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MOKUTI RE-IMAGINED

In March 2023 Mokuti Etosha will rise from the ashes, having undergone a total transformation that is sure to capture the hearts and minds of everyone. Over the past thirty-three years this property has been part of the O&L Group and has stood the test of time – emerging bigger, better, more beautiful and exhilarating over time.

THE VERY BEGINNING

Farm Kleinbegin No.941, as it was initially called, next to the Etosha National Park at the Namutoni gate was purchased by Werner List on 12 August 1987. On 10 September 1987 the plan was unveiled for the development of a lodge which would ultimately offer accommodation to 200 - 240 people and was to be named 'Mokuti'. In Ovambo the word means bush or 'in the bush/forest'.

Werner was the first businessman to develop the concept of erecting a lodge/camp a stones-throw-away from one of the entrances of the country's most prized game reserves. Being the closest lodge to the national park – only 40 metres from the Von Lindequist Gate – tourists could stay just outside Etosha, enjoy their daytrips into the game reserve and return to the beauty and luxury of Mokuti at sunset. By tackling this project Werner also proved his commitment and confidence in the new Namibia as he saw a bright future for the country and its people. When the lodge opened its gate, he was lauded by many as a visionary.

Development on the original project was started in August 1988 and the lodge was officially opened on 1 September 1989. The thatched roofed buildings included the guest rooms, pool bar and a huge boma near the pool area with a pool bar and kitchen from where light meals were served. Other amenities included swimming pools, tennis courts, an aircraft landing strip and a snake park.

HISTORY IS MADE

as John Travolta lands at Mokuti. The first stop of a historic flight of a DC-4 "Skymaster" from Johannesburg in South Africa to Oshkosh in the USA was at Mokuti Lodge on 19 July 1994. The most famous of the 25 passengers on board the vintage flight was John Travolta who was greeted at the airfield by Werner and Hildegard List. John Travolta, a pilot and aircraft-owner himself expressed his excitement in crossing the Atlantic in a DC-4, fifty years after the first Skymaster had crossed the Atlantic Ocean for the first time.

Photo:
Dirk Heinrich

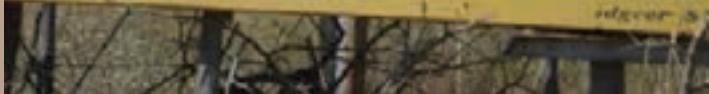
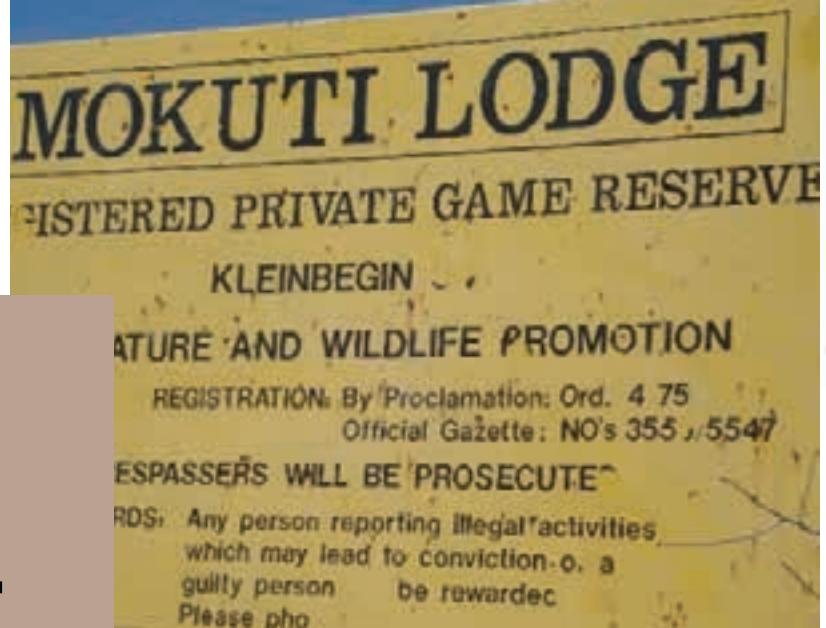


NO APRIL FOOL'S JOKE

MOKUTI BURNS

In the early hours of 1 April 1997, a fire broke out in the curio shop within the convention centre and Mokuti started to burn. The fire brigade in Tsumeb was called but shrugged it off as an 'April-fool's' joke and subsequently did not respond. Although every effort was made to contain the fire, it started spreading. Employees managed to rescue a lot of the kitchen equipment as well as crockery, cutlery, tables and chairs. Mokuti management advised O&L Head Office and a light aircraft was dispatched to the site. When the fire brigade eventually arrived, it was too late. Luckily no one was injured and there was no loss of life. The fire had destroyed both the restaurant and the convention centre - only the walls remained. Rebuilding started almost immediately and throughout the renovations Mokuti remained open to guests. By December 1997 work had been completed and Mokuti rose out of the ashes and presented itself in all its glory.

Photos: Dirk Heinrich



2022 AND BEYOND

At the beginning of March this year, O&L announced the closure of Mokuti Etosha for major renovations. Norbert Wurm, O&L Leisure Managing Director said that excitement was high for another one of the O&L Leisure establishments to be transformed into a contemporary destination, whilst preserving its 32-year character and heritage.

"This grand dame is ready for a facelift and keeping in line with our Purpose at O&L, 'Creating a future, enhancing life'; we want to ensure the lodge will remain at the forefront of the hospitality industry in Namibia. It is with faith in our future and the future of Namibian tourism, despite the unprecedented challenges we faced, that O&L is investing in Mokuti once again to create new realities and set new world-class standards for our industry and country," Wurm said.

MOKUTI RE-IMAGINED

"We are confident that the new Mokuti will wow and impress beyond all expectations," says Etienne Fourie, General Manager. "Without giving too much away at this stage, we promise service excellence delivered by our people and look forward to presenting you with more than just a lodge in the bush. You can embrace being part of sustainably growing and protecting our people, our environment, our country, bush walk with the local Haikom Bushmen, pampering at Omulilo Spa, property and night drives and sky safaris, the Ontouka reptile park and so much more. We look forward to welcoming you at Mokuti in 2023 - guaranteed to be an unforgettable, re-imagined experience."

