

Hope of tourism recovery as Vic Falls hits highest occupancies



Guests enjoying sundowners at Victoria Falls Safari Lodge's Buffalo Bar recently.

THE Victoria Falls Safari Lodge estate last month recorded its highest occupancies since the onset of Covid-19 in March 2020, with operators in Zimbabwe's top tourist destination optimistic of a recovery following the collapse of the industry.

Occupancy across Africa Albida Tourism (AAT)'s Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Victoria Falls Safari Club and Victoria Falls Safari Suites' 98 rooms reached 33% in October, with some other hotels in Victoria Falls also reporting similar occupancies.

This compares to average monthly occupancies across AAT's three properties being 16% so far in 2021, while bookings for December are at 45% so far, so looking set to exceed the October month average.

AAT chief executive Ross Kennedy said while November has historically been a softer month, December and the festive season were showing good signs of being the busiest month since the start of the pandemic with new enquiries and bookings still coming in daily.

"The forward booking pattern seems

positive at this time and from the second quarter of 2022 onwards there appears to be real momentum building," Kennedy said.

"There are, however, many factors at play across all source markets and the world, so we take nothing for granted in an ever-changing extremely competitive environment.

"We are seeing a trend of many more late bookings, with guests from local, regional and international markets booking, paying and staying within one to three weeks."

Guests have also been staying longer in the last six months and that trend is also reflecting in bookings, with some international visitors staying or booking for five to seven nights, Kennedy added.

The increase in occupancies comes as 96% of the Victoria Falls Safari Lodge estate staff have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19, as well as 86% of Victoria Falls' adult population.

In addition, access to Victoria Falls has been boosted with airlines flocking back to the destination. Airlines currently flying

into Victoria Falls are budget airline Fastjet, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, British Airways (operated by Comair), Airlink, Air Zimbabwe and Mack Air, as well as charter airlines.

The Lufthansa Group's new leisure airline Eurowings Discover will start flying into Victoria Falls from March 30 next year, increasing Frankfurt to Windhoek flights to a daily service, with a Windhoek-Victoria Falls-Windhoek tag flight three times a week.

Other international airlines to resume flights to Africa include Qantas with Johannesburg-Sydney flights three times a week from January 5, while Delta Airlines has also recommenced flights into Johannesburg from the United States, and British Airways into Cape Town from London.

AAT operates a portfolio of properties in Victoria Falls, namely Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Victoria Falls Safari Club, Victoria Falls Safari Suites, Lokuthula Lodges and The Boma-Dinner & Drum Show. — Staff Writer.

Italian cuisine comes into focus ahead of festive season

ZIMBABWEANS, much like many other people across the world, enjoy pizza, a meal of Italian origin. Not only pizza but also many other dishes and confectioneries with roots in the Mediterranean country.

Besides having one of the most famous cuisines in the world, Italy also proposes an immense variety of different regional dishes and recipes and some of the best wines enjoyed across the world.

However, Italian cuisine will be the centre of focus next week, as the world enters the festive season. And Zimbabwe will join the rest of the world during the World Week of Italian Cuisine which will this year be held from November 22 to 28.

The week-long event — this year to be held under the theme "Tradition and Perspectives of Italian Cuisine: Awareness and Enhancement of Food Sustainability" — is an initiative of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with all its diplomatic missions around the world, aimed at promoting Italian cuisine and the uniqueness of original Italian ingredients and products.

Italian embassy cultural attaché Massimo Amadeo told *IndependentXtra* that the embassy will organise an event that will take place on November 25.

"We will offer Italian typical dishes prepared by the chef at the embassy accompanied by a selection of Italian wines," Amadeo said.

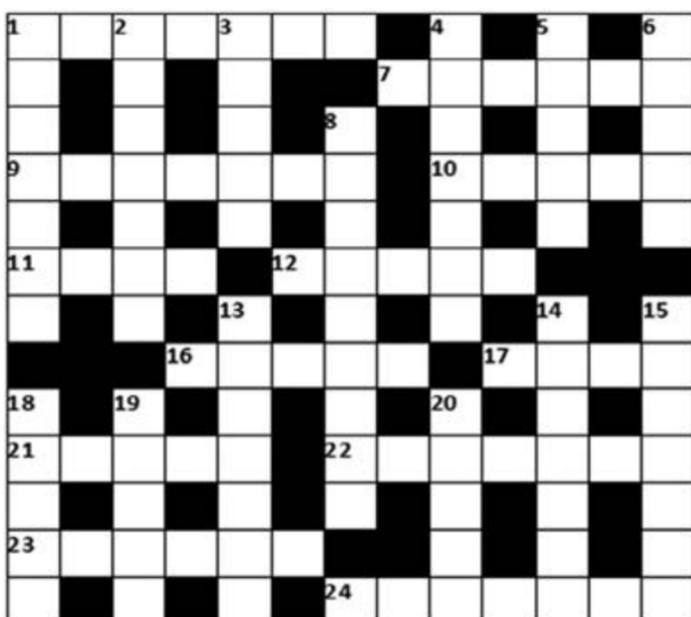
He said the event is meant to showcase original Italian cuisine to the world and guests can expect to be served the taste of original Italian food.

Now in its sixth edition this year, the Italian cuisine week sees competitions, conferences, tastings, themed dinners, exhibitions related to cooking and technical-scientific seminars to raise awareness of the authentic Italian food product.

In Zimbabwe, however, as in other countries the world over, Italian cuisine continues to be enjoyed freely, including Italian cheeses, vinegar and the iconic pizza. — Staff Writer.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE & QUIZZES

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

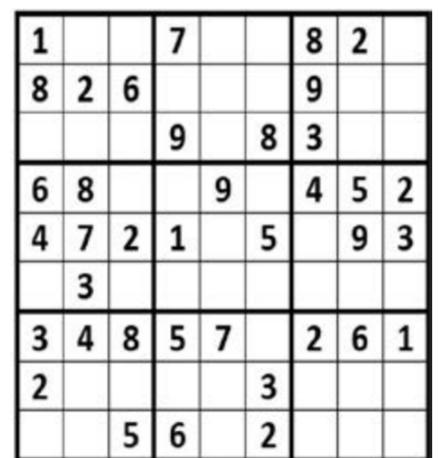
1. Person who counts something, for example votes in an election (7)
7. Be in charge of (a business) (6)
9. Person under instruction (7)
10. Singing voice (5)
11. Brewing ingredient derived from grain (4)
12. Tired, exhausted (5)
16. Not at all (5)
17. Sticky stuff (4)
21. Permit (5)
22. Museum official (7)
23. Alliance formed to monopolize and control trade (6)
24. Pleasant smelling scent (7)

Down

1. Theatrical clothes (7)
2. On a normal basis (7)
3. The main woody stem of a tree as distinct from its branches and roots (5)
4. Manufacturing plant (7)
5. Sweat room (5)
6. Cheerful and lively (5)
8. ___ book; information source; e.g. an encyclopedia (9)
13. In the space separating two objects (7)
14. Area of high level ground (7)
15. A paved or bricked outdoor area right next to a house or apartment (7)
18. Not plain; decorative or ornamented (5)
19. Blinding light from the sun (5)
20. Formal arrangement of things (5)

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