



ZAMBEZI QUEEN

Exploring Africa by luxury houseboat

Ever dreamt of cruising along the banks of the Chobe River to the point where four African countries meet? Imagine a luxurious houseboat river safari where the low rumbling of the magnificent Victoria Falls can be heard in the distance. Well, dream no more as the newly-commissioned Zambezi Queen is your passport to the ultimate “Out of Africa” experience. Leisure Boating takes a look at this luxury houseboat that will provide you with a wildlife river safari like no other.

The Chobe River, which separates Botswana’s Chobe National Park and Namibia’s Caprivi, is one of the densest

population of wildlife seen on the African continent. With the Zambezi Queen, a lavish 45 m “hotel boat”, you can experience the raw wilderness of Africa right from the deck of your own private suite.

The Chobe River sprawls across some 11 000 km² of lush African bush and is home to about 120 000 elephants along with prides of lion, massive herds of buffalo, elusive leopards, the mighty crocodile and hippo, and numerous bird species. And together with the ultimate freshwater gamefish, this is truly a nature lover’s paradise.

The Zambezi Queen is the brainchild of partners Tony Stern

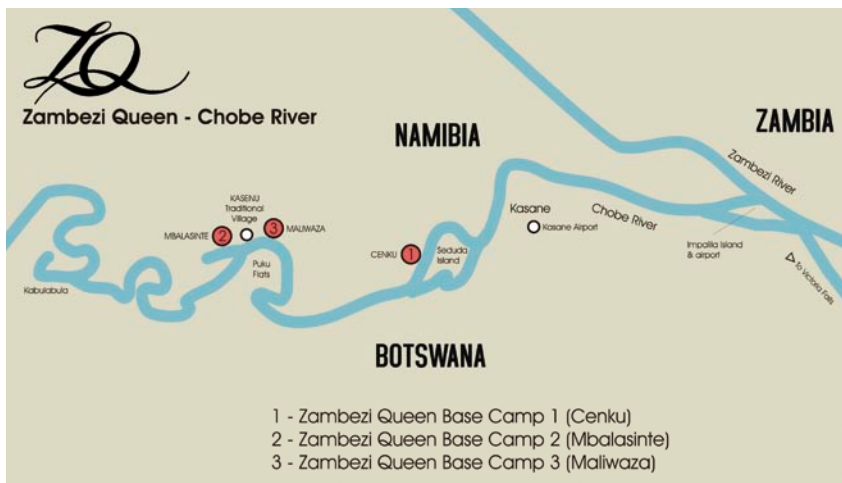
and Brett McDonald. Stern, a marine businessman with an engineering background assisted in the construction and design of the boat, while McDonald and his wife Jacqui, both have a complete understanding in experiencing Africa at its finest.

Together, they make the ultimate team. Both will be living at the base camp and will be responsible for both the operating of the boat and well-being of guests. The Zambezi Queen operates in simply stated luxury and is all about pampering, indulgence, and personalised comfort under the African sun.

Although it’s only launching in July, Stern and Brett McDonald have already started taking bookings for this adventure of a lifetime. The Queen will offer 14 suites of which four are rated master suites. All have private balconies and full-length sliding shutters for both privacy and protection.

The sliding doors incorporate a sliding mosquito net, protection from the sun and the finest finishes complete this cocoon of creature comforts, amidst the wild and untamed Africa.

The first of the vessel’s three levels boasts an air-conditioned reading room, which offers a comprehensive library of books on the area or numerous





The third-level, luxurious dining room offers guests unobstructed views and delicious meals whilst taking in the picturesque African surroundings.

board games. There is also a computer facility with Internet and a curio shop. The remainder of the first- and the entire second level contain 10 suites and four master suites.

All suites and master suites are en-suite with private balconies, king-size beds and are furnished to the highest level. Two of the four master suites have their own private deck with outdoor furniture, while the remaining two have superb panoramic views with doors and windows on two sides. All suites accommodate two guests.

Zambezi Queen is conveniently located about 80 kilometres from both Victoria Falls near Zimbabwe and

Livingstone in Zambia. It is also just three kilometres from the Botswana Airport. Transfers from Livingstone or Victoria Falls airports are by road, and take about 90 minutes, depending on border crossing times.

But road transfer guests will be collected from Immigration that's situated on the banks of the river in Botswana for the 10-minute boat transfer to Zambezi Queen docking station. There is also an air charter company, and there will be just the one border clearance necessary, as it is Namibian-based.

Situated on the third level with unobstructed views on three sides,



The Zambezi Queen "hotel boat" puts the raw wilderness of Africa right on the deck of your own private suite.

guests will dine in absolute luxury whilst taking in the picturesque African surroundings. Pete Goff-Wood, self-styled food guru and one of South Africa's top chefs, has been commissioned to create a menu that reflects the flavours of Africa.

He has extensive experience in all things pertaining to the African palate and specialises in authentic cuisine. All sous-chefs and waiters have been specially trained at his Cape Town-based training centre. The bar will contain both local and imported spirits, wines and beers.

Activities in the area include half-day 4x4 game viewing in the Chobe National Park in Zambia. The Queen has its own guides, all of whom are groomed by Garth Thompson, world-renowned expert in the field of guiding in Africa. Also look out for a cultural tour of a local village and aerial tours of Africa's breathtaking surroundings.

The Zambezi Queen prides itself on responsible tourism and does not use conventional propellers but rather a jet propulsion system that reduces damage to the riverbed enabling the boat to operate in very shallow water. At night it switches over to a low emission power flow for lighting, refrigerators and other requirements. This unique system will allow guest to enjoy the sounds of the bush, undisturbed by the unwanted sounds of modern technology.

The cruise entails two- or three-night itineraries. For the two-night cruise, the first night is spent at the home base. The second day is spent cruising the Chobe River, and the night is spent 20km upstream near a cultural village.

For the three-night cruise, the first two days are as above but on the third day there will be the option of further activities. All accommodation is aboard the Zambezi Queen.

For more information contact Zambezi Queen on (021) 438 0032 or 083 300 3874. Alternatively, visit www.zambeziqueen.com, or drop them an email at info@zambeziqueen.com ■