



LVHS CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2009

Hi Everyone!

What a spectacular end to another wonderful season here at horse safaris. We had our first summer storms two weeks ago followed by another two solid days of heavy rain, which was soaked up by the grateful soil. And with the first rays of sun, the area has crisp green shoots covering what was dusty dry sand only last week. We are expecting the little yellow devil- thorn flowers to make their appearance shortly and all the pregnant impala ewes to start dropping little long legged, big eared babies soon. The beautiful velvet mites are scurrying around as well as the flying termites, which some of our guests ate on toast one evening. We assure you that this was Cor's doing and will not be added to the menu! As the Limpopo remains dry we have also had the chance to play some epic soccer and touch-rugby games with some of our sporting guests.



We've had some amazing sightings these last few weeks. The lions have been sighted regularly from horse back- one group even witnessing a pride of lions chasing off a new lioness in the area and finding her cubs hidden in a bush right next to them! Needless to say they retreated slowly away from the excitement. Two leopards were also sighted from horse back on the one safari. A few cheetahs were also seen on both the rides and game drives. A lot of tiny baby elephants have been seen bundling along under mum's bellies, trying to figure out what that long pink thing on their faces are for. Another rare sighting this year was of a pair of honey badgers, the one little tike even tried to take on the horses but figured it was probably better not to! The wild dogs made their den at the same place as last year and welcomed to their pack another 12 pups. We enjoyed many more sightings of them on the rides before the pups were big enough to join their pack on their long distance rounds.



Thanks to Cor and West's sensitivity and knowledge of approaching the animals in the area it seems that a sense of understanding has been formed between the horses and the animals, particularly the wildebeest, eland and giraffe who have posed curiously and quietly only meters away for some excellent photo opportunities. The elephants also seem more relaxed with our presence although everyone has their bad days and a few charges are always inevitable. Our Two Mashatus camp is currently home to a beautiful Impala ram and a grey duiker who seem to have figured out that it's quite safe

hanging around a place bustling with people and horses.

We are happy to announce that our barn is now full! With the addition of the pretty boerperd x thoroughbred- Highlander and the ever so sweet Cimarron, a quarter horse cross, we now proudly



boast 35 beautiful horses. The previous hardworking horses such as Albany, Strider, Rascal, Tugela and Frank have had a bit of a reprieve this year with the new horses all earning their keep. Little Foot is proving



to be a fantastic lead horse for West and young Mars has been developing leadership skills with Cor.

This year we have also made an effort in reviewing and training for possible emergency evacuation incidences. Which, touch wood, we will not have to go through often! We are now involved with SATIB24 who is a revolutionary company in terms of giving companies like us out in remote areas the skills and equipment to handle emergency situations out in the bush. This ongoing course as well as SATIBS support in evacuation, will add value of safety to both our guests and staff. We regularly do emergency 'pick-up' exercises as well as other scenarios we might face.



Cor & Louise added new additions to the team after loosing beloved Brannie. The two new pups arrived much to Lucy's annoyance about 5 months ago. Cleo, a greyhound x Saluki and Suco, the handsome Swiss White Shepard have been bringing ahhs and giggles from both staff and guests as they lollop around the stables. Lucy loves them now but every now and then still has to try to assure her dominance- much like a honey badger putting a lion in check! Suco is giving Jamie his first riding lessons...



Other exciting news is that we are revamping Two Mashatus by supplying running water to the tents. We have dropped a borehole and will be using solar power to generate the pump and heat the water so guests will have running water for showers and basins. Also new for next year will be our reception area at the stables. Designed on the same theme as Two Mashatus but set along the Limpopo here at the stables is a dining room hut and ablutions so that our guests will arrive at the stables first, have time for lunch and to change before setting off on their introductory ride. Also at the end of the safari instead of driving all the way back to Two Mashatus after the ride, the guests can shower, change and enjoy brunch here at the stables before meeting their transfer at the border. All in all this will allow for longer rides and less driving back and forth for our guests.

We have finally succeeded in adding an additional 25 000 hectares of pristine wilderness to our riding area thanks to our neighboring Charter Game Reserve. Two beautiful lodges in the reserve have been added to our Lodge to Lodge ride for next year. We are sure that guests will enjoy the lodges stunning settings as well as the very long canters that the ground offers! Our first exploratory ride on the reserve took us all the way to the Shashe and Limpopo confluence- a first for horse back safaris! Cor enjoying a nap in the vast Shashe riverbed... it's a tough life!





David has started taking out groups as a lead guide, and his positive attitude and energy will stand him in good stead in the future. In order for our guides to get the best experiences to further their knowledge of different cultures and of horsemanship we have decided to send them off for work experience overseas for 2 months. Mmushi and West will be going to Germany at The Oldenberg Stud and Mpho to England at Queenholme event yard. It will probably be the coldest they will ever experience and thermal underwear

will be a completely new concept for them. But none the less an incredible opportunity for them and we wish them all the best in this new adventure!

This past week we all experienced a once in a lifetime occurrence. On Saturday the 21st November at around 11pm, the guests were tucked in bed and the staff asleep around the horses when Maitseo, our housekeeper who was doing night watch, noticed a bright streak across the sky. The next thing the whole sky lit up like it was daylight for almost a minute and then the most almighty boom resounded followed by tremors and rumbles. It took a while to settle the horses and ourselves but the rest of the night remained quiet apart from the lions roaring in the distance. We discovered the next day that the meteorite had exploded only 90km above us and the light was seen as far as 600km away! So we have literally ended our season with a big bang! For amazing footage of the meteorite, check out this link on Youtube- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAoUyXGWm0w>

To all our guests and friends we wish you an amazing festive season and hope to see you in the New Year!

Everyone at LVHS

