





---

# SINGITA SWENI LODGE

---



**S**weni, part of the Singita cluster of luxe lodges on the riverbank in the Kruger National Park, has been renovated with a different feel than the others. This project called for a sensitive group of professionals who could take function and the natural, sensitive area into consideration.

GAPP, the architects, have been working together with Interior Designers Cecile & Boyd on Singita projects since 2009.

Sally Tsiliyiannis, who has been working for years as lead designer on large-scale, highly complex buildings in urban areas, discovered the joy of working on sustainable projects in remote, ecologically sensitive areas. Sally has often called upon to work outside of South Africa's borders and is currently leading the design of sustainable resort developments in ecologically sensitive areas throughout Africa. The success of these projects can be attributed to having intuitive design skills as well as a good understanding of these fragile environments.

As the architects on the project they were responsible for conceptualising the way the layout needed to be re-configured to have a more integrated and intimate relationship with its secluded rivers-edge location and its lush landscape. Working in collaboration with Cecile & Boyd, they developed a specific, vibrant and ultra-contemporary character for the lodge which pushed the boundaries of safari lodge aesthetic.

With sustainability at the core of their thinking - through

passive design, they focused on making buildings more responsive to their environment, thereby improving their performance in terms of power and water consumption and reducing their negative impact on the planet.

"This requires us to be light on our feet" says Sally,"and quick in our thinking. Construction time-frames are always very tight, as shutdown of lodges needs to be minimised. They worked with clearly established aesthetic direction that the lodge had, but modifying and adding to enhance the relationship of buildings to the landscape."

"At Sweni" Sally says, "we looked to the essential elements of the surroundings to inform the design. The soft curves in the riverbed, the organic forms of the boulders, the drooping trees and lush vegetation, the colours, textures and patterns of the vegetation and the spirit of the place all had a profound influence on shaping the end product."

Every Singita lodge is differentiated from the others. Sweni is closer to the lush riverbed than the other lodges which helped to develop a more daring, colourful aesthetic. Inspiration for the colour palette was drawn from the exquisite, intricate detail of a beetle shell and the iridescent shine of a birds wing.

Decor by Cecile & Boyd helped with decor in this daring concept. Although an unusual interpretation of the typical safari offering, Sweni is a magically expressive lodge that makes the most of its proximity to its lush river site where it vibrates with colourful detail.

M.Z.