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SAFARI LODGE SPECIAL
Saseka Tented Camp, Thornybush

CHRISTIAN REVIVAL CHURCH
Church meets Stadium

THE OLD GRANARY
Building **as Document**

R39.90 (incl.VAT)
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A distinct curve in the Monwana River, which sweeps through Thornybush Nature Reserve, was the catalyst for the site of the main area of Saseka Tented Camp, designed by Silvio Rech & Lesley Carstens Architects + Interiors.

Much of the furniture is made from round tubular steel frames in reference to the area's history of prospectors, farmers and hunters setting up temporary camps.





Below: The elevated tented suites give guests a full view of the riverbed and are surrounded by some very large and beautiful trees.

Left: Conically shaped lampshades reminiscent of tree-pod blossoms open up more intimate spaces and reinforce the concept of private spaces within the public area.



New luxury tented camp

Saseka Tented Camp is the latest addition to The Thornybush Collection, designed by Silvio Rech & Lesley Carstens Architects + Interiors.

Saseka Tented Camp is situated alongside the Monwana River, which sweeps through Thornybush Nature Reserve. Thornybush forms part of the Greater Kruger National Park Conservation Area, now that the fences bordering the Timbavati Reserve and Thornybush have been dropped. A distinct curve in the river was a natural catalyst for the site of the main area. The elevated tented suites give guests a full view of the riverbed and are surrounded by some very large and beautiful trees. The sandy riverbed presents guests with game viewing opportunities from the comfort of their private decks. "Saseka" is the Tsonga word for beautiful.

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SASEKA, THORNYBUSH COLLECTION





From top: The surrounding vegetation is typical riverine bush, featuring excellent examples of classic river trees like jackalberry, apple leaf and leadwood, from which the colour palette is drawn.

The reconditioned apple-green enamel baths sit in a steel cradle and the vanity is a take on the traditional washstand and basin.

Silvio Rech & Lesley Carstens Architecture + Interiors, who have been designing bush lodges for over 32 years, wanted to create an archetypal tent for each of the ten 200m^2 tented suites. These tented suites are spaced around two common areas, the smaller common area acting as a camp-within-a-camp, designed for exclusive small groups and families.

"Thornybush Nature Reserve is situated in an area of South Africa where the earliest gold rush happened," says Carstens. "Prospectors came out to make their fortunes and set up mining towns like Pilgrims Rest and Barberton, and then set out further to start taming the wild bushveld. The romantic campaign-style safari is an East African legacy, and not South African. Here we had hardened prospectors, famers and hunters setting up temporary camps for hunting, farming and in recent times, game viewing. It is a story of a farmer or a local going camping."

The tents at Saseka have been reimagined with a gentle nod to nostalgia, but with the emphasis very much on 21st century design. The colour palette is drawn from the natural surroundings. "We looked at the indigenous landscape, the flora and fauna. The camp is adjacent to a natural watercourse, the surrounding vegetation is typical riverine bush, featuring excellent examples of classic river trees like jackalberry, apple leaf and leadwood. Our imaginations were fuelled by nature – hues of ivory, dark green, apple, sage and subtle flushes of pink echoing the characteristic tones of the flowers found in the bush," says Carstens.

"The stitching patterns are an abstraction of the original wallpapers. The furniture is made from round tubular steel frames. The reconditioned apple-green enamel baths sit in a steel cradle and the vanity is a take on the traditional washstand and basin, but now custom-made from hi-tech CIAN. The wardrobes are clad in traditional rattan, and the beds have a heavy padded leather wrap over them. The woollen carpets are custom woven in the Midlands from South African mohair."



The recycled, environmentally friendly flooring of both the tented suites and the public spaces are of a soft off-white colour. This allows all the signature furniture pieces and design elements to make a statement while linking it directly to the white sand of the riverbed.

The public space is a celebration of nature. Silvio Rech explains, "We took a sculptural approach that allowed us to create different spaces within the main area. The use of light was key and we created our extraordinary ceiling that filters light into the space – imitating the natural dappled light of a tree canopy. We christened it the 'ceiling for all seasons', which is totally apt."

Additional illumination comes from the distinct chandelier, which is constructed from metal, wood and rattan. This reflects the overall design philosophy of mixing the old with the new and repurposing elements, where appropriate. Conically shaped lampshades reminiscent of tree-pod blossoms open up more intimate spaces and reinforce the concept of private spaces within the public area. This allows guests to enjoy private meals and breakaway time.

With the public space sectioned using different levels and terraces, a feeling of extraordinary volume has been created. The connection to the riverbed is emphasised by the water feature forged from natural rock and the calming flow of water accents the natural surroundings.

Silvio Rech & Lesley Carstens Architecture + Interiors created an extraordinary ceiling that filters light into the space – imitating the natural dappled light of a tree canopy. The architects also designed a distinctive chandelier, constructed from metal, wood and rattan, which reflects the overall design philosophy of mixing the old with the new.

PROFESSIONAL TEAM

ARCHITECTS: Silvio Rech & Lesley Carstens Architects + Interiors **DESIGN TEAM:** Silvio Rech, Lesley Carstens, Grant Woodward, Jessica Buys **PROJECT MANAGER:** Bluegreen Ltd **BUILDER:** Ingwe Construction **TENT MANUFACTURERS:** Canvas & Tent, Texwise **LIGHTING CONSULTANT:** Darkroom **ENGINEER:** PLB Consulting Engineers

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