

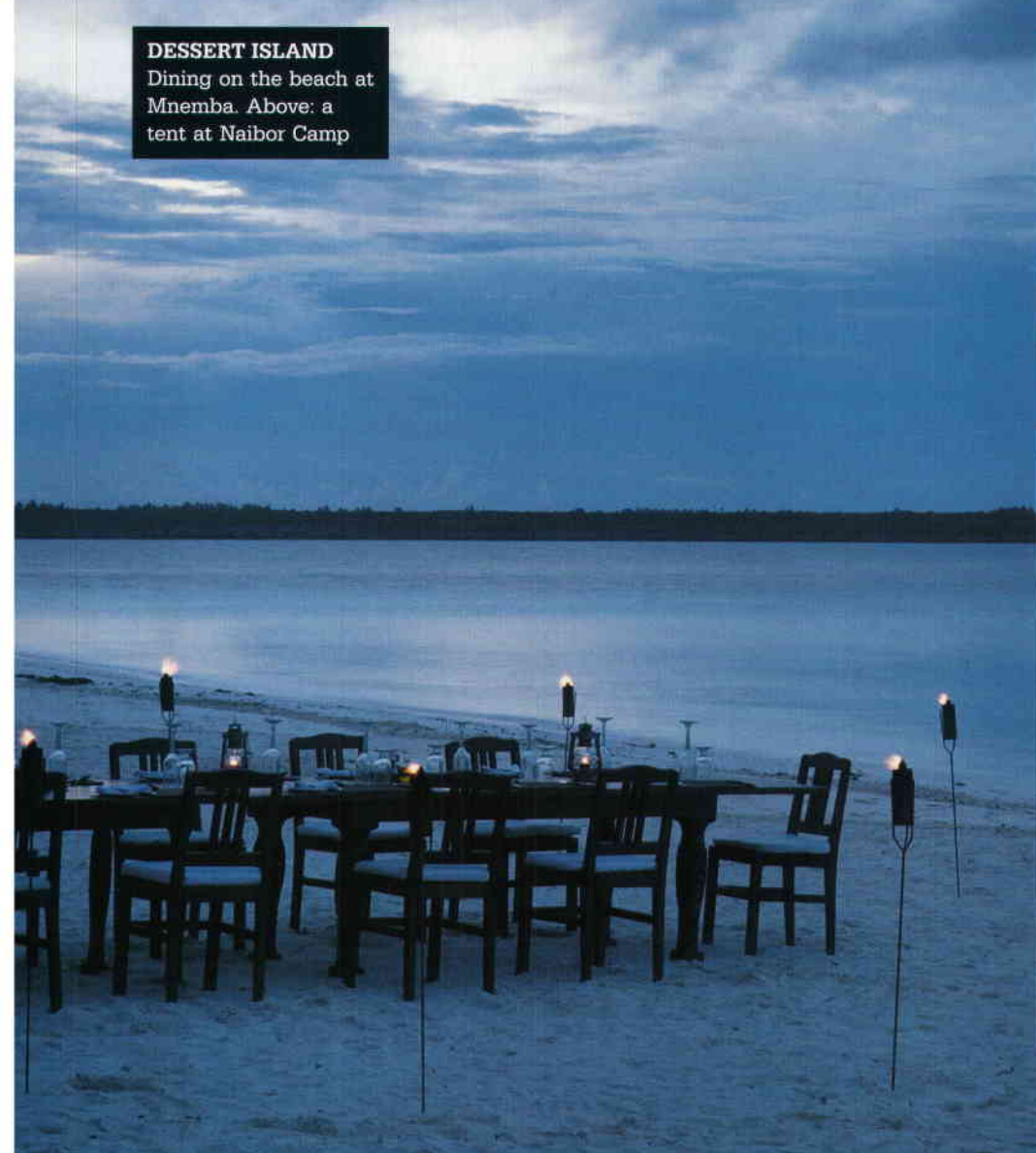


NAIBOR CAMP MASAI MARA, KENYA

Naibor Camp is Anthony Russell's latest venture (he also founded Shompole, the luxury eco-safari camp). This small tented camp on the edge of the great savannah plains of the Masai Mara is camouflaged and shaded by an umbrella of boughs formed by a collection of acacia trees. Its proximity to a natural mineral salt lick ensures regular wildlife sightings.

The camp is the epitome of understated chic and comfort, but the main pursuits for guests are the spellbinding treks through the open plains and quartzite hills. The true pulse of Africa can be felt by inhaling the scent of dry earth and buffalo grass and by camping out at night beneath the stars - privileges not possible in the Masai Mara game reserve itself. *Four nights full board, from £957 a person, including park fees, with Journeys by Design (01273 623790; www.journeysbydesign.co.uk).*

DESSERT ISLAND
Dining on the beach at Mnemba. Above: a tent at Naibor Camp



BEITIL AMAN SHELA, KENYA

On the hippie island of Lamu, in the village of Shela, is Beitil Aman, a painstakingly restored traditional Swahili house. The eight large beautiful bedrooms have ensuite bathrooms and many authentic details, such as locally crafted beds and intricately plastered walls, along with views of the seven-mile stretch of sandy beach, flanked by dunes.

Guests can take breakfast in the cool, leafy courtyard and relax and enjoy the evening breezes on the roof terraces that are illuminated with hurricane lamps. This is the newest and most atmospheric guesthouse in Shela town, tantalisingly close to the Crescent Moon boutique with its irresistible treasures and clothing. Beitil Aman is the perfect place to escape the stresses of modern living. *For more information, ring +254 42 633022. Doubles, from £80 a person a night full board, with Journeys by Design (01273 623790; www.journeysbydesign.co.uk).*

MNEMBA LODGE MNEMBA ISLAND, ZANZIBAR

This 'desert' island used to be a refuge for fisherman who knew of its secret freshwater spring. Now, it plays host to the sublime and exclusive Mnemba Lodge, which has 10 private *bandas* with recently renovated bedrooms and a siesta area with swinging beds.

The waters surrounding Mnemba Island are a protected marine reserve and are, consequently, rich in 140 species of fish. Because of this you'll find the best diving and snorkelling in the Indian Ocean. You can flop out of bed, slip on a mask and pad down to the water for a gentle snorkel before breakfast. You might even catch sight of a whale shark, the gargantuan but harmless giant of the deep.

The beach - which never becomes too hot underfoot, since the sand is made up of coral fragments - plays host to ghost-crabs, which rush in and out of the water in search of food. Vanilla soaps are made locally, there are organic feasts at dinner, and nothing jars the peace of this island haven. *Visit www.ccafrica.com for more information. Four nights full board, from £1,612 a person, including transfers from Stone Town, with Journeys by Design (01273 623790; www.journeysbydesign.co.uk).*