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OUT *of* AFRICA

TRISHA WILSON trades the rigors of the business world for relaxation, reflection, and game drives in South Africa.

DESIGNER TRISHA WILSON FELL IN LOVE WITH SOUTH Africa while working on Palace of the Lost City, one of her many hotel projects. "The land, the weather, the openness and warmth of the people of South Africa all remind me so much of Texas!" she says. She began looking at property and finally found the perfect site at Welgevonden Game Reserve, a Big Five game sanctuary in the Waterberg Mountain region. Construction was completed in 1998.

Though Wilson is the president and CEO of Wilson Associates, one of the world's leading architectural design firms, she spends about four months a year at what she calls Izingwe Lodge. She typically begins the day with breakfast on the open balcony where >>

Text by **LAURA KOSTELNY** Photography by **GERRY MULFORD**



Space

Izingwe ("leopard" in Zulu) Lodge, an estate comprising a main living space and three guest villas, with an office and housing for the manager's family and staff.

Why South Africa?

"The country speaks to my soul. I regain my balance there."

Travel Time

23 hours by air to Johannesburg (including plane changes), then a 45-minute flight to the bush.

Designers

Trisha Wilson and Jim Rimelspach of Wilson Associates.





THIS PAGE: Trisha Wilson describes her living room as "colonial luxury blended with the natural splendor of the Africa bush. The furniture style is a mix of transitional with an infusion of African motifs, which are carried through to carved tables, Puma masks, pillows, ostrich-egg lamps, tablescapes, and artwork." Wilson designed the monkey chandelier and had local artisans create it. Floors are stained concrete and floor coverings are woven grass mats.

OPPOSITE PAGE: (top left) Aerial view of Izingwe Lodge. (below) Hand-carved leadwood columns at the entrance to the main lodge feature carvings of animals, including baboons, elephants, leopards, and zebras.





"The country is so beautiful, and I love seeing how the light from the rising and setting sun reflects off the mountain range and the plains."

—TRISHA WILSON

she watches kudu drinking from the stream below. In the afternoon, she enjoys relaxing with a book on a *sala* (open-air lounge) attached to the villa. "In the evenings, we have 'sundowners'—cocktails—in the folly, which is an open-air viewing platform built off the ground like a treehouse," she says. Whether entertaining family, friends, or business associates, Wilson likes to serve dinner in the *boma*, an outdoor dining area that's close to the main lodge. "We set up tables in a semicircle in front of a large fire pit and enjoy a leisurely meal while taking in the beautiful starry sky. The walls are made of bamboo, so you can see and hear the animals that are drinking at the watering hole just on the other side," she explains. At the end of it all, her bedroom beckons. "It's my personal getaway, and it features floor-to-ceiling photos of animals from the reserve as well as family and special friends who have visited," she says.

And then there are the game drives. "Every day at >>

(left) A bar is adjacent to the main lodge. The walls are varnished gum poles stacked with assorted African masks, drums, spears, and beaded baskets. The window behind the bar opens to the counter on the pool terrace. (top) Each bedroom has a *sala*, an open-sided lounge with two daybeds and a chandelier made of porcupine quills and beads.



THIS PAGE: (clockwise from top left) A better view of the monkey chandelier designed by Trisha Wilson. Black-and-white photographs of Wilson's many friends and family members—as well as her favorite animals on the reserve—line the wall just beyond the front door. One wall folds back to reveal a bar. The freshwater infinity pool is built into the side of a hill overlooking the valley. Wilson has to continually refill it because elephants often stop over and drink the water from it. The four-poster bed is hand-carved South African hardwood. The finial at the top of each corner post is a bird indigenous to the South African bush. Colonial-style chairs are made of cane and have upholstered cushions.