

Damaraland
Below left: thatched
rooms among the
boulders at Camp
Kipwe. Below right:
guest room at
Camp Kipwe. Inset:
a woman of the
ova-Himba people
in the Kaokoveld

Dune busters

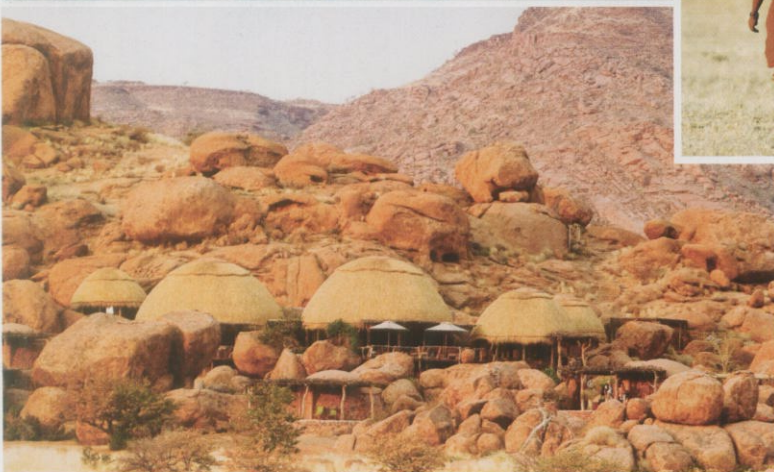
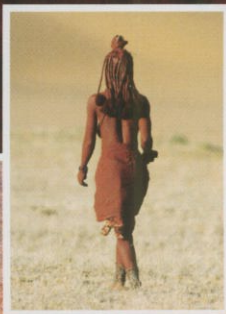
NAMIBIA Three new private camps offer a different experience in the Namib Desert

Mention Namibia and most people think of the otherworldly giant orange sand-dunes at Sossusvlei. Spectacular as these are, however, they are only part of the story, as three new privately owned camps in different parts of this southern African country reveal.

Opening this month in Namibia's far north-west corner, almost touching the border of Angola, the eight-room **Okahirongo River Camp** is one of only two lodges in this part of the Kaokoveld, which sustains oryx and a fantastic variety of birdlife. It, too, has sand-dunes, but they are sliced through by the Kunene River (home to crocodiles) which guests can navigate by boat. There is also the opportunity to meet members of the resident ova-Himba people.

Further south in craggy Damaraland, **Camp Kipwe** is understated with eight stylish, thatched rooms designed to blend in amongst the site's huge granite boulders. The surrounding area features

petrified forests and ancient rock carvings (at UNESCO World Heritage Site, Twyfelfontein), and is home to desert elephants and rhinos. Those more interested in exceptional guiding than striking interior design should head for the eight-room **Khowarib Lodge** on the edge of a gorge overlooking Damaraland's Hoanib River. It's run by Namibian-born Caesar Zandberg and, whether accompanied by Zandberg himself (Ray Mears will go with no one else) or one of his personally trained team, your nature walks into the gorge and rhino and elephant tracking will be unlike anything you've experienced before. **FRANCESCA SYZ African Explorations** (01993 822443; www.africanexplorations.com) offers a nine-night trip in Namibia combining **Okirovango River Lodge and Camp Kipwe with Wolwedans Private Camp**, from £4,900 per person (based on two sharing; excluding flights). **Khowarib Lodge** (www.khowarib.com) from £165 per person per night, full board, including activities



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