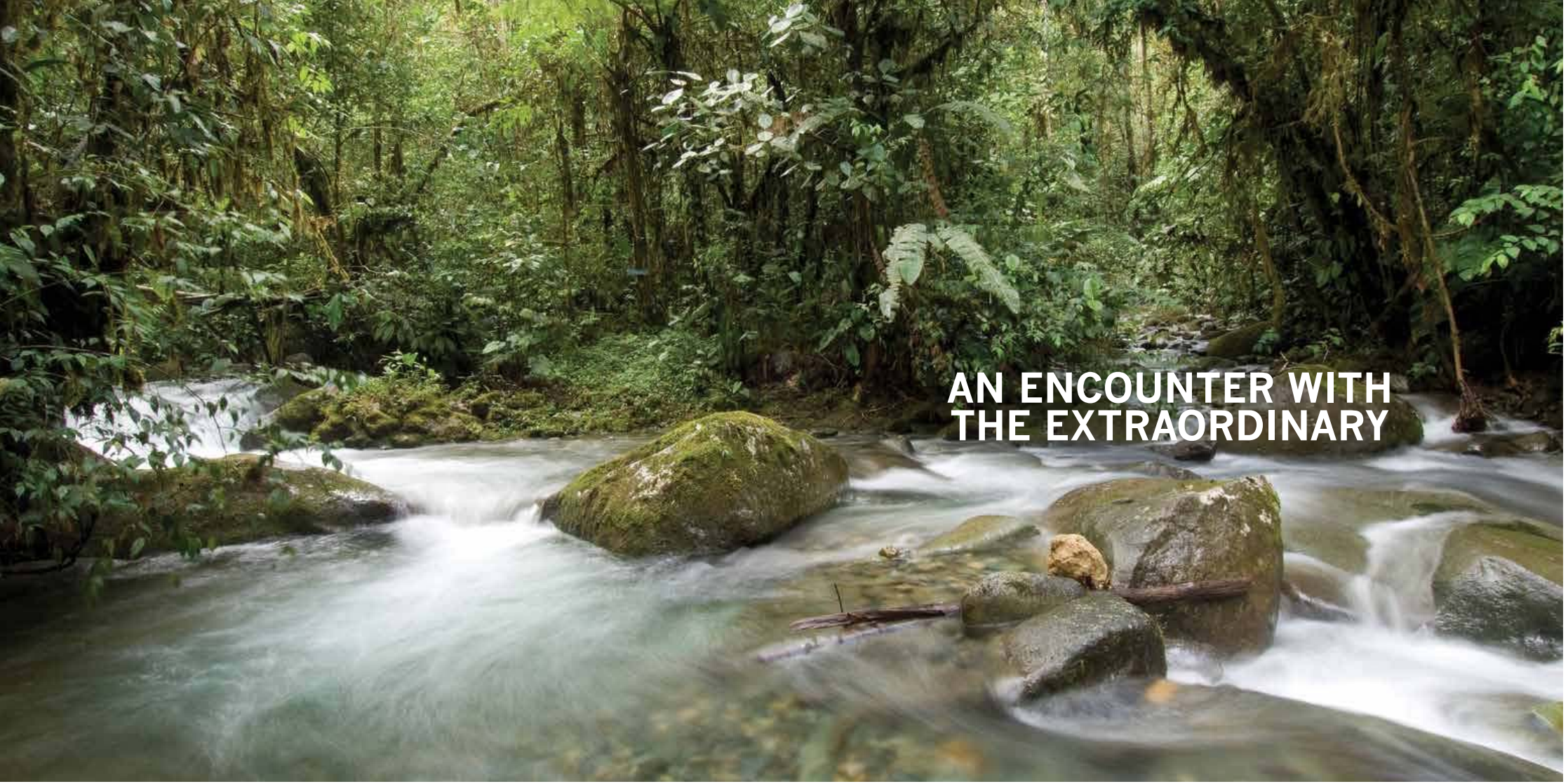
mashpi

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

UNIQUE LODGES
OF THE WORLD™

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF MASHPI,
THE UNDISCOVERED NATURAL SIDE OF QUITO


AN ENCOUNTER WITH
THE EXTRAORDINARY

THE EQUATORIAL CHOCÓ

Shafts of light filter through the canopy... The aroma of forest plants and flowers... The swirl of clouds through branches and trees... The sound of rain drops cascading onto leaves... This is the world of the forests on the western slopes of the Andes Mountains, regarded as one of the most biologically-diverse ecosystems on the planet. Everywhere you look, you find life, in all its varied, surprising and multi-coloured forms.

Nowhere is this truer than within the Masphi Rainforest Biodiversity Reserve. The Reserve enjoys a privileged position, harbouring both cloudforest and rainforest. A profusion of plant and animal species has adapted to these environments, creating an incredibly rich ecosystem which is still revealing its secrets to science, still mysterious, still magical.

A GATEWAY TO BIODIVERSITY

Mashpi Lodge shows you the other side of much-acclaimed Quito. A step away from the bustling city proper, but still within its Metropolitan District, lies another world, one of quiet walks through cloud- and rainforest paths dense with vegetation and still undiscovered fauna, a hot spot of biodiversity. Quito, a city of two hemispheres: culture and nature. Explore them both.

The area around the reserve is one of the very few biodiversity "hotspots" in the world, particularly when it comes to flora and avifauna. The reserve occupies much of the land that was previously part of a logging concession. It was purchased in 1997. Over the following years, more land was added until the forest was registered as a private protected forest. Eventually, the project's investors turned their dream into reality with the building of the lodge itself –in fact, on the very site of the mill which once processed the forest's trees.

THE MASHPI EXPERIENCE

"The whole glory of these forests could only be seen by sailing gently in a balloon over the undulating flowery surface above: such a treat is perhaps reserved for the traveller of a future age." Alfred Russel Wallace, 19th century British naturalist and explorer, best known for independently proposing a theory of natural selection.

The Mashpi experience is about discovering life in the tree tops, trekking along trails, listening to animal calls, absorbing each and every colour, bathing in pure waterfalls, spotting butterflies and birds, encountering amazing creatures, or simply relaxing with a view of clouds playing hide-and-seek with the forest. Share our passion for the awe-inspiring rainforest and explore it, as nature comes alive before your eyes.

THE DRAGONFLY

The highlight of any trip to Mashpi is a ride aboard the Dragonfly, an innovative cable system which carries you under, through and above the forest canopy: a unique way to see the world anew.

The Dragonfly consists of two stations, six towers (with an intermediate station half-way, which we can use to embark and disembark), and four 'gondolas' in which you travel. Each gondola can carry four guests plus their guide. The Dragonfly travels gently and slowly along a 2-kilometre (1.2-mile) cable between the two stations, sometimes below the canopy, sometimes through it, and also far above it – it's a bird's eye view of this magical ecosystem.

It takes about 40 minutes to ride from one station to the other.

GUIDED NATURE WALKS

As one enters the realm of the rainforests, one becomes aware of life at every step: mushrooms and "fox fire" fungi below, tree trunks festooned with liverworts, lichens and mosses, giant ferns reaching up to the light above, swirling mists and clouds of moisture. And then, from nowhere, comes the sound of rushing water, a waterfall amid this glistening, green world, where senses are revived and new perspectives gained.

The trails are designed for a complete vision and understanding of the various life-zones and types of forest within the reserve. Trained local guides and expert naturalists explore this world with guests, bringing the reserve's riches to life through their explanations of its flora and fauna's behaviours, adaptations and medicinal uses. Exciting guided night walks through the reserve reveal an altogether different side of the magic of the rainforest: true nocturnal adventures.

Lectures by the team of naturalist guides are part of everyday activities, allowing guests a more in-depth understanding of the ecosystem and the science at work within the reserve.

DISCOVER THE WORLD OF BIRDS

Mashpi rewards the curious with sightings of amazing avian species. Take hummingbirds: these unfailingly busy flying machines buzz from flower to flower at speeds of up to 115 kilometres per hour (70 miles per hour), their wings flapping at up to 80 beats per second. An incredible sight!

And then there are flocks of chattering parrots to spot, or sightings of multi-hued toucans up in the canopy... In this small region northwest of Quito, you can spot an estimated – and staggering – 400 species (about half the total for all of Europe, and a third of all of the five-country Amazon Basin), including some 36 endemics – birds found here and absolutely nowhere else.

ORCHID SEDUCTION

The environment around Mashpi Lodge provides ideal conditions for what are commonly called 'air plants' because they do not root in soil, but rather grow on living plants.

The most beautiful of these plants are orchids, bromeliads and gesnerias, 'the violet of the Tropics'. Ecuador is home to 4,000 known orchid species – a thousand of them discovered in the past 12 years alone – more than any other country in the world, despite its small size. Within the reserve, natural gardens and trails will allow you to explore the amazing variety and beauty of these most beguiling of plants.

SCIENCE AND INVESTIGATION

The science and investigation projects are ample and varied in Mashpi. Even before construction was completed, a biologist was hired to conduct an ambitious program of research. Its aim? To find out as much as possible about the myriad natural elements within the Mashpi Reserve and their interaction with visitor activities.

Complementing this work, insectaries for breeding butterflies were constructed, and camera traps placed across the terrain. The knowledge accumulated by our team is then shared with local communities, our guests and the wider public, with the aim of spreading the message of the importance of conserving this endangered and fascinating bio-region. We have worked on and collaborated with several Ecuadorian and international research projects, and have even discovered new species to science.

These initiatives have proved to us that our conservation efforts have to go beyond merely protecting our reserve with its hotel. They must be a combination of research, education, ecotourism and community support in order to be truly successful.

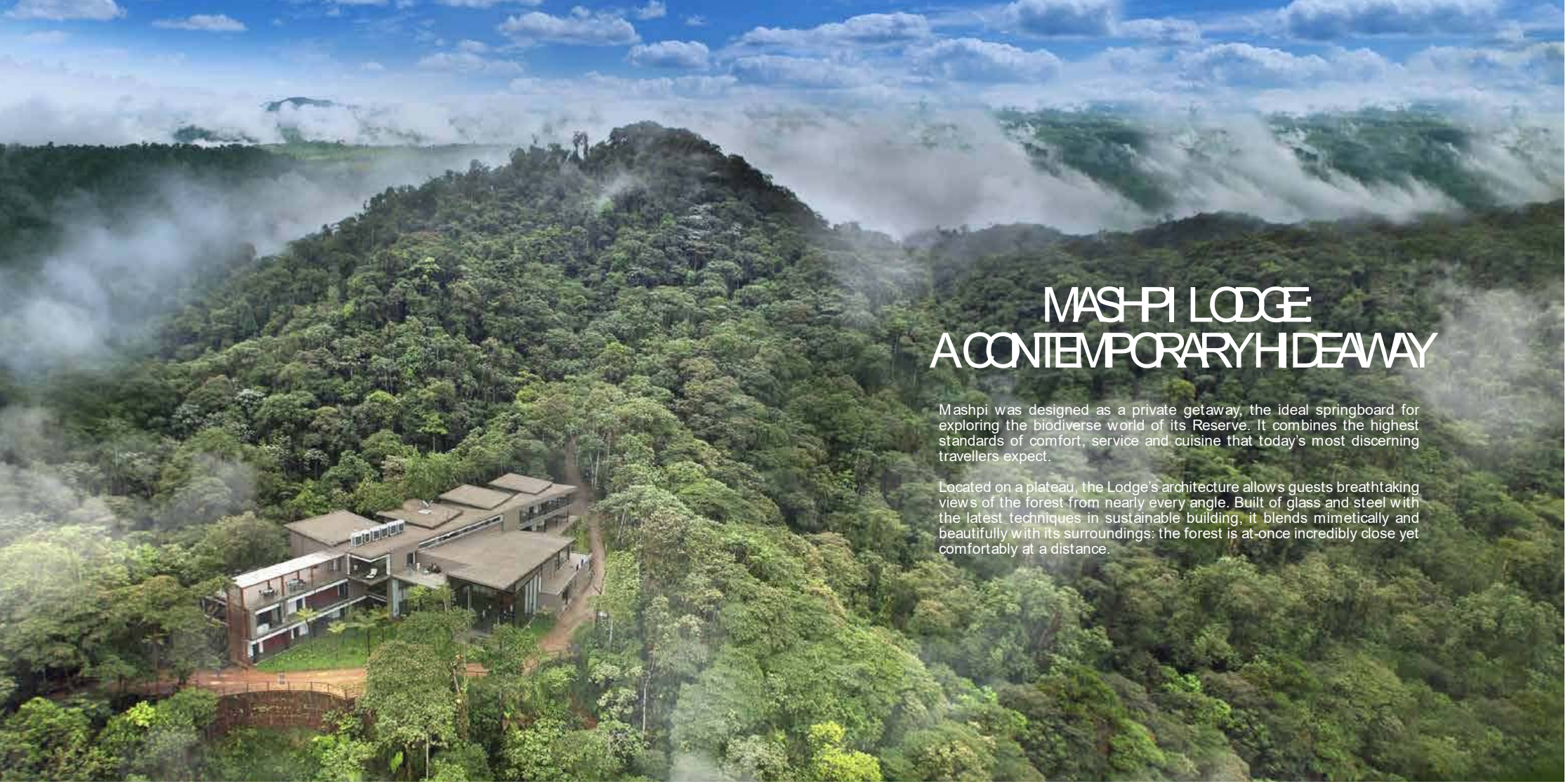
THE FASCINATING WORLD OF MASHPI CREATURES

The forest ecosystem of Mashpi hosts hundreds bird species, possibly thousands of orchid species, tens of thousands of insect species, as well as monkeys, peccaries and even puma. The camera traps installed and the field work carried out by our team of on-site biologists have produced many exciting sightings since the project's inception.

Enter this realm and one's eye soon spots flitting colourful wings, such as the amazing, electric-blue Morpho butterfly. These can be observed at the butterfly exhibition centre, where at night, one can also enjoy the amazing nocturnal show of dozens of multi-hued moths.

The rivers and rivulets, waterfalls and hilly terrain around Mashpi make perfect habitats for dozens of species of amphibians, with new and very rare individuals discovered to date. They come in all sorts of marvellous and eye-catching forms, and all sorts of sizes, from the tiny to the titan, including beautiful, other-worldly glass frogs. These are just some of the mysteries and delights that await in the forest.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD
OF MASHPI LODGE



MASHPI LODGE: A CONTEMPORARY HIDEAWAY

Mashpi was designed as a private getaway, the ideal springboard for exploring the biodiverse world of its Reserve. It combines the highest standards of comfort, service and cuisine that today's most discerning travellers expect.

Located on a plateau, the Lodge's architecture allows guests breathtaking views of the forest from nearly every angle. Built of glass and steel with the latest techniques in sustainable building, it blends mimetically and beautifully with its surroundings: the forest is at-once incredibly close yet comfortably at a distance.

The Lodge features contemporary design and décor, mixing warm earth tones and clean lines: a cosy cocoon amid the forest.

Its ample public areas, lounges, dining room, massage room and Jacuzzi are all perfect for contemplation and relaxation, with huge picture windows making guests feel part of their surroundings, where, at night, the only lights are the dance of myriad Ğeğies.

The Lodge is intimate, accommodating a maximum of 44 guests in 22 ample rooms, three of which are suites.

For those travelling with friends or family, connecting rooms are available.

CHOCÓ CUISINE

Inspired by the rainforest and the huge diversity found in Ecuador, our chefs excel in preparing gourmet dishes that combine locally-grown ingredients such as plantain or chocolate, as well as experimenting with an endless variety of delicious fruits: mandarinas, guavas, naranjillas...

The finest fresh organic produce, complemented by a carefully selected wine list.

EMBRACED BY WELLBEING

Encounter a tranquil place in the heart of the cloud forest. A place where your wellbeing is nurtured to harmonize with your inner self. A place where care is personalized and life is celebrated.

As your guide on this journey of rejuvenation we will tailor our range of beauty and body treatments to meet your personal needs and preferences. Our Spa suites and relaxation areas combine to create the perfect escape and reconnect with the essential.

Beyond the lodge, our grounds provide remarkable spaces for meditation and yoga. Let us know how you would like to enrich your time with us and we'll do our best to ensure you leave our company feeling restored, revived and inspired.

COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

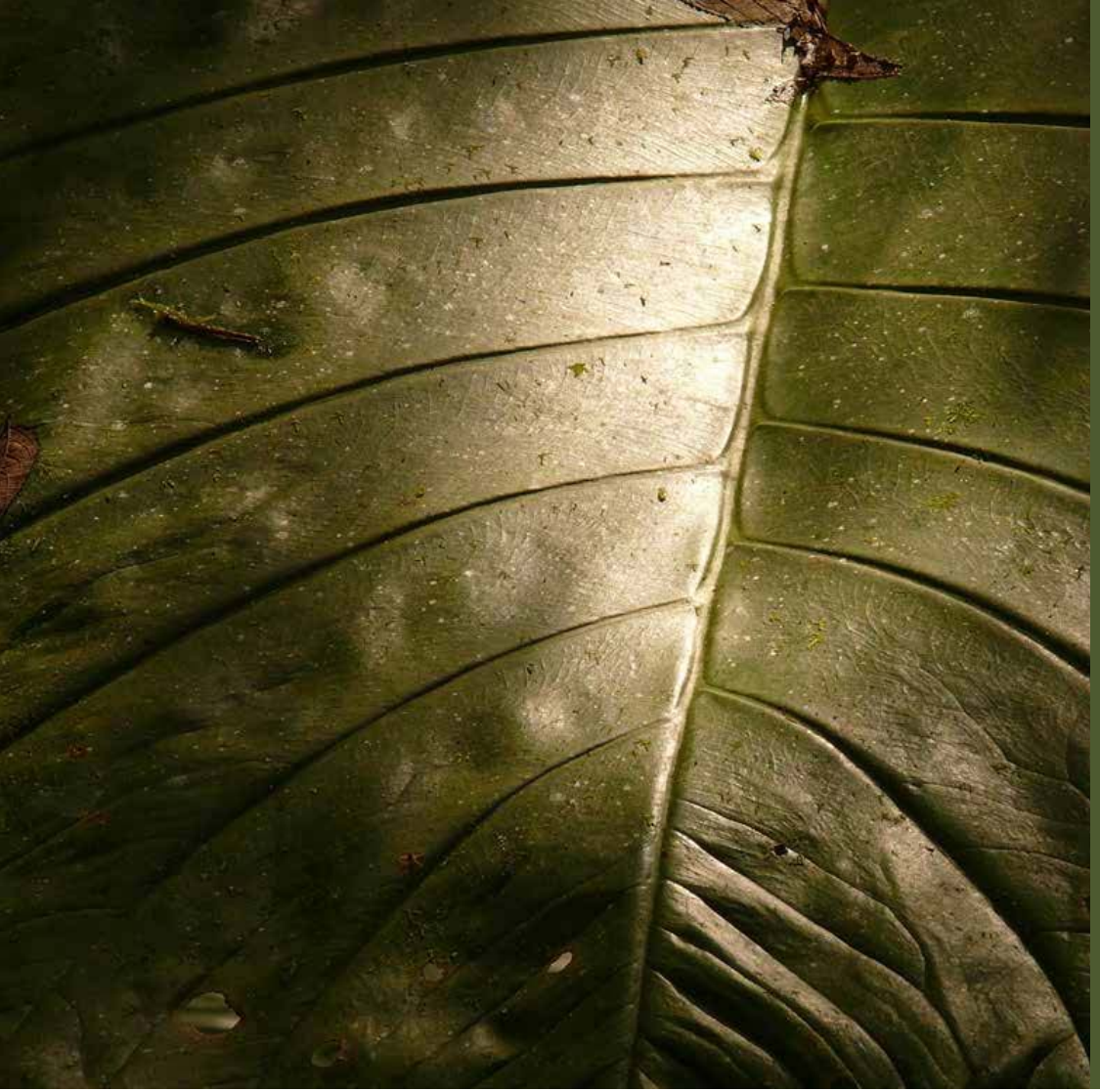
From the start, the Mashpi project has sought successfully to work hand-in-hand with the Reserve's surrounding community.

The Mashpi project has implemented an innovative programme in which members of the surrounding communities as well as Lodge employees will become shareholders in the Enterprise.

Mashpi offers numerous job opportunities for members of the neighboring communities,the added value is that not only they get the jobs, but they also receive specialized professional training with ongoing programs that include English language classes . But Mashpi goes farther beyond. The communities are also the primary providers of agricultural and other food products and supplies for the use of the Lodge, especially on the Hotel's food and beverage areas.

Mashpi lodge was built using steel and pre-assembled walls, that were put together in Quito before being transported to the site in order to reduce the impact of the construction in the reserve .

As part of our commitment with the wellbeing of the our forest, the lodge has a water treatment plant that allows the operation to have a neutral impact on the water of the Mashpi river.



Credits:
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