

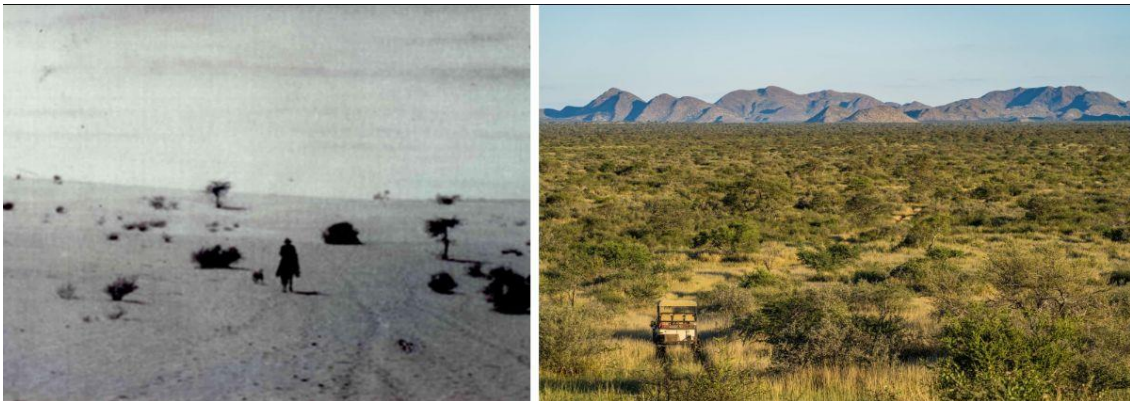
## BUILDING A CONSERVATION LEGACY

Dear Friends,

### HONOURING TSWALU'S LIVING HERITAGE

The Tswalu of today is the embodiment of a bold enterprise brought to life that continues to support the southern Kalahari's rich diversity of fauna and flora. Every single guest who chooses Tswalu brings us a step closer to sustaining the conservation work that is at the heart of this ambitious project. We thank you for being such an integral part of this great endeavour to conserve one of southern Africa's most enigmatic wilderness areas for future generations.

Heritage Day was celebrated in South Africa on 24 September. Once again, it was an opportunity for all of us who are privileged to be part of the **Tswalu community** to acknowledge our living heritage which continues to dictate our vision and purpose to leave our world better than how we found it. Since the Oppenheimer family became the custodians of Tswalu, building on the conservation vision of the late Stephen Boler and honouring the legacy he had begun, real strides have been made towards the restoration of the southern Kalahari.



The reserve has been a true labour of love for the Oppenheimer family, who became custodians of the land in 1999. In so doing, the family committed to continuing the legacy of the previous owner, the late Stephen Boler, to return overgrazed, farmed land to its original state and restore vital habitat and natural processes.

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Long before Tswalu was given its Setswana name, meaning 'a new beginning', the property had begun to take shape as a consolidation of cattle farms, fledgling commercial attempts started in the 19th century in a harsh, unforgiving landscape. Englishman Stephen Boler acquired the collection of farms in 1995, naming it Tswalu. Over the next two years, he added 28 additional farms and set to work dismantling derelict buildings, removing fences and other unwanted infrastructure and stocking the land with indigenous Kalahari wildlife.

A chance meeting between Boler and Nicky Oppenheimer in 1998 was to have a lasting impact on Tswalu's future. The two men only met once, when Nicky accepted an invitation from Boler to visit Tswalu and witness its transformation. He recalls being captivated by the beauty and empty expanses of the Kalahari landscape. Boler had achieved a lot in the space of a few years, including the reintroduction of some of the most iconic Kalahari species such as black rhino.



When Boler died in 1998, he requested in his will that the property be offered in its entirety to the Oppenheimer family with the expressed hope that they would continue the legacy he had begun. Nicky felt compelled to take on the responsibility and carry this bold conservation vision forward. Had it not been for Nicky, Tswalu might never have existed or developed into what it is today - the largest privately protected area in South Africa.

Saying yes to this ambitious conservation endeavour has seen further land acquired - to date, an amalgamation of 43 former cattle and sheep farms - and real strides made

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towards the restoration of the Kalahari. Consolidation of such a unique piece of South Africa's natural heritage is no mean feat.

Tswalu's national and regional importance as a habitat was acknowledged in 2014 when it was designated as a formally protected area. The reserve has become an important contributor to species conservation and is recognised as a valuable reservoir of genetic diversity and as an important research site for understanding the conservation management of endangered species.



Numerous research projects under the auspices of the [Tswalu Foundation](#) are geared towards understanding and conserving key species within the Kalahari ecosystem. Research informs all major conservation decisions, playing a vital role in revealing fascinating aspects of the ecology. Tswalu is also at the forefront of sustainable ecotourism in South Africa, embracing a low-impact, high-value approach to nature-based tourism that helps fund conservation.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Russel'.

Russel

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

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September 2022