

BAGS OF CHARACTER

Look stylish and help support livelihoods through the Amias Project – a fair trade initiative that works with Barabaig artisans in Central Tanzania

Embodying the spirit of Amias (Barabaig for “beautiful”), the Vessel Bag is a chic leather handbag modelled after the gourds in which Barabaig women carry their essentials. In rural life, different labours require different gourds: long thin ones for milking cows, small ones for storing flour and big bulky ones for carrying water over many kilometres. No matter where you are in the world, the Vessel Bag reflects these African traditions. Each handbag also carries its own meaning, beaded in numerous colour patterns symbolising values and characteristics of various clans within the tribe. The extra soft leather comes in the following colours: black (with eternity beads), brown (with blessing beads), red (with rainmaker beads), light blue (with healing beads), mustard yellow (with sun god beads). As a result of the fair trade opportunities created through the Amias Project, many families have had ample food to eat during the drought, sent their children to school, increased their livestock and are making plans for the future.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAVID PLUTH/FOTOGRAFIX



BUY IT...

Barabaig vessel bag, available online from the Amias Project (www.anotherland.com), US\$95



KENYA QUARTER YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S HAPPENING

DON'T MISS...

*** Butterflies on the wing** Clouds of butterflies appear after the rains and the best place to spot them are forests like Kakamega in western Kenya, where no less than 400 species have been recorded. No time for heading out west? Then pop instead to the superb butterfly centres in the Karen suburb of Nairobi and at Watamu on the north coast. For more information, visit www.kws.org

ALSO...

*** Kenyan National Music Festival** **AUGUST** Annual festival of folk songs, choral music and other high notes at Nairobi's International Conference Centre.
*** Kenya Tourism Week** **SEPTEMBER** Celebration of World Tourism Day.
*** Kenyatta Day** **20 OCTOBER** A national day held in honour of Jomo Kenyatta – Kenya's first president after independence.

AFRICA IN YOUR HOME

In African tradition, stories are often told sitting around a fire on old wooden tribal stools. Make a statement of your own by bringing these stools into your home. They look great with a large candle on. An old wooden mortar from

the Makonde in south Tanzania makes a useful container, while dressing the mantelpiece with a short Bakuba cloth adds a dash of colour to stone walls and strengthens the impact of individual wooden pieces placed on it.



BY LISA CHRISTOFFERSON & ALEX HOOPER