

Wolwedans, 21 July 2021

Dear Colleagues and Business Partners

It's been a while since you heard from us. So to start, please accept our apologies for lying very low for over a year now. I appreciate that everybody wants answers, and we all long for a sense of 'normal' and planning perspective to return. Our (hospitality) houses are all burning and as Namibia is negotiating the third wave, with all the inevitable and dire consequences for it's population and our industry, I feel it's *still* pre-mature to come out of the shell with 'the big plan'.

We have a plan of action though, at least on paper, which we'd like to share with you today - remaining conscious of the new normal - plans can change within the span of a week as we experience (and feel) right now.

Before I get into the technical details, I would first like to share with you where we as an organisation - comprising the commercial "Wolwedans Collection" and the "Wolwedans Foundation" with our wide range of initiatives - stand today. You are welcome to skip this bit and go straight to page 3, but then you will not quite understand *why* certain things at Wolwedans will, and have to, change going ahead.

INTRODUCING: WOLWEDANS WAY

Out here in the Namib Desert we are looking at ways to tweak the rules of 'business as usual'. Essentially, and this really defines how we go about our business going ahead, we have decided to put the quest for profit at the motivational back-end, and put **'the Pursuit of Happiness'** first. Hopefully our new 'Wolwedans Way' will have merit and inspire others to follow suit.

My late father Albi Brückner – who founed NamibRand Nature Reserve - liked to say: "In all that you do and why, always remember that your last shirt hasn't got a pocket" (meaning you can't take material wealth with you). Following this wisdom, we continue to strive for **'Business in Balance'**, and to do what is good for people and the environment. This means that net profit after tax equals funds collected for the Foundation through guest levies and used 'to do good'. Instead of leading with commercial success we will let our commercial enterprise be a facilitator of good, and in this way believe commercial success will follow.

We used the past 15 months of forced reflection to actively prepare for the future and properly reboot. Shifting into 5th gear by adding a new 'C', Consciousness, into our sustainability mix. All our actions going ahead, will be guided by the interconnectedness of our **'5C's Sustainability'**: Conservation, Commerce, Community, Culture and Consciousness.

WOLWEDANS WAY

Pursuit of Happiness | Business in Balance | 5 C's Sustainability

OUR TEN YEAR PLAN: WOLWEDANS VISION 2030

Mid 2020 marked our 25th Jubilee. To honor this historic occasion (sorry folks, no big bash, maybe in 25 years then...), we quietly launched the ambitious *Wolwedans Vision 2030*, themed **'The AridEden Project'**. Underpinned by a philosophy of balancing people, planet and profit in everything we do, The AridEden Project provides the framework and identity for our journey ahead. See www.arideden.org.

We feel confident that our ten-year plan, guided by the 5C's, has what it takes to become a blueprint for more sustainable, resilient and inclusive conservation/tourism economies - both in Namibia and globally. As we all know, the time to walk the talk has never been more relevant and pressing than now.

In addition to driving positive change and building a sustainable enterprise, Wolwedans is also about the *Pursuit of Happiness*. Happy people – including our guests, the team and stakeholders alike – a happy and healthy environment and importantly, a happy bottom line.

Going ahead, Wolwedans wants guests to go slow, and disconnect to reconnect. With themselves, with nature, and with humankind. We endeavour to steer away from the passively consumptive tourism paradigm of the past, and rather strive towards a more engaged, active and participative way of travel - crafted by a wide range of experiences and activities which nurture the head, hand and heart.

We are also using the pause and our Jubilee to bring a fresh look to the entire Wolwedans Collection, with Dune Camp, Boulders Camp and the Dune Lodge undergoing extensive renovations. Private Camp, which was washed away with the wonderful rains we received early in the year, will be restored to its former beauty and re-open in April 2022 as Wolwedans Plains Camp. When you experience Wolwedans today, it's hard to imagine where it all began in 1995, with four igloo tents pitched on elevated wooden decks on the crest of a dune.

We trust you see merit in the changes we want to bring into the fold. If not now, when?

You are welcome to contact me in case you'd like to know more. And, if you have a spare moment, feel free to browse a bit on www.arideden.org. As will see and hopefully appreciate, Wolwedans is more than a 'Collection of Camps'. It's a collection of dreams, aiming to inspire 'a new way'.

Yours in hospitality,



Stephan Brückner
Managing Director

Wolwedans, 1 August 2021

Important update for our trade partners

3 PHASED TRANSFORMATION: August 2021 to December 2023

Going ahead, we want to go **slow** (in term of duration of stay), **active** instead of passive, **mindful** instead of stressful (maximising offering), and strive for a good **balance** of head|hand|heart when it comes to crafting the overall guest experience. Please allow us to share with you some interesting changes taking place across the Wolwedans Collection, to be implemented over the next 18 months:

WOLWEDANS IMMERSION

Go slow and linger longer. As we reopen, one night-stays (common in the past) are history. All camps require a minimum stay of 2 nights (except Boulders which is 3 nights). Furthermore we introduce the **Wolwedans Immersion**, our tactical offer encouraging longer stays. At all camps the third and all additional nights will come at 50% discounted rate, (except Boulders which is a fixed three night package). We seek a sense of calm in our camps and enhanced choreography during your stay. After all, we are not a hotel or tick-off destination en-route to the next hot-spot. We want your guests to enjoy Wolwedans to its fullest, and for the magic to unfold, we need to slow down and afford more time, with three (or better even four) nights being the new normal (like everywhere else in Africa).

EXPERIENCES & ACTIVITIES

One of our future signature experiences will be *the Heart & Home Tour*, an educational walk through the Wolwedans Village, bringing the concept of sustainability and *'The AridEden Project'* to life.

We are in the process of renewing our fleet. The main change is a shift from fuel guzzling Landrovers and Landcruisers (which will still be used until obsolete and for day-excursions) to fuel efficient Suzuki Jeeps, which will have four seats instead of six (incidentally, we never did the 9 seat game-viewer configuration).

We also bought 20 eBikes (with fat wheels) which is as carbon friendly an activity as it gets, esp since the entire Wolwedans operation now runs 100% on solar power. In essence, we want to limit burning of fossil fuel to keep our guests entertained and look at creative alternatives.

Experiences at Wolwedans can be grouped as follows:

Classic Experiences (old school and still valid)

- Sundowner drives (either exclusive with a surcharge, or collective/shared)
- Three-hour morning and/or afternoon drives (either exclusive with a surcharge, or collective/shared)
- Full-day excursion on NamibRand with picnic lunch en-route (either exclusive with a surcharge, or collective/shared). This is a real 'classic', however only offered to guests who stay for three nights and longer. If you stay for two, there is enough to keep you busy around Wolwedans. And, we want to reward going slow.

Active Experiences

- The Heart & Home Village Tour: A look behind the scenes of the workings of Wolwedans with special focus on sustainability and "The AridEden Project"
- "Antares" – Naked eye star safari: No fancy telescopes, just plain good story telling bringing astronomy alive in away that laymen can follow (a bit).
- Bushman walk: an interpretive naturewalk with a cultural edge, ideally combined with a Wolwedans Water Walk (creating consciousness about water and the logistics to get it into your guest bathroom).
- eBiking - various routes for various levels, the absolute 'hit' being a dune crest ride (only for seasoned bikers)
- Horseback - morning ride, sundowner ride and day-ride, the latter only for seasoned riders
- Pottery - offered as a guest activity too as of mid 2022 (great for children)
- Full day organic gardening course (as of 2022): Spending a day in the garden learning the basics, with a lunch.
- Leather craft (as of mid 2022): i.e. crafting your own belt in our new art & craft center
- Leave your mark: Guests can plant a tree, pack a stone circle or adopt a Fairy Circle. This is a Foundation Fundraiser in addition to levies collected from every guest.

Other extra activities

- Hot Air Ballooning (offered ex KwessieDunes)
- Massages (offered at every camp from April 2022)
- Scenic flights (different routes and durations) when a plane is available

Please note that we will not do **Sossusvlei excursions** as special favours anymore, unless we can do it by plane (this way you take a quick flight to Sesriem and take it from there by car). Doing Sossusvlei by road from Wolwedans is a gruelling 360km return drive and just no fun. We sit with tired and unhappy guests – who, adding insult to injury - are likely to miss all there is to do at Wolwedans/NamibRand.

To encourage sparse use of WiFi (“disconnect to re-connect”), we are discontinuing WiFi in the rooms and public areas and instead introduce WiFi Lounges and Media rooms at Dune Camp and Desert Lodge. Here guests can do WiFi and view documentaries, i.e. an introduction to “The AridEden Project” (Sustainability) and NamibRand Nature Reserve (Conservation), and other relevant films addressing global challenges.

OUR CAMPS

Wolwedans Desert Lodge (formerly Wolwedans Dunes Lodge) : REOPENING APRIL 2022 (or earlier, pending demand)
The **Dunes Lodge** will be closing mid September for refurbishment and reopen as **Desert Lodge** in April 2022. Now is the time to fix the age-old confusion between Dunes Lodge and Dune Camp and having to deal with countless guests who are convinced they are booked into the wrong camp.

More importantly, **Desert Lodge will become a vocational training facility** for hospitality (the living classroom), forming part of the Wolwedans Desert Academy, the second and equally important leg Wolwedans stands on. This product is hence taken out of the classic trade inventory, also to create space for retreats (see below). The trade is still welcome though to book it. Albeit, and this will likely make it a less attractive proposition, *commission at Desert Lodge will be capped to 10%*, regardless who books and how many in the chain.

We commit to channel **15% of the Desert Lodge turnover into the training programme** and the lodge hence becomes the base funding vehicle for our Desert Academy – in addition to necessary grants. In case all other camps are fully booked, and trade *does* book the lodge because guest want the Wolwedans experience (which will be equally great at Desert Lodge), such a booking would contribute to a good cause which as a trade partner you should feel happy about. Hence, Desert Lodge going ahead is not about making profit, but generating funds for doing good, that is training young Namibians.

Desert Lodge – which is the only camp in operation at the moment (until Dune Camp refurb is complete hopefully end of August, pending lockdown extensions) - has also seen the start of a big re-furbishment in 2020 which is 75% done and yet to be completed. Once the Dune Camp is done (see below), all current Dune Lodge bookings will be up-graded so the refurb project can be completed and this product can re-emerge as “Wolwedans Desert Lodge”. We plan to reopen Desert Lodge when the time is right, latest April’22 (pending what COVID does).

The improvements entail:

- Completion of re-vamp and refurbishment of all rooms, with extended subdecks making place for more veranda space, a sleep-out deck and outside shower
- Extended dining area to make provision for more social distancing (if required)
- A dedicated WiFi Lounge to drastically reduce gadget use in other public areas
- A state of the art training kitchen (completed) with floating herb gardens
- Renovated pool and pool deck and Stargazing platform (see Antares)
- Renovated team/trainee quarters

Mountain View Suite : OPEN FROM JULY 2021

Mountain View Suite – situated at Dunes Lodge but forming part of the Wolwedans Private Collection as a separate offering - will see the addition of an outside bathroom, as well as a study which can also house an extra bed (kids). This Suite has been in operation all along, and if need be, two to three adjoining lodge rooms can be booked (i.e. family travel). In this case all meals would be taken at the Suite, which caters for a maximum of eight (meals). This combo can also work for a small group of up to eight where the Suite is used as main recreation area and all guest stay in standard lodge rooms. This offering will remain available during the period that Dunes/Desert Lodge is undergoing refurbishments.

Wolwedans Dune Camp : REOPENING MID-SEPTEMBER 2021

The classic Wolwedans Dune Camp – this is where it all began 26 years ago with four Igloo tents - is currently undergoing a complete renovation, extension and refurbishment, scheduled to be done by mid-September.

- All standard tents will see the addition of an outside bathroom, a sleep-out deck and the 'Wolwedans Chiller' (a water filled silo to cool off during hot summer months).
- The main area has seen the addition of a reception deck, a WiFi Lounge (to limit use of gadgets in public areas) and a media room (for screening of educational videos), a new rest room as well as extended outside decks for al fresco dining (socially distanced if required). The charm of the 16 bed camp remains.
- A new concept, forming part of the "Wolwedans Private Collection" brand is a separate unit with two bedrooms (same as other tents), plus a kids room, a small lounge and dining section with various al fresco dining options. Guests staying here can opt to have meals at the main area or at their 'home away from home'. This 'island' will only be used for exclusive use and the rate will be fixed at 5 x full paying Dune Camp rate. Note that these beds form part of the 16 mentioned above.
- Floor- and site plans for better understanding can be provided on request.

Wolwedans Plains Camp : REOPENING APRIL 2022

Formerly known as Private Camp and forming part of the Private Collection, this charming home away from home has been washed away by flash-floods during our sensational rainy season (which really turned Wolwedans and surrounds into an "AridEden"). Whilst the elevated bedrooms survived the ordeal, the entire main section will have to be re-built from scratch. Needless to say, smarter and better. We will also use the opportunity to add a second master bedroom, so the camp can then sleep 8, ideally suited for families and befriended couples. Minimum rate is based on four guests sharing. Plains Camp will re-open when the time is right, probably in April 2022. First all other camp renovations have to be completed, which is a bit of a challenge given the current situation we find ourselves in (shortage of cash and manpower, and now lock-down).

Wolwedans Boulders Camp : OPEN FROM JULY 2021

Our 'sleeping beauty' in the deep South of the Reserve has seen extensive work done in 2019 and early 2020. The refurb was almost complete when Namibia went into lock-down in March 2020. Boulders has been lying idle ever since and can be re-opened whenever bookings warrant it. As the camp is in a good condition, we would open it for exclusive use based on 8 full-paying guests and a minimum stay of three nights as of August 2021. Any additional night would be at 50% of normal rate. In addition to adding new softs to the rooms the main improvements at Boulders are:

- Enlarged decks with outside lounge, mini-bar and sleep out options
- Splash pools positioned in between- and shared by two adjoining rooms
- Salas at three rooms for multiple use (used for kids, massages, yoga etc.)
- Outside bathrooms (to be completed in 2022)
- Enhanced public areas
- A complete re-vamp of Boulders' back of house, including a brand new solar system.

FIXED ARRIVAL DAYS AT BOULDERS CAMP & DESERT LODGE

As of 2022 Wolwedans will introduce fixed arrivals days at Desert Lodge, similar to Boulders Camp but in two day intervals. For the while all other products will remain flexible. One night stays are not offered anymore, except for StarBeds which is available for single night stays and can be used as a filler option. StarBeds can only be booked in combination with 2 nights at any of the other camps. Dune Camp will see a gradual introduction of the fixed arrival day system during 2022 too, although we will keep it flexible during 2022 to allow for a smooth transition.

- **Wolwedans Desert Lodge** (formerly known as Wolwedans Dune Lodge): MON|WED|FRI (closed on Sundays)
- **Wolwedans Boulders Camp**: MON & THU (fixed three night package). Sunday night can be combined with a stay at any other camp and/or StarBeds.
- **Wolwedans Dune Camp**: Anytime, first come first serve, two nights minimum. Arrivals preferably on SUN|TUE|THU (and SAT in combo with Boulders Camp on SUN or pre/post Dune Camp bookings)
- **Wolwedans Plains Camp**: Anytime, first come first serve, two nights minimum
- **Mountain View Suite**: Anytime, first come first serve, two nights minimum
- **StarBeds**: Flexible, albeit can only be booked in combination with any of the above, esp when only one night is available at other Camps.

RATES

Whilst Wolwedans is positioned in the premium rate category, please take note that we are at the lower end in the high-end market. We want to offer fair rates and good value for money. Notably, 10-15% of total rate (pending where you stay) is in the form of levies, which is 'do-good-money' paid by the client (who automatically becomes a donor), and channelled direct into conservation, community and culture. These levies are non-commissionable and added separately on invoices.

- The entire Wolwedans Collection will see a rate increase of 10% compared to 2020 rates, which then averages to 5% increase p.a. since COVID shut us down (for 2021 we maintained 2020 rates). Given the extensive value add in all Camps, without this going hand in hand with up-graded prices, this is a very moderate increase.
- Desert Lodge will do away with DBB rates going ahead, and the new 2022 Lodge rate is equivalent to the current Full Board rate, with drinks/beverages and selected activities charged extra. Included activities are: sundowner drive on arrival day, the Heart & Home Tour (which we encourage every guest to do) as well as morning or afternoon drives. Additional activities as indicated on the rate sheet will be charged extra.
- We will maintain high and low season rates introduced in 2020, assuming that seasons will re-establish once COVID is behind us.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

NamibRand Safaris (Pty) Ltd supports a 'Book with Confidence' policy during these uncertain times.

- All new bookings will be held on a provisional basis for extended periods with no need for early confirmation and no Commitment Fee required.
- If a confirmed request is received for another booking that needs to use the same rooms that are being held on a provisional basis, those holding the provisional reservations will be asked either to confirm or cancel their booking within three working days. If the guests want to keep and confirm the resources involved, they will be required to pay a 20% deposit in order to do so.
- Full payment is required 30 days prior to arrival and our standard cancellation terms apply.
- Our 'Book with Confidence' policy has the following COVID impacted cancellation terms
 - Between Confirmation and 48 hours prior to arrival – 100% credit to the value of monies paid for future travel or full refund of monies paid or (note this is the choice of the guest)
 - Between 48 hours and arrival - 90% Credit to the value of monies paid for future travel – no option for full refund
 - These terms only apply to COVID-19 related reasons for cancellations.
- Please refer to our full TERMS & CONDITIONS attached as a separate document.

We acknowledge that the above is an immense amount to take in. If you have read to the end, thank you, we appreciate you taking the time to listen to our vision. We sincerely value our trade partners and look forward working with you as we make our 10 year plan, Wolwedans 2030, a reality.

Your Team Wolwedans

Wolwedans Collection

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