kim Anh Nguyen Thi. On the way to sleepy coastal town Makunduchi, we observe construction activities on almost every beach plot. Crazy craft made of jeans, lamps with dhow ropes and other unusual home

And the best newcomer is ...?

& garden paraphernalia sells German florist Ilka here. "I wish some of the coast would remain undeveloped", says Leonie Kaack, owner of Zanzibar's best known backpacker hotel New Teddy's on the Beach. But even she could not resist starting a new venture. Recently she opened the wonderful, more upmarket Babu Villas (see sidebar).

A new road for Paje – good or bad? Next morning on the Paje strip, Kim is holding court in her tiny "Hanoi Café". Over the last few years, street



BEST STAYS FOR ALL BUDGETS

Perfect location: Babu Villas

The beauty of the southern East Coast is a wide variety of boutique hotels, apartments and villas. Here THE FUMBA TIMES pick - all offering special rates for residents.

Private comfort: Babu Villas – New! 3 lovingly furnished design apartments with pool and a terrace directly overlooking the white beach of Kibigigi; very private and very relaxed

Ultra luxury: Xanadu – 9 top extraordinary domes with butler service in an oceanfront paradise for a once-in-a-lifetime experience near Michamvi

Close to the party: B4 Boutique – quieter boutique hotel near the famous B4 beach club with 15 rooms in Paje, yummy sourdough breakfast & mezzie

Cosy classic: Blue Oyster – 18-room family-run hotel with excellent kitchen, a quiet beach and sustainability concept in Jambiani

Perfect hideaway: Daima Villas – private reclusive with 6 homey rooms and Italian-Zanzibari cuisine in a tropical garden villa in Jambiani, 2 min to the beach

Polish pleasures: Jambiani Villas & Passion Hotel – 3 beautiful compounds with villas and outstanding design hotel along Jambiani beach

NEWS FINALLY RESIDENTS!



Milestone: Dutch national Fozia de Jong receiving her resident permit from ZIPA immigration chief Zakia Kisiri (left)

Joy and relief were expressed when the first foreign home owners were granted legal resident status in May in Zanzibar.

All four are Dutch nationals and have bought property in Fumba Town, the growing eco city near the capital. The new residence status is granted with an investment of \$100,000 and above. The move has been eagerly awaited. It is meant to encourage foreign private investment in the islands and to make life easier for property buyers. "We are expecting many more applications", said Vuai Lada, acting director of the Zanzibar Investment Authority (ZIPA) when handing over the first light-blue digital "e-permit"-cards to foreigners in his office.

"It's a big relief", said Fozia de Jong, a Dutch housewife, when receiving the permit. "We have been waiting for this for two years while we had to leave the country every three months to renew our tourist visas", said Petra van Bommel who moved to Fumba Town with her family of four also from the Netherlands. In Fumba Town alone, more than 100 new residents are expected to qualify for the permit.

Anybody who buys a ZIPA-endorsed property of \$100,000 or more qualifies for the practical stay permit. Initially, the "golden visa", as it is called in other countries, was supposed to also cover multiple investments as long as they exceed \$100,000. This obviously has been changed, confirmed ZIPA executive Lada during the handover in his

office. Without further explanation he said: "For the time being, one single investment property must be worth \$100,000 or more. However, this can be evaluated in due course." Many residents have criticised the change: "we hope this will be re-evaluated", they expressed.

\$550 for two years
The so-called "class C11 visa" is valid for two years, costs \$550 and is renewable as long as property continues to be owned by the holder. East African nationals pay \$300. It includes the investor, his or her spouse and up to four children under 18. Family members pay \$50 each. "The residence permit does not replace a work or business visa", stressed Zakia Kisiri, immigration officer in charge of the new permit at ZIPA.

The investor-friendly "Golden Visa" has been in the making since 2021 and was finally passed with a new Tanzania-wide immigration law in June 2023. To apply, a Zanzibari tax number and police clearance from the home country of the applicant are required. Fumba Town developer CPS and THE FUMBA TIMES have been pressing for the new stay permit for years.

"History was made", investors acknowledged, when receiving the desired new national identity card for their chosen country of residence. The card also assigns them of a national driving licence as well as attractive resident's tariffs with airlines, ferries and events.

How to get the permit:
Homebuyers who bought from developer CPS may contact their sales agent for information; other homebuyers contact ZIPA's one-stop-investment center, website: zipa.go.tz.

Teamwork (from left): THE FUMBA TIMES editor Andrea Tapper, Immigration officer Zakia Kisiri, Gerrit and Fozia de Jong, Petra van Bommel and acting ZIPA director Vuai Lada during the ceremony

MIND MY BUSINESS LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

GO FOR COFFEE AND COCKTAILS

New artisan café Asili in Paje



Modern look, top coffee: Asili café in Paje

Poland, he opened Asili coffee last year. Situated directly next to Paje's local supermarket, the retro-furnished hang-out is busy from morning to evening with internet users who make use of the co-working space and very good coffee, indeed. "Paje is young", says Siganje who seems to have hit it off with holidaying global nomads who cannot do neither without their laptops nor an extra-strong caffeine shot in the mornings. Espresso macchiato, decaf, Americano – all are made with top-grade coffee directly from the farm.

Siganje's speciality: he names his different coffee beans after Tanzanian tribes that do the cultivation. He is planning coffee and wine tasting workshops, also barista training. Beans are roasted in dark and medium quality by farmers in Mbeya; to guarantee quality, Siganje, a graphic designer by profession, even filters his own brewing

water. "Low calcium, better for the machines", he explains. "What makes Tanzanian coffee special? "Good altitude, fertile soil", he says. As the day grows older, customers start coming for a homemade date coffee brandy or – equally rare – Tanzanian "Presidential" red wine, produced from Makutupola grapes in Dodoma. The food is imaginative, too, from octo-to-hotdogs with octopus to Lake Victoria fish cake. Anything goes, "as long as it is a natural Tanzanian product and we know the producer", says Siganje. His customers are happy about it.



Capuccino time: Siganje (left) with barista Tumi John

IG Asili goods café, asiligooods.com
Asili Goods Café, Paje, open 9am-10pm

WELCOME NOTE
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FT!



Andrea Tapper
Editor-in-chief
THE FUMBA TIMES

In five years of reporting from and about Zanzibar, what story did I like most? What was the most difficult to write? I find it hard to answer such readers' questions - because I love them all. There's always plenty to report about, and THE FUMBA TIMES has made it a trademark to cover the tiniest community start-up - often in our popular regular columns 'Local Hero' and 'Mind my Business' - with just as much passion as we dedicate to unearthing the big headlines on the sunniest of shores.

Surely, Corona times were a tough nut to crack. I remember heading out to the airport when German tourists were evacuated by their travel companies. I had decided to remain behind, no matter what and my journalistic instincts were right: no lack of twists and turns in those days!

When THE FUMBA TIMES started out in 2019, it was meant to give Fumba Town, then in its initial stages, some soul and warmth. To make sense of the construction site in the midst of Zanzibar, trying to be different: resilient, green, adaptable. To create an umbilical cord between the growing town and its residents, local as well as foreign. Fumba remains our focus. Zanzibar, East Africa and beyond is our context.

In no time we established ourselves as a regional voice and the first lifestyle newspaper around. Today we are read and followed by over 125,000 readers. You find us in Tanzania, Kenya, Oman - and in your mailbox at home. A big thanks goes to publisher CPS, the developer of Fumba Town. Sebastian Dietzold, his wife Katrin and his brother Tobias Dietzold, who from the beginning believed in an "old-fashioned newspaper", albeit with a modern look and feel. And, as any decent publisher in the world, they also believed in and stuck to interfering as little as possible in editorial content. I would not have started THE FUMBA TIMES otherwise. As a nosy journalist I'm a terrible PR person.

So, here's my promise for many more years. We will keep on asking the uncomfortable questions. We will stay entertaining - just check our cover story about five prototypes of people attracted to Zanzibar. This issue, we also share insights of green research about eatable fish and mangrove protection on page 6 and 7, as well as the enormous feedback to our street name challenge. Thanking you, dear reader, for your continued trust and interest, this birthday celebration is for all of us.

GUEST COMMENT
FOOD FOR THOUGHT
IN FUMBA



Eva Klaus, 25, is a political economist from Washington and co-organiser of the Zanzulu event, an ongoing tech and free-spirits convention in Fumba Town. Here she explains what it is all about.

These days, you may see some interesting new residents hanging out around Fumba Town. Be sure to say hello - the conversation is bound to be interesting! The new neighbours have been coming from all over the world to participate in Zanzulu - a five-week pop-up village festival, as we like to call it. It's an event, a workshop, a conference - in short: an experience! Zanzulu aims to connect entrepreneurs and innovators who are pushing the boundaries of technology and social innovation.

Zanzulu was inspired by Zuzulu, a gathering hosted by Vitalik Buterin, founder of the cryptocurrency Ethereum, in 2023 in Montenegro. Vitalik also came to Zanzibar - his first visit to the island, and in his very own way became a much wanted interview partner and panelist during his short stay.

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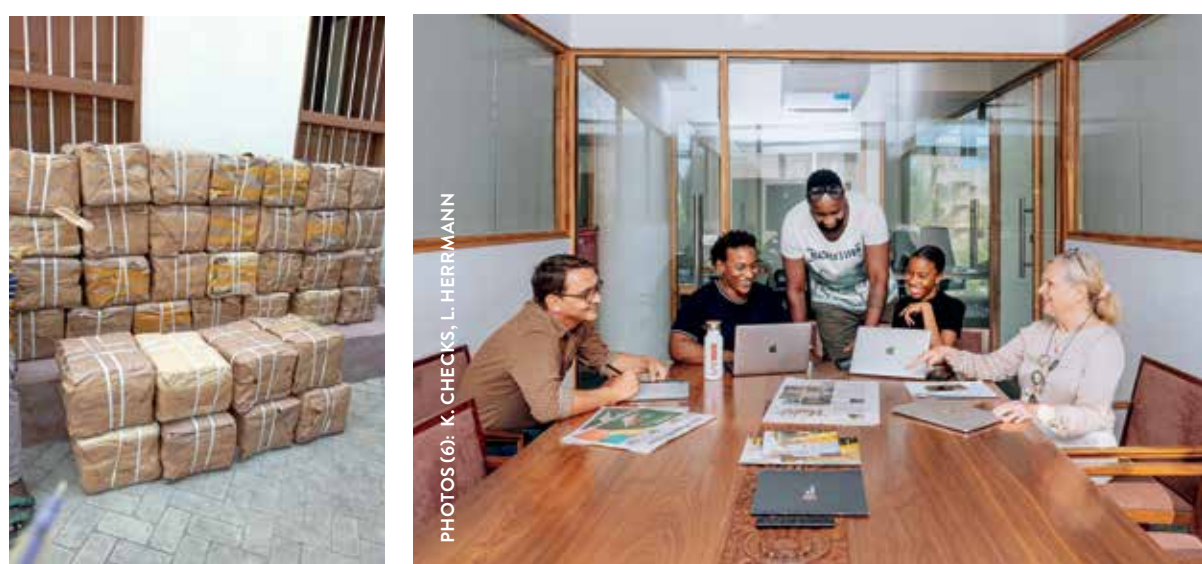
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NOW & THEN FIVE YEARS FUMBA TIMES



THE MAKING OF...
...our newspaper from story idea to print



From conference to shipping: Many hands and brainstormings are needed for the print and online edition of THE FUMBA TIMES. Publisher Tobias Dietzold (left, photo above), does what good publishers do, not interfere too much!

READER LETTERS

"Amazing Stargazing"

After reading the Fumba Times article Dec-Feb '24 "Totally Spaced Out" I was pleased to take the author's recommendation of downloading NASA's Spot the Station app to anticipate upcoming orbital passes over the region. In April I managed to observe the ISS during three separate passes in one 24-hour period. It's a special treat to show others when it is coming out. The tranquility, clarity of the sky, and low building obscuration around Fumba Town make it easier to ob-

serve the heavens. Fumba peninsula certainly "punches above its weight" for stargazing thanks to the dark surrounding ocean and embryonic regional development footprint. As the region develops, I hope municipal attention can be paid to DarkSky initiatives that reduce the growth of light pollution (downward-directed shrouded lighting, reduced or time-bounded floodlighting from adjacent urban facilities), joining DarkSky-affiliated urban communities as Fulda, Germany and FlagaStarf/Seodoma, US.

-RS, Fumba Town denizen

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"I CAN'T SEE ANIMALS SUFFER"

Swiss biologist helping Zanzibar with her Paka Clinic



Eva Styner in her Paka Clinic in Mombasa. She also offers boarding for cats when their owners are away

By Andrea Tapper

Some tourists fall crazily in love with the cats of Stone Town and pay hundreds of dollars to take a kitten home. On the other hand, Zanzibar is struggling to keep the numbers of wild cats at bay. The "Paka Clinic" in Mombasa takes care of both.

Our entry seems staged. When the metal door of the Paka Clinic in Mombasa opens, a black cat crosses just in front of the car from the left to the right. I make a note to check if this means good or bad luck. Eva Styner, 68, with an ultra-short haircut, greets me and leads me upstairs to the operating room where

cats are being neutered. Veterinary Dr. Goodluck Gaudance is operating on an elderly cat with skin cancer. Tiny instruments lay sterilised on a piece of cotton.

The clinic catches and sterilises about 60-75 cats per month, 700 per year. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. According to one statistic, historic Stone Town may well harbour about 2,000 cats on one square kilometre. That's the same cat density Jerusalem registers, said to have 240,000 of them in its boundaries - one of the highest cat populations in the world. In Europe, Romania has the most cats. In Germany, love for kittens has made them pet No. 1 before dogs and birds, with 15 million cats in a country of 80 million people.

In Zanzibar, neutering is often paid for by hotels and restaurants. In Stone Town, the Paka clinic with its foundation "Nature Care" and eight employees acts on its own account. "I

can't see animals suffer", says Styner, who came to Zanzibar twenty years ago from Switzerland and founded the clinic after her retirement. Married to Salim Lukman, the owner of a famous backpacker restaurant here, she had been working as a biologist in Bern for the Swiss government and international

"Cats are household pets, not wild animals"

organisations. "It's better to spy females than to castrate male cats", she knows, "it has a higher impact".

Why not leave the cats alone? The procedure has become easier and more sophisticated over the years: a tiny cut on the tummy, uterus and ovaries are removed, internal and external

stitches complete the 15-minute surgery, explains vet Gaudance. The questions looming behind it are larger: is such human intervention called for? Why not leave cats - who after all hunt rats, mice and even snakes - to roam and multiply freely? "Cats are household pets, not wild animals", biologist Styner points out correctly.

But she has more to say: "Of course cats are part of the ecosystem and the cycle of life, and we would never castrate all of them." It would not be possible either. Studies have shown that cat control interventions reach a maximum of about 75 percent of cats in a targeted area.

"It's a continuous effort", says Eva Styner, "because new cats come up all the time". A cat gives birth to multiple kittens up to three times per year, a cat pregnancy lasts 60-70 days. But studies have also shown that in high density cat areas, infectious diseases including toxoplasmosis (potentially



A vet team under Dr. Gaudance does sterilisations, the instruments are ready



dangerous for pregnant women) and the malnourishment of cats increase.

"Vets don't kill cats"

"Cats themselves suffer, when the density is too high, weaker cats don't get enough food and are often injured", the clinic director explains while cuddling half a dozen cats presently awaiting new owners in the clinic. "The older they get the harder it becomes to find new owners", she says.

"Trap-neuter-return" is the philosophy of the Paka clinic's street cat approach to keep the population within healthy dimensions. "We do not capture and kill cats", says Styner, "that's against the ethos of a vet". Besides street patrols, the clinic takes care of sick cats, provides boarding when cat owners are on holiday and clears the way for "international adoptions". International adoptions? "Tourists fall in love with a particular street cat during holidays, we prepare them to be taken abroad, neutered and vaccinated", says Eva Styner. Presently she is planning "Cat Tours" and even a "Cat Coffee house" in a historic location near the new Malindi fishmarket. The cat tour will explain more about the feline creatures, first

CAT CONTROL IN FUMBA

The Paka Clinic will carry out a 3-step cat control plan for Fumba Town, the seaside community, to live in harmony with and not to be disturbed by cats.

Step 1: No feeding near the tables in restaurants

Step 2: Define two or more cat feeding stations near residences where cats will be fed, collected for neutering and returned

Step 3: Residents and cat lovers will feed the cats once per day at the stations.

Information and donations: www.pakaclinic.com

A DIFFERENT TYPE OF SCHOOL

New series: 'Living with kids in Zanzibar'



Undivided attention: every class has two teachers and not more than 15 students in Jambiani's SEC

Does one have to come to Africa to find intact schools? Started by parents, a small coastal school in Jambiani sets new standards.

Eighty-three sharp, and school starts with a school assembly and joint singing. Quietly the kids have come in, each and every one washing their hands at a rustic water station past the entrance. Helpers are sweeping the earth floor. Director Gemma Davey from Manchester, 35, has an encouraging word and a warm smile for each class before they disperse to their class rooms in a simple bungalow compound in Jambiani. The South East Coast International School Zanzibar - in short SEC - was founded out of necessity eight years ago by a parental initiative when booming tourism was bringing more and more expats to the coast, and the International School in Zanzibar City was too far away.

No class has more than 15 students, but all have two teachers. Now with 150 students from 24 nations aged between two and 14 years, the school seems to thrive on a mix of enthusiastic teachers, clever principles such as

an "anti-bullying policy" and playful learning. This week's project learning is "The Island", an age-appropriate survival training. Which plants are edible? How does a sundial work? "Even if you are tired, it's nice to come to school for such lessons", says 13-year-old Aziza. Comparing the school to her native England, director Davey has observed: "Children seem happier here and more accepting of each other".

Sense of oneness

Where multiculturalism is the norm, binational kids are the majority and a good number of parents immigrants - judging from Europe, one might expect quite some school chafers. The opposite is the case. A sense of oneness prevails: polo shirt school uniforms are mandatory; the standard British curriculum is complemented by bespoke subjects such as African history. "We teach subjects relevant to the location", assures head teacher Davey. Nothing sums up better the symbiosis of respectful togetherness and ambitious individuality than the slogan on a banner in the school yard: "Be kind, be safe, be ready".

With ten international teachers and 18 local staff, the SEC eventually intends to reach up to A level. School fees differ for local and international students,

the latter paying around \$4000-6000 per year. For many parents at the East Coast, some of them freelancers and global nomads, it's not easy to raise the money. Likewise, the school struggles with its finances; over 50 percent of fees go into taxes.

Information: www.seczanzibar.com

Next episode in the series: "How to motivate your child", Mark McCarty, head of the International School Zanzibar, has tips which really work



Enthusiasm comes when children can freely express themselves

"EVERY COMMUNITY NEEDS A CHAMPION"



All smiles in Fumba: world-famous Vitalik Buterin explains cryptocurrency

2.5 million followers on Insta: Vitalik Buterin, 30, founder of the second largest cryptocurrency Ethereum, came to Zanzibar and made time for a frank interview with THE FUMBA TIMES

Excuse our stupid question: How does cryptocurrency work?

Cryptocurrency is a blockchain, an app that computer networks all around the world share. But we don't chat, we trade with money. Any message is a transaction. Transferring money is as easy as an email. The system is decentralised and controlled by its users, we are not dependent on any central company or central bank. Ethereum is everywhere in the world.

Hmm, still not easy to grasp. Is a cryptocurrency like bitcoin or ether better than dollars or Tanzanian Shilling? What about if it crashes? Technologically it is very safe and robust. The biggest risk are fast value changes due to demand. But this is also an incentive to invest. When we started Ethereum in 2014, one ether coin was worth 30 cents,

now it stands at \$3,000. Cryptocurrency is not safer than the dollar but definitely safer than Zimbabwean or Argentinian currency

It made you a billionaire? I am a programmer. I was born in Russia. When I was six, my parents migrated to Canada. Note this: everything important has to start somewhere. And I was there for an early start. We can learn from cryptocurrency: the key ingredient to success is consistency and persistence. Any successful community needs a champion.

What can virtual money do for Zanzibar, for Africa? Imagine it like the modern grandchild of an old-school NGO. Charity and donations work very easily. Even a group of fishermen in Zanzibar could access large amounts from international investors. Transactions cost very little. We are breaking the power of banks.

Vitalik Buterin participated in the Zanzulu conference, a networking event of start-ups in Zanzibar.



CHOOSE SARDINES, AVOID LOBSTER

A-Z protection guide: What fish may I eat?

Fish is healthy and tasty but threatened by overfishing. The dorado (photo) however has a healthy population here

Some of Zanzibar's most delicious dishes include seafood – hardly a surprise on an island. But certain fish species are under threat, even here. Chumbe Island, Zanzibar's greenest holiday spot, has come up with a practical household seafood guide.

Fish burger with ginger and sesame seeds? Warm crusted tuna sushi? Chuku Chuku curry (Swahili for tuna) with a touch of turmeric? If that sounds mouth-watering to you, you may have some thinking to do. In Zanzibar and the wider Indian Ocean, as in many maritime areas of the world, certain fish are under threat due to overfishing, coral and mangrove deterioration and – last but not least – by ever growing demands of restaurants and hotels.

The bad news: yes, rock lobster is on the red list. (All the better, that

we don't eat this exclusive speciality daily.) Good news: you may go for tuna – if it's the right one, and in moderation.

After years of research, Chumbe Island, the world's only self-sustaining eco-island and marine park off Zanzibar's west coast, together with the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries in Zanzibar, have published a 30-page seafood guide for consumer orientation. It uses an easy traffic light system to tell the good from the bad. Green means "best choice" for species that produce lots of eggs and grow fast; yellow stands for "choose with caution"; and red means "avoid" to give highly endangered fish populations the chance to recover.

Who owns the fish? "We", says the fisheries ministry, at least within a territory of 12 nautical miles around the archipelago. Local fishermen can freely operate in an open-access system along the entire

coastline, typically they fish in less than 20–30 metres depth. Dynamic fishing has been forbidden for 14 years. Nonetheless, the pressure on fishing stocks has grown.

A Zanzibari fisherman recounts in the guide: "We used to catch so much kingfish that we could not even sell all of them on the market. Those that were not sold we cut them into small pieces and dried them. Nowadays dried kingfish is no longer available because it is directly sold to restaurants and hotels." An octopus fisher remarks:

Too much fish goes directly to hotels

"The ocean has changed. We used to stop fishing for octopus during a certain time of the year. But now fishermen go out every day, morning, afternoon and at night." How do consumers know if a tuna displayed at Darajani market or at the new fish market in Malindi (well worth a visit, by the way) is a bluefin or yellowfin? Bluefin is much pricier and fatter, and some say, rarely offered here. In supermarkets when in doubt look for labels and certifications like the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) to guide your decisions.

Information: Full guide available on the website chumbeisland.com.

FISH CHECK LIST

- Fish to avoid:**
 - **Bluefin Tuna**, popular for sushi and sashimi, overfished to the point of critical endangerment
 - **Groupers**, popular in seafood dishes, endangered due to overfishing
 - **Sharks**, under significant threat
 - **Parrotfish**, a keystone species in coral reefs. Leave them in the sea!
- Choose in moderation:**
 - **Kingfish**, very popular in Zanzibar's restaurants, but global stocks are decreasing
 - **Snapper**, facing threats from the clearing of mangroves for coastal development
 - **Prawns**, fished in brackish water in Zanzibar, which is a feeding ground for many fish species
 - **Yellowfin Tuna**, when sourced responsibly it's an option, but important to monitor
- Enjoy:**
 - **Dorado (Dolphinfish, Mahi-Mahi)**, vibrant fish with a healthy population
 - **Squid**, large distribution range in the Indo-Pacific area
 - **Reef Octopus**, sustainable when properly managed, in Zanzibar 500g is the minimum size by law
 - **Sardines**, high reproductive rate, packed with nutrients

Sources: Zanzibar Sustainable Seafood Guide, WWF.



Eco pioneers: beautiful Chumbe island from above

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Bicycle workshop in Stone Town: new ideas for colourful lanes

LET'S GO CYCLING!

Zanzibar wants to become more bicycle-friendly.

Special lanes for bicycles in Zanzibar and Pemba are planned, thus introducing the island's very first bicycle infrastructure. At a recent master plan bicycle workshop at Maru Maru hotel with local and international experts, the groundwork for a more bicycle-friendly archipelago was laid. More cyclists would certainly reduce congestion with vehicles and traffic jams especially in the Stone Town area, participants agreed. "The increasing influx of cars and pollution already poses a severe threat to the UNESCO World heritage site", they summarised. "We also want to support small businesses that rely on non-motorised transport systems", explained the project's leader Amira Osman, an architecture professor from Tshwane University of Technology in South Africa. A donation of bicycles from Holland is expected.

tal that lack even pedestrian lanes - where would extra cycle lanes fit in? Especially in the historic, narrow alleys of Stone Town there have already been collisions between walking tourists and cyclists and, even worse, motorbikes.

A solution could come with a few main cycling routes, marked perhaps in colourful ways, the bicycle fans suggested. They dotted-out sample routes, for example along the seafont promenade and along airport road in Maisara.

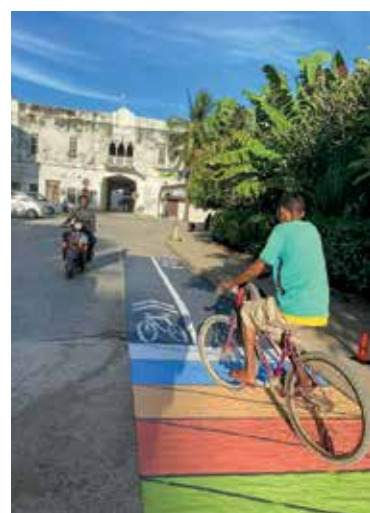
The project is funded by the African Development Bank (ADB) and considered a 10-year-undertaking with gradual marking of bicycle lanes all over Zanzibar. Zanzibar's public administration seems taken by the plan. "We can create an environment where more Zanzibaris take an interest in cycling, both in Zanzibar and Pemba", said Muchi Juma Ameir, director of planning for Stone Town and rural areas.

Ramona da Silva

HIRE A BIKE

Bluebikes: Organised day tours and multiple day tours all over Zanzibar. Tours in the Masingini and Spice region will soon be launched. Bluebikes is a social enterprise by Kawa Foundation. Students of Kawa Training Center receive mechanic training here; the bikes are always in good condition. @ Kiponda, ground floor Kawa Foundation building. +255 776 828 385

E-mountain bikes: Fumba Town resident Kare Murtonen shares exclusive e-mountain biking tips and lesser-known trails around the island. Murtonen contributed to the design and development of the first locally assembled e-mountain bikes here. WhatsApp +255 762 797127



Bicycle lanes will enhance safety

STREET NAME CHALLENGE

Floral and classic names emerge as favourites



BLUE WATERS, GREEN STREETS

Finally: roads in the making in Fumba, to be completed by end-2024

By staff writer

THE FUMBA TIMES called for imaginative street names for Fumba Town – and received an overwhelming echo.

The initiative got residents thinking - and temperamentally discussing. "We are very happy about the response. We received even more suggestions and replies than expected", said THE FUMBA TIMES editor-in-chief Andrea Tapper. From flower schemes to tribal ancestry - name concepts submitted by residents came in all flavours. Several wrote to us from overseas.

A good number of readers simply handed in one or two particular ideas for the road of their residence ("Wild Basil Way", "Granny's Grove"), others developed whole concepts (see extracts below).

Honouring homeowners of 60 nationalities in Fumba, one reader suggested simply marking streets by country names and flags. Annette Tagoe, a Fumba resident

from London, attached photos of her own home, a barren townhouse in June 2021, a green oasis with a potted palm garden in 2024. No wonder, the retired social worker wants the whole of Fumba to blossom, a request backed-up by a good number of submissions.

Some favoured naming streets after politicians ("Samia Suluhu Road") and other remarkable individuals ("Dietzold Square"), while others wisely rejected the idea: "No politics, no living persons, it could later lead to controversies" - in the age of cancel culture a valid warning, indeed.

The wish to vote on the name challenge was expressed ("who is on the judging panel?"), while others took it more humorously ("Pombe Street" on the way to the Chill). Some thought practical ("different themes for different neighbourhoods"), others wanted "historical depth". Sandra and Michael Jessat, Zanzibar residents from Germany wrote: "We would like to live in a multicultural neighbourhood with warm, positive names such as Diversity Drive, Soul Street and Harmony Avenue". Foreseeing a heated debate, resident Odette Stevens from South



Fumba Town got a first public pool recently and long awaited street paving is progressing. The seaside suburb of Zanzibar City is using a modern variation of cobblestones. Green builders prefer them to tarmac roads because they allow rainwater to sink into the soil. The first public pool in Fumba with spectacular seaside views was opened near the Kwetu Kwenu Chill restaurant (photo).

Africa pre-emptively calmed down emotions: "Some will be happy with the final names and some surely won't. I embrace whatever will be." Her own idea: "Why not have bilingual signs with inspirational Swahili words, or spices, with an English translation. That way we could learn the language while taking a walk."

Who will have the final say? "Name-giving will take place when most streets in the community are

completed, probably by the end of the year", said one of the town founders, Tobias Dietzold of developer CPS. Generally, Fumba Town as a residential development in a free economic zone under the Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority (ZIPA) - the first where foreigners can buy - can decide about road patterns and building names on its own. The final okay however will come from the Ministry of Infrastructure, Communication and Transport.

FLOWER POWER

Annette Tagoe, a retired social work manager, wrote from London: "The west of Zanzibar has a abundance of flora. It is therefore my view that the streets/roads should reflect the flora of Fumba. Peacock Tree Lane, Coconut Palm Street, Cat Palm Road, Oleander Grove and so on. It is a joy for us walking around the neighbourhood with all its well-kept plants and flowers. And: there are enough floral names to cover the growing town, no matter how large it becomes."

DO THE OBVIOUS!

A full bag of instantly recognisable, classic choices connected to Africa and Zanzibar came from Lukáš Šinogel, hotelier and Fumba resident: **Sunset Street** (in front of the Horizons and Seafont Penthouses), **Freddy Mercury Street** (great Zanzibari known everywhere), **Green Street** (Fumba is green and sustainable) or **Kijani Street** (= green in Swahili), **Tanzanite Street** (uniquely Tanzanian gemstone), **Serengeti Street** (greatest park in Africa), **Furaha street** (Swahili for happiness).

TRIBES OF FUMBA

An ambitious concept was submitted by **Roseland Hupp**, management consultant from the US. Her idea: showcasing the names of Tanzania's 120 original tribes. But would "living on Massai street" or "meet me at Tumbatu square" suit a cosmopolitan community? Roseland says yes. "Names like **Hadimu Street**, **Unguja Road**, **Pemba Road**, **Bondei Street** educate about origins, cultural context and history, creating a warm, welcoming environment."

Lifestyle News

MANGROVE EXPERIENCE



Big mangrove clean-up: Permaculture managing director, Catherine Decker (left) and Dr. Jenny Bouraima leading Fumba residents

The Fumba community set out for a beach clean-up and planted over 1,500 mangrove seedlings recently to combat coastal erosion. More than thirty sacks of plastic waste were collected on a seafont stretch of about three kilometres. "It was quite an experience", said Andrew Amani of the Urban Care Clinic who initiated the action. "Mangroves here are standing very densely, it was almost a bit frightening to get lost within them." Supported by green organisations like Permaculture Design Company, Recycle at Otzi, Chako

Company, 2 Winds Paddle Sports, more than 60 adults and kids took part, among them many villagers of Nyamanzi and Dimani. An estimated 67% of historical mangrove habitat has been lost or degraded worldwide, environmentalists say. One of the biggest threats to mangroves is the tourism industry. Mangroves absorb up to five times more carbon than land-based forests. Tanzania houses one of the largest coastal areas of mangroves in Africa, with forests stretching along 1,424 kilometre of coastline from the border with Kenya in the north and Mozambique in the south, and around the isles of Zanzibar.



Drastic effect: an illustration by Climate Champions shows how mangroves can reduce wave height and flooding dramatically

MR MICRO MARKET

There are markets, supermarkets and mini markets but Fumba also has a micro market. Suleysh Tuwa sells veggies in the real estate project at his improvised stand near a playground. Much frequented by residents, he provides daily rations of everything from passion fruit to

broccoli. The 22 year-old who is also a distributor for THE FUMBA TIMES said: "I like cooking and when I was living here I noticed that the next veggie shopping is rather far away." He sources his supply from farms around and markets in town by *bajaj*. How much is his margin? "I calculate by feeling", he replies with a smile, and residents appreciate his efforts.



Selfmade veggie seller Suleysh saves Fumba residents grocery trips to town. Also very popular is the pakacha delivery service of Msonge farm

Happy & Healthy

ASK DR. JENNY BOURAIMA

READERS' QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY OUR OWN MEDICAL EXPERT

GET YOUR GLOW!

Jennifer McGuiness, 53, Paje

Dear Dr. Jenny,

I heard it through the grapevine - are you offering anti-aging interventions and treatments at the Urban Care Clinic now? I would be very interested but I want something gentle and not too drastic. Can't wait to hear from you.

Dr. Jenny Bouraima answers:

Your information is correct! Since the beginning of May, we have expanded our offer and re-introduced medical aesthetic services at Urban Care. We are always actively seeking feedback from our patients on how to improve our services, and aesthetic treatments were repeatedly requested.

I believe in a comprehensive approach to health and wellbeing; this should include skincare. For many people these days, skincare goes beyond a simple cleanser and moisturiser and I love to share my expertise and skill sets in assisting them "to get their glow back". My focus in medical aesthetics lies

in emphasising your favourite and best skin features, improving potential blemishes, giving your skin a boost, and keeping it as hydrated as possible. A fake, unnatural and completely altered look that some may know from or relate to medical aesthetics, is outdated in my opinion and therefore not my goal when treating a patient.

No fake looks! Well-aging as opposed to anti-aging is the key. The interventions and treatments we are offering at Urban Care are supporting your skin in collagen production and help to minimise lines and wrinkles. The offers range from mesotherapy

to micro-needling to neuromodulators and more. As in any field of medicine, there is no one-size-fits-all regimen. Everyone has different skin, different needs, and different expectations. I therefore would first have an extensive consultation with you, and develop an individual treatment plan - usually combining different treatments to maximise the positive outcome. So-called repeat "maintenance treatments" are recommended, but will only be needed in 6 - 12 months intervals. I am looking forward to welcoming you to Urban Care to discuss your skincare needs.



NOW OPEN UNTIL MIDNIGHT!

The team of Urban Care Clinic in Fumba Town is now available for even longer hours. The modern state-of-the-art clinic headed by German doctor Dr. Jenny Bouraima expanded outpatient opening hours up to midnight since the beginning of May. Book your appointment; in case of an emergency just come in.

Monday - Friday: 8am - midnight
Saturday - Sunday, public holidays: 8am - 7pm

In case of an urgent medical matter outside of these hours, the clinic remains available on call: +255 622820011, www.urban-care.clinic

FASTER, NAIROBI!

City, country and creativity - all in one place



PHOTOS (6): GOOGLE, OFF CUT, ATAPPER

A 764 million dollar project: Nairobi's giant expressway; popular *mitumba* fashion (small photo) A new 4-6 lane highway to Mombasa was also just announced

By Andrea Tapper

A visit to our neighbour: Kenya's capital Nairobi has moved to another level with a giant expressway cutting through the heart of the city. The city of five million may look more American now, but it has kept its soul.

A light-blue Ford Taunus V6 coupé, 1971, is parked in the gentle shade of an African tree giant. At the Tin Roof Café at Langata Link, customers enjoy their organic breakfast. I have set out to explore Nairobi, where I used to live and work in the 80s and 90s. Kenya and Tanzania are often at odds, yet so close. And cool Nairobi could not be more different than steamy Dar es Salaam.

Langata Link, a small retail hub with a rural feel, is one of a dozen shopping locations and malls with high quality standards (see sidebar) where Kenyans and visitors from all over the world find homemade artisan brands offering everything from handbags to postcards to local fashion. It is here where city and country meet: the Nairobi National Park with lions, giraffes and elephants roaming freely is only a few-minutes-drive away.

The highway monster

With five million inhabitants, the City in the Sun, as it calls itself, seamlessly embraces fast-paced commerce, bohemian creativity and wildlife. Nairobi "encapsulates what

is happening in Africa better than any other city on the continent", observed the New York Times.

Kenyans love country music, beer and shopping malls - and since recently also their new expressway. China has built the 27-kilometre highway for 764 million dollars, will in return collect toll fees for 27 years. The concrete monster perched on huge beams cuts straight through the inner city, has created a bright upper world and a twilight underground where *matatus*, bikes and cars still struggle to move on. Though the expressway is an admission that the car is still king in Nairobi, most people would agree that the drastic measure was the last exit out of a decade-long horrendous traffic congestion.

25 minutes to the airport

A trip to the airport, formerly a two-hour-plus torment, now takes 25 minutes. "It's a game changer" says General Manager Anthony Chege of Serena Hotel; fashion designer Sabine Hüster calls it "a blessing for drivers but a visual catastrophe."

Hüster, a German living in Nairobi for three decades, belongs to a new tribe of crafty settlers, some of them second or third generation expats, completely in sync with a life between savannah and concept stores. Masai-fashion icon Anna Trezbinski led the pack; creatives like Hüster with her company "Off cut" and Barbara Tyack with "Shake the Tree" have followed. The documentary filmmaker from Cornwall lives in Karen Blixen's ("Out of Africa") former coffee house. Mon-

keys are playing in guava trees, when we visit her.

With lace and embroidery, Tyack gives jeans and safari jackets a third lease on life. She sources her raw material at Nairobi's *mitumba* second-hand markets. Hüster and her husband, employing around 50 workers in their garment factory, have a similar business model, tailoring trendy unisex shirts, blouses and shorts from old duvets, curtains and tablecloth, sometimes from prominent sources like Jennifer Lopez' homework collection.

The city's image has drastically changed in the last five years or so. A silhouette of ultra-modern sky-scrapers has superseded the long prevailing 70's look; some real estate bubbles burst but growth is still there. Often I hardly recognise where I am. Alternative bars like the rooftop club cinema

"Unseen" and top-class international restaurants co-exist. More United Nations agencies will move to Nairobi; a state-of-the-art garden city "Enaki" is being built in Gigiri.

High-rise versus old charm

Do the many new high-rise buildings destroy the city's former charm? Arjun Malhotra, 30, has placed his craft beer club in a typical British bungalow, built before independence in



Kenyans love beer, country music and the expressway



PHOTOS (4): MIKE ELPIKE, iSTOCK

More *mitumba* third-hand-fashion by Nairobi brand Off Cut (above left); craft brewer Arjun Malhotra of "Crafty Chameleon" and industrial-look Nairobi Street Kitchen



BEST OF NAIROBI



Cool, dynamic Nairobi, 1,795 metres above sea-level, is the perfect get-away from hot, dreamy Zanzibar.

WHERE TO STAY

Serena Hotel: old-school 5-star with impeccable service
Trademark Hotel: convenient at Village Market

SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

Sarit Centre: has-it-all mall in Westlands
Village Market: top mall in Gigiri
Langate Link: offbeat shops
House of Treasures: concept store in Karen

LOCAL FASHION BRANDS

Off cut: third-hand quality fashion
Shake the Tree: revamped denim and safari jackets
Urban Ranch: high-end leatherware
Anna Trezbinski: Samburu fashion trailblazer

TOP CUISINE

Le Grenier à pain: french pastry
Furusato: Japanese-Korean local favourite
Ezo: Michelin chef from Russia goes Japanese in Westlands
The Talisman: evergreen classic in Karen

JUST DISCOVERED THE NEELA BOUTIQUE HOTEL



High above Stone Town: terrace of new Neela Hotel



NEW HEIGHTS IN STONE TOWN

LOCATION
Ocean view with history

THE BOTTOM LINE
Where Stone Town meets quality

There is a saying: "When in Stone Town, always go for the penthouse." The owners of the new Neela Boutique Hotel have heeded his call. With love for detail, they restored a run-down old structure, occupied for decades by the Ministry of Education, to its former glory - peaking with a casually elegant rooftop terrace on the 4th floor. The 'Views' bar and restaurant there has become an instant success since its opening.

I am seated less than 80 metres away from the Indian Ocean - marvellous! Marginally spoiling the fun is the chunky structure of the Park Hyatt, built one floor higher than the cultural heritage status of Stone Town allows. That one floor, a point of severe disagreement with UNESCO at the time but never rectified, now stands partly in our way. But I calm myself down: the Neela is a wonderful place to ponder the predicaments of Stone Town, Zanzibar's invaluable but harshly neglected ancient quarter.

Fresh and playful

It's always amazing to see how yet another hotel comes up with a different approach and styling here. Neela stands out with high-end quality interiors from the bottom to the top, blessing it with a light, fresh, even playful elegance. Upholstered retro chairs in the lobby - also used for breakfast - are placed next to cosy wall niches. 14 rooms, deluxe and superior, make up for missing views with all-embracing comfort such as deluxe beds and beddings, lighting management and TV. I'd suggest going for the large superior rooms with a bathtub inside. Bold art from Kenya and Uganda such as graffiti-like elephants in the third-floor-parlour ex-

clusively for inhouse-guests lend an art gallery feel. Here, the handwriting of the owners, an Indian-American family living in Singapore, can be particularly felt; Ms Raju Shaulis is an avid art collector.

Innovative cuisine

Breakfast can also be taken in the adjacent Breadfruit café, a little annex, offering surprises like lobster omelette. We try beans and pak choi with ultra-soft octopus and a first-class caesar salad for dinner at the rooftop; amuse bouche with sweet potato cream are heavenly. Bartender Ayubu Mussa, who worked at Zuri and Riu Jambo, goes out of his way to prepare a non-listed pineapple mimosa for me after hearing my preferences. The champagne-juice drink could not have been better when it was invented at the Paris Ritz Hotel in 1925! (AT)



Impressive entrance (top photo); elegant in-room bathtubs

The Neela Boutique Hotel Stone Town

Rooms from \$420; inquire about resident rates. Reservation recommended for dinner and drinks. neelacollection.com



PHOTOS (4): K. CHECKS

Large superior rooms to spend quality time with your loves ones

EMERSON REMEMBERED

Become a member of the Emerson foundation to keep "Babu's" legacy alive.

The longer I'm here the less I understand it", these words were among the last of a man who knew Zanzibar and his beloved Stone Town probably better than anybody else. Emerson Skeens passed away ten years ago at the age of 65 but the legacy of the charismatic New Yorker lives on. A cultural foundation started in his name in 2014 is now accepting new members. Skeens was first to recognise the

tourism value of Stone Town when, in the early 1990's, he opened the hotels Emerson on Hurumzi and Emerson Spice, still the most authentic icons here. Babu, as many called him, was co-founder of the Busara music festival, the Dhow Countries Music Academy and Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF) among others.

Emerson's Zanzibar Foundation has kept up the cultural engagement in his name, handing out yearly awards for music, film and visual art. For the 10-year-anniversary of Emerson's passing artists joined for a live concert. Anybody interested in supporting arts and culture in Zanzibar can now join the membership organisation with several benefits in hotels and restaurants.

L. Beetstra

Information: foundation@emersonzanzibar.com



PHOTO: EMERSON

Unforgotten: Emerson Skeens, a New Yorker who loved Zanzibar and was a cultural pioneer in Stone Town; he died ten years ago

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