

#### PROTEA HOTEL by MARRIOTT-BLANTYRE RYALLS

the hub of art, heritage, and hospitality.



For over a century, Blantyre Ryalls has been a cornerstone of an ever-evolving city, rich in history and culture. As Malawi's oldest hotel, it has been more than just a place of rest—it has been a meeting point, a witness to change, and now, a canvas—a living museum.

Once an overlooked space used for rubbish disposal, the hotel's garden was transformed into the green sanctuary it is today, proving that no space should go to waste. Yet, while the garden flourished, the surrounding walls remained bare. Inspired by a guest's suggestion, the Blantyre Ryalls Mural Project was conceived to revitalize this forgotten space, solidify the hotel's advocacy for Malawian art, and create a cross-generational platform for learning and collaboration.

These murals act as a living guidebook, immersing guests in Malawi's history, culture, landscapes, and people—like life-sized postcards come to life. More than decoration, they invite visitors to take a walk through history, engaging with the country in a new and interactive way.

The following pages illuminate Malawi's past as seen through Blantyre Ryalls' many eras, tracing its evolution from a colonial-era landmark to a modern icon of hospitality under the stewardship of Blantyre Hotels Limited. The Blantyre Ryalls Mural Project, completed in 2023, adds a vibrant dimension to this legacy—a colorful homage painted by some of the country's most talented artists.

Welcome to the hub of art, heritage, and hospitality.

Farruhn Mag bool General Manager







- O4 Location, Location
- $\mathbf{O6}$  The Meeting Place
- $\mathbf{O8}$  A Woman And Her Hotel
- 10 Mural, Mural, On The Wall
- 11 The Faces
- 14 Moving In Malawi
- 16 The Places
- 18 Fauna
- 20 Landscape
- 22 Our Future
- 23 Our Culture
- 25 The Art & The Artists
- 27 The Future
- 29 A Legacy of Hospitality

location LOCATION Blantyre has earned the colloquial nickname London Boma (with "Boma" referring to a city center, similar to Capitol Hill). This name originates from the city's temperate, often foggy and rainy climate, closely mirroring London's springtime weather. The connection between the two cities—and, more broadly, the two nations—is deeply rooted in history.



By 1876, Scottish missionaries settled in what is now Blantyre, journeying through the Zambezi and Shire Rivers before establishing themselves at Mandala. This mirrored pre-colonial Malawian settlement patterns, where communities naturally gravitated toward rivers, streams, and dambos—marshy areas similar to Florida's Panhandle.



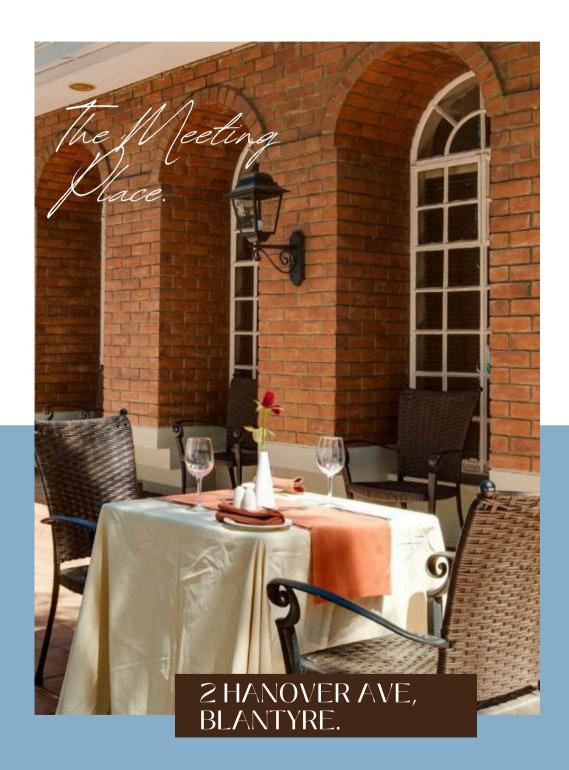
In honor of David Livingstone—the missionary instrumental in ending the regional slave trade and spreading the Gospel—the settlement was named Blantyre, after Livingstone's hometown in Scotland.





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Born from the need for respite for travelers along the Cape-to-Cairo route, Blantyre Ryalls quickly became a crucial establishment in the growing settlement of Blantyre.

The Moir brothers, Scottish traders affiliated with the African Lakes Company—a British enterprise promoting commerce and countering the slave trade were instrumental in shaping the town's early commercial landscape. At that time, Mandala House (Blantyre's oldest European-built structure) served as the primary stop for visitors.

However, as Blantyre grew into a bustling commercial hub, the need for proper accommodations became evident. Blantyre Ryalls swiftly evolved from a simple rest stop into *The Meeting Mace*.

a center where business deals were struck, travel routes planned, and diverse communities exchanged news and ideas.

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#### Anoman and her hotel



Louisa and Francis Rvall's efforts transformed a former World War I internment camp into the foundation of the esteemed hospitality landmark we cherish today. Mr. Ryall, a builder and contractor with the Nyasaland Volunteer Reserve, oversaw its early development. The site was later operated as Nash's Hotel before Louisa Ryall, already managing Limbe Hotel in 1914, expanded her hotelier ambitions westward.

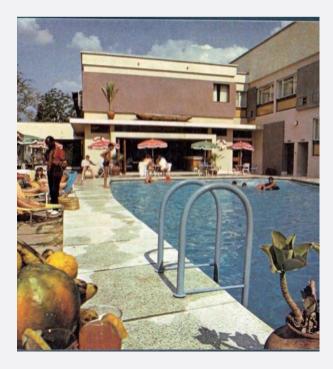
Following the death of her husband, Louisa acquired a small establishment in historic Blantyre, later marrying John Stratton, the manager of Limbe Hotel. Together, they opened Ryalls Hotel in 1922, laying the foundation for Malawi's longest-running hotel, now with over a century of continuous operation.

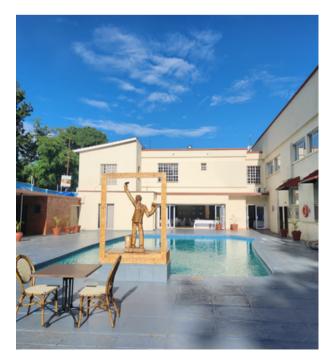




Situated at the corner of Glyn Jones Road and Hanover Avenue, Blantyre Ryalls defies its age with a blend of tradition and modernity. Dressed in warm amber and cream tones, it exudes timeless elegance. While pristine lawns, contemporary amenities, and luxurious accommodations uphold the standards of a premier 21st-century establishment.

It is a testament to Louisa Ryall's dream that Blantyre Ryalls has weathered the winds of change and continues to stand as a beacon of hospitality in Malawi.





#### mural, mural, on the wall

One of the most striking absences in Blantyre's vibrant, walkable cityscape is public art. Despite its breathtaking natural surroundings—mountains stretching into the skyline, tree-lined streets, and some of the most stunning sunsets you'll ever see, Blantyre lacks a strong visual artistic presence that can reflect the soul of the city.

This mural project is more than an artistic endeavor, it is a cultural revival.

With a threefold mission, the murals serve as both a tribute and a transformation:

- They map Malawi's past, depicting historical moments, cultural traditions, and national icons.
- They celebrate artists as storytellers, preserving collective memory while shaping the future.
- They infuse Blantyre Ryalls with vibrant color, reinforcing its role as a living museum.

In collaboration with Blantyre Ryalls, Art Malawi spearheaded this initiative, uniting eleven talented artists (including graduates from Jacaranda School for Orphans) to turn a once-blank wall into a vivid celebration of Malawian identity.

#### AFRICAP: INVESTING IN CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

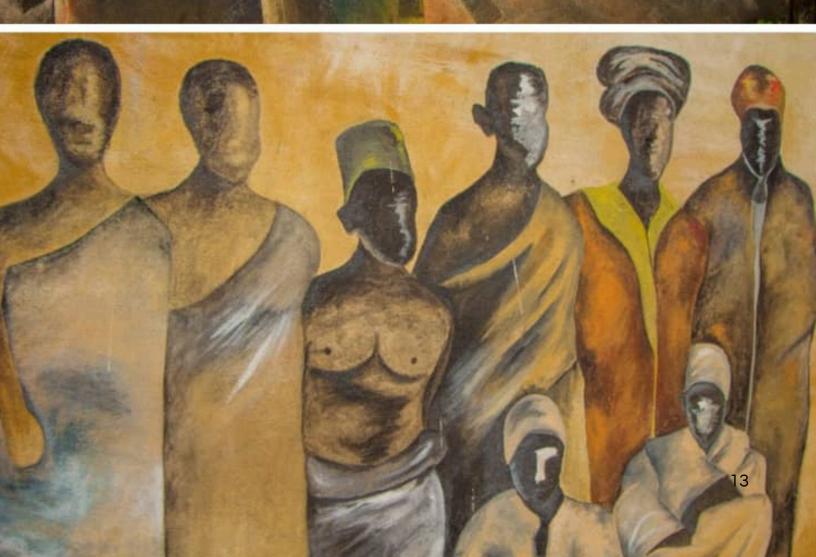
Africap LLC, a Houston, Texas private equity fund advised by FCA Corp that is dedicated to fostering economic growth and social impact across Sub-Saharan Africa, proudly sponsored the Pool Art Project at Protea Hotel by Marriott Blantyre Ryalls. With a strong commitment to sustainable development, Africap recognizes the power of art in shaping communities and preserving cultural heritage.

Their generous support has transformed the hotel's poolside into a vibrant canvas, showcasing Malawian history, identity, and artistic talent. Through this initiative, Africap continues its mission of making meaningful investments that extend beyond financial returns, leaving a lasting imprint on the region's cultural landscape. Scottish missionary and explorer Dr. David Livingstone visited Nkhotakota, a district along Lake Malawi, in 1861, where he bore witness to the brutal realities of the slave trade at Jumbe's stockade.

Horrified by what he saw, he brokered a treaty in 1864 between Jumbe and Chewa chiefs, seeking to end the practice. However, the treaty was short-lived, and the trade only ceased when Nyasaland became a British protectorate in 1891, with Sir Harry Johnston leading efforts to eradicate it.

A pivotal figure in Malawi's resistance against early colonial oppression, John Chilembwe is celebrated as a national hero. His legacy is commemorated annually on John Chilembwe Day (January 15), and his likeness graces the 500 Malawi Kwacha note. In 2022, his statue was unveiled in London's Trafalgar Square; a global acknowledgment of his impact. Mr. David Russell, (former) Trustee for The Society of Malawi.

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## Moving in Malawi

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## LANDSCAPE

**ARTMAL & RYALLS HOTEL** 

TITLE: "MAJESTIC MOUNT MULANJE" MEDIUM: ACRYLIC ON WALL/MURAL ARTIST: THANDIE MJIMA

PROTEA HOTELS

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### **OUR FUTURE**

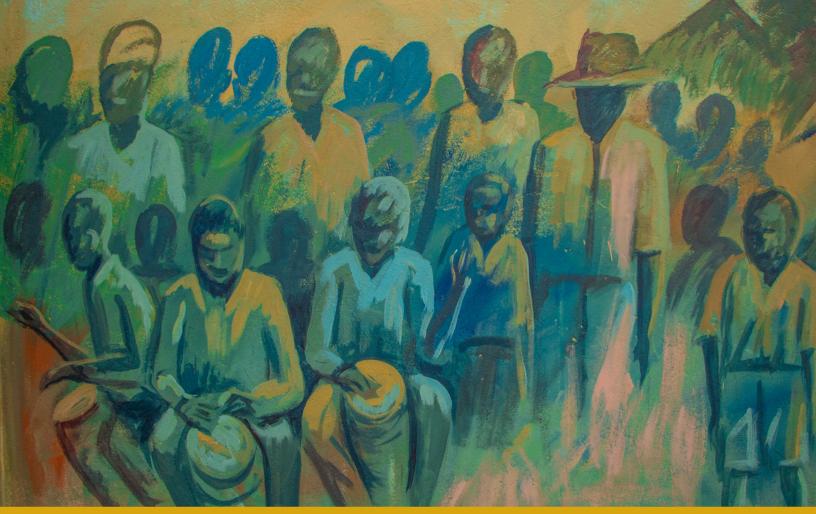
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THE OUTLIERS



#### **OUR CULTURE**

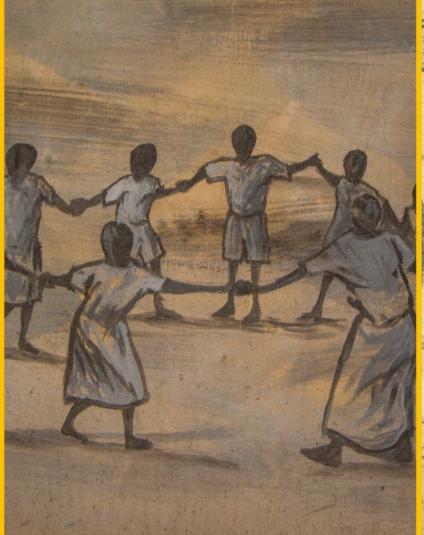


















The Art #

# the artists







The artists behind the murals captured a slice from contemporary Malawian life and her layered history against the backdrop of the country's beautiful wild places. From bustling markets to serene rural scenes, traditional dances to modern cityscapes, their work sought to blend real-life observations with imaginative depictions, creating a captivating visual narrative that captures the vibrancy of Malawian culture, heritage, and history.

The murals offer an invitation to guests to engage with the stories behind each brushstroke, and leave having learned something new about Malawi.

Maxwell Banda, one of the artists, recalls the experience as a moment of pride. To him, this was an unforgettable opportunity that not only allowed him to showcase his craft but also led to further commissions within the hotel. The Blantyre Ryalls Mural Project became a significant milestone in his artistic journey, leading to further commissions within the hotel and expanding his creative reach.







Another artist, Cris Taulo, reflected on the historical depth of the clock tower mural, emphasizing how clock towers played a crucial role in colonial-era Malawi. Before wristwatches became widely accessible, these structures were not just architectural landmarks but essential timekeepers for the public. His mural honored this history, ensuring that such details of Malawi's past are not forgotten.

Beyond Banda and Taulo, the Ryalls Hotel Mural Project was a collaborative effort that brought together a diverse collective of talented artists, including Thandie Mjima, Andrew Missi, Prudence Chivasa, Hamilton Kameza, and Jimmy Malinga, as well as students from the Jacaranda School for Orphans.

Each artist infused their distinctive perspective into the murals through bold colour-filled strokes, intricate traditional motifs, and, ultimately, deeply personal interpretations of Malawian life. Their collective contributions transformed the hotel's walls into a living canvas-enriching the project with different styles and stories.



Blantyre Hotels Limited (BHL), the owner of Protea Hotel by Marriott - Blantyre Ryalls, is embarking on an ambitious expansion with plans to build Malawi's first golf hotel in Lilongwe. This project underscores BHL's commitment to enhancing the country's hospitality landscape while aligning with its plans for strategic growth.

As a publicly listed company on the Malawi Stock Exchange (MSE), BHL continues to strengthen its market position through strategic investments and shareholder confidence.

The company recently announced a rights offer to raise capital, allowing both existing shareholders and the general public to invest in its future growth. This capital injection will fund the development of the Lilongwe golf hotel, positioning BHL as a key driver of Malawi's hospitality sector expansion.









NICO Holdings Plc, a diversified financial services group, holds a significant stake in BHL, reinforcing its position as a majority shareholder. This investment is part of NICO's broader strategy to support high-value assets across key industries, including hospitality.

Through its involvement, NICO provides financial backing and strategic oversight, ensuring BHL's projects, such as the upcoming golf hotel, are executed with excellence.

Set within the prestigious Lilongwe Golf Club, this four-star, 180-room hotel is designed to elevate the city's appeal as a premier destination for both business and leisure travelers. Slated to open in January 2026, the hotel will operate under the internationally recognized Protea Hotel by Marriott brand, further solidifying BHL's presence across Malawi and enhancing the country's global tourism offering.







## a legacy hospitality

As Blantyre Ryalls continues to evolve, its commitment to blending history, art, and hospitality remains unwavering. Through the Mural Project, the hotel has redefined its role —not just as a place of luxury, but as a guardian of Malawian culture.

By championing local artists, preserving national heritage, and setting new standards in hospitality, Blantyre Ryalls stands as a beacon of innovation and tradition in Malawi's tourism landscape.



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02 Hannover Avenue Blantyre, Malawi.

+265 (0) 111 895 200 / +265 999-971 024
protea.ryalls@marriott.com



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