

TRAVEL & ACTIVITIES / By cardova



## INTO THE WILD WITH AMANDA BLACK AT MAKWETI SAFARI LODGE

Singer-songwriter, Amanda Black retreats to Makweti Safari Lodge, Limpopo to rejuvenate her creative and free spirit. Amanda's art defines both her individuality and her proud Xhosa heritage.

Afro-Soul singer-songwriter, Amanda Black escapes the buzz of city life to a picture-perfect getaway at **Makweti Safari Lodge** in the Welgevonden Game Reserve. Described as having a timeless African feel that embodies the eras of Livingston and Hemingway, the lodge is situated within a **UNESCO** biosphere.



Makweti Safari Lodge is situated on the Makweti Gorge within the 40,000 hectares of private game reserve. Here, guests can enjoy front-row seats to the activities of the Big Five, as well as a variety of other mammal and bird species at a nearby watering hole. General Manager of Makweti, Neil Davison explains, "It's a very unique water catchment area in South Africa, making it a very critical conservation area."



It's here where we meet Amanda Benedicta Antony, popularly known by her stage name, Amanda Black. When her debut single, **Amazulu**, went platinum only three weeks after its release, this talented performing artist became a household name. Her debut album won Amanda two METRO FM Awards and three SAMAs, as well as being nominated for Best International Act at the BET Awards.

Looking forward to a unique bush experience and the intimacy of the reserve, Amanda makes her way to Makweti to catch some downtime and share her journey with us.



Hailing from the Eastern Cape, Amanda shares how her love for music was there from the very beginning. "It may have started in the womb because for as far as I can remember, I've always been singing."

The iconic white dots of paint are a part of Amanda's culture and play a deep role in expressing her identity. Umchokoza is a way for Amanda to show her pride in being Xhosa and to encourage other people to unapologetically embrace their roots as well. She explains, "I woke up one day and decided I'm going to do my dots every single day. It became very important for me to own who I am, understanding my history as a black person, as a black woman, and as a Xhosa woman."

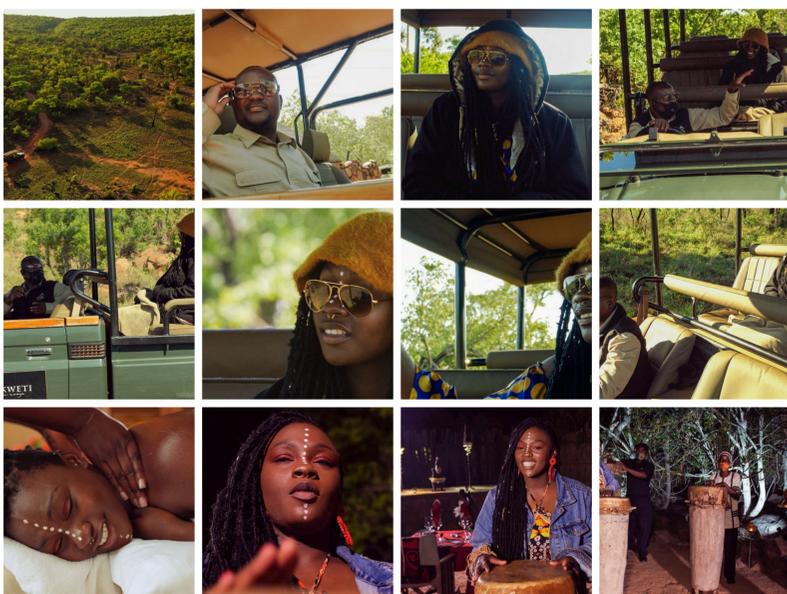
Reflecting on her career in music, Amanda shares, "I write from a place of emotion; a place of self-inspection. Most of the time my songs are directed at me, but they sort of talk about everybody else as well. It's like I'm talking to myself in a mirroring conversation."



Needing time to unplug from her creative lifestyle in the city, Amanda sinks into her suite at Makweti. From king-sized beds to outdoor showers, at Makweti every room is a secluded sanctuary with picturesque views of the valley.

Leaving the comforts of the suite behind, Amanda heads out to the surrounding wilderness of the South African bush. Game drives into the Welgevonden Game Reserve are led by skillful guides who share stories of the wildlife and ecology infused with African folk-wisdom.

After a long day in nature, Amanda allows the worries of the world to disappear while she enjoys some of the many spoils the spa has to offer.



Next, it's time to indulge in Makweti's authentic African-inspired cuisine, prepared by Head Chef, Phillip Nthai. For Amanda, Chef Phillip prepares his signature dish of samp and mushroom risotto with locally-sourced, fresh ingredients.

After sunset, Makweti's dinner drums begin to sound around the log fire, signalling that dinner is about to be served. Amanda is able to dine under the stars in the outdoor boma and reflect on the bright future ahead of her. She shares, "There'll be new music and new avenues of exploring my talent. I really just want to see what else I can do!"

Amanda is a true artist who can capture the spirit and souls of others in her music. It's clear that her authenticity is what makes Amanda Black so popular with her many fans.



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[makweti.com](http://makweti.com)

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TUESDAYS 7:30 PM, REPEATED SATURDAYS AT 8PM ON SABC3