

SLEEPER

GLOBAL HOTEL DESIGN

SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER 2017



Four Seasons Hotel at The Surf Club
Richard Meier and Joseph Dirand
revive a Miami institution

The Whitby
Kit Kemp waxes lyrical at Firmdale's latest
opening in Midtown Manhattan

Chablé Resort & Spa
Ancient Mayan traditions meet modern-day
luxury on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula





Billy Quimby & Anne Wilkinson

B A M O

The newly appointed Principals of San Francisco design firm Bamo travel to the plains of Africa for a fantasy hotel stay safari-style.

Where are you?

Serengeti National Park, Tanzania.

How did you get there?

First class on Etihad Airways – we each have our own personalised Residence cabins. Once we land, there's not a care in the world as we're swept away in a Land Rover by the hotel's personal driver.

Who is there to greet you on arrival?

Christian Strobel, a fellow Bay Area resident and Joie de Vivre alum, who brings his Basecamp Hotels experience and millennial savvy to a joint venture with luxury hotelier Ratan Tata of Taj Group.

And who's at the concierge desk?

A friendly local gent is our personal concierge for the duration of our stay. He provides every detail needed to make the most of our safari excursions, spa packages and activities around the resort.

Who are you sharing your room with?

AW: My travel companions are two enthusiastic animal-lovers, my nine- and 11-year-old sons.

BQ: My significant other, it's a full-on family affair.

Is there anything you would like waiting for you in your room?

Cool towels, refreshing glasses of fruit juice and some artfully arranged local produce.

Describe the hotel, your room and the view...

Simple, buff plaster walls with afromosia wood shutters frame the view out to the savannah, where

golden grassland is dotted with Acacia trees. Tall ceilings expose the traditional wood structure and thatched roof. Fluffy white bedding with a colourful blanket is shrouded in netting and sits atop a wood framed bed. The interiors feature Piet Hein Eek's functional art and furniture. His arte povera style uses recycled materials to create beautiful patterns and shapes, and is transformed here to reflect the critical effort of minimising human impact on this World Heritage park.

Who designed it?

Urko Sanchez Architects from Nairobi. Their eco-conscious design blends contemporary and traditional Swahili techniques.

What's the restaurant and bar like?

An open-air, rooftop restaurant sits above the central lobby – the only part of the hotel that is two storeys – offering expansive views of the terrain and wildlife. The walls and floor build out to become lounge seating and banquettes, dotted with colourful cushions. A double-height water feature trickles down to the natural pool below.

Who are you dining with this evening?

Actress and singer Bette Midler for laughs and after dinner music; Danish author Isak Dinesen, for historical perspective and storytelling; primatologist Jane Goodall for a greater understanding of conservation efforts here; architect Alvar Aalto, for inspiring design conversation; and entrepreneur Elon Musk, to bring it full-circle.

Who's manning the stoves?

Ryan McIlwraith – the talented Executive Chef at Bellota, a wood-fired Spanish cooking concept in San Francisco.

And what's on the menu?

Nyama Choma skewered, grilled meat served with mixed chutneys, chapati and maize. And for dessert, Tanzanian peanut brittle made from black coffee.

Would you like something to drink with that?

South African chef Siba Mtongana's twist on the traditional sundowner cocktail, incorporating all of the fresh, local juices – apple, carrot, orange, pomegranate, celery and ginger root – mixed with vodka instead of bourbon, and topped with refreshing mint leaves.

What's in the mini-bar for a night cap?

Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve Port 2015.

What toiletries would you like to freshen up with?

African Botanics, a South African brand using indigenous all-natural botanicals.

Early morning alarm call or late check out?

AW: Early wake-up – just do it.

BQ: Late check-out, please, its vacation. But I would like to be woken by a giraffe!

Swimming pool, spa or gym?

Must we choose? All three – this is fantasy right!

Name: Billy Quimby and Anne Wilkinson | Position: Principals, Bamo | www.bamo.com

Notable hotel projects: Four Seasons Hotel Sao Paulo; Capella Bangkok; Terranea Resort, California; The Ritz-Carlton Chicago; Four Seasons Resort Dubai at Jumeirah Beach