

Tourvest buys controlling interest in Adrift

By [Nick Hedley](#)

18 Sep 2013

Tourism group Tourvest said on Tuesday (17 September) it had bought a controlling interest in Ugandan-based Nile rafting company Adrift.



Tourvest delisted from the JSE in 2008 after it was acquired by a black economic empowerment-led consortium. The company said the deal, for an undisclosed sum, was designed to support its accommodation and activities division's expansion outside SA.

The company's divisional chief executive Gary Elmes said Uganda has outstanding wildlife-based tourism potential. The transaction included the purchase of the majority share in the Wild Waters Lodge, which is on an island in the Nile River and surrounded by the Kalagala Falls.

"We have also secured concessions to build lodges in or near most of the national parks, including Bwindi, Queen Elizabeth, Murchison Falls and the Kazinga Channel as part of the acquisition," Elmes said.

Tourvest already has a small footprint in Uganda through its overland safari business Drifters.

Elmes said the acquisition was another step in the company's strategy of establishing a mini-Tourvest in East Africa, and the deal added an activity-based dimension to a range of Tourvest's tourism businesses and accommodation in the area.

These include Vintage Africa, Tourvest's Kenyan-based tour operator, ground-handler and travel agent, as well as Lemala and Kuria Hills, the seasonal and permanent camps it operates in the Serengeti National Park.

In addition, Tourvest's property management business AHA was recently awarded the full management contracts for the Mara River Lodge in Kenya's Masai Mara Game Reserve and the Azanzi Beach Hotel in Zanzibar.

Elmes said the investment in Uganda was expected to significantly raise the country's profile in international tourism markets through Tourvest's network of representatives that sell brands across the world.

He said: "We will bring valuable expertise and experience in all aspects of tourism to the country, something from which an emerging market like Uganda will benefit greatly."

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