

# THANDA

## The Thanda Story.

### THIS IS THANDA

Sometimes in life, something comes along that is so special and unique it reminds us the world is still a place of great beauty and wonder. A place where likeminded global citizens arrive with a handshake and then don't want to leave. And when they do, it is with a hug or a tear and always a promise to return. This is Thanda – and Thanda means Love in the Zulu language.

It is a family owned- and managed business, a journey of exploration, appreciation and Love. It is where we reconnect with nature and the simpler things in life that reward us with so much joy and happiness. It is where families and friends gather from around the world and become part of the Thanda family.

Join us on this journey of Love that began in 2002 when the Thanda Group's founders and owners, Christin and Dan Olofsson, self-made entrepreneurs from Malmö in Sweden, dreamed of an African adventure that they could share with family and friends. Dan is also the owner and chairperson of the Danir and Sigma Group of global companies <https://danir.se/en/>, and today Christin and Dan are Scandinavia's largest private investors and philanthropists in Africa, significantly contributing to environmental conservation, the protection of endangered species and the empowerment of rural communities through the Thanda Group's philanthropic initiatives and magnificent stable of properties.

### THE MOST EXCITING LIFE QUALITY AND ADVENTURE

Here, guests, donors and club members are immersed in nature where they get to enjoy the most exciting life quality and adventure within the spectacular backdrop of an African Safari in Zululand, South Africa, an exclusive Private Island off the coast of Tanzania, and a Classic Superyacht Cruise experience in the Mediterranean.

Guests also have the opportunity to give back to humanity and nature, make an impact and positive difference through philanthropy, contributing a heartfelt legacy to this beautiful Earth and communities in need. The Thanda timeline spans over 21 years and takes you on a thrilling journey, where dreams become reality, where the impossible is achieved because its owner and Chairman, Dan Olofsson and Thanda's founding CEO, Pierre Delvaux, believe that nothing is impossible and that everything they dreamed of was achievable. We hope that you will join us.

### TIMELINE

#### 2002

Christin and Dan Olofsson purchase their first game farms in Zululand and begin the process of accumulating several large properties to consolidate all the land into one large privately-owned game reserve.

#### 2004

Thanda Safari – Private Game Reserve officially opens

**2005**

Star for Life is established

**2016**

Thanda Island – Private Marine Reserve officially opens

**2017**

Thanda Classic Cruise, Over the Rainbow of London, launches in the Mediterranean

**2021**

The Royal Thanda Club by Thanda Safari commences construction

**2023**

The first Royal Residences, owned by international members of The Royal Thanda Club by Thanda Safari are completed and become available to discerning guests for rental in 2024.

## **IT'S GOING TO BE AN ADVENTURE!**

The Thanda adventure began with Dan's dream of an African adventure. Inspired by Ernest Hemingway's passionate accounts of the extraordinary spirit of the continent, its people and wildlife, it awakened in him a sense of destiny; a destiny that would lead him, his wife Christin and their family many thousands of miles from Sweden to northern Zululand in South Africa. Zulu means Heaven, and Zululand is the Land of the People of Heaven. The rolling hills of Zululand and its proud, welcoming Zulu people, instantly stole their hearts.

Dan's adventurous spirit and incredible energy is epitomised by his words, "it's going to be an adventure!".

His dream after turning fifty was to refocus his life on adventure and life quality, coupled with exploring ways to give back, to make a positive difference to the lives of less privileged people in Africa and to contribute to the conservation of the continent's extraordinary wildlife and endangered species.

To achieve this, he wanted to create a home in the wild in Africa where he could reintroduce all the naturally occurring wild animals; a place where their family and friends could experience the freedom and exhilaration of the Big Five and the very best African Safari in a special part of this ancient world.

In Zululand in early 2002 he met the man who was to become the Thanda Group's founding CEO, Pierre Delvaux. Pierre grew up in Zululand, spoke fluent Zulu and had close ties to the Zulu Royal Family. Before joining Thanda full time, Pierre was the director and partner of a management consulting and accounting/audit firm with deep roots here as it was the first to be established in Zululand in the 1940s.

Getting down to business straightaway at their first meeting, Dan asked Pierre four questions:

*Do you know the history of this area?*

*Do you know the Zulu people, and about their culture and customs?*

*Can you speak Zulu?*

*Do you know the safari industry?*

Pierre smiled and answered 'yes' to all four. He knew the area extremely well on many levels. From the age of three Pierre went on safari with his parents to the exact location where Thanda Safari and The Royal Thanda Club by Thanda Safari are now situated.

Pierre knew the region from his years in the military and from working closely with government and rural development funding agencies here. He knew the cultural, environmental and geological history of the region, dating back to the time of the Kingdom of King Shaka and the ancient history of this land. He knew the Zulu Royal Family, the Zulu people and community leaders in the area.

Dan knew at once he had found a kindred spirit and valuable point man in Pierre. *"It's going to be an adventure!"* Dan now famously said to Pierre, and it was Dan who chose the name 'Thanda' for the Game Reserve, and that is how the Thanda journey began.

## **THIRTEEN YEARS LATER**

Thirteen years later, in recognition of its rich wildlife and the land's unique historic significance, Thanda Safari was re-proclaimed a Protected Environment on 9 October 2015 in terms of South African environmental legislation. This was exactly 120 years after it was first proclaimed as a game reserve in 1895 by then British Colonial Government of Natal, and then de-proclaimed in 1907 in favour of what is now the state-owned, Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Game Reserve, not far from Thanda.

## **THE OLOFSSON'S FIRST HOME IN AFRICA**

The Olofsson's first home in Africa was built in 2003 on Thanda Safari. Called Villa iZulu, meaning *"Place of Heaven"* in Zulu, it was initially built just for their family but today it is available for guests who prefer a unique, private retreat. Villa iZulu has been honoured with the most awards of any luxury, private villa by the World Travel Awards. In 2023, twenty years later, it was yet again named World's Leading Luxury Private Villa.

## **A PROFOUND SENSE OF BELONGING, OF DESTINY, OF RETURNING HOME**

Sitting round the campfire at night at any of the Thanda Safari properties, watching Zulu TV Channel 1 (the fire), with its flames leaping into the darkness as it has always done, you are transported back through time and space to an ancient feeling of being part of the natural world; part of the universe, the stars and galaxies.

You immerse yourself in absolute freedom; the space; the symphony of the wild; a night sky of wonder with shooting stars fire-balling across the heavens. You remember the unremembered, your future unfolds. It is a profound sense of belonging, of destiny, of returning home.

*Ah! The gods*

*set me free...*

*After a thousand years*

*of wandering*

*in space*

*The gods said*

*I was free to go*

*To Africa*

- Mazisi Kunene, South African poet 1930-2006

## **COMPLETE COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY**

As Scandinavia's largest philanthropists and private investors in Africa, Christin, Dan and their family are significantly contributing to environmental conservation and the empowerment of rural communities through education.

They strongly believe that education, job creation, skills development and the participation and involvement of the rural neighbouring communities is essential to developing strong enduring relationships. Thanda has pioneered several community education, upliftment and job creation programmes.

Ninety-three percent of the staff on Thanda Safari are from the neighbouring Zulu communities. All Thanda staff are offered career advancement, education and training opportunities, and many have risen from junior to senior posts, including top management. One of Thanda Safari's original staff members is Truman Ndlovu who started as Dan's tracker and guide. He is now the Reserve General Manager.

Thanda Safari partners in many different ways with the neighbouring Zulu communities and regularly employs local choirs, woman singers and warrior dance groups, whose performances never fail to enchant guests.

## **CONSERVATION AND ANTI-POACHING**

Thanda Safari is engaged in the conservation of critically endangered animals, including the black rhino and cheetah breeding programmes.

It is a founder member of Project Rhino KZN, an intensive anti-poaching and conservation collaboration in KwaZulu-Natal, working to protect the rhino populations from poaching syndicates. It takes considerable ongoing effort to safeguard these magnificent animals threatened with extinction.

## **CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE - THANDA ISLAND**

Two years after opening Thanda Safari in 2004, Pierre started looking for a private, uninhabited Indian Ocean island. It had to have the most exquisite beaches and clear, turquoise water to add to the Thanda Group's portfolio of unique properties in Africa and continue the adventure.

Dan's instruction to Pierre was to find something exceptional and unapparelled off the coast of East Africa. He told Pierre not to present him with anything until he was one hundred percent sure.

It took months of searching along the east coast of Africa in a twin-engine propeller plane. And then by chance Pierre saw it: a teardrop of land in a turquoise sea; an uninhabited island too small to appear on the map within a beautiful coral reef.

Pierre knew in his heart that he had finally found Thanda Island and immediately called Dan who was at his home in Sweden. "I'm one hundred percent sure," is all Pierre needed to say.

Their requirement for Thanda Island was that it should be a place of absolute natural beauty with a protected coral reef where marine life could flourish, and that it should be an ultra-luxury bespoke experience that sets the highest global standards for guests.

## **THE WORLD'S LEADING EXCLUSIVE PRIVATE ISLAND**

Thanda Island has achieved this. Since opening in 2016 it has repeatedly been named at the World Travel Awards as the World's Leading Exclusive Private Island, including in 2023. It is the only Island Five Star Hotel and single-key exclusive use property in the illustrious group of international Leading Hotels of the World.

Thanda Island is led by its passionate, enthusiastic General Manager, Antigone Meda, who is undoubtedly the heart, soul and spirit of Thanda Island. Having been on the Island from the start, she and her team of wonderful, talented, Swahili staff continue to "Thandarize" guests with unforgettable memories of a lifetime.

As part of their ongoing commitment to communities and conservation, Thanda Island partners with the Tanzanian Marine Parks in a range of marine conservation programmes and educational, sporting and sustainable fishing programmes with the communities in the region.

## **THANDA CLASSIC CRUISE**

In 2017 Dan was having lunch in the marina at Nice where he has a villa in nearby Cannes, when he first set eyes on a 115ft (35m) classic super yacht epitomising old world glamour and grace called 'Over the Rainbow of London'.

He instantly fell in love with her, purchased her and incorporated her in the Thanda Group as the Thanda Classic Cruise. She is currently available for charter in the Mediterranean.

## **A KINGDOM TO CALL HOME**

The flagship of the Thanda Group is Dan's latest investment, The Royal Thanda Club by Thanda Safari that opened to the world in January 2024, almost 22 years after Thanda Safari opened.

It has taken 18 years to create The Royal Thanda Club, the consummate Kingdom to Call Home in Africa. Here, likeminded friends and families gather from around the world and spend glorious days and starlit nights in their own exquisite Royal Residence in The Royal Thanda Club Estate, which guests can also book for their Big Five safari.

Situated in the central part of Thanda Safari, The Royal Thanda Club Estate is enclosed in a 386 hectare, high-security fenced, patrolled, access-controlled area where guests can safely walk, run, cycle and explore in total freedom. Only members and guests are permitted access to the Estate.

## **THE MOST EXCLUSIVE PRIVATE RESIDENCE CLUB**

Inspired by the Yellowstone Club in Montana, United States - regarded as the most exclusive private residence club in the world - The Royal Thanda Club by Thanda Safari is set to become the most exclusive private residence club and real estate offering ever to come out of Africa.

It will ultimately be a Club of 42 members of especially invited families from around the world who join the Olofsson and Delvaux families, making it a unique community of only 44 families who own their own Club House and Royal Residences, some of which are now available for rental to discerning guests.

These are individuals and families who love life and who wish to live life to the full, adventurers who seek the most exquisite homes in the wild, while giving back to conservation and community. Pierre refers to the 44 as the modern day Knights of the Round Table. He believes they will one day inspire "the Davos of Africa to take place here and make a massive impact and positive difference to the continent".

## **EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE, EXCEPTIONAL LIFESTYLE**

The members of The Royal Thanda Club by Thanda Safari are all exceptional people seeking an exceptional lifestyle. Membership is only through ownership of their own bespoke Royal Residence and land on The Royal Thanda Club Estate. These are the most exquisite homes with every 21st century amenity that guests can also book for their Big Five African Safari.

The benchmark of service excellence here is the standard set by the Leading Hotels of the World who provide all hospitality and concierge services to the Royal Thanda Club as an extension of the multi-award-winning Thanda Safari Lodge.

## **A LIFETIME OF UNIQUE FRIENDSHIPS AND MEMORIES**

The Olofsson family have invested over R1,8 billion of their family money into Thanda over the past twenty-one years. Three generations of the Olofsson and Delvaux families regularly gather here on this ancient land and love

being here. By the end of 2023 another six families had joined them. New families are being invited and this is set to significantly increase from 2024.

It's a lifestyle and legacy like none other to bequeath of future generations; a lifetime of unique friendships and intergenerational memories that few experience. It's a feeling of returning home, the familiar faces, the love story, the adventure, and most importantly, the sense of family is at the core of the Thanda DNA.

And so it is that we invite you to reconnect with the wild, with likeminded souls in A Kingdom to Call Home. The strongest calling.

*"For our family, Thanda is a place of seclusion and wilderness ~ where we restore our senses and rejuvenate our spirit. For us, the Thanda properties are about giving people from all over the world the opportunity to experience Africa's most extraordinary places. It is about living the adventure, conserving unique wildlife areas and contributing to the betterment of the communities in the region. Thanda means Love in the language of the Zulu people, and it is indeed a story and journey of love.. Come join us."*

– Dan Olofsson