

HD Back in the tourism fold**WC** 327 words**PD** 20 November 1996**SN** Travel Trade Gazette UK & Ireland**SC** TTGU**PG** 45**LA** English**CY** (Copyright 1996)**LP**

Mozambique is ripe for rediscovery now that tour operators are returning. Mozambique's return to international tourism following years of civil war has reopened the door to a world-class fishing and diving area. A number of tour operators are once again featuring the country in their brochures. These include Okavango Tours, which is promoting a twin-centre deal with South Africa, and **Encounter Overland**, which is selling a four-week Cape Town to Harare expedition which cuts through Mozambique. "We will be following the coastline, visiting the fishing villages and taking Arab-style dhows across to Indian Ocean islands to enjoy deserted beaches and coral reefs," said Encounter product and marketing director Warren Burton. Sussex-based Hunt Travel, run by Zimbabwean expatriate Buckley Hunt, is the leading UK operator to Mozambique. "Before the war, Mozambique was ranked alongside the Great Barrier Reef as one of the great game fishing places on earth," he said. "The boats and crews which worked

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in the game fishing industry perished in the conflict and fishing today is being run with South African-style surf launched boats. "There is a move to train crews and provide boats for the old style of fishing because there is a market for it. We hope to open it again." Hunt Travel sends clients mainly to the Tahitian-style Benguela Island Lodge, on Benguerra Island in the Bazaruto archipelago, and Magaruque Island Resort. The archipelago is a marine national park, and the islands provide ideal bases for scuba-diving and snorkelling. The region is also renowned for its dugong sea cow population - the largest on Africa's eastern coast. Mr Hunt added: "Within the curve of the coast is 87 square miles of mangrove flats and swamps, much of which is unexplored. The birdlife there is out of this world." Mr Hunt said the absence of a regular air service to the region was holding back the development of tourism.

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