



Entrepreneur at Heart

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Excerpt by Alain Mallebay-Vacqueur

“My father sits across the table from me grinning from ear to ear.

Le Maquis d’Eden where we are celebrating, is typical of the restaurants in this region; seemingly makeshift establishments serving the local food and drinks to those who can afford a laugh or two with a group of friends. Though Bouaké’s population is roughly equivalent to that of Detroit’s one million inhabitants, it can by no means be called a city; it lacks the infrastructure and the more specialized administrative personnel anticipated of such. Like a village, everyone seems to be aware of each other’s quotidian exploits—their perpetually smiling exteriors are welcoming: eager to volunteer neighborhood gossip. L’Harmattan, a dry wind that blows from the Sahara this time of year, allays what would otherwise be the insufferable humidity expected of Cote D’Ivoire, and now that the sun has set we can hear the bustle of hundreds of people carousing in the dozens of comparable dining establishments that emblazon the street. In forty-five days we finalized the purchase of a villa, successfully made the transformations necessary for it to produce water and, more impressively, obtained all the governmental documentation to run our facility *in complete legality . . .*”