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DOWN BY THE RIVER

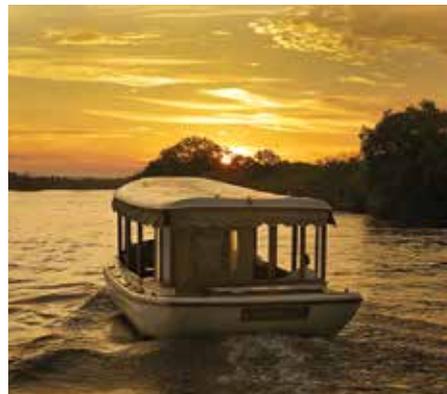
To get the most from your visit to Victoria Falls, stay on the banks of the Zambezi



Top: A walkway modelled on the Victoria Falls Bridge links the main public area to one guest wing

Bottom left: The view from the courtyard across the gardens to the Zambezi River

Bottom left: A sunset cruise on the Ra-Ikane



There's no denying that the Victoria Falls is hugely impressive. Getting drenched in its spray, feeling the power of water thundering violently over the gorge is liberating, exciting — and its impact on you should never be underestimated.

Equally invigorating, though in a calmer, more soothing way, is the Zambezi's broad, bloated flow towards the falls. No visit is complete without spending time on the river, be it on a cruise or fishing boat, exploring the riverbanks and islands, and also simply sitting peacefully and watching it drift by.

This is why the opening of

the new Palm River Hotel is so exciting. Visitors to Victoria Falls now have an accommodation option that caters for everything you could want from your experience. It is the first 4-star hotel on the riverbank, giving you quality hospitality and immediate access to the Zambezi. It is located just before the entry to the Zambezi National Park, so a wildlife experience is right on your doorstep (there are often monkeys and warthog spotted in the grounds), yet you are only a 10-minute drive from town and the falls themselves.

Unsurprising for a modern \$24m hotel development, Palm River is a contemporary facility,

bang up to date with mod cons and conveniences. The Queenslander-style architecture, with savvy use of wood and corrugated iron, gives it a sense of lightness that in itself is refreshing.

It has 73 rooms, yet it retains the feel of a small boutique hotel. Guest rooms are located in blocks dispersed among the trees, so you feel like you have ample space to explore the lush gardens or laze by the pool without being overlooked. The main hospitality areas are cavernous, with abundant light and space, and the transition to the gardens is enhanced by extensive indoor planting and living steps.

And this understated elegance is extended to their river cruise vessel, the Ra-Ikane, which is moored on a private jetty in the gardens. Modelled on the boat used by David Livingstone, it is small and tasteful and, like a hug, it sets the mood for a calm meander upriver, gin and tonic in hand to admire the sunset.

Everything about Palm River is about tranquillity, softness. Time here just flows gently along, just like the river it overlooks.

For more information, visit www.palmriverhotel.com