Raising sustainability standards to greater heights-the case of Emboo River

The world has been at pains for close to two years witnessing the devastating impacts of the pandemic on the tourism industry, but this moment has also provided us an opportunity to reflect on how tourism has been practiced in the past decades and to rethink and re-shape the post-pandemic tourism.

It is true that for the past decades, tourism has been at the heart of economic development, conservation of the environment and preservation of local cultures in our tourism destinations but the fact is there is still more to be done in making tourism sustainable. In a nutshell, tourism businesses have to raise the ceiling even higher in integration of sustainable practices in their operations. In Kenya, tourism businesses are slowly heeding to this call. One of them is the Gold-rated Emboo River, that is raising sustainability standards to greater heights in a remarkable way.

This luxurious camp located in Masai Mara, has distinguished itself as a leader in sustainable tourism and a reference point for accommodation facilities that aspire to make positive change in the destinations they operate in. The way sustainability has been integrated in its operations makes it the perfect spot for your dream safari.

Electric vehicle

Imagine being able to enjoy your safari, while gliding and listening to the sounds of nature and getting closer to the enchanting wildlife in the Mara ecosystem without causing them disturbance from noise, how possible could that be? What about emitting zero carbon while on a game drive? This is the case with Emboo River which is the first camp in East Africa to have the first full fleet of electric safari vehicles, and this is turning out to be a game changer. The vehicles are 100%
solar powered and were converted from safari vehicles that had internal combustion engines. This is by replacing their engines and gear box with electric engine, batteries and a touch screen. While the conversation regarding potential carbon emissions from production and recycling processes makes sense, the overall benefits outweigh the possible downsides, and the use of electric vehicles contribute immensely to combating climate change. The pictures below illustrate the electric vehicles on a game drive and also when being charged.

Natural swimming pool
Emboo River Camp’s pursuit of sustainability goes beyond use of electric vehicles to how the swimming pool is cleaned. The property has deployed one of the best methods to kill bacteria, viruses and algae in a swimming pool without chemicals. Rather than using chlorine it uses Ecosmarte system, which apply ionization and oxidation processes to clean the pool water. As the swimming pool water flow through the Ecosmarte ionization/oxidation chamber, it either receives copper ions or become oxygenated depending on the controller switch settings. See the picture below of the swimming pool at the camp.

Use of renewable energy

One of the most effective tools that exists for humanity to fight climate change is the use of renewable energy. Besides reduction of emission of greenhouse gases associated with use of fossil fuels such as diesel, use of renewable energy such as solar and biogas can also lead to significant financial savings.

Emboo River has perfected the conversion of food waste that would ordinarily be regarded as trash into treasure. All food at the camp is exclusively cooked using biogas generated from its own organic waste. Scraps of food produced are placed in a biodigester which turns them into fertilizer for organic garden and gas for cooking.

Besides use of biogas, the property is also run fully on solar. This is used for lighting, heating water and running electrical equipment. The picture below is that of the solar panels and one of the solar heaters at the camp.
Sustainability has become the norm in today’s world, and for any tourism business that strives to continue growing and attracting the eco-conscious traveler, it is essential that it integrates sustainable practices in its operations. While it is true that implementing some of the practices is expensive from a financial standpoint, the long term benefits are immense. Emboo River is a classic example of striving to be green in all that we do, and thanks to its efforts it has been featured in some of the top news channels in the world including: The Times UK, Bloomberg USA and Reuters International among others.

While meaningful progress has been made in ensuring sustainable development, collectively and individually we are still falling short in addressing sustainability challenges of our generation like Climate Change. We need to do more but whether that happens or not depends entirely on us and that is the cold hard fact!