

**Selous Game Reserve**

It covers some 55,000 square kilometres, one of the biggest in East Africa and the world at large. It boasts of a number of wildlife, including African bush elephants, Masai giraffes, East African wild dogs, plains zebras and more. It takes its name after Sir Frederick Selous, a famous English conservationist.

**Rufiji River**

Rufiji River waters are home to a number of hippos, crocodiles, birds and more that stretch in and along the 200 kilometres of its size. On the sides is wild vegetation. It is formed by the confluence of the Kilombero and Luwegu rivers. The river is lined by a large mangrove.

**Transport advisory**

We flew Coastal to Selous, which is one of their first destinations and remains one of the most popular for flying safaris. According to the aviation's website, they fly to three times a day to every airstrip in the game reserve and connect with Ruaha National Park as well as with the coastal destinations, through the Dar es Salaam hub.

Sailing down River Rufiji is a once-in-a-lifetime experience

ENJOYING TANZANIA: In Tanzania, one of the adventures you should never miss is sailing down River Rufiji or sight-seeing in the Selous Game Reserve. The beauty of the landscape and the splendid setting sun is the joy of any tourist who loves nature, writes **Edgar R. Batte**.

The smooth sail across the Pacific River Rufiji was a deserved relaxation. We had been on the road for much of the day, sight-seeing in Selous Game Reserve, on the southern wild side of Tanzania. The roads were rugged and bumpy. 'African massage' travel buddy, Professor Wolfgang Thome, joked about the experience, tickling us with laughter. The beautiful landscapes, wildlife and a stunning sunset all settled our hunger for splendour.

We stopped many times, to capture moments, a pride of lions being one of the biggest highlights. The landscapes were another sight to marvel at, with sprawling hills, a valley and extensive open grasslands.

But that was not all that awaited our sight. As we drew closer to Serena Mivumo River Lodge, the architectural creativity got us gaping. The cottages hanged above rocks, cuddled in nature's greenery of trees and shrubbery.

And right at the riverine, at the dwelling side, staff from the facility stood, with welcoming smiles. They stretched their hands, offering warm, herbal-infused towels, the type that leaves a soothing effect on

your face.

Then, the pleasant hosts served us glasses of chilled juice, to smoothen our throats with some sweet squeeze of nature. The language of hospitality was not new to us. Dar Es Salaam Serena Hotel had given us hints. The staff was friendly, willing to share information and pleasantries. The same gestures remain a hallmark of the many Serena properties I have visited. Dar's beauty was much in its welcome area, of gold-brushed chandeliers and lounging spaces dotted with colours of nature in flower form.

Mivumo's location and set up is only grandeur. The feeling of being in the wild, in a place artistically put together with wood and items precisely chosen, makes for a good honeymoon experience. The bathroom has a bathtub affixed with rustic taps, handles and unique decoration. Showering at the outdoor shower, suspended on a wooden deck was a tranquil treat.

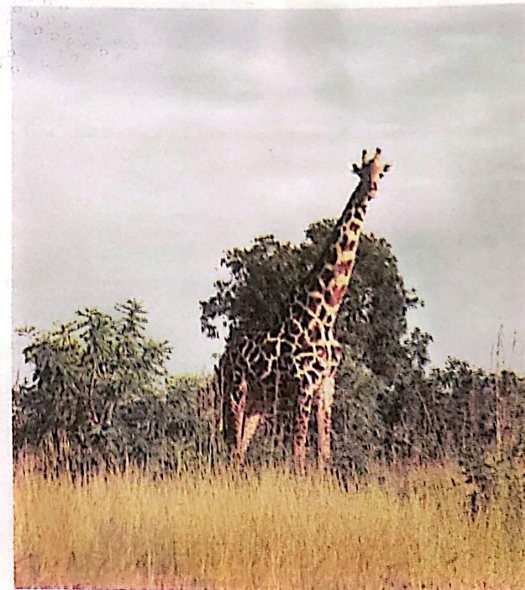
And as the water run over my head, memories of Zanzibar Serena Hotel came alive; memories of the beautiful, sunny mornings by the Indian Ocean as the wind blew over and through the sharp-ended palm



Serena Mivumo River Lodge is cuddled by nature's greenery. PHOTOS BY EDGAR R. BATTE



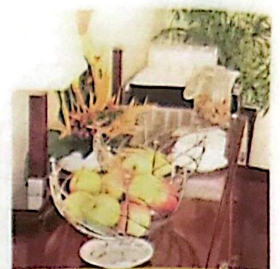
The writer enjoying a snack of coconut water in Zanzibar with his travel companions.



TOP. Architectural creativity of Serena Dar Es Salaam. RIGHT. Giraffe in the wild.

leaves. If you are looking for heritage, Zanzibar Serena Hotel is the place to visit. You will find a rich culture, heritage and history which reels off tour guides' tongues and some of the hotel staff.

The hotel is in the right place - Stone Town, Zanzibar's well-kept architectural museum and Africa's historical corner. It tells of rich Swahili style. It is a former hospital, located seven kilometres, about 20



The magic of Mivumo

At night, Mivumo takes on another look, charmingly enhanced by the lighting. What it does not have in historical pieces, it possesses in architectural finesse, of grass traditional thatch, with high sprang ceilings. The mix of that with modernity fills up a void of urban spaces. There is a swimming pool, at cascade angle that allows you overlook the river.

minutes from Abeid Amani Karume International Airport. You will find the old fashioned telephones, the ones where you had to dial by placing fingers in a numbered hole and dragging it around. There are the hanging porcelain plates and ornaments as decorative items.

From the balcony - if you are lucky to be given a room with one - your optical sense will be fed to an array of Sultan palaces, dhows and boats as they are rocked by the waves of the Indian Ocean.

I was least surprised when the Serena Hotels were announced winners at the World Travel Awards gala event on Tuesday night in Kigali, Rwanda. They have mastered the fluency in the language of hospitality. Staff members are friendly and eager.

At night fall, the hippos will feed so you hear them wheezing and as you enjoy dinner or wash it down with some tasty drink.