Evening Standard

Inside: England heroes party night away

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Deep calm: the view from the pool and a villa at Omaanda

Wild side with a mild side

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER
Omaanda, Namibia

ONCE upon a time, you were left to fend for yourself in the Namibian bush. Now a rash of luxury lodges has opened, providing fine food, crisp linen and huge baths after a day's desert drive. One is Omaanda, east of Windhoek, by Zannier Hotels.

First impressions

It's so discreet Google can't locate it — we spent half an hour bumping down gravel roads trying to. Its on the Omaanda reserve: 9,000 hectares stuffed with oryx, eland, warthogs, white rhino and lions. The lodge has 10 circular stone villas (eight one-bedroom and two two-bedroom), with a main lounge and pool area.

Looks

Natural materials in warm colours under high ceilings with a thatched roof. Baths are cathedral-like, sinks are rough-hewn stone. Terraces have wicker chairs for savannah viewing. Namibia's winter chill is eased by in-room fireplaces staff light for you.

Feel

Friendly and laid-back. The blue infinity pool sets off the orange-green savannah beautifully; watch staff don't fall in in their eagerness to help you. It's not unusual to end up chatting around the firepit, with a G and T from the gin bar by the pool (try Desolate, a local brand).

Extras

Stays are full board. Lunch is a delicious mezze platter, and dinner revolves around delicately presented meat dishes. Also included are a sunrise and a sunset game drive, where you're guaranteed to see at least something: we followed a family of white rhinos.

Outside

Omaanda is about 30 miles from Windhoek and impressively close to the airport — although thanks to Namibia's trademark bad roads it's a decent 45-minute drive.

Dark side

Like most Namibian luxury hotels, this experience doesn't come cheap.

In a nutshell

Upscale, swish safari lodge that's the perfect place to end an epic road trip.

● *Rates start from €650 per person per night. zannierhotels.com/omaanda. Visit expertafrica.com*

Cathy Adams