Lentorre - Surely one of Kenya's Finest Photography Destinations!

30 September 2026

by Inger Vandyke

Deep in the wilderness of southern Kenya, nestled on a hillock between two incredible soda lakes, lies the stunning, exclusive lodge Lentorre.

Barely visible from anywhere, yet a haven of exclusivity in the wild, Lentorre is a centrepiece of photographic luxury at the heart of the community-based Olkiramatian Conservancy.

Many years ago, the elders of the local Olkiramatian Maasai sat around their campfires listening to the bellowing of distant lions, yet by the turn of the last century, most of these iconic sounds had disappeared from their world. Their nighttime serenades by nature had almost disappeared. This prompted a small group of elders to divide their land and create a model in which the expansion of human interests would not come at the expense of the wildlife living in the same realm.

For centuries, the local Maasai migrated from one side of the Ewaso Nyiro River to the other, using the grazing lands that grew with the rains. That same river now forms a boundary to the conservancy, and the local Maasai work to keep the grasslands abutting the river open, providing the wildlife with enough room to migrate in tune with the community, a move that significantly reduced the incidence of human-wildlife conflict that accompanies conservation projects that have grown within communities.

As a result, the conservancy now has increased numbers of both game and predators, with Kenya’s second-highest densities of lions outside the Maasai Mara.

At the heart of this thriving conservancy is Lentorre, a lodge that was set up specifically for photography and an exclusive, small number of guests at any one time. With just six villas that can accommodate up to 16 guests, it is intimate, beautiful, and features understated luxury at every turn.

A stay at Lentorre usually involves you having to make some very difficult and unique holiday decisions – do you spend all your time in their comprehensively outfitted photographic hide? Visit the local Maasai community? Go on safari? Take an exhilarating, no-doors helicopter flight over a spectacular soda lake? Or relax and enjoy your own private plunge pool in your villa, surrounded by the sights and sounds of the bush. It was a tough call each day, but Wild Images recently answered it.

We were initially intrigued by the hide and aerial photography at Lentorre but, after our stay, we found ourselves beguiled by the opportunities to go on safari, visit Lake Magadi’s flamingos, the daytime photography from the hide and the warmest hospitality of the Maasai team, welcoming you to their lands.

The Lodge

Lentorre has just six standalone chalets. Four cater to couples/singles, while two cater to families. Each of them has its own private plunge pool and is designed to leave a light architectural footprint on the land. Enjoy natural ventilation while staying protected from mosquitoes, lying in bed, listening to the sounds of the bush, with every whim catered for by a discreet but helpful small group of devoted staff. Each villa offers a unique outlook. No neighbours can be seen, leaving you with the feeling that you may just be the only two people on earth.

A stay at Lentorre usually involves you having to make some very difficult and unique holiday decisions – do you spend all your time in their comprehensively outfitted photographic hide? Visit the local Maasai community? Go on safari? Take an exhilarating, no-doors

helicopter flight over a spectacular soda lake? Or relax and enjoy your own private plunge pool in your villa, surrounded by the sights and sounds of the bush. It was a tough call each day, but Wild Images recently answered it.

We were initially intrigued by the hide and aerial photography at Lentorre but, after our stay, we found ourselves beguiled by the opportunities to go on safari, visit Lake Magadi's flamingos, do daytime photography from the hide, and enjoy the warmest hospitality of the Maasai team, welcoming you to their lands.

The Lodge

Lentorre has just six standalone chalets. Four cater to couples/singles, while two cater to families. Each of them has its own private plunge pool and is designed to leave a light architectural footprint on the land. Enjoy natural ventilation while staying protected from mosquitoes, lying in bed, listening to the sounds of the bush, with every whim catered for by a discreet but helpful small group of devoted staff. Each villa offers a unique outlook. No neighbours can be seen, leaving you with the feeling that you may just be the only two people on earth.

At the back of the hide are beds for you to sleep, each made up with blankets and crisp white linen; there is a flushing toilet and even a bar fridge stocked with alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Around 10 pm, one of the staff brings hot tea and coffee and biscuits for those who want a snack before bed, or for the hardcore folk who want to crack an all-nighter waiting for the myriad of nocturnal creatures that visit the hide nightly.

Initially, we were part of the crowd that did the night shift, but eventually we took some nights off to sleep and enjoy the hide in the daytime.

Even with shorter visits, life in Lentorre at night is wonderful. Over five nights we had great encounters with leopards, caracals, striped hyenas, spotted hyenas, genets, scrub hares, white-tailed mongooses, and jackals. On one of the all-night sessions, we were visited by a pride of lions who enthralled all of us by drinking from the waterhole and also playing, jumping on the roof of the hide!

From a distance, the wildlife visiting the hide during the day doesn't seem frequent or visible, but once you actually spend daylight hours inside, you can be rewarded with numerous lovely birds and mammals that come to the waterhole to drink and escape the heat of the day.

Safari

We visited Lentorre when the grasslands were overgrown, so it was difficult to see many animals on safari. I had hoped to see Fringe-eared Oryx, one of those mythical animals that are a highlight of any wildlife lover's safari. They have been recorded at Lentorre but were sadly absent during our visit. We did, however, see some lovely giraffes, dikdiks, zebras and the usual impalas.

Flamingos!

Like any photographer, I find flamingos an avian extravaganza. I don't know what it is about flamingos; I can never see too many of them, and even though I have been on countless visits to Africa, countless safaris, countless birding trips, watching flocks of thousands of flamingos wading around a lake right before your eyes, to me anyway, is always a highlight.

We visited the shoreline of Lake Magadi to photograph flamingos on this trip, and although the weather gods weren't exactly shining in our favour, we still managed to capture some lovely images of these quirky birds in the red soda lake.

What surprised me, though, were the other birds along the lake shoreline. We also had lovely encounters with Yellow-billed Storks, Great White Pelicans, and even dainty Chestnut-banded Plovers during our visit.

Aerial Photography

Perhaps the most stunning images that drew us to Lentorre were the sublime photos from helicopter flights over the nearby lakes of Natron and Magadi.

Across Kenya, lake flooding from climate change is creating a huge problem for the vast flocks of flamingos I mentioned above. The excess water is altering ecosystems in many Kenyan lakes to the point where the tiny invertebrates flamingos rely on for food can no longer thrive. This translates into fewer numbers in these once-huge flocks and a dramatic shift in the avifauna in places like Lake Bogoria, which used to be home to several hundred thousand Greater and Lesser Flamingos.

Thankfully, the vivid soda lakes of Natron and Magadi are not as affected by this phenomenon, and when you fly over each in a helicopter with no doors, it is both adrenaline-fuelled and so photographically spectacular that, during our first flight, I literally cried at the beauty of it all.

Both lakes are within minutes by air from Lentorre, with Natron perhaps just a few minutes further from the lodge than Lake Magadi.

Flying over both lakes is, at once, both spectacular and wildly expensive. For those seeking one of the most thrilling photographic experiences of their career, however, they are completely and utterly worth the money.

You would think these places were just lakes. They aren't. Each one transports you to another world of salt and sulphur, to the point where you feel like you are flying over the surface of Mars instead of something that exists here on Earth.

Interspersed with swirls, crystals, pans, shorelines, and even factories are large flocks of birds, including flamingos, pelicans, and storks. In fact, one of my favourite images from all the hours we spent flying is featured here. I called it "The Terning Circle" because that tiny circle of white birds flying is actually a circle of Gull-billed Terns feeding on Lake Magadi.

You cannot imagine how beautiful these flights are. The colours, the wildlife and even the transits to each take your breath away.

En route to the lakes, you fly directly over Maasai lands, where you can see Maasai bomas, herders, and even children on their way home from school waving at you from the helicopter.

The long grasses we experienced on safari gave way to aerial views of elephants, giraffes, zebras, and we even flew alongside a Kori Bustard, the heaviest flying bird on earth.

Each feature amounted to some of the most extraordinary aerial photography I have ever done in my career.

At the end of our trip, I jokingly told our wonderful pilot, Max, that in my next life I'd come back as him.

Photography

So how do you make the most of your visit to Lentorre? Believe it or not, photography there isn't always as easy as the photos suggest. Night photography has ISO challenges, helicopter flights have focus challenges, and the waters in each lake are ever-shifting.

We have written an "Insider Guide" for guests who book their stay at Lentorre through us. We would be happy to give you a first-hand perspective on how to make the most of your photography during your stay.

To add a Lentorre stay to your trip to Africa, please contact us to check availability.

We look forward to sending you on one of Africa's most sublime photographic experiences.