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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



s always, it gives me great pleasure to write the introduction to our in-flight magazine, Fulcrum.

In my introductory piece in the June edition, I informed you that Ibom Air was in the process of acquiring 2 Airbus A220 aircraft to join the fleet, bringing our fleet to 7 aircraft and offering significant additional capacity to meet the surge in demand for our services.

I am pleased to confirm that the two aircraft have since joined the fleet. They commenced scheduled flight operations on the 30th of June 2021, and just as we expected, their arrival immediately eased the capacity crunch our passengers were experiencing. Besides that, the feedback from passengers about their experience flying on our Airbus A220 has been overwhelmingly positive.

With the additional capacity provided by the Airbuses, we opened our Port Harcourt destination, bringing our national footprint to 6 destinations- Uyo, Lagos, Abuja, Calabar, Enugu and Port Harcourt, from where we operate 9 different routes. I am also pleased to inform you that we will be receiving our 6th Bombardier CRJ 900 aircraft in October, increasing the fleet to 8 aircraft, which will allow us to further expand our domestic footprint.

We also intend to commence operating scheduled flights into a couple of regional destinations out of Uyo and Lagos in the last quarter of the year. We will make these announcements in due course.

But in the meantime, I want to take this introductory piece to thank you all profusely for your continued patronage of Ibom Air. It is because of this patronage that we have grown so fast and exponentially in the 2 years and three months since our operations commenced. We know and appreciate why you keep choosing us, and we do not take it for granted at all. Many people ask me every day, "can you people keep this up"? Hence I want to reassure you that the Ibom Air team is totally committed to continuing to deliver on our tripodal brand proposition to you of Schedule Reliability, On-Time Departures and Excellent Service, ad infinitum.

And yes, while our growth might seem very steep and cause some worry from our passengers, let me also reassure you that our growth is unfolding out of a very carefully put together business plan and playbook. As an airline, we are bent on doing this business in an efficient and sustainable manner to ensure that it becomes a successful enterprise that all Akwa Ibomites, all Nigerians and indeed all our passengers and stakeholders from around the world can remain proud of for decades to come. Once again, on behalf of all of us at Ibom Air, I thank you for your continued support.

Travel safely, and we look forward to seeing you onboard again and again.
With warm and cheerful regards,

Mfon Udom.



OUR DESTINATIONS

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We are evolving!

Yes! And like every growing entity we learn, unlearn, and relearn as we trudge along.

It is in our DNA to keep thinking up new ways to serve you even better, and of course, abandoning any that is not hitting the mark. your satisfaction is a given to us here at Ibom Air, be it in our primary service delivery or the quality of content we bring to you with every edition of our inflight magazine. As we promised in the last edition, we have opened our port-Harcourt - Lagos, Port-Harcourt - Abuja route to daily operations. Port- Harcourt holds some fascination for us and we have tried to show you why in our story on the garden city. The Airbus A220, bigger capacity aircraft has also since taken to the skies, offering more capacity to our esteemed passengers on the Abuja - Lagos, Uyo-Lagos, Uyo-Abuja route. We remain immensely grateful for the acceptance and patronage we have enjoyed on both services so far.

You may have noticed our affinity to nature in our previous editions, well, in this edition, we are taking you on a journey into nature yet again, with the hope that we can stir your interest enough to take a leap of faith and venture into the flora infused hinterlands every now and again, instead of waiting for retirement to do just that. You would be amazed what a trip to the local stream in your hometown

or the local market can reveal, that is if your hometown has not been bitten by the urban bug.

A quick recap of the just concluded Tokyo Olympics, and the monumental win recorded by our homegrown football team- Akwa United, as the Nigerian Premier Football League Champions for 2021, is our way of touching your sporty, competitive side. If you took advantage of the summer season and went on vacation, you may want to take some notes on what to look out for as you plan your next one. Relish a bit of "Je ne Sais quoi" as our lifestyle corner draws your attention to trends in grooming. Overall,

us hits some, if not all the right spots. Wishing you a pleasant read, while looking forward to your feedback.

we hope our effort to excite you as you travel with

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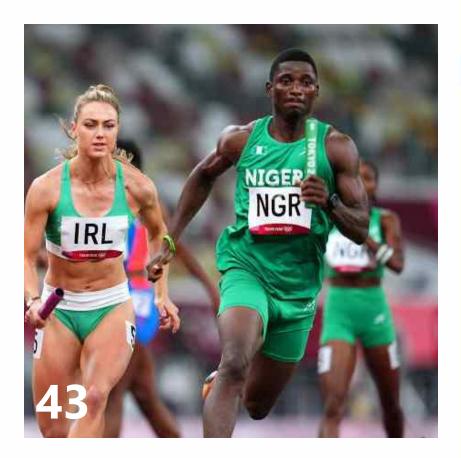
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At your service: Dakkada Affordable Estate

Fulcrum Magazine sat with the **Chief Operating Officer of Open** House Property **Management** Company Ltd. A foremost real estate company with many years of experience providing low-cost housing around the country. In partnership with the Federal government of Nigeria (through Family Homes Funds Ltd.) and the Akwa ibom state government, they will be rolling out massive housing projects in different local governments, beginning with the Dakkada Affordable Estate sited at Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area already in advance stages of completion to discuss their real Estate Brand and future goals in the excerpts below.

She reveals, "our Dakkada Affordable Estate is determined to prove to private developers and investors that profit can be made from helping those in need as a team of passionate multidimensional men and women committed to solving the housing/home acquisition challenges in Nigeria".

How is this project possible?

We will commend His Excellency, Mr. Udom Emmanuel for the giant strides he has recorded so far as a State as the developments are Laudable. As the state's slogan says "Akwa Ibom DAKKADA" meaning "Akwa Ibom ARISE", His Excellency's vision of Industrialization also played a huge role in attracting investors into the state which has spiked the housing demand of the state which makes the housing development project at great advantage in contributing to the real estate gross domestic product (GDP) in the Akwa Ibom State economy.

His Excellency, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State through the Ministry of Housing and Ministry of Lands and has been very supportive of the project right from inception. This he has done through the provision of Land and major infrastructure (accessible road) for the estate as well as financing of the project through the Akwa Ibom State partnership with Family Homes Funds Limited (FHFL), a fed-

eral government body whose core vision ("is to use housing to improve the living standards of Nigerians on low income by building quality homes, providing homes ownership, financing solutions and creating jobs through the process")

Reacting to one of our first questions on her brand services, she shared with us saying,

"Our service offers insight into how we can use this past episode of the Covid-19 to shine a beacon of hope into the Real Estate market in Akwa Ibom State. Our Innovation over the years has helped us build a strong company, so our services have transitioned during the pandemic. For example, infection prevention components had to be made into all of our services.

This meant that we were not only able to help businesses respond to the covid-19 pandemic, but it also allowed us to reach our performance objectives through the growth of our bottom line."

"We've been very fortunate to have built a resilient organization, but we also took the position that every challenge creates opportunities. We believe that the best companies evaluate and seize opportunities for success amid those challenges, and that's what we did. We went further to think about how the real estate landscape may be permanently changed in the future and how we will alter our strategy. Open-house must protect the safety and health of all our employees, tenants, and other end user's safety and health of people by all reasonable means. When we succeed in strengthening this position through this crisis, we will go beyond just adapting: We will take bold actions that deepen relationships with us, earning respect, trust, and loyalty of our customers and employees by the need to over-communicate".

On strategic partnerships?

"The biggest challenge for professionals or new people emerging in

the industry is building a pipeline and database. Therefore, we have focused our attention on building local relationships and immersing ourselves in the community. We focused on leveraging our professional sphere to expand our local network. We never delay payments to our suppliers or our employees and this has strengthened our relationship with our partners," she shares.

Reacting to questions about consolidating their place in the Nigeria Real Estate business,

she said "what sets Open House apart from its competitors is "Positive Disruption" creating Innovative Architectural Designs, building systems and value Engineering methods that lower the cost of Homeownership. We strive to build the most desirable residential communities in the country based on environmental sustainability, top-shelf design principles, and unique in-house community development. We create communities, natural communities, where people want to live," she added. "Communities where you know your neighbors, where parent meets each other for meeting or celebration. That's called "the old country town."

GREEN!! GREEN!!! At Open-house, our emphasize is on GREEN!

"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

~ Native American Proverb

When we include green, We effectively reduce our carbon footprint by reducing pollution, we also reduce the amount of energy consumed, making way for a greener and cleaner environment.

West Africa's longest beachfront & Surrounding Coastal Towns

WORDS BY NSIKAK AKPAN







ith clement sea winds and lovely scenery, these fascinating coastal towns of Ibaka, Oron and Ibeno have beautiful shorelines that provide bounties of seafood for your choice cuisine. Whether you want to unwind on a white-sand beach or dive into local history and culture, Nsikak Akpan takes you on a fantastic ride around this beautiful destination spot this summer, where the natural world blends with life's little luxury.





IBENO

The coast of this beautiful beach town in Kwa Ibo is breath-takingly beautiful regardless of whether it's raining or glistening during summer. This beach town is the epitome of the southern Nigeria charm. A one hour plus drive 65 KM from the Victor Attah International Airport, Ibeno, has the longest white beachfront in West Africa.

This Beach is the fusion of sunshine, sand, and sea during summer, where the Atlantic Ocean shimmers under the blue sky, giving a clear view of the Gulf of Guinea during the day.

A peaceful waterfront town with rich history, dating back to 1200-1500 BC, when the natives first settled here, making this exotic destination their home. The historic landing site of Qua lboe Christian Missions from Scotland during the early 20th century is worth visiting.

Observe strict Covid-19 protocols.

Top: A section of Ibeno beach showing relaxation spots.

Bottom Left: Ibeno nightlife.

Bottom Right: White sands of Ibeno.



A must-see is the water garden behind the museum, where you get to catch glimpses of small boats drifting along the creeks.

Right: A glimpse of boats as you would see behind the museum.

Bottom Left: A basket of Palm fruit, one of the communities favourite on display at the market

Bottom Right: Fish business at Oron market.







Picture source: wikipedia, unsplash.com





IBAKA

This fishing village occupies the beautiful green shores of the Mbo river on the southeastern Nigerian coastline. A 63 KM one-hour, 22-minute drive from the Victor Attah International Airport. This community will soon be the home to one of the economic gateways of Akwa Ibom and, indeed, the nation, the Ibom Deep Seaport. Designed to open up the waterways for a booming economy, this port can accommodate very large vessels that can load up to 13 thousand containers in one trip. You would love the neighbourliness, nature trails, and renowned fishing market at the Inewalker fishing port.

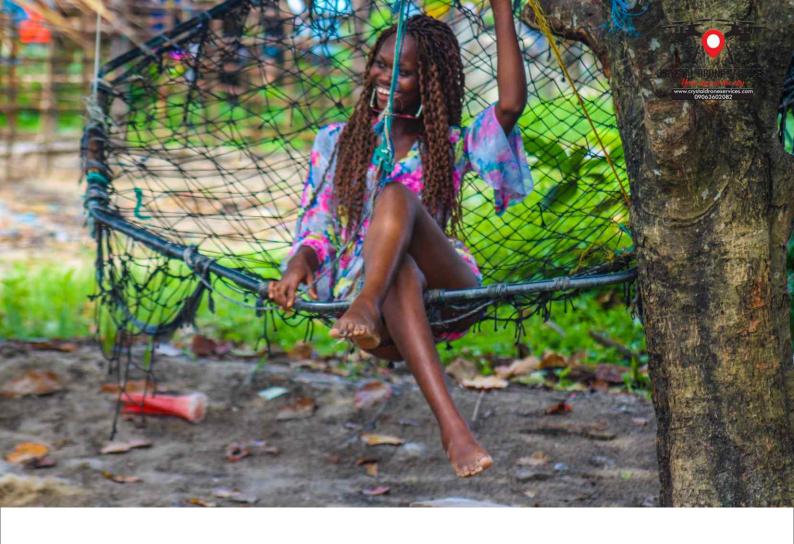
Visit the Mbo forest game reserve, rich in indigenous plants, wildlife, and trees, whenever you are there for vacation or fishing. If you plan to visit this beautiful place during the rainy season, don't forget to pack your necessary gear.

Top left: Grill ready fish

Top Right: Fish on display for sale.

Right: Various seafood on display.







et's face it, life in the city can be tedious.

Urban life sure has its thrills and spills, but there are times when you want to escape from the stress and pressures of life in the city and run to somewhere serene and natural to let down your hair and live!

Imagine living on a quiet island away from the noise, stress, and pressures of the city? Welcome to Iko island, also known as the cashew beach, a place that offers you a haven to explore nature's gifts. This Island is located in Eastern Obolo local government area of Akwa Ibom state, and The Atlantic Ocean bounds it in the south.

You can pack up and escape to Iko Island as it is a distance of 73 KM by car and takes two hours plus to arrive from the Victor Attah International Airport. This Island is an impressive beach town with a bounty of natural views and history, a delightful picture of nature's paradise. You will never be in want of adventure. The cold breeze will welcome you with open arms as you step into the rural kingdom.



Top left: A tourist having fun on the island.

Top right: Locals gazing at visitors and young farm girl.

We invite you to awaken the adventurer in you. Spend a night in a brick or mud house with tatched roofs, experience the childlike excitement of bathing in the cold waters of the stream, eat fresh fruits and vegetables, boosting your immunity. Take time to explore the beach and experience the feel of the wispy beach sand in the middle of your toes, relax in the sun, listen to the sound of the waves slamming the shore and experience inner peace gazing into the blue waters of the beach.

Munch on a delicious cashew nut, one of the famous fruits the Island is renowned for as you wander around the Island. Resist the urge to charge your phone with one of the many improvised solar energy charging systems provided by the locals. At the end of your adventure, you will return to the city refreshed!

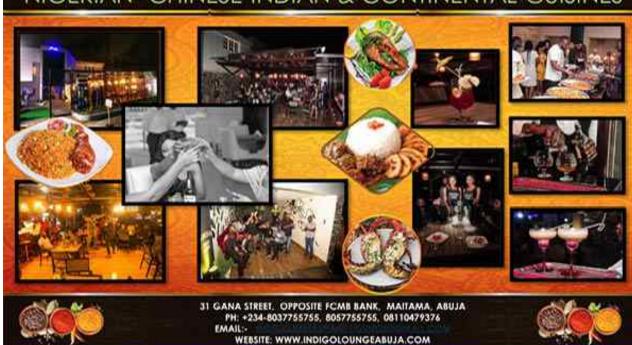
Middle:: Tourists on vacation on the island

Right: A view of beautiful houses for the locals.































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WORDS BY IMOH USANGA

Port Harcourt, popularly called PH by locals, is Nigeria's fifth-largest city. It lies along the Bonny River in the Niger Delta. Its booming industrial activities, the influx of tourists, down-to-earth serenity and vibrant nightlife scene make it one of Nigeria's most exciting cities.

Do you want to tour Port Harcourt? Here's a quick rundown of where to go.

Port Harcourt Tourists Beach: is a great place to start with. Play in the cold water and listen to local sounds of highlife and modern music from any bush bars on the beach. Relish the local delicacies of palm wine or salty, spicy meats, local

dishes. Play beach football, beach vol-

lleyball, watch boat races or dive into the water.

Bonny Island: Head off to this fantastic spot on a speedboat and relax in the fun that this idyllic island offers.

Port Harcourt Zoo is an excellent spot to spy on exotic wildlife species. Watch them feed and explore their habitat.

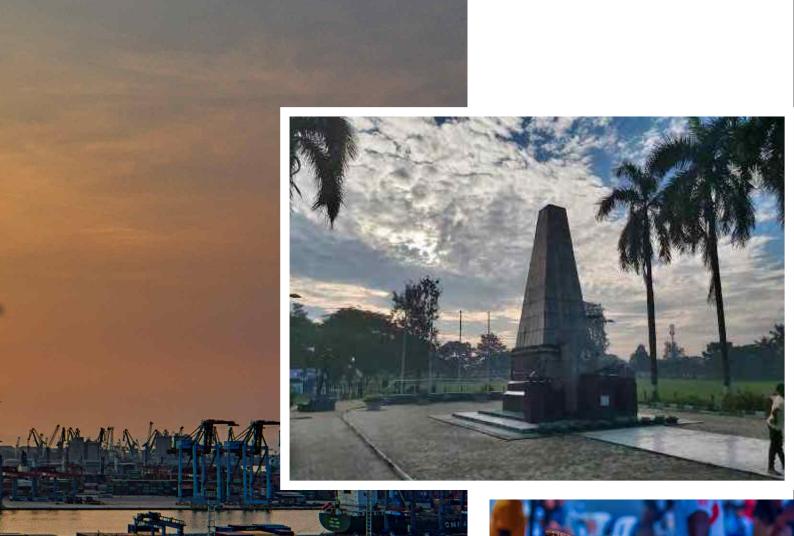
Port Harcourt City Mall has something for everyone. The malls, shopping complex, theatre, and various food courts will attend to your shopping and food needs.

Mile One Street Market: A visit to this bustling and famous market will introduce you to the commercial side of Port Harcourt. It is the home for traditional African wear of all fashion. The market

opens as early as 6 am and closes late in the night. Buy an item or two before leaving.

Isaac Boro Park: Serenade yourself in peace and tranquillity at The park, which has a garden with seats and trees overhang outside to supplant the furiousness of the sun. While visiting this resort, bring along mats, a camera, a companion and a good book; the ambience is perfect.

Exploring Port Harcourt with kids? Give them a taste of unlimited fun at the Pleasure Park, a giant children playground equipped with various exercise machines, straightforward walkers, back rubs machines, curved coaches, a parking lot, a running track restaurant, and a climbing tower.



A trip to PH would be incomplete without trying the famous Bole and fish cuisine, a traditional Rivers dinner consisting of roast plantain and fish Slathered in the most exquisite pepper and palm oil sauce. Almost every street corner, you can see indigenous women roasting this dish over hot charcoal.

Port Harcourt Golf Club: Are you a golf lover? Play your heart out at the 18-hole golf course with excellent facilities that will indulge you even if you do not play golf. Facilities such as a table tennis hall, a bar, clubhouse, a swimming pool, football pitch, a lounge area, cafè and a gym are available.

Port Harcourt is a lovely place to be.

"on-y va va àport harcourt" simply means come to port Harcourt.

Top: A view of the Port Area leading to Bonny Island.

Top Right: Isaac Boro park.

Middle: Bole food on display

Right: Mile one street market.





BOSTON CELTIC COACH IME UDOKA

WORDS BY NSIKAK AKPAN

e is the first head coach of African origin in the NBA league history. Ime Sunday Udoka (born August 9, 1977) is a Nigerian-American basketball coach and former player of the National Basketball Association (NBA). He represented the Nigeria National Basketball Team during his playing career.

Spending nearly a decade as the assistant coach, Udoka became the new head coach of the Boston Celtics. The 43-year-old became the 18th

coach, and sixth Black coach, in the franchise's distinguished history. Ime Udoka, who later served under Steve Nash for the Brooklyn Nets, was an attacking player in the NBA for five teams starting 2003 to 2011 before embarking on a coaching career in 2012 with the San Antonio Spurs, Ime, whose father, Vitalis Udoka, emigrated from Africa's most populous nation Nigeria before Ime Udoka was born, is the first African to serve as head coach in the NBA. (Nash, who recently completed his first season in Brooklyn, was taken to Welsh and





English parents in South Africa.) Udoka, who played for the Nigerian men's national team during the 2006 FIBA World Championship, led the team in scoring, assists and steals, and was second in rebounds. He also played for Nigeria during the 2005 and 2011 FIBA Africa championships. Udoka and his sister, Mfon Udoka, all from Akwa Ibom state, who played for the Nigerian women's national team and in the WNBA for three seasons, was the first brother-sister to play in the NBA and WNBA, with regards to a 2006 report published in the Los Angeles Times.

In a move in 2019 designed to get him ready for a subsequent coaching job. Udoka later joined the Philadelphia 76ers as head coach Brett Brown's-another former Popovich assistant—lead assistant coach. Brown got fired after eliminating the Sixers from last season's bubble playoffs; Udoka joined Nash's Nets sometime in October. During his spell as a player and assistant coach, Udoka receives compliments by his fellow teammates and coaches for showing characteristics that make for a successful NBA coach: with hard work ethic, ability to teach, fortitude and patience, the latter of which is the Ibibio meaning of Udoka's first name.



"I think that's kind of work ethics the Celtics should expect, a guy that's highly intelligent but also has resilience with a unique way of communicating and linking up with players. He's just got a great unique way about him."

Top: Ime Udoka.

Middle: Boston Celtic Players celebrating after a game.

Right: Boston Celtic player in action.







s the Premier League trophy finds home in Uyo following Akwa United's first victory, it fulfils the age-long dream of the founders of soccer. While globally, England introduced the game in Nigeria, it was first played in Calabar, the political father of Uyo. Akwa United beat MFM 5-2 to emerge champions, with a game left. The Promise Keepers were FA Cup champions in 2015 and again in 2017. Calabar had won it in 1954. Politically, Calabar and Uyo are in the same League. Nigerians refer to people from Cross River and Akwa Ibom as Calabar.

Soccer came to Nigeria in March 1902 through James Luke, principal of Hope Waddell Training Institution, Calabar. The school was founded in 1895 by Scottish missionaries. On June 15, 1904, the school team defeated a British squad, HMS Thistle, 3-2. The foreigners were sailors. That was the first match on Nigerian soil. It was also the first international game. It is remarkable that the English FA, which emerged in 1863, is the oldest. And the first soccer competition came in 1871. The same Brits who introduced soccer also took it to Calabar. Ever since, there is always something special about that Cal-





abar axis, from Uyo to Ikot Ekpene and Eket down to Oron. The Captain of the 1949 UK Tourists, Richard Etim Henshaw, came from Calabar.

Three other team members, Edet Ben, Mesembe Otu and Sam Ibiam, had Hope Waddell background.

The man who captained Green Eagles to their African Nations Cup debut in 1963, Asuquo Ekpe, hailed from the same area. The first Nigerian to make the FIFA Executive Committee, Oyo Orok Oyo, was a Calabar man.

There are record-making goalkeepers too. In 1983, Patrick Udoh became the first Nigerian to keep in a FIFA tournament. Ten years earlier, Eyo Essien was in goal as the Green Eagles lifted their first continental Gold, the All Africa Games, in 1973. Vincent Enyeama is the only goalie to have kept and won in two CAF Champions Leaguefinals, and he was voted



TOP: Akwa United appreciate fans.

LEFT:

The Governor with Akwa United Captain.

Player of the Tournament in 2004. Enyeama is the only African goalkeeper to have handled the posts in three World Cups.

Competitive soccer began in Calabar in 1906 with the Beverly Cup. Lagos did not get to play Europeans until 1914 when Frederick Baron Mulford, Games Master at Kings College, Lagos, organised friendlies with British workers based in Lagos.

Credit must also go to Calabar for improving the game in Lagos. Nnamdi Azikiwe, a product of Hope Waddell, moved to Lagos and made a bold statement. He played for Diamond FC in 1923 with Mulford. In 1938, Zik founded Zik Athletics Club (ZAC).

Azikiwe built a stadium in Sabo, Yaba, Lagos in 1940 and was also a referee. One of his players, Sam Akpabot, who later became a Professor, had his roots in Calabar. Akanu Ibiam left Hope Waddell to captain Kings College. Students from Calabar were outstanding. The Trenchard Cup, introduced in 1939, helped the game.

In 1954, St. Patrick's College, representing the town, won the FA Cup. The boys dethroned defending champions Kano with a 3-0 scoreline.

School principal Father Fitz-gibbon turned out an all-conquering squad that included captain Ekanem, keeper Brendan John, Hubert Ejoh, Tim Nwogu, Cyril Anyanwu, Francis Bassey, Emmanuel Okoro and Hamilton Ihenacho. There are important historical names attached to Calabar. James Edet Wey moved to Lagos, won the FA Cup with Marine, played left-back for Nigeria, joined



hammered Ikot Ekpene 18-0. In the Eastern zonal playoff, Aba humiliated Eket 24-1. Attempts were made to make Calabar matter in soccer as from the 1970s. Teams like Rovers, The beginning was not so tidy. Customs, Acadia United, Jetimo of Uyo, Mobil Pegasus, Eket and Ibom Stars tried their best. Calabar Rovers were to go international in 1986, but Nigeria withdrew from WAFU in 1985. Akwa United emerged.

Then-Governor Udom Emmanuel ascended the throne. Things started to happen. Monday Ebong Uko was appointed. Paul Bassey moved in. Two FA Cups came. International exposure was sure.

Now for the very first time, the League has been won. Delay, they say, is not denial. Orange is the colour in Uyo, and Gold is the medal.



the Navy and became Chief of Naval Staff and later Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters.

Another Service Chief, Luis Orok Edet, became the Nigeria Football Association chairman as Inspector-General of Police. Michael Ani played for Calabar against Lagos in1939. About four decades

later, he was Chairman of the Federal Electoral Commission. The first time a Calabar team visited Lagos, the story did not sound sweet. Their hosts battered them like babies, and that was in 1939. From there, a Calabar man set up a team in Eko known as Ekang Eleven. In 1958, teams from the Calabar axis posted very disappointing results in the FA Cup. Port Harcourt Red Devils, also known as Pitakwa All-Stars,

EXPERIENCE THE BEST OF NIGERIA

LOCATION: Akamkpa LGA A once thriving oil palm plantation now abandoned and in total desrepair. The oil palm however still thriving. Everything man-made fades away, Nature wins



LOCATION: Ibeno LGA A set of aerial photos and videos of Ibeno, highlighting the Beauty o the coastal regions untouched by Civilization.





LOCATION: Uyo , A Birds Eye view of our beautiful Uyo Metropolis



LOCATION: Akwa Ibom State. A series of photos of structures and landscapes taken with my camera painted straight of the ground. Hard to understand at first glance but breathtaking nonetheless

LOCATION: Akwa Ibom State Breathtaking aerial photographs of some amazing landscapes in Akwa Ibom State.





WHOLE ROASTED GOAT PORK CHOPS GRILLED CHICKEN STUFFED CHICKEN WHOLE PIG ROAST BBQ RIBS

Drivethru & DELIVERY











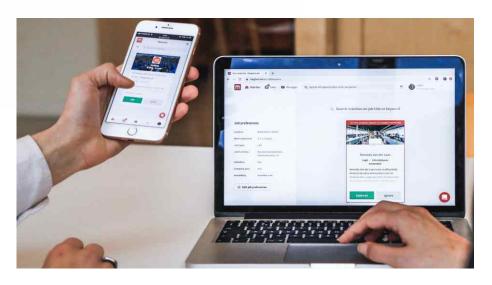
Vacation season is a time to unwind and take that much-needed break. If you're a frequent traveller or a new one, more likely than not, you're going to need help remembering some key things you need to do before you go on that anticipated trip. I've come up with five things you need to do to make your vacation stress free and more relaxing.

Research - Every successful plan always starts with research. When it comes to vacationing, your research pretty much determines the success of your trip. You're going to need to do a lot of research about the country or city you're visiting, their culture, food, language, weather, best times to visit, covid restrictions, and so on. At least you will want to see a new place in the worst possible season. You never want to be cut off guard, so make sure you're highly informed about everything regarding your vacation location.

Reservations - It's essential to make sure all types of reservations for your trip are accurate. From flight tickets to hotel bookings, car services, and tour guides, who will use any of these services during your trip, make sure to make reservations for them, and even call in a couple of days before your trip to make sure your reservations still stand and nothing has changed. It's always better to make reservations weeks ahead of your trip, especially if you're travelling in rush season; booking early could secure you better deals and lower prices.



Schedule - Going on vacation usually means lots of activities, you may want to visit some places, go shopping, go sightseeing amongst other things. Keeping track of these activities means you never miss out on anything. If you're travelling with children, this will make sure you get everywhere on time. Make a list of all the places you need to be, what time you need to start your journey there, when you need to be there, and when you need to leave for your following location.







Packing sounds like the easiest thing to do when travelling, but it's not-having the habit of forgetting your toothbrush and towel every time. Make a detailed list of everything you need, a toothbrush, towel, passport, specific medications if necessary and everything else. Checklist each item off the list as you put them into your luggage; that way, you never forget anything. Pro-tip, have a different toothbrush and towel for travelling, that way if you forget yours on vacation, you always come back to another one at home.

Get to the airport on time – What use is all this help I just gave if you end up missing your flight? It's always better to get to the airport a couple of hours before your flight than five minutes before. I know you think you have all the time in the world to get there, but you don't. Roads are unpredictable, things happen beyond our control, but if you leave hours before, you have an excellent opportunity not to miss your flight.

Kindly select a few ideas and incorporate them the next time you go on vacation.



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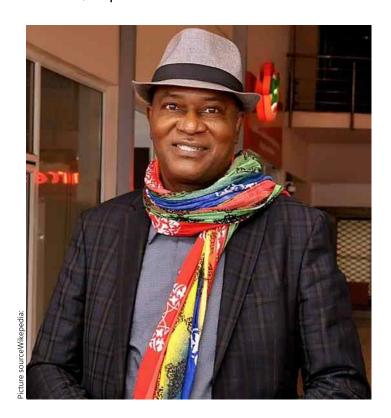






THE MAN BEHIND AKWAABA

Ikechi Uko is a Nigerian who loves to travel. Someone who Loves Africa and everything African. Passionate about Tourism and Travel Promoter. A child of God, a proud father and husband. A dedicated Friend.



Tell us about your early life?

I grew up in Enugu in 1942 and had my Primary and Secondary School education in Enugu. I started my travel journey while growing up. I started riding trains as a kid. I also followed most of my friends to their villages. I love going on excursions. I found out I wanted to travel around the World. After reading Cyprian Ekwensi's Book, "Burning Grass," I wanted to go to the North and wander with the Fulanis. After University studies at Ibadan, I did everything to serve (NYSC) and travel in the North, and I was successful with that dream. I served in Bauchi State and worked in Kano. The Biography of David Livingstone I read as a child also set me up for a life of travelling around Africa.

Can you share with us? How long have you been in the Tourism business?

Since the early 1990s, I have done nothing else but tourism and travel promotion. I earlier worked as an Editor for a Tourism Guide to Nigeria, then joined Happy Land Happy world, a Disney project in Lagos that didn't eventually take off—then started publishing in 1993. I wrote my first book, Festivals in Nigeria, in 1998/9.

As a well-known travel enthusiast, how do you combine yourFamily life with your career?

When I started, the family was young. Luckily for me, I started a family very early in life, but it must have been challenging for my family. I was not at home but travelling when two of my children were born. Combining my travel duties with family duties was never easy, but my family understood. Now, it is a lot easier because the children are mostly abroad. I am a househusband whenever I am back in Lagos from my all trips. I try not to stay more than five days abroad. But in some years I stay abroad for over 200 days.

What are your achievements in your career so far?

Having survived so far in such a challenging environment in Nigeria is a significant success. We published the first travel magazine in West Africa and held the most considerable travel and tour-



ism exhibition in the West African travel market, Akwaaba. After that, we successfully organised the first search for the Seven Wonders of Nigeria in 2010-2012. We are presently on the Second Season of Naija7wonders. We have helped standardise hotels in Nigeria through our annual Top 100 Hotels. Between 2000 and 2006, it was the most respected rating for hotels in Nigeria.

We have raised many champions in tourism in Nigeria. We are developing many brands to put Nigeria and many destinations on the tourism map.

I am very proud of the awards I have received. In 2003, The Federal Government of Nigeria gave me an award of distinction for the promotion of tourism in Nigeria. In 2010, the Government and tourism stakeholders in the Gambia gave me a prize for the promotion of Gambia as a destination.

The government of Rwanda honoured me in 2014 for the promotion of Rwanda. In 2021, the Lagos State Government gave me an award for the promotion of tourism in Lagos. The government of Cross River appointed me as the International Consultant

to Carnival Calabar in 2015. African Travel Times appointed me African Tourism Ambassador in 2013 in New York. I was honoured as the African Tourism Man of 2016 at the African Hotel Show in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

I am currently a board of trustees member of the Federations of Tourism Associations of Nigeria (FTAN) and BOT Member of the Nigerian Association of Tour Operators (NATOP).



First Image: Signature portrait of Mr Ikechi Uko

Second Image: Mr Ikechi Uko, with the Director-General National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR), Alhaji Nura Kangiwa.

Third Image: Mr Ikechi Uko presenting an award to the CEO Ibom Airlines Limited Captain Mfon Udom.

Fourth Image: Mr Ikechi Uko with the Managing Director/ Chief Executive, Med-View Airlines, Alhaji Muneer Bankole

What do you find the most frustrating about working as a Travel consultant?

Because I handle destinations and not travellers, my job is difficult because everyone believes they know how tourism works. Everyone claims to be an expert, and it took a long time before people got to see and understand the unique skills we bring along. The Second Problem is the political will to go.

Through with a tourism project. It is an intangible product, but the results are measurable and visible. Convincing the owners on the steps needed to achieve the desired success is usually the big elephant in the room, but now my records speak for me.

What are your favourite travelling destinations?

I am an Africa Addict. I love Obudu, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and now the confluence of Itu in Akwa Ibom. My Favorite City is Lagos.

Can Akwa Ibom State boast of a good tourist site?

Akwa Ibom State can be the best tourism destination in West Africa, with natural water, flora and fauna. We have god beaches, the heritage and historical attractions of Mary Slessor, Christianity and colonial history. We have the human element of culinary tourism and rich culture. We have superior Infrastructure with the Worldclass Ibom Icon resort, an airport



and the best airline in Nigeria today, Ibom Air.

What do you suggest we should do to harness tourism Potential in the State fully?

There's a need for executive attention and political will, which will need packaging and marketing and leadership.

You are the organiser of the Akwaaba African Travel Market. Would you please tell us about this business?

When we started (Akwaaba) in 2004 after attending the World Travel Market in London for many years, we participated at the ITB Berlin in Germany for some years and the Spanish expo. We decided we needed to create something like that in Africa. Only a few people are privileged to get visas to Europe for those fairs. So

we brought the World to Africa. It has been a tremendous success. It is among the top three events in Africa, the only big tourism event without government subsidy. Over 20 Countries attend the event. We also organise the most extensive travel event in Ghana, Accraweizo.

Any regret so far?

That I could have done more than I have done, I am grateful to God for what I have done so far.



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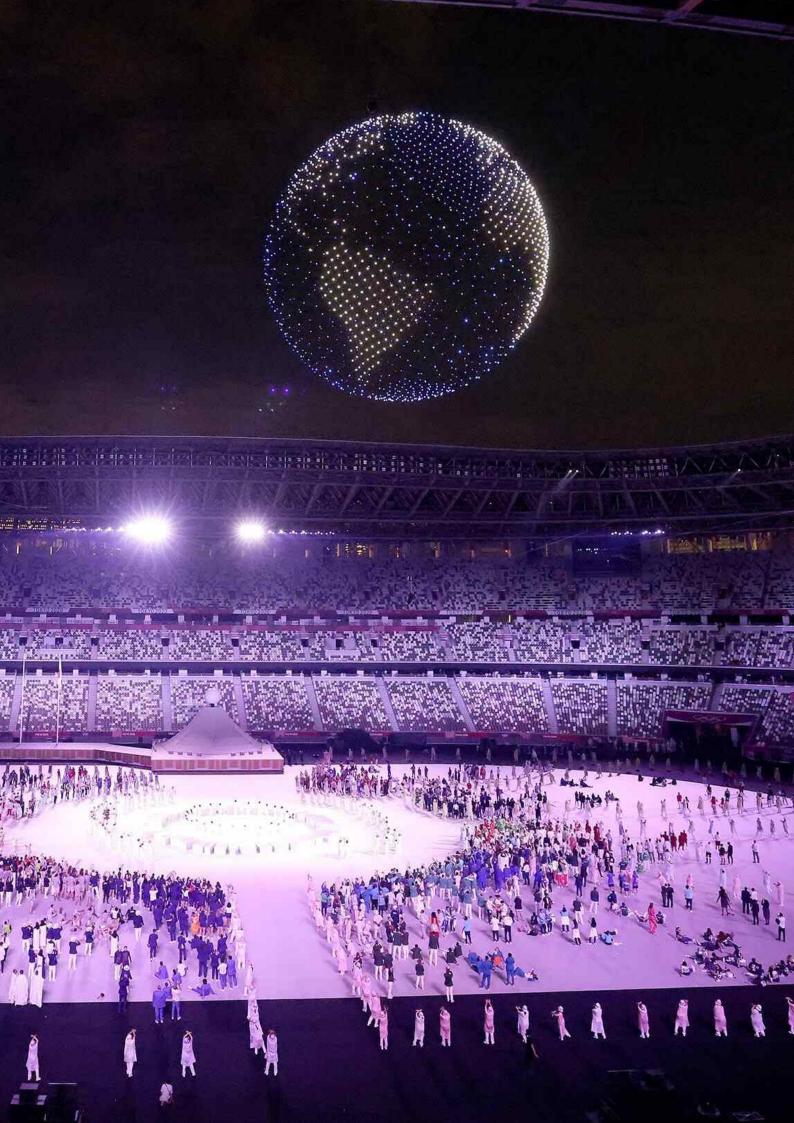




ROUID TOKYO OLYMPICS

WORDS BY NSIKAR AKPAN





rom the Olympic cauldron lighting to the Closing Ceremony's Final fireworks, Olympians competed for 1,017 medals in over 339 events at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. The 17-day event was held without international tourists or even domestic fans amid a Covid-19 state emergency after the pandemic delayed the Olympics by a year.

The pinnacle of an Olympian profession, winning gold, silver or bronze medals are the prize for years of sacrifice, and exhausting training sessions shielded from the public gaze.

Nigeria participated in the games with 60 athletes. The Nigerian team won two medals (Silver and Bronze) to finish 74th and eighth-best amongst African nations participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Long Jump Bronze for Ese Brume

Nigeria's 25-year-old Ese Brume won the country's first medal in Tokyo when she won bronze for a women long jump event.

Her best leap of 6.97m was three centimetres behind the winner and reigning world champion Malaika Mihambo of Germany, but 20cm short of the African record she set in May.

Blessing Oborududu gets Silver in Wrestling

Nigeria's Blessing Oborududu won silver as she lost to USA's Tamyra Marianna Stock Mensah in the final of the women 68kg freestyle event to grab Nigeria's first-ever Olympic wrestling medal. The 32-year-old lost 4-1 on points to the American in the bout.

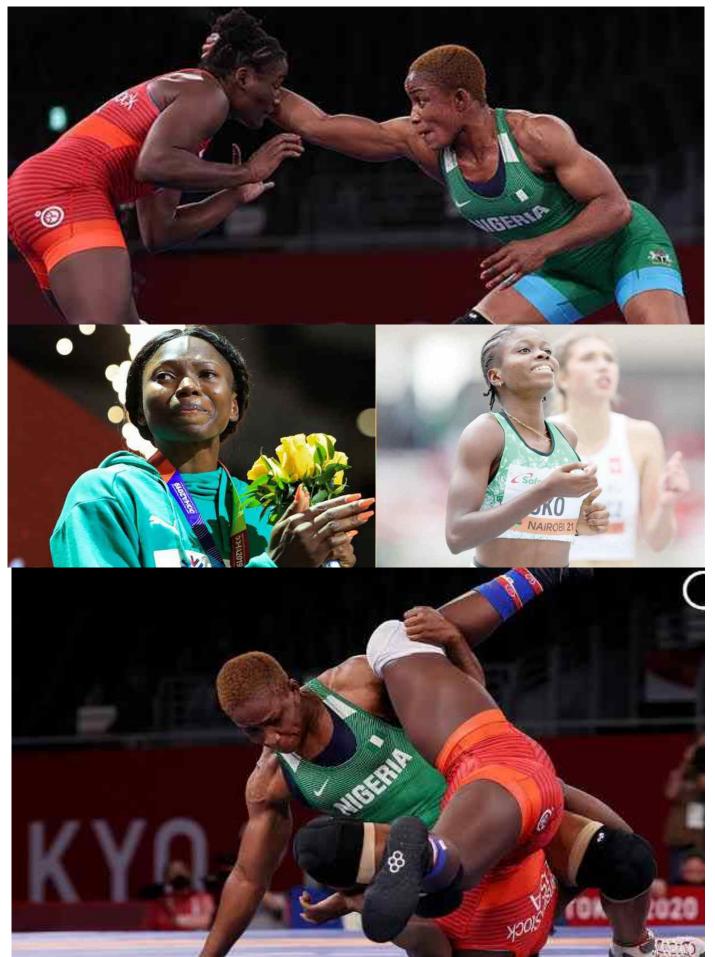
Did you know?

In the history of these games, Michael Phelps has won more total Olympic medals (28); Gold medals (23) than anyone in history.





Picture source: Wikipedia, playingpasts.co.uk



Picture source: wikipedia, olympics.com, vanguardngr.com

BEHIND EMILY'S LENS



WORDS BY INIOBONG UMOH AND MOBOLAJI LAMIDI

he photographer using

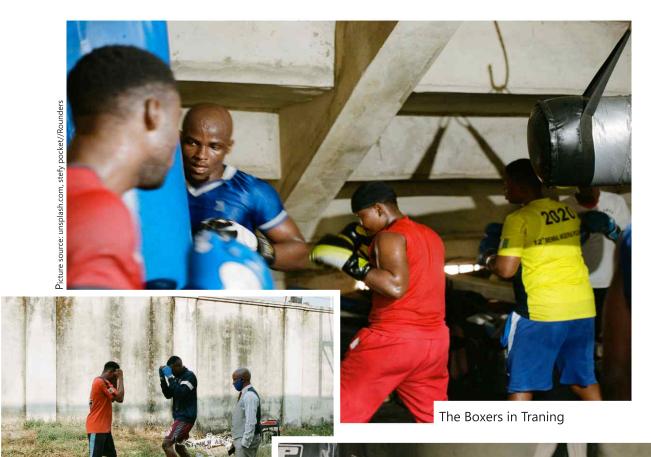
her skills to showcase young talented individuals
Lenses capture photos and videos of people, places and things – indeed, it preserves all kinds of memories. The art of photography is timeless and will continue to remain relevant as long as humanity

Emily Nkanga is a fast-rising Nigerian photographer and filmmaker based in London, United Kingdom. Emily's work primarily focuses on portraiture, documentary and live shows. Through her photography, Emily spotlight talented and skilful individuals, capturing human-related emotions and stories.



Idara Monday Umoh-Ette -Gold // 54kg National Sport Festival Edo , 2021

exists.



Nkanga has worked closely with some of Nigeria's leading musicians and athletes, including the legendary Femi Kuti, rapper Olamide, footballer Tammy Abraham, broadway actor Adesola Osakalumi, and international artist Not3s; to mention a few.

She is also the visionary behind some of the most notable album covers, Olamide's "The Glory", Lil Kesh's "Y.A.G.I", Mayorkun's "Mayor of Lagos", and promotional images for Mr Eazi's "Lagos to London" mixtape. Earlier this year, Nkanga stumbled on some professional boxers who were part of the Akwa Ibom State Boxing team to the recently concluded National Sports Festival in Edo State. With her lenses, Nkanga captured their images depicting their grit, passion and determination.



Dorcas Emmanuel Onoja--Gold //81kg National Sport Festival Edo , 2018



"You can never take too much care over the choice of your shoes. Too many women think that they are unimportant, but the real proof of an elegant woman is what is on her feet" - Christian Dior









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Women have plenty of roles in which they can serve with distinction: some of us even run countries. But generally, we are better at wielding the handbag than the bayonet

- Margaret Thatcher



















GET A FREE BRAND NEW S-CLASS WHEN YOU OWN A UNIT OF AFRICA'S BEST CONDOMINUMUM – THE LUCREZIABYSUJIMOTO

Changing the global rule when it comes to customer service and satisfaction and going the extra mile with a fierce customer centric approach is Sujimoto's biggest secret. The 100% audacious construction company is handing out keys to brand new Mercedes Benz S-Class; a uber-luxurious car which combines quality interior, mega power, advanced driving options, unrivalled comfort and impeccable finishing, as complimentary gifts to residents of the Lucrezia, the most sophisticated building in Africa.

Nestled in Banana Island, Nigeria's most extravagant and expensive neighborhood which is at par with the 8th Arrondissement in Paris, St. John's Wood in London, Emirates Hills in Dubai and Upper East Side in New York; the Lucrezia comprises exclusive maisonettes and prestigious penthouses, immersed with world class amenities and features, first-of-its-kind in Africa.

The ultra-luxurious edifice undoubtedly holds the trump card of architecture, location and lifestyle, standing out as the tallest residential building in Banana Island - a private estate with the highest concentration of high net-worth individuals and billionaires in Africa.

Currently in the intermediate stage of construction, the 68 meters high condominium, which is the brainchild of Sujimoto Construction - Nigeria's prominent luxury real estate company, is set to redefine luxury living in Africa and is

poised to be the best and most sophisticated condominium in Africa.

The 15 floor residential building embodies luxury, sophistication, opulence and extravagance right from its Glass Reinforced Concrete façade-a first in Africa, to its mesmerizing interiors.

CEO of Sujimoto, Sijibomi Ogundele, made his intention for the stupefying project known in a recent interview. "T've been to the best buildings in Africa and other parts of the world and our intention with the Lucrezia is to build a symbol of pristine extravagance that does not only compete locally but also stands tall among the best buildings in the world."

True to his words, the Lucrezia doesn't fall short of his ambition. From foundation to chandelier, the Lucrezia is a masterpiece of architectural ingenuity. It comes loaded with a Virtual Golf Bar where you can play on over 2500 courses worldwide: door technology by Oikos- the Rolls Rovce of door automation: an IMAX cinema for an immersive experience; a Private Elevator; Personalized concierge services; an indoor swimming pool, World-class gym for fitness enthusiasts; Interactive lobby to conduct all business, Full home automation which allows you control the lights, blinds, security, utilities, music systems, alarm, TVs and every other entertainment device in your home from the touch of a button; Electric car charging stations; Dornbracht and

Kohler kitchens; Crèche for future leaders; Private salon for male and female grooming; fine marble flooring; super high ceilings; flawless Calacatta marbled kitchen tops and several amazing features that are sure to excite luxury aficionados.

The triple storey penthouse includes a lower level with an open concept dining room, living room, kitchen, and lounge, a 180 degrees penthouse terrace. The second level will contain 4 bedrooms including the master suite, a Private office/library for business and educational activities. The rooftop level will have the Gym, Golf garden, a highly secured Private Elevator, a stress relieving Sauna experience, Private Jacuzzi to give a therapeutic experience, fully furnished Private Cinema room with premium leather seats and soundproof walls that will afford you the luxury of watching the latest blockbusters at your convenience. Every corner of this luxurious penthouse epitomizes and elevates you into a life of luxury in the

Residents of the penthouse will enjoy amenities such as a 400 sqm golf garden, the first of its kind in the whole of Africa, Sound System by Bang & Olufsen, Private pool in the sky, a 2-year free service of a personal butler, a monster Michelin star Chef, master bathroom sanitary wares by the world-renowned Zaha Hadid and Villeroy & Boch, without forgetting to note that all the bathrooms come with a 32' TV; elegant staircase with the 8m long 100%

Crystal Swarovski chandeliers, cozy evenings on a balcony that can host up to 200 people and several jaw-dropping features.

The penthouse termed to become the most alluring penthouse in Africa comes with the sophisticated kitchen appliances from the revolutionary home appliances brand: Gaggenau, the iconic and timeless Sub-Zero full-size food preservation system, wet and dry kitchen which comes with an in-built refrigerated cold room just like that of Kim Kardashian's luxury home in Hidden Hills, California, exquisite ultra-modern bathroom fittings by Maison Valentina, not 2 but 10 private parking lots and a 3 bedroom maid's apartment of approximately 100sqm will also be sitting at the 12th floor in the sky.

The architectural ingenuity of the Lucrezia, gives credence to the famous and disruptive line of Sijibomi, "owning a piece of The LucreziaBySujimoto is not a right but, a privilege!"

With a truckload of never-before-seen luxurious additions and future forward innovations, it is crystal clear that the LucreziaBySujimoto is the apex of luxury living in Africa.

Set to be completed by first quarter 2022, the Lucrezia project is already selling out with the speed of light and has a clientele of both luxury seekers and savvy investors seeking to secure an impressive return on investment.



Kitchen by Gaggenau



Reception & Interractive Lobby



Maison Valentina Bathroom



Suspended Infinity Pool



Living Room



Bedroom

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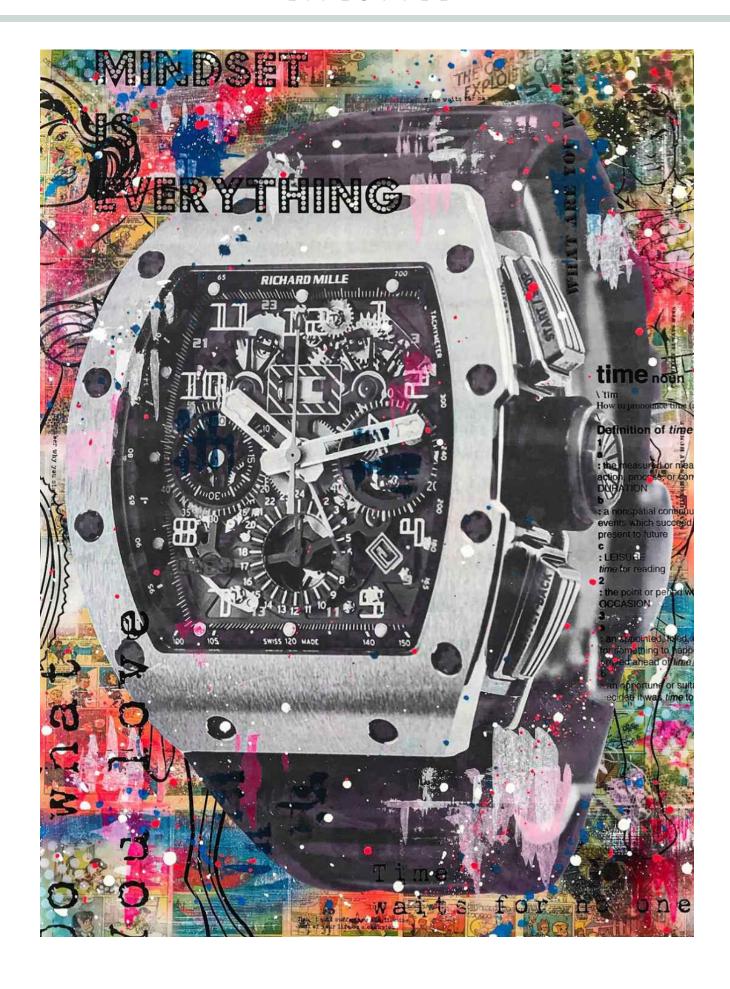
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On 2nd May 2021, Mc Holly staged Holly Era 2.0. Featuring an A-list line of national and homegrown comedic/music talents, including Kenny Blaq, Acapella, Osama, Dan Dizzy, Sagas, General Odey, Captain Edet, Jesta, Ikpa Udo, Dj Ritzy, Royal Music House, the show supported by Ibom Air was a night of laughter and entertainment, pushing the frontiers of comedy to a new level.













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very tribe has some kind of food, different taste, presentation and eating patterns. Nigeria is celebrated the world over as a home for delicious and nutritious foods, and Akwa-Cross has the most significant convergence of Nigerian foods.

Miyan Geda of the Hausas, Oha soup of the Igbos, Gbegiri of the Yorubas, and Ekoki of the Akwa-Cross over the years has served as a uniting factor for Nigerians.



UKANG | South-South, Nigeria

Ukang (smoked fish in scent leaf stew) is a delicious local stew famous amongst the Efik-Ibibio people of the Southern part of Nigeria. This delightful delicacy is majorly used as a sauce to eat yam

(udia) as well as other food like rice, cocoyam (ikpong), sweet yam (anem) and the likes. Relished by many, different from the tomatoes stew, Ukang has this unique sweet aroma, a bit peppery and delicious, and it has many fantastic health benefits.

EKPANG NKWUKWO | South-South, Nigeria

Described by many as food for the gods as a result of the amount of time, love, patience, and ingredients that go into it, Ekpang Nkwukwo is so unique that it is reserved for special occasions, its

flavour and taste are heavenly mouth-watering.

Ekpang Nkwukwo is one of those Nigerian cocoyam recipes prepared with grated cocoyam, water yam, cocoyam leaves and periwinkle, etc.

It is a Nigerian food recipe whose origin can be traced to the South-South and South-Eastern Nigeria, the Akwa Ibom, Abia and Cross River States of Nigeria. Made with cocoyam and little water yam, grated and wrapped in green leaves, this meal is relished by many and contains the basic food classes.

For Ekpang, its nutritional benefits are incomparable about the numerous ingredients used for its preparation. The health benefits of the significant components, cocoyam and water yam, are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fibre. They help alleviate symptoms of menopause, provide several antioxidants that may have anti-cancer properties, and improve blood sugar levels.





EKOKI | South-South, Nigeria

Ekoki is another healthy and quite filling dish that you can make from fresh Corn. If you're on an A weight loss program is a meal you can add to your diet.

This is a native delicacy thats popular among the South-South and South-Eastern people of Nigeria. It is usually served during traditional engagements, such as wedding introductions, traditional

marriages and other cultural events, and tastes really good.

Rich in Vitamin C and the mineral manganese, Corn which is a significant ingredient in the preparation of this tasty and filling dish, is seen as a good source of carbohydrates and has antioxidant benefits, preventing damage to body cells.

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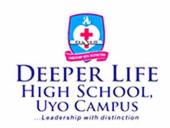
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FEEDBACK

Saying Sorry, the Ibom Air way

Sometime last month, I was to fly Ibom Air from Lagos to Abuja. Given the airline's track record with on-time departure, I could not take chances. With the traffic situation, I had to abort the task at hand to head for the Airport. Little did I know the flight had been rescheduled. In a rush, I had not checked my mailbox. I wish they had called me like they called many.

So I ended up stuck at the Airport. I realised later that there had been some operational issues all day and the flight had to be further delayed. Somehow,

the Staff on the ground, possibly not quite used to what had become routine to some airlines, did not manage the situation well, especially with communication. I will leave the Airport, electing not to wait, even as the flight eventually left, hours late.

I was not happy, and I made that known. Ibom Air responded with a letter offering an explanation and apology for that day. As a show of sincere remorse Ibom Air offered everyone acomplimentary one-way ticket on that flight. Even though the NCAA has guidelines for customer care, for customer care, most passengers are not quite aware of cases of this nature, and most airlines never live up to these protocols.

Ibom Air, as we have seen over these few years, is different.

I was glad to again be on an Ibom Lagos-Abuja flight a few days back. Regular services were restored, and the flight took off at the exact minute scheduled. Ibom Air said in the letter it does not take my patronage for granted, and I have no cause to doubt that.

Simbo Olorunfemi an Ibom Airline passenger

A note on Ibom Air

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I have heard of Ibom Air. Quite a few posts have been made favourably describing the airline-the spanking new aircraft, punctuality, and generally civilised modus operandi. Having avoided flying since March last year, since the Covid-19 pandemic, it has only been stories for me. But having now taken the vaccine and gained reasonable confidence, I have started venturing out to events an indeed flown twice, in as many weeks, once to Abuja and once to Uyo. Naturally, I elected to fly the now-famous Ibom Air, typically to get a feel of it.

The Abuja trip was uneventful. Lagos to Abuja was dead on time. The air-

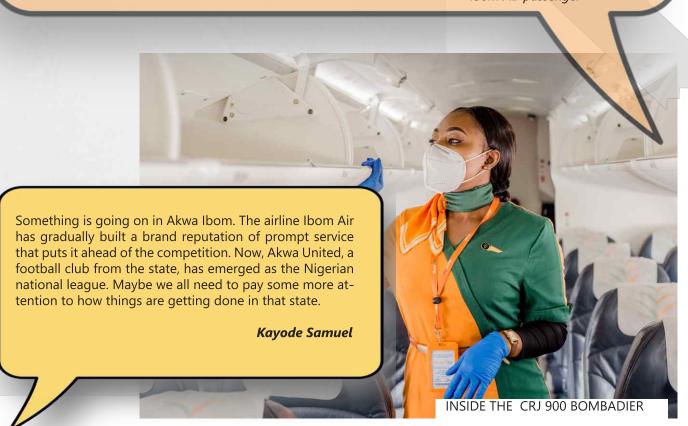
craft was an Airbus 200, a big one, squeaky new with a professional and, I must add, courteous Middle Eastern crew. Take-off and landing was world-class.

I thoroughly enjoyed the disembarkation procedure, which obviated the usual "emergency" process practised here where passengers remove their seatbelts and luggage and flee the aircraft before it makes a final stop, thereby stepping on and clambering over and even injuring fellow passengers in the process. Prudently, they handed the snacks to passengers as they left the aircraft, making it trash-free and odourless. By the time we got to the arrival lounge, our luggage was already waiting for us. .Excellent!

The return flight was pretty much the same but for The 40-minute delay. That was a minus, but these things happen. And I should give them the benefit of the doubt, and I still think so.

Travelling to Uyo on Sunday was more interesting. The flight was delayed for about an hour. First, it was a security check on 3 Chinese passengers who were already on board. By the time they returned to the aircraft, we were told the plane needed a tyre change. Change of tyre? Abeg O! Anyway, it didn't take as much time as I feared. One-hour delay, and we were smoothly airborne to Uyo. I missed most of the event in Ikot-Abasi...!

Emeka Oparah, VP AirtelIbom Air passenger





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Rise to togetherness

Rise to the faith of our resources, beyond what others see, human and intellectual

Rise to chart a new course for us, our children and a generation of Akwa Ibomites unborn

Rise to the faith that one day; we shall be counted as great people of a great state with great minds

Rise to the faith that all these are possible and many more Hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful

I rise to the faith that Akwa Ibom was created to be great
I rise to the faith that Akwa Ibom is destined to be great

I am an Akwalbomite, I rise to the faith of greatness **MME DAKKANDA!**



— Gov. Udom Emmanuel —