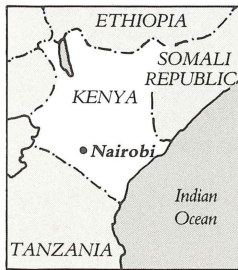


Game Lodges, Kenya



Project Data

Amboseli Serena Lodge, Amboseli National Park, Kenya.

Mara Serena Lodge, Mara Game Reserve, Kenya.

Client: Safari Lodge Properties Kenya Ltd. Architect: Archer Associates (formerly Cobb Archer), Nairobi.

Number of Units: Amboseli: 96.

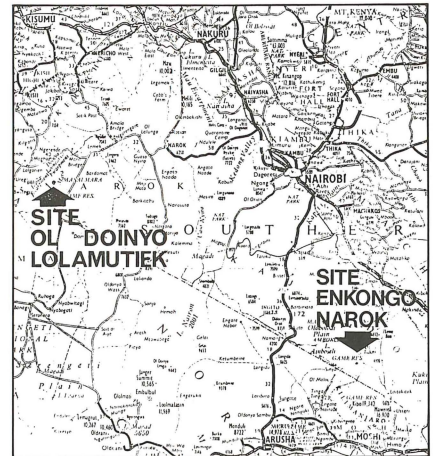
Mara: 76.

Completion: 1971 (First Phase).

1980 (Recent additions).

Game lodge is not always synonymous with *hunting* lodge. Kenya is one country, in fact, which has over the years made efforts to preserve its abundant and diverse wildlife by creating game reserves and national parks. Animals, and vegetation, thus protected not only aid in maintaining an ecological balance in the region but can also be a source of revenue through tourism. An absolutely breath-taking natural landscape attracts leisure-privileged tourists, while others are by the spectacle of animals in their natural habitat, the game lodges provide the opportunity for indulging in both pastimes — being the antithesis of the urban zoo, among other things.

The two lodges presented here, although clearly falling within the category of hotels, are unobtrusive and sympathetic attempts to create reasonably comfortable shelters for recreation without marring the landscape. First built in the early 1970's in a period of general economic expansion, and having received extensions in the early 1980's, the Amboseli and Mara lodges sought a 'low-profile' image in terms of the natural setting, yet went a step further. At the risk of being criticised as quaint and picturesque in purely architectural terms at the time, the designers opted for a solution inspired by the local Masai tribal encampments. (Today, after the upsurge of traditionalist, populist, or even post-modernist trends, perhaps they seem more respectably contemporary.) Be that as it may, the one-storey, rough-coated concrete units for sleeping and for



Above: Location plan of Mara Serena Lodge, Mara Game Reserve, at Ol Doinyo Lolamutiek, Kenya and location of Amboseli Serena Lodge, Amboseli Game Reserve at Enkongo Narok.

Bottom: Aerial view of the Mara Serena Lodge in the Mara Game Reserve east of Nairobi.

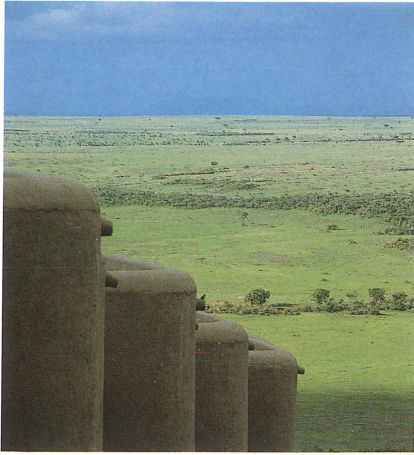
recreation have been grouped in the form of a Masai *manyatta* slightly modified and following the slope of the terrain. The adjoining individual huts are thus afforded panoramic views onto nature and the wildlife of the reserve.

A respect for the site at both Amboseli and Mara, and the choice of an architectural language stemming from indigenous rural dwelling types (although of masonry construction here) have meant that the complexes are practically one with their surroundings after a relatively short length of time. They do not detract by being out of scale or ostentatious, from the principal purpose of a visit, namely to appreciate the extraordinary natural milieu.



*Text compiled by the editor.
Documents courtesy of the client.
Photographs by*

**Ian Charles
Stewart.**



Above: Detail of Mara Serena Lodge against the landscape of the game reserve.

Right: Single-storey sleeping units strung out across the hillside, seen at dusk.

Right, below: Lounge in the lodge.

Below: Site plan of Mara Lodge, final version.

