

OF SWAHILI FUSION AND GENTLE CHARM

SOMETIMES A GETAWAY MEANS FINDING A VERY INTIMATE, QUIET, ALMOST ETHEREAL SPOT, SUCH AS KIZINGONI IN LAMU.

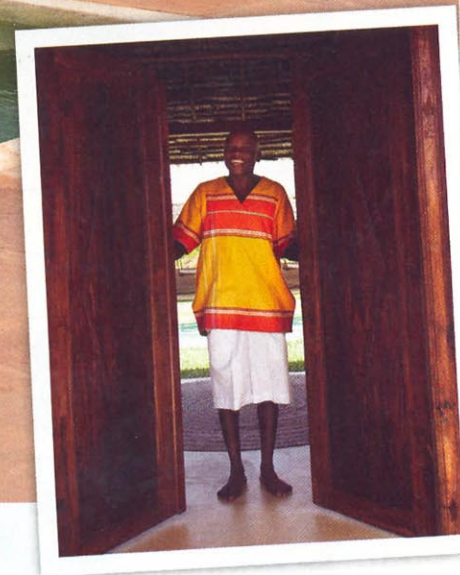
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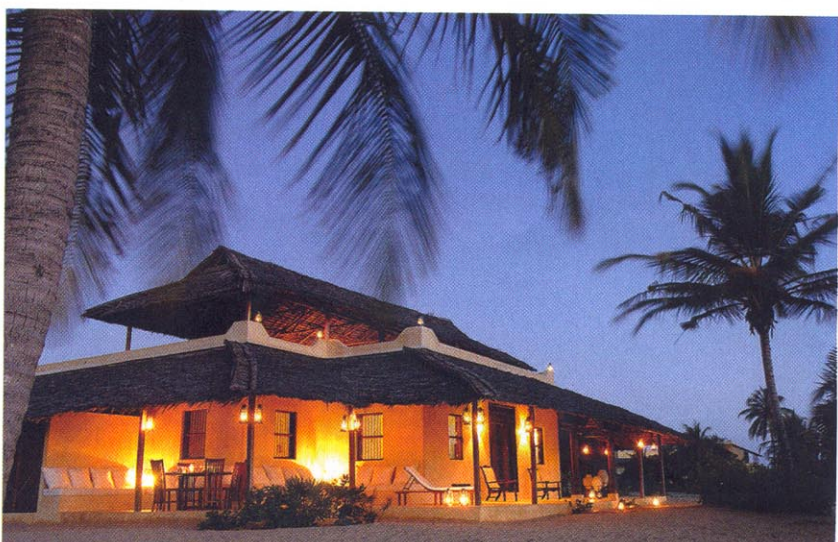
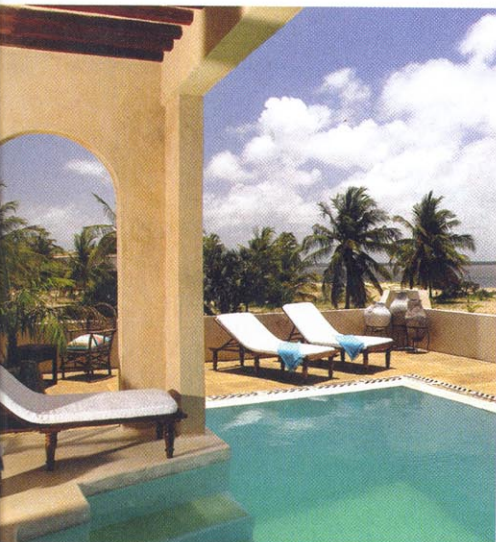
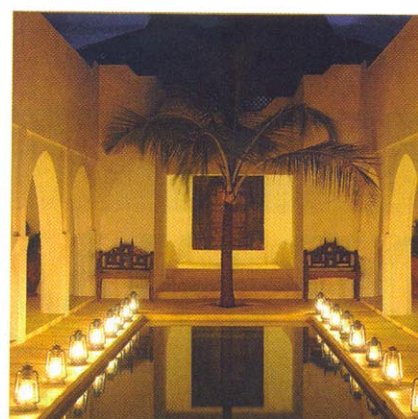
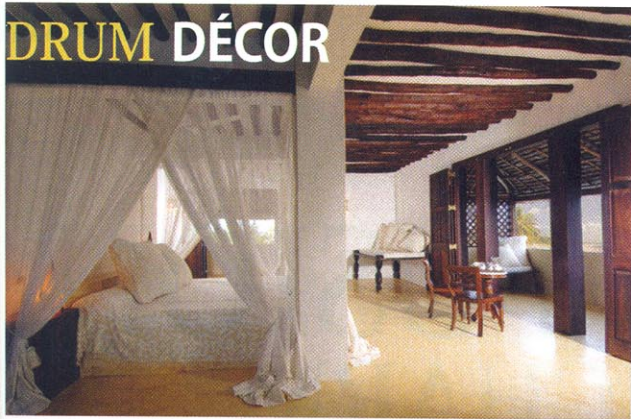
alf an hour by speedboat from Lamu town, Kizingoni Beach Homes sit on a 24-acre stretch of spectacular golden beachfront on the southern tip of the island. In keeping with the Lamu World Heritage Site stipulations to preserve the authentic old culture, this property is a classic take on the chic Swahili fusion

style. Blending in perfectly with its ancient natural surroundings, yet fully loaded with modern conveniences, its hallmarks are symmetry and simplicity. Leslie Duckworth is the creative mind behind this collection of homes. She purchased the land from a retired Italian hunter and designed and built all seven houses. Authentic signature touches include ornately carved Swahili doors and white decorative plastered walls. All the building materials were sourced locally and transported to the site by dhow. The *makuti* roofing and *mikeka* (floor mats) were hand-woven by women from the neighbouring village using local coconut palms. The traditional Swahili courtyard design is incorporated into each home – the house is a circuit of spacious rooms that surround an exquisite shaded alcove with a turquoise blue freshwater swimming pool as the centrepiece. Pretty lanterns dotted around the poolside provide a magical luminescence at night.

Breathtaking panoramic views of creation from each room are enough to thrill any guest – swaying palms and pale sandy beaches are set against the relaxing soundtrack of lapping waves. Buffered by the rustling trees, monsoon breezes blow in cool air laced with the heady scent of fragrant frangipani. Solar and wind power provide sustainable electricity for the buildings. The beds are a perfect showcase for the brilliance of local Swahili craftsmen. Leslie has a stunning selection of elaborate pilli pilli beds, hardwood four-poster beds and even an elevated



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king-sized bed on hand-hewn coral rock in the master suite. Dark polished wooden ceiling beams are sourced from the nearby mangrove forest. They add a delightful contrast and are complemented by the massive framed mirror above this majestic bed. The synergistic mix of local furnishings with Japanese, Indonesian and Moroccan pieces imbues the homes with a luxurious cosmopolitan flair. Indeed, Lamu's history from over 600 years ago has always included a fusion of different cultures, so this particular medley of Western, Asian and Arabic influence is an apt continuation of this centuries-old symphony.

A tasteful burst of African flavour and colour is injected in the clever use of kikoi, mud cloth, kanga and lesso fabrics. These artistic accents are found in the carefully embroidered bedspreads, cushion covers, seat covers and wall hangings. The whitewashed walls bask in the equatorial East African sun creating an almost ethereal glow and giving this exclusive sanctum a deeply calming aura. Each of the homes has a motorboat on stand-by to take guests snorkelling, deep sea fishing or exploring on the archipelago. Shady verandas and terraces, daybeds for napping, swinging beds on the beach and plentiful lounging areas add a sense of space, simplicity, comfort and tranquility. All in all, this place offers a great way to entertain in style or simply relax with family and friends.

