

# designingways

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*Belmond Savute Elephant Lodge* - Page 78

Inge Moore co-founded Muza Lab in 2016. Reflecting her vision of creating a studio recognised for designing inspired spaces that, in turn, inspire those who use them (Muza), with a culture that was both analytical and innovative (Lab), the company has enjoyed a roll-call of exceptional projects in its so far short life.

Inge instinctively designs places which make people feel elegant and cherished. She draws on the history of each building and the natural world of its location, developing a construct to inspire the team and help shape the design down to every last detail. An interior designed by Inge is full of discovery, sensuality and fun. Her work delights in hand-crafted and imaginatively re-interpreted elements.

Inge's projects have won many accolades, most recently at Gold Key Awards and AHEAD, and she herself was recognised as Gold Key Designer of the Year in 2013. She designed the Belmond Andean Explorer Train and is currently leading the design team on hotel projects around the world.



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# Belmond Savute Elephant Lodge

Botswana

The Belmond Savute Elephant Lodge in Botswana has reopened following its redesign by Inge Moore, creating 'an explorer's camp for today's explorers'. Located in the Chobe National Park where the big five roam, the skies are large and the land is washed with the muted colours of the Savute, the lodge has become a tented retreat infused with the romance of a bush camp. Here, guests can discover and connect with the natural world, and slow down to the rhythm of the land that surrounds them.

*"I have a huge love and respect for nature and the wilderness: it's something we as human beings need to cherish and protect. So, working on this project has been a real passion, honour and a huge responsibility". "My design not only seeks to create spaces where people can embrace the experience but does this with the greatest of care for the environment" says Inge Moore.*

The public areas are entirely new, each tented room constructed on a timber-based platform to minimise environmental impact. Together, they form an intimate cluster of tented rooms on a footprint that is smaller than before. Luxury Frontiers, the architects of one-of-a-kind tented resorts, worked closely with the Muza Lab team in refurbishing the existing guest-rooms and in creating and installing the new public spaces. These include a kitchen/dining room, lounge and bar, library, spa and arrival lobby, as well as a very special viewing hide where guests can sit and watch the wildlife at eye-level as they gather to drink in the watering hole.

To experience Inge's design is to get really close to nature as a modern-day explorer. The park is not only the home of abundant wildlife, it is the location of the fabled Savute Channel, which flows for years like a river into the Savute Marsh, and then, without reason, dries up before eventually flowing again, creating a dynamic and ever-changing habitat. Unsurprisingly, the word "Savute" means unpredictable.

The area is also home to the Gubatsa Hills, formed 980 million years ago during volcanic movement, which rise 90 meters high out of a completely flat landscape and bear reminders of the nomadic San people in their rock art.

## Arrival

Framing views is key to the arrival experience and the entry buildings have been moved to perfectly capture sights which will always be remembered. Textural, light timbers clad the walls and individually selected pieces of timber have been used in the making of a large reception table, produced in Southern Africa. A cluster of carved poles are stationed just inside the front door, inspired by the carved sticks used by the San people as tent posts or for making a fire. Groups of simple lanterns provide light when it becomes dark, giving a reassuring but gentle glow so as not to compete with the stars of the night sky.

Outside the arrival tent there is a large fire-pit tripod to welcome guests at dusk - one of many fire-pits around the camp which act as beacons for guests walking at night and are a traditional place for people to come together and tell their stories.



Viewing hide



Entrance



Lounge

## The Lounge and Bar

Designed to make each guest feel that the space is "their lounge in the bush", the tented room has the ambience of a place that has been here for a long time with layers of collectibles and lived-in comforts.

The tent itself has a latte (local thin timber struts) edge with a traditionally random crisscross pattern. This design has also been used in decorative screens to the back-of-house buildings and together they cast dappled shadows around the space. The tent sides can be rolled up or down as required by the weather, and seating spills into nature outside. Furniture is a collection of rattan and timber; large custom-designed rattan tub chairs contrasting with natural timber and leather detailing. A traditional library filing cabinet helps divide the space and creates an intimate seating area; there are tables for games and painting, books about nature to read and comfortable chairs to relax in and enjoy the views.

Fabrics combine bright geometric prints with earthy tones and two large chandeliers inspired by local clay pots form focal points in the ceiling. Behind the lounge, there's a library with a concealed TV, a small bar to gather around and a desk for writing or working.



Bar



The Kitchen

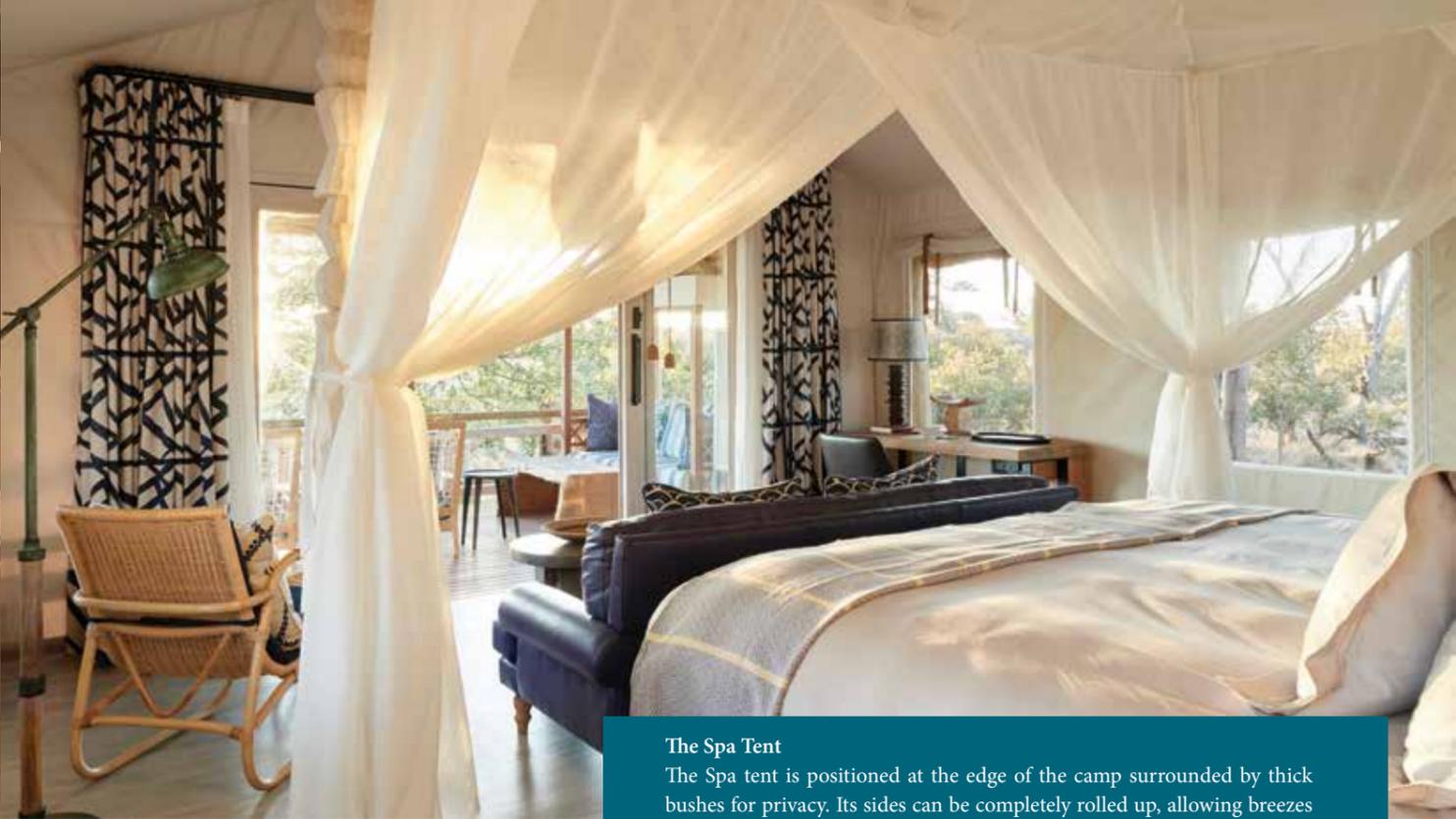
**The Kitchen**

The kitchen is at the heart of the lodge and guests are encouraged use it like their kitchen at home. There is an open cooking area in the centre and dining tables and chairs located to provide fabulous long-distance views. Again, materials are light: limed timbers, white painted floors, geometric fabrics, rattan sofas with high backs and a beautiful handmade layered timber screen. The residential style cooking counter is of timber, above this, there is a sculptural light crafted by South African designer David Krynauw out of Panga Panga wood with brass shades. Guests are invited to reduce their plastic use by re-filling water bottles supplied by the lodge from the carbonated and still water dispensers located in this space.

**The Pool Area**

The new pool is smaller than its predecessor, reducing water consumption and allowing for more space around it to relax. It is constructed of fiberglass with a low-energy heat pump keeping the temperature above 26°C and has a stone coloured interior so that it blends into the surroundings and becomes one with the landscape. Loungers and seating are set up with views over the plains. Next to the pool is a multi-function space that can be used for private dinners or yoga and a fire pit is just a few steps down.

The Pool Area



**The Spa Tent**

The Spa tent is positioned at the edge of the camp surrounded by thick bushes for privacy. Its sides can be completely rolled up, allowing breezes to flow through the space. Its palette is sage green with hand-glazed green tiles and a simple white painted floor; a beaded chandelier takes inspiration from pods and plants and wicker furniture adds to the natural feel. There is a large terrace with low slung chairs, perfect to relax in.

**The Guest Tents**

The main feature in the 12 guest rooms is the bed with a bright blue leather-clad sofa at the end, both facing out to the view. Once again carved nomadic poles are a source of inspiration, this time translated into limewashed timber bed posts over which a mosquito net is softly draped. Handmade blue and ivory-toned string chandeliers hang over the coffee table and in the bathroom, creating beautiful shadows at night. Rattan seating, made by southern Africa's Blind Society are upholstered in a blue-toned fabric inspired by local wax cloth. Existing timber floor was re-used and stained light.

The terrace is very large – a living space outside for guests – and decking is in a composite bamboo. The statement piece is a huge daybed with its own canopy and African-inspired carved side panels – in effect an outdoor four poster ideal for an afternoon nap. There are also low-slung armchairs, side tables and an exquisite locally carved cocktail cabinet.

The bathrooms have a large timber and marble-topped vanity with handmade pottery basins painted with an abstract of natural grasses. Outdoor showers are generously sized and connect guests to nature.

*“The essence of Belmond Savute Elephant Lodge is to allow guests to experience timeless exploration in the heart of wild Africa,” says Inge Moore. “Just as the early explorers widened their horizons and brought home news and learning, I hope today’s guests will return to their homes with once-in-a-lifetime memories and stories to share with others.”*

Furniture and fittings throughout the lodge are from southern African suppliers, including: furniture from Moorgas & Sons, Phases Africa, Cane Time and Weylandts. Artefacts and collectibles are from Toguna and Amatuli, and glassware and tableware from Ngwenya Glass and Creative Copper. Textiles are mainly by St Leger & Viney.

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