Azura offers classic and authentic safari experiences in a spectacular part of the Selous Game Reserve, Africa’s largest game reserve in southern Tanzania.

A River Runs Through It
As our Coastal Aviation charter plane touches down on the gravel runway in Upper Selous, Tanzania, the words of Meryl Streep ring in my ears: “You see, I had a farm in Africa.” I expect Klaus Maria Brandauer or Robert Redford to come out to welcome me. I am instead greeted by two equally charming men: a tall blonde introducing himself as Andrew, our host for the stay; and a guide named Joseph, who would prove most knowledgeable and demonstrate the best off-road driving skills I have yet to encounter.

The third luxury retreat in Christopher and Stella Bettany’s trademark Afro-chic Azura collection, Azura Selous is located on the banks of the Great Ruaha River, and offers classic and authentic safari experiences in a spectacular part of the Selous Game Reserve in southern Tanzania.

With a design theme of “bringing the outside inside”, the focal point of the camp consists of a formal dining area, lounge and relaxation deck with infinity pool, all of which are positioned at alternating levels to benefit from the welcome breezes and beautiful views over the Great Ruaha River.

The camp is made up of 12 deluxe tented villas. Each is air-conditioned and spacious, and features an entrance area, large bedroom, and stone-finished bathroom with Hansgrohe showers and double vanities. A large wooden deck with a refreshing plunge pool offers a wonderful private outdoor retreat with spectacular views of the river.

The Selous Game Reserve is one of Africa’s classic wilderness areas. As one of the largest faunal reserves of the world, it covers a total area approximately the size of Switzerland. At 44,800 km² the Selous Game Reserve is over 3 times the size of the Serengeti National Park (14,763 km²) and over twice the size of South Africa’s Kruger National Park (19,485 km²).

Named after the Englishman Sir Frederick Selous – a veteran of the First World War skirmishes that took place in the area, and a famous early conservationist – the reserve is also the second oldest in the world, with only Yellowstone National Park in the U.S. having been founded earlier.

The area surrounding Azura Selous comprises open grasslands, thickets, forests, ravines, sand rivers, and higher altitude plains that, along with the Great Ruaha River that flows through it all, make for a thrilling and diversified game viewing experience.

Activities and experiences at Azura Selous are all tailor-made, and include game drives, walking safaris, boating excursions, bird watching, and plenty of free time to take in the breathtaking views from the comfort of your luxury villa. A picnic, candlelit dinner or sundowners on the banks of the river are highly recommended. A highlight for most is the lantern-lit bush braai, which offers the opportunity to dine in the wild, listening to the area’s rich tapestry of stories around a roaring campfire.

As the home range of three packs of wild dog and some six prides of lion, Azura Selous is particularly well known for its magnificent predators. We were fortunate enough to get up close and personal with a pride of lions, including a handful of young cubs. This was made possible only by our guide Joseph’s exceptional driving skills down the rocky banks of the riverbed, alongside which the lions were enjoying their afternoon nap. We also experienced a true African welcome from the group of 17 wild dogs that snooped around the vehicle in their highly inquisitive style.

With the Ruaha River creating its own unique biome, Azura Selous is an ideal location for viewing over 440 endemic, aquatic and migratory bird species. We encountered the bearded vulture, southern carmine bee-eater, white-fronted bee-eater, red-billed oxpecker, and many more species of wildlife that can be found in the magnificent wilderness of the Selous Game Reserve.
African fish eagle, grey-headed kingfisher, purple-crested turaco, and a beautiful juvenile bateleur, to name but a few.

Apart from the adventure of being in the world’s largest game reserve and spending time on game drives, walking safaris and river cruises, guests can also relax and unwind with a number of treatments available at the Azura African Spa. These are conveniently offered in the privacy of the tented villas, with foot massages also available at the pool.

Azura offers a dedicated children’s program that serves to educate younger guests about the bush, teaching tracking skills and interesting facts about the “Little 5,” as well as allowing them the opportunity to enjoy their own fishing expeditions on the river.

Azura Selous is situated between eight and 10 degrees south of the equator, and enjoys sunny days and warm evenings. Unlike safaris elsewhere in Africa, you will never need a blanket or hot water bottle on the vehicle during game drives. January and February are the hottest months, but you always have the air-conditioning in your tented villa, as well as an array of inviting swimming pools, to keep you cool.

The Africa that you have always dreamed of awaits you at Azura Selous.

To make a reservation please call +27 11 467 0907 or send an email to reservations@azura-retreats.com, or visit www.azura-retreats.com for more info.

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