

ZBLS – NEWS UPDATE no. 4 January 2012

We would like to alert our readers that this is likely to be the last pre-Lodge opening Newsdate!! Although we are still working on the final touches and have not yet declared the Lodge officially open, before the closing of 2011, we received our first paying guests – 2 couples with five children, who occupied 3 bungalows from the 31st December for 3 nights! In the first weekend of January, we also opened our doors to another four families!

Meanwhile, however, we are still furiously working night and day to try to get everything ready so we can provide guests with a full service!

STAFF TRAINING

In December, 16 new staff participated in a training course run by an experienced trainer from Maputo. Some of the training sessions were held inside the restaurant....



And some on the patio outdoors.....



This is the first of a series of training sessions. The training covered general issues, such as hygiene, communicating with guests, punctuality, and so on, as well as more practical issues.



The main focus of the practical work was on cooking and food presentation. The dish below is duck rice, using all locally sourced ingredients.



Women are in the majority!

Of those selected to work in the restaurant as helpers, the majority at this stage are women. Pedro, the Manager, said that this has come about because: “women have proved to be the most reliable and hardworking in the group.”

BUNGALOW FINISHINGS

In readiness for formal Lodge opening, the mosquito nets, which have been waiting in storage for some weeks, were installed in all the bungalows. These nets, made in Mozambique are used by all the 4 and 5* Lodges and Sir Richard Branson and Prince Harry are amongst the many famous people who have slept under the famous Donabella nets!



The local carpenter is working under the guidance of Pedro to add a nice wood surface on the patios outside the bungalow to give more comfort and privacy to our guests



THE BAR AND PATIO

The bar has now been set up and ready To serve drinks and the best quality espresso from our new coffee machine!



The patio lights are working and, in the photo below, Pedro and I were sipping wine with a couple working with USAID and other charities based in Quelimane and came to talk to us about organising future retreats at the Lodge.



VISIT TO IDUGO

During my latest trip to Mozambique (from the UK), I went with Pedro on a canoe ride across the river and through the mangroves to visit the inland island of Idugo, home to many of the local. Many of the islanders have been employed during the construction of the Lodge and some have had training. Our aim is to develop tours of the island for visitors to the Lodge, so they can experience the way of life of a small African village. Besides its natural beauty, the friendliness and hospitality of its people make it particularly welcoming.



Soon after arriving, we were greeted by a song!



The milk of the coconuts offered to all visitors is the most refreshing I have ever tasted!!



After chatting for some time, we were served lunch by Rosita, pictured above, who is one of the beneficiaries of the credit and training programme run by ZBLS.

Before leaving, we assembled for a group photo!



Everyone saw us off as we left



ELECTION VICTORY FOR MANUEL -LODGE CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR !!

Manuel de Araujo was one of two candidates running for Mayor of the town of Quelimane in the local elections that took place on 6th December 2011. He won the election with 63% of the votes against 37% for the other candidate.



On the morning after the election, Manuel's victory was enthusiastically celebrated by the staff of ZBLS photographed below.



On 30th December, 2011, Manuel officially took up his position as Mayor of Quelimane.



The photos above were taken during the campaigning period leading up to the election.

It is hoped that Manuel's new position will help to attract more customers to the Lodge!