

“mas con menos”

Guide to the Discovery of “Hotel Club du lac Tanganyika”

The earth’s resources are not endless and the actions of man have a huge impact on the health of our living planet. Our resort, Hotel Club du Lac Tanganyika, was inspired by the idea that it is possible to minimize negative effects we have on the local environment and still provide the highest quality services and facilities to our visitors and guests.

The Hotel Club du Lac Tanganyika

The hotel facilities are located on the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Bujumbura. Set within green and lush gardens, the hotel’s building has been uniquely designed in a “W” shape, giving all rooms a view of the beach, lake and park.

The hotel is home to some ten species of exotic birds, and over 100 species of flora and fauna. The waters of Lake Tanganyika are vast and constitute one sixth of the total water contained in lakes around the world. The lake dominates the surrounding landscape, and its shores are sometimes dotted with moving hippos.

We believe the best times of the day are in the early morning, sunset and late evening. At these times, the silence is broken only by the gentle call of the exotic birds living in the gardens, the sound of trees rustling in the breeze, and the sound of the waves lapping against the shore.

We hope our guests enjoy this close contact with nature both in their rooms as well as in the facilities provided, which include tennis courts, swimming pools, and a wealth of other relaxing pursuits.

The Philosophy – Mas con menos

The Hotel was renovated according to the concept, “mas con menos” or “the most with the least”. The architecture of the building is simple and discreet, and has been designed to let the beauty of nature prevail.

The interior design of the building follows the same principle and is simple and functional. With only one pattern used, the furniture, doors and floors have all been made to the same specification (12 x 2.5 cm wooden board). The manufacture of the furniture, doors and floors has been so simple to produce, that we were able to involve 35 prisoners in the delivery of the project with only a few tools available. Alongside the wood, other local materials have been utilised in the building work including: straw, bamboo, wicker, stone, cotton.....

Social Sustainability

The Hotel aspires to promote social sustainability by involving local people. To achieve this, we searched for local skilled people to contribute to the restoration of the hotel. Alongside this, we wanted to use furnishings and art that represented the knowledge and skills of Burundian people. The wood furniture, sofas, chairs, wicker lamps, wooden sculptures, and fabrics including curtains, sheets, blankets, and wall paintings have all been made by Burundians. We also wanted to add value to the management of the hotel by harnessing the valuable skills and energy of Burundian people. Today all our staff including management are local, and they have been working very hard showing their tenacity in the activities they undertake. We hope their engagement will continue to prove successful.

Wellness and guest healthcare

The Hotel wants to give its guests healthy and natural environment. The real key feature in all bedrooms is wood (floors and furniture) treated with wax and natural oils with no glues or chemicals. Wood is the best thermo-regulator absorbing humidity and releasing it during the dry season. Moreover, wood does not spread electromagnetic fields. Alongside wood, natural cotton fibres have been used to safeguard wellness as they do not keep electromagnetic fields. No iron has been used in the beds (it changes natural flow of earthly electromagnetic field). This ensures sound sleep.

To increase guest well being, light relaxing colours have been selected to contrast with brightly coloured objects (paintings, sculptures and decorations). For intimacy we have created various places where guests may eat and/or chat in a candlelit atmosphere. Anywhere in the large grounds guests may relax in the park, on the room balcony, at the beach or socialize with other people by the pool, bar, disco, gym room etc.

Natural Air Conditioning to protect guest’s health

The Hotel has a favourable position facing the lake and benefits from a cooling breeze during hottest part of the day. This keeps the humidity away and the building cool. These benefits are also enhanced by the gardens and imposing greenery of the grounds which keeps the building shady. The natural air conditioning is also made possible by the building’s architecture. This is characterised by thatched roofs, and large balconies which screen rooms from direct sunlight. All this gives the hotel the lowest humidity rates and temperatures compared to the city of Bujumbura.

Therefore, artificial air conditioning is unnecessary, which is beneficial to wellbeing and health of our guests. We know air conditioning is dangerous to health, because the artificial climate it creates makes breathing system dry, alters body self thermo-regulation, and may cause colds and flu (sudden cold/hot and dry/humid change should be avoided). One more danger comes from bacteria and dust coalescing in the filters and air ducts of air conditioning systems. Therefore light perspiration represents a small concern!

Saving Energy

We try to reduce energy consumption. Materials used are local to avoid transport to and from Burundi. We also use products which require little energy consumption (wood, bamboo, straw etc).

During long periods of the year, Burundi can only supply less than 50% of power needed, so saving energy in both a social and an environmental priority. Therefore, we have avoided air conditioning and have adopted using low consumption light bulbs.

Rooms are provided with a general switch which is disconnected any time you remove the key from the slot, thus interrupting the power supply except for fridges which are provided with cooling batteries. Solar panels are used for hot water production and big clothes horses have been built to dry laundry, so sheets are dried up in the wind and sun in a better and more hygienic way.

In order to conserve drinking water we use pit water for cleaning and watering. We are awaiting a water analysis which will enable us to use the same water for the toilet system.

Suggestions to Hotel Guests

All our efforts to reduce energy consumption and to protect the environment would be unsuccessful without the cooperation of our guests, to whom we suggest:

- Use rooms without air conditioning;
- Limit use of the hair drier provided;
- Use card disconnection any time room you leave your room to stop all power supplies (fridge only will remain connected);
- In case of an interruption in the power supply, hotel generator units will start operating after 30 seconds. In communal areas, security lights will continue working (external lighting, fridges, freezers etc.) This also applies during the night. However, in the bedrooms, after midnight only two lights will be operation in the bathroom and balcony to save energy. We remind guests that power interruptions are more likely to occur during the dry season.
- Switch off TV set completely off during the night;
- Elevated washing results in the high consumption of power, water and detergents, which is bad for the environment. During your stay, the sheets will be changed twice a week. However, if you would like to increase or reduce the number of changes please ask a room attendant. Towels are also changed twice a week. The towels left inside bathtub will be removed, and remaining ones folded and kept. In case of guest change, the room is always provided with freshly cleaned sheets and towels.

Suggestions for mental-physical wellness

- Morning walks on the beach and breakfast on the balcony; lunch either on the balcony or by the pool; afternoon walks in the park and aperitifs on the beach or by the pool; dinner at the picturesque "Plage de Cocotiers" restaurant, which serves a range of barbecued food and local dishes; after dinner relax by the pool or on the balcony but also at the disco.
- Play sports which include a choice of tennis, swimming, beach or gym activities;
- Relax in the sauna and/or take a massage;
- Respect yourself and your neighbour by keeping the volume low on the TV, other sound sets, conversations and phone calls;
- Before dark, close the balcony sliding door and leave the side mosquito net window open. The hotel is thoroughly mosquito disinfected every week.
- Inform management of mishaps or problems. Any suggestion to improve the quality of our service is welcome.

We wish all guests a pleasant and relaxing stay.

Ing. Alfredo Frojo

Bujumbura 18 June 2007