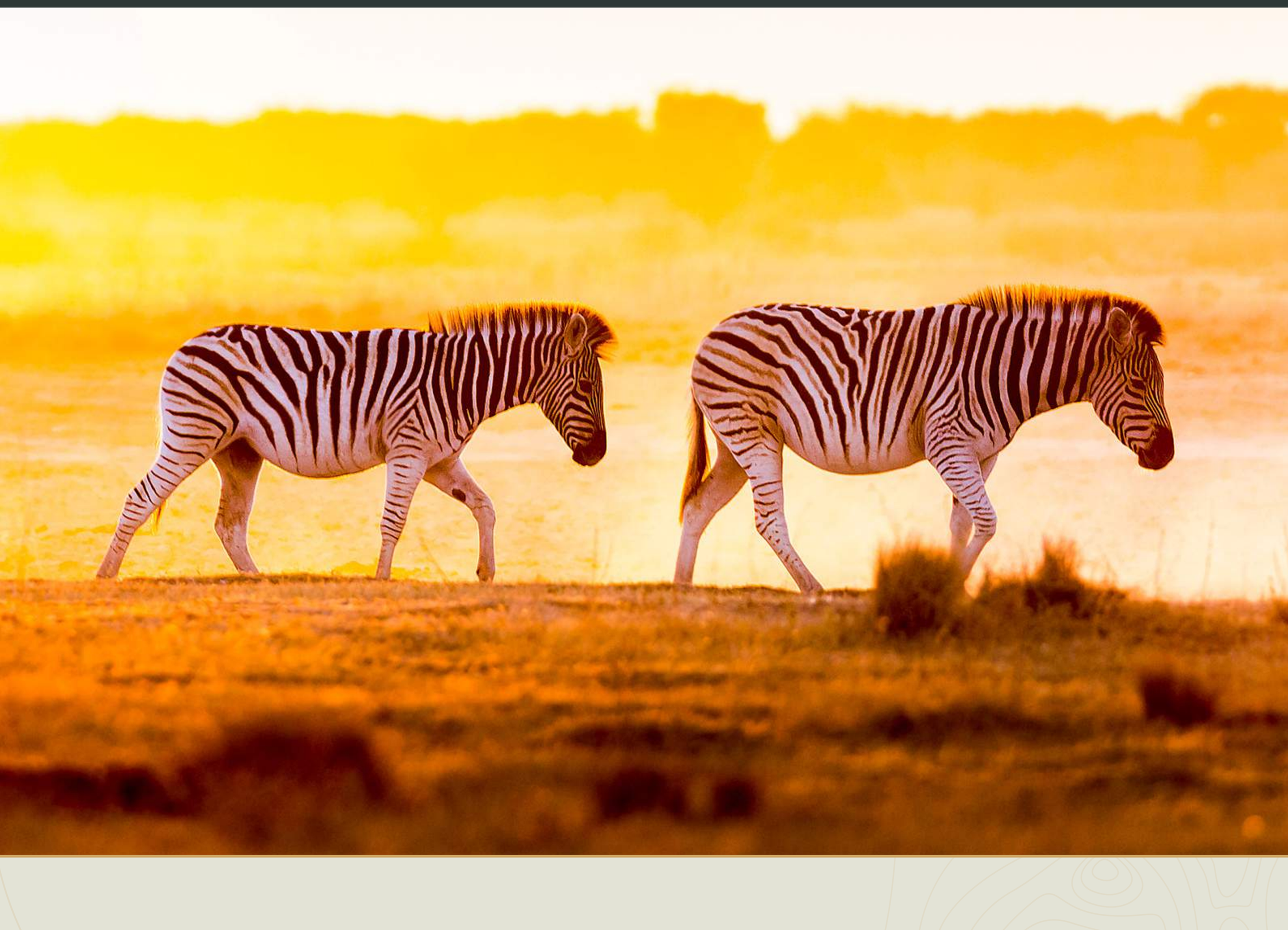
CRUISER SAFARIS

EST. 1995



2023 SAFARI NEWSLETTER

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

As with any day in Africa, this one started fresh and crisp with sense of adventure waiting calmly on the doorstep of the Cruiser lodge. Colten and Samantha set out early in the morning to have their first taste of what African game has to offer. Not long after entering the bush, they crossed paths with what will turn out be a Gemsbuck that turned the day into a humbling experience. As calm as anyone can be with their first shot at their first African animal, Colten aimed for and shot centre of the shoulder..... crack. A deflected bullet hit bone. The bull takes off into the bush as fast as any other. A hunters worst fear, an injured animal. The rest of the day was spent tracking and spotting this bull a couple of times with no real opportunity to get in a second shot.

Late in the afternoon some of the other staff and owner Pieter joined in to help with the search for this bull that kept eluding Colten and his PH. Soon after fresh tracks were picked up. Colten along with another PH waited in a clearing with the hopes that the trackers would be able to push the bull in their direction for a follow-up shot. The trackers called on the radio and said that they jumped the bull where he bedded down and the bull is on its way towards him. Excitement built as the trashing of brances gave away the bulls direction.

"He is comming strait for us".
The bull stopped less than 20 yards from Colten and he gave the bull a shot to the center of the chest. Just like in a fast shooting action film. The bull started to stumble and Colten took the opportunity to give the bull another insurance shot just behind the shoulder.

"He is down"
A big sense of relief for all involved and most of all a happy ending to a long day just as the sun started to make way for the night sky.

Congratulations Colten!

THERE IS VODOO IN THE KUDU

With an interest in African hunting that's been bred from books written by the legends in the glory days of the African Safari, this was a first-time trip to Africa for Kim and his wife Buffy.

Kim headed out into the African bush mindful of what animals he was after and excited to hear the thundering crack of his 60-year-old 9.3 x 62 mm Rifle "The voodoo gun".

His first few days were as eventful as any in Africa with successful hunts on Blesbuck, Impala, Steenbuck, Blue Wildebeest, Zebra, and Gemsbuck.

The day finally arrived for a good opportunity on the Grey Ghost of Africa. With its spiral horns that shoot through branches, glints only to be seen when the sun hits the curves, and its ghostly ability to disappear in plain sight the Kudu in itself is a spooky story of note, but the rest of this story will blow your mind.

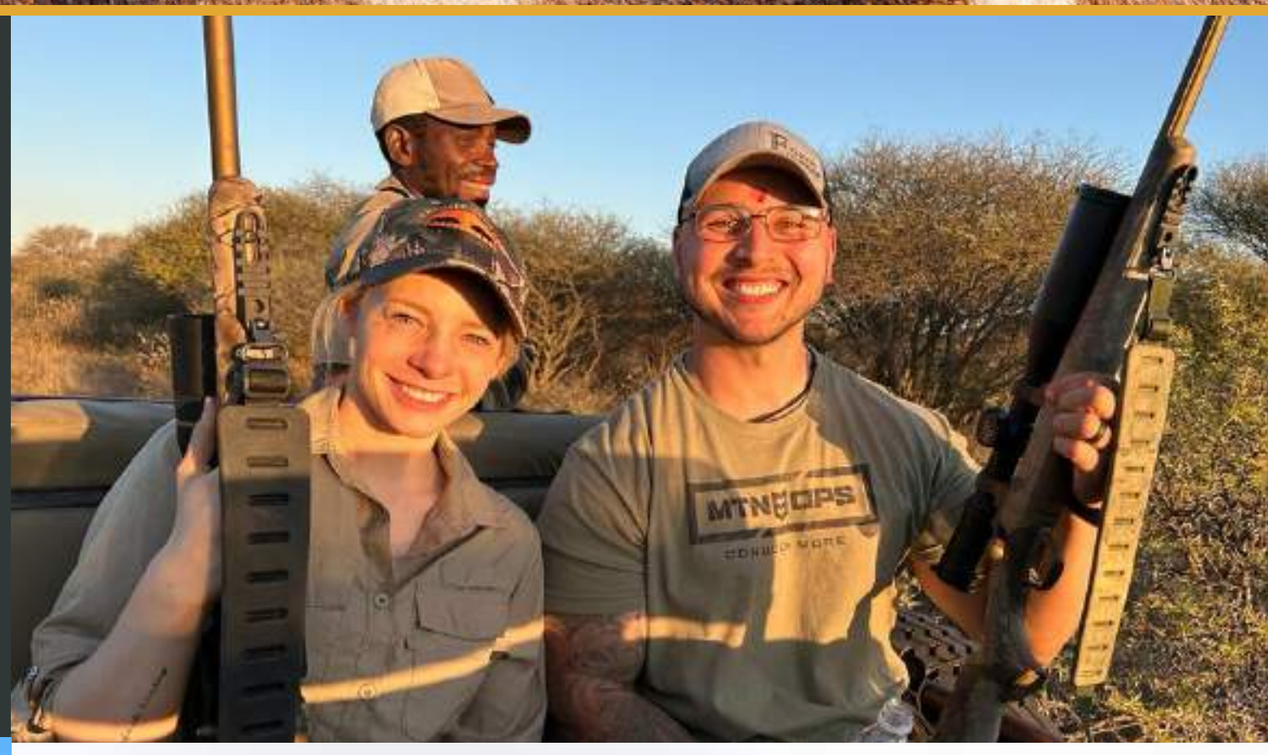
Kim aimed at the Kudu bull and pulled the trigger.... click. Malfunction! He opens the bolt to see what is going on and closes it again as the primer on the cartridge was not struck. Switched off his rifle safety. The click of the safety unknown to everyone involved, set off the firing pin. Without Kim aiming, the bullet hit a twig on its way and tumbled straight into the vitals of the Kudu bull.

The Grey Ghost met his match in the "Voodoo gun".

A POWER COUPLE OF NOTE

Adam and Hailey Langer came to Africa for their first taste of the challenge that the African game can provide.

Adam, an avid bowhunter back home in the States, traded the stick and string for a boomstick in a caliber that we don't see too often here at Cruiser Safaris a 300 PRC.



Hailey, not being much taller than the bush opted for a lighter 6.5 Creedmoor to take her first-ever animal. Don't let her size fool you, she said right upon arrival that the bigger game animals are the ones that she is after. She successfully got a Blue Wildebeest, Gemsbuck, and Blesbuck.

Adam's dream safari included Warthog, Impala, and Kudu. Adam got one magnificent Kudu after a 2-day long chase, one that stretched the tape to 54 ½ inches.

During their time here they truly became friends with everyone at Cruiser and made memories that will last a lifetime!

NOVICE TO PRO IN .30-06

A lifelong dream for seasoned world traveler Dick Mauldin came true when he and his son Kirk decided to book a hunting trip to South Africa. Kirk - with no previous hunting experience, enthusiastically joined his father.

But Kirk quickly proved himself a worthy shot with placements that dropped the animals dead in their tracks. They bagged impressive, once-in-a-lifetime trophies.

One day in particular was maybe just a bit more remarkable than some of the others. They set out early before the stars gave way to a beautiful sunrise, to hunt on a property we call Rosevally. A favorite amongst everyone that visits, a truly magical piece of land that is rich in game of exceptional quality as Dick and Kirk would experience too. They spent their late morning and early afternoon waiting for elusive warthog at separate water holes. Dick and his guide got dropped off and on the way to their blind Kirk and his guide came across a kudu that would make any hunter excited. Shots broke the sound of loud silence... a beautiful Kudu down before 10:00 AM.

Not long after, Kirk entered the blind with the excitement of the kudu still fresh in the air, a warthog came to visit the wrong waterhole and got blasted by the 180-grain bullet of a 30-06. A rather uneventful few hours followed and the decision was made to hop onto the back of the Cruiser, pick up his father and his guide, and spend the rest of the afternoon exploring a different area of the property. Not long after everyone was on the move, a kudu bull following a bunch of cows raised every heart rate to the big open sky… a few seconds passed and yet another bullet was on its way to its target. Smaaack.... the bull sunk in behind a bush, dead in his tracks. What a day! Dick's Kudu bull measured an impressive 57+ inches leaving everyone in awe.

3 once-in-a-lifetime trophies in one day, definitely tickles our fancy.

A 20 YEAR REUNION!

20 Years after his first trip to Cruiser Safaris, we were excited to Welcome now retired Alaskan hunting guide back to camp.

Pete Buist had some special animals on his list for this trip after hunting almost everything that there is to shoot in Africa.

First up was the Black Imapla that stood no chance against the experienced hunter's accuracy in the now dry river bed of the Mighty Matlabas river.

Next in line was a sable bull, The Prince of The Busveld. Needles to say uncle Pete made short work of him to keep the skinners busy.

In between going along to help his son Jason on his hunt for his wildebeest, Pete and his PH patrolled some promising river thicket for a bushbuck. After a few days of some grulingly slow walking in thick river sand an old bruiser of bushbuck finally made his appearance, and Pete made the shot count.

Pete you once again filled up camp with smiles about your stories from your hunting trips around the world. Pete is truly a story teller of note - he even wrote a fantastic book about his travels and experiences "Me Caribou is on fire". (Available on Amazon)

Pete its been a big pleasure to have you back, we are still laughing about some of your stories. Please return soon!

ANNIVERSARY IN AFRICA!

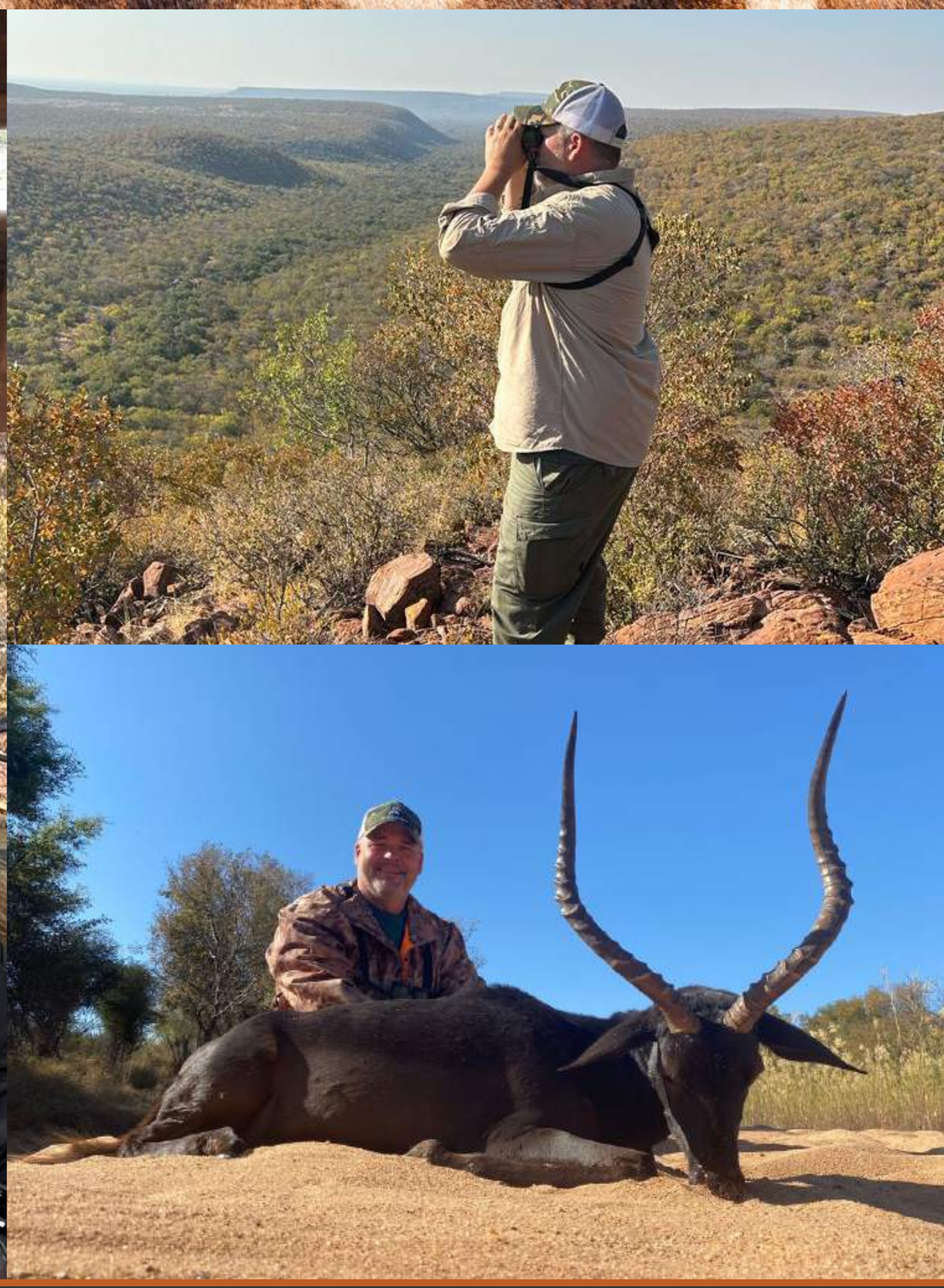
Jason and his wife Susan came to Africa on a very special time of the year for them, some arrangements were made to make a special day just a little bit more special.

Jason had a few long days in the bush chasing some rather unwilling-to-die Blue and Golden Wildebeest. Jason's luck finally changed on the 3rd day when the .375 put a golden cape in the salt.

The next chapter of Jason's hunting adventure was that of an early morning riverside hunt for the sometimes elusive Nyala with owner Pieter. They stalked carefully through the riverine thicket trying to not bump into any of the other game animals in the area that might scare off any potential Nyala bull in the area. They spotted something dark-coloured in the distance and stopped to take a look. Surprised by the sound of some nearby movement they spotted a warthog feeding very close to them. They tried to catch a glimpse of his tusks but the tall grass gave them a hard time. Unaware of them the warthog moved off finally revealing his tusks when there was no shot opportunity. They switched their focus back to the movement they spotted earlier. Indeed there is a Nayal bull moving about trying to find some sunlight. They stalked into position... The sound of 2 shots awakens everything nearby and when the dust settled a pair of ivory-tipped Nayal horns lay dead in the grass.

On their wedding anniversary, the Cruiser Staff set up a surprise with one spectacular sunset to celebrate their marriage day. They got dropped off with the campfire already burning to spend the evening under the stars. Jason got the job of cooking and we have to say he can be given the honorary title of Braai master.

Jason and Susan, it was truly an honour to have you around camp. We hope the Alaska weather treats you well.



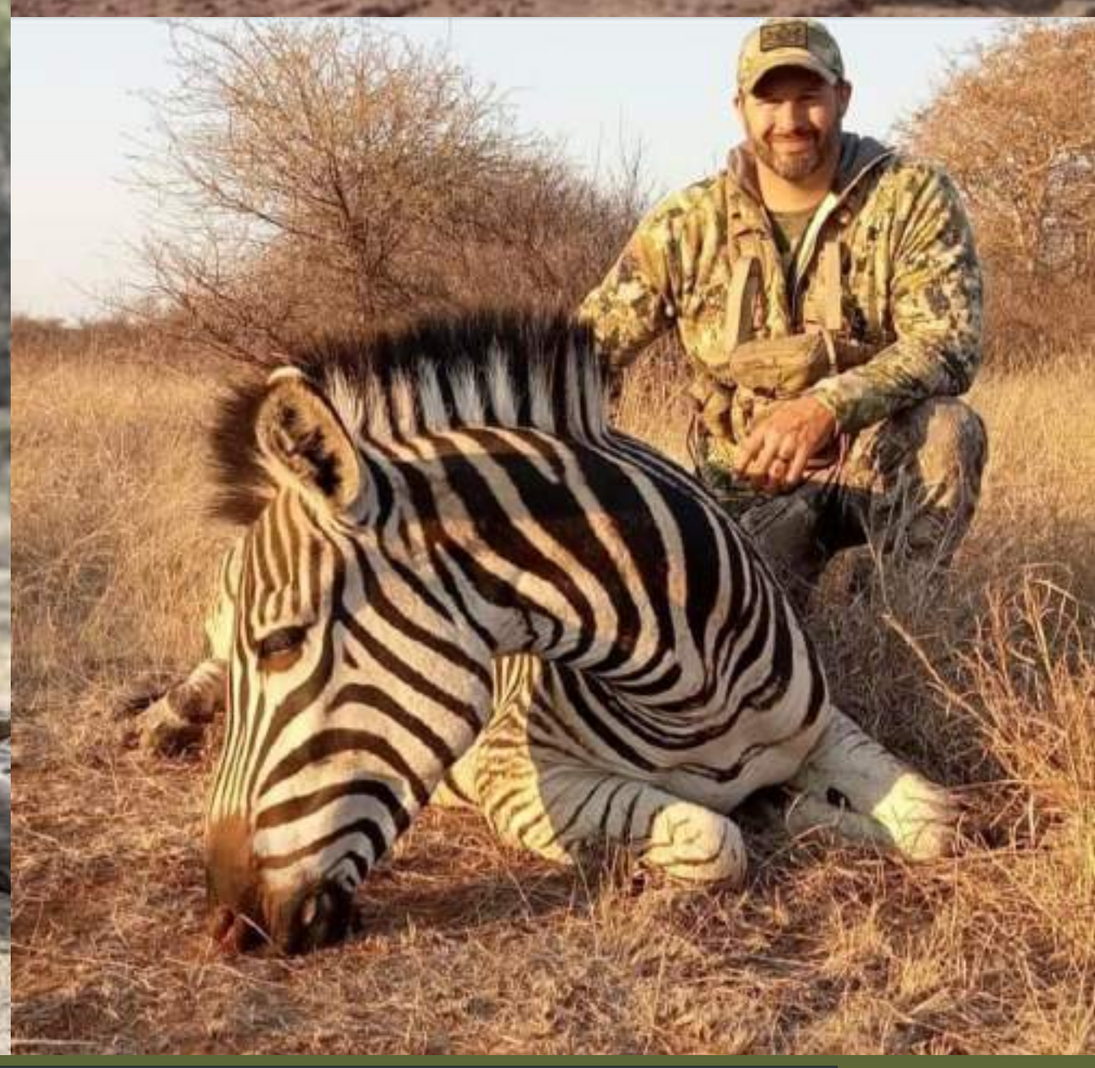
EXPLORING SOUTH AFRICA

Author and retired detective Peyton Meridith and his wife Kristi visited South Africa along with good friends Pete, Jason, and Susan Buist. Peyton and Pete visited Cruiser 20 years ago and after that Africa a few times. Payton accepted the challenge of collecting the tiny ten. However, this is no small feat.

For this trip, a certain mountain-dwelling quill-haired critter was on this detective's most wanted list. The skittish sure-footed Klipspringer in the mountains. The first big challenge when it comes to hunting a Klipspringer is finding them, this is where some hiking up and down mountains and a fair bit of glassing comes in. The first 2 days they saw a few rams but nothing worth the effort to pursue over the rugged terrain. At last, they saw a ram that was worth the time to put in a stalk. Unfortunately, the sharp senses of the Klipspringer and the layout of the terrain made it almost impossible to get him for a good shot. Although the hunt for a Klipspringer did not pay off this time, they got to see some amazing high country and had some great laughs along with owner Pieter who accompanied them.

Peyton didn’t go home empty-handed though - he got a big black Impala and made it count.

We look forward to the final chapter of the Klipspringer hunt. We are humbled by mother nature, and realize once again why our beloved sport is called hunting, and not shooting.



RACING STRIPES

The racehorses of Africa are often than not one of the most challenging animals to hunt. With their heightened senses, brain-confusing patterns, and their almost choreographed-like movements they offer one amazing experience when it comes to the thrill of the chase.

Brian and Melani Johnson can certainly write a good book about chasing Zebra. Long miles on foot coupled with stalks so good you could almost taste the success of finally getting a good shot opportunity.

The success of getting a pristine Zebra was only the cherry on the cake. Mountain hunting kudu, calmer days at a blind overlooking a waterhole, and one amazing afternoon chasing the Big 5 from a game-viewing vehicle and all of that with great friends.

What more can you ask for...

TRACKERS WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD

Wheels on the runway, first-night sleepover, next morning off to the Cruiser lodge. Finally, Tom Shwabenbauer could see the terrain where his quarry for the week is lurking.

As the days went by and the trophies started hitting the skinning shed. Gemsbuck (Oryx) up next.

The day passed and after a couple of busted stalks, Tom and his PH located a big old lone gemsbok cow about 30 minutes before darkness set in. The last stalk of the day, they got up to about 60 yards, a frontal shot was presented and Tom felt comfortable taking the shot.

A gunshot echoed in the bush... followed by a few anxious moments. When they got closer they saw that the bullet hit some brush before it got to the gemsbuck and only a small drop of blood was found before darkness called it a day.

After a rather sleepless night, they set out the next day to pick up where they left off and with the help of their tracker, they were able to identify the track and the chase was back on. After some excellent tracking, they eventually caught up to the gemsbok.

It jumped up about where it bedded down roughly 50 yards in front of them but Tom was on it like Billy the Kid, a very quick and perfect shot, downed the wounded animal.

Well done Tom, it was a pleasure hunting with you!

WAYNE JOHNSON
A WELCOME SURPRISE

Two friends of 57 years, Tom and Wayne spend their days hunting together here at Cruiser. Hard hunting days and bucketloads of adventure was the name of the game.

It was a day to remember, hunting at the famed Rosevalley. Stalking up on a waterhole after lunch the hunting party found themselves staring at some Eland bulls going about their day. Quietly as they so often do, a Gemsbuck came in looking for a drink. Being well hidden they got set up, a short few moments passed and a well-placed shot sent the Gemsbuck into the light

Congratulations Wayne on a very successful hunt!

THAT KUDU GOT HUMMER'D

A long-awaited trip for Ernie and Janet Hummer turned into a master class on archery. Ernie thoroughly impressed the Cruiser staff on day one with his incredible accuracy with a stick and string.

Ernie spent most of his days in a blind quietly watching the abundance of animals, waiting for his chance to put his archery skills to the test. As quietly as they often do a kudu bull approached the ellevated blind and Ernie faced a pretty stiff challenge with a near vertical shot on the bull. Drawn between letting him go and taking the shot on one magnificent bull. Ernie did not let his nerves get to him and faced the challenge. The arrow came from above like a kamikaze pilot and passed through the bull like a hot knife through butter.

Was it a good shot? Should I have waited? Is he injured? Did I even hit him? His mind went from calm to crazy in the blink of an eye. Needless to say, it was such a good shot that the bull piled up before he knew what happened.

If there was a Hunting Olympics Ernie would be the Gold Medal holder in the Archery division.

KARL & LISA

Seeing old friends after some time and picking up where you left off is arguably one of the most special treasures there is in this life.

Returning client-friends Karl and Lisa is just that. This was the 3rd visit for Karl and a 2nd one for Lisa and they still managed to find animals to add to an already great collection of trophies.

Successful hunting was followed by some time off with a visit to Pilanesburg National Park and one surprise sunset dinner with Champagne and one of the best views we can find around here.

AUSSIE, AUSSIE, AUSSIE (OI, OI, OI)

The boys from down under came, invaded camp, and brought with them a fair share of laughter and a bag full of new words. We had the best time ever!

They hunted hard in the heat of early summer with great success. The nifty warthog came through to be the one animal that put them to the ultimate test by eluding them until Chris managed to issue a beautiful warthog with a plane ticket to Australia via flight .308 Winchester.

A birthday cake also made its way from the kitchen thanks to Ben which rounded out one amazing trip as a whole for this father and son that has a bond as strong as a gun barrel.
Until we meet again.

PATIENCE PAYS OFF!

Graig and Fran Golding finally made it to South Africa and what an amazing time we had!

Excitement filled the air of some rather chilly winter days. Action-packed with the thrill of the chase as the days passed and quality trophies hit the salt. Kudu, Steenbuck, Blue Wildebeest, and Zebra kept the couple busy during the day and lots of laughter blended with the smoke around the evening's fire. One specific animal surely tested their patience, the poor man's Elephant. A funny-looking animal with some rather muddy tendencies, the wise old Warthog.

Days of a picnic at a blind around a waterhole waiting for an old bruiser to appear from the bush. Many warthogs came and went until finally, he made his appearance. Booom... A well-placed shot sends him straight to the skinning shed.

A dream come true and memories made, Craig and Fran it was a pleasure hosting you and we hope to see you again soon.

A 20+ YEAR DREAM

Kelli and William Zore had a dream of visiting Africa for 2 different reasons. Kelli being a travel agent, was in need of experiencing everything South Africa has to offer, While William had some wall space that was in short of some African trophy's, with Kudu at the top of the list.

William managed to harvest all of the trophy's on his bucket list with relative ease but the wise old warthog pulled every trick from his well worn hat to try and escape William's bullet.

The last afternoon on the last day with the last few minute of daylight left, he finally had his chance. He has been out in the bush for more than a week, his patience well and truly tested. He can't let this opportunity slide. Needles to say he returned to camp with a smile as big as man can get.

RICK KASPRAK

More than a decade in the making but Rick finally made his way back to Cruiser Safaris with a special plan in mind. He is going after his majesty himself, the prince of the bushveld an ancient sable bull that has escaped a hunter's fury a few too many times.

Rick returned with his lifelong friend Scott and the two friends accompanied each other on every hunt. It is great to see such a special bond between friends staying together through the good times and tough times.

THE YEAR LONG NIGHT

A return trip to African hunting after some time passed, made for a different choice in trophy animal for Scott. The plan for the trip was simple, hunt some colour variant plains game from the species he already successfully harvested and become a Big 5 conqueror by adding a cape buffalo to his trophy room.

With his close friend Rick as his backup the journey began with the first couple of days living up to their reputation, conquering cape buffalo is no easy feat. At last not long before sunset they had an opportunity to take a shot. The shot hit the buffalo with a solid thump, however a few hundred yards of tracking revealed that the bull was injured with light fading fast. The call was made to let the buffalo be for the night and attempt to pick up where they left off early the next morning. The time from dusk till dawn must have felt like a full orbit of earth around the sun.

Early the next morning Pieter and team accompanied the hunting party understanding the danger an injured buffalo can pose. A hour barely passed when the buffalo was spotted. The first follow-up shot by Scott was backed up by the army of 4 that accompanied him. When the dust settled their celebration cheer could be heard by all around. The buffalo met his match.