



Call of the wild

Last year, the world's attention was turned to South Africa where football mad nations went head to head during the planet's most widely viewed sporting event, the FIFA World Cup. JESSICA ZOITI reports on what's happened since.

IN JUNE last year, images of South Africa – one of Africa's wealthiest and arguably most beautiful countries – were beamed to an estimated 26 billion people, giving its tourism industry a boost like no other.

The knock-on effect was that people's perception of the entire continent improved and new markets are now being lured not only to South Africa, but to its neighbouring countries also.

"Since South Africa hosted the World Cup the perception of Africa has changed dramatically and we are seeing a surge in popularity for this destination," explained

African Wildlife Safaris' sales and marketing manager, Praful Albuquerque.

"Previously it was more the hardcore adventure travellers who visited this region, who would only consider it after they had visited Europe, the Americas and Asia. Africa now seems to be higher on the list of places to be seen and clients are also using it as a stopover alternative on their way to Europe."

At Bench International, director of product Fiona Orton has also noted that Africa's target market has diversified.

"Australians from all walks of life enjoy Africa – from those seeking a budget-priced

experience to those looking for absolute luxury," she said. "Bench has a range of adventure camping tours, yet also offers its own special Connoisseur Collection brochure."

THE MAIN ATTRACTION

While Africa may be experiencing a spike in popularity, it's the call of the wild that continues to lure visitors. As Albuquerque explains: "The main attraction for tourists visiting Africa is the wildlife. 4WD safaris are what most of our clients are interested in. However, having said that, we are seeing a change in trend where clients are now opting for activities that are more active, like walking safaris, horseback safaris and canoeing trips."

So while South Africa remains one of the most sought-after holiday destinations, countries that have excellent natural attractions such as Kenya and South Africa's neighbours are becoming equally, if not more popular.

"The most popular destinations in Africa for Australians are Kenya and Tanzania due to their high density of game, diverse eco systems, including savannah, forests, deserts and lakes, and the great cultural experiences and interaction opportunities they provide. Botswana, the home of the Okavango Delta, also offers great wildlife experiences and is also popular," said Albuquerque.

NEW AFRICAN HOTSPOTS

Orton has also noticed a trend for these African hot spots.

"Kenya has now overtaken South Africa as Bench's most popular destination in Africa



with Tanzania and Botswana next and Zimbabwe looming as the world begins to understand that much of that country is now free from political unrest," she said.

"South Africa is popular as a 'first time to Africa' destination. Like Kenya, it has well-priced itineraries and also a great variety of wildlife, culture, history and scenery."

Lalie Ngozi, South African Tourism's country manager, Australia, agrees that Africa, and specifically South Africa, offer great value for money attractions.

"We do continue to work closely with the African nations surrounding South Africa. This ensures we collectively reach, and engage with, the Australian traveller that is looking for an African holiday experience.

"A majority of Australian travellers visit South Africa for holidays, with South Africa's value-for-money proposition providing the rationale to visit. Not surprisingly, Australians love our unique wildlife, such as the Big Five. However, more than ever, Australians are looking for a more enriching and memorable experience, which includes engaging with our history and heritage or getting up close with our people," she said.

TRAVELLING SAFELY

According to Albuquerque and Orton, a typical client will spend two weeks on the continent and visit at least three or four countries while on safari. The diversity of attractions each destination offers, combined with the high cost of airfares and great



distances travelled encourages travellers to really get their teeth stuck into as many unique African experiences as possible.

A question that weighs on the minds of many travellers to Africa, especially those making their first trip to the continent is "will I be safe?" At the time of print, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) advised against travel to six African nations. None of these however, are destinations brochured by reputable travel wholesalers, such as Bench International and African Wildlife Safaris.

"There are some countries in Africa which are relatively volatile, however we do not promote

any of these countries," said Albuquerque. "The areas that we promote are extremely stable and safe. During times of unrest we always exercise caution and request clients always follow the DFAT advice."

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.southafrica.net

www.africanwildlifesafaris.com.au

www.benchinternational.com.au

www.dfat.gov.au

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South Africa

It's Possible

New African benchmarks

African safari specialist Bench International has added a host of new Zimbabwean products to its 2012 brochure.

THE MOVE was prompted by an incredible increase in numbers visiting Victoria Falls, and after further research, the company discovered that clients were eager for more to see and do in other parts of Zimbabwe, too.

New to the brochure are lodges in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, new camps and a canoeing adventure at remote Mana Pools, and a new 12-day Zimbabwe Explorer tour which takes in Victoria Falls, Hwange, Lake Kariba, Matsudona National Park and Mana Pools.

The company has also refined and added to its product in South Africa, Botswana, Kenya and Tanzania.

In South Africa new options include Franschoek Villas in the Cape Winelands, apartments in Cape Town, and a Kruger National Park and Zululand safari.

In Botswana, there's a new Trans-Kalahari adventure, a three-day cruise along the Chobe River and the rustic five-star Ngoma Safari Lodge.

Namibia product now includes a 10-day Diverse Namibia package and a 16-day Namibia Experience.

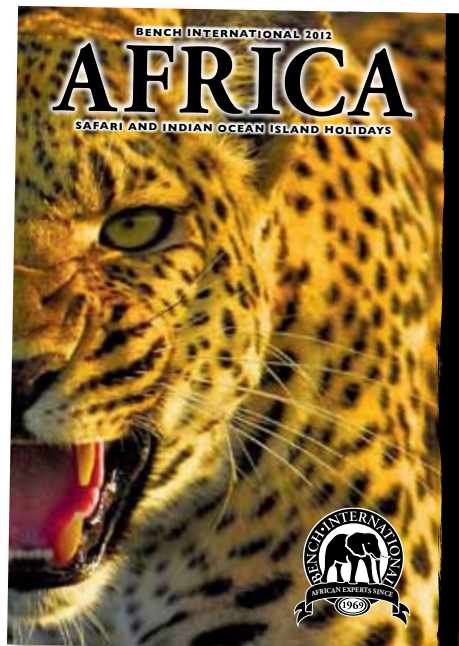
In east Africa, Bench has added the Elewana Air Safari in Tanzania. This complements the Kenya by Air safari the company has been operating with its own aircraft for the last couple of years.

SOUTH AFRICA SAVER

Bench is offering clients travelling to South Africa a saving of \$400 per couple on its six-night package at Makutsi Safari Springs for selected periods between January 14 and May 25 2012.

Makutsi sits between the Drakensberg Mountains and Kruger National Park. Packages include accommodation, breakfast and dinner, trips to Kruger, Blyde River Canyon and a tribal village, three game viewing drives on the reserve and airport transfers.

The saving means the itinerary now costs from \$1445 per person twin share. Children



under 12 will also receive a discount of \$100 on the same package. All bookings must be made by 31 December 2011.

www.benchinternational.com.au

Explore Africa with Adventure World

Australian travellers looking for a unique and tailor-made African holiday can check out the latest Adventure World 2012 Africa brochure for inspiration.

WITH OVER 100 pages of tours, accommodation and packages to the African mainland, Mauritius, Reunion the Seychelles and Madagascar, the brochure is designed to suit every taste and budget.

Inside are more than 19 new products, including the unforgettable Dr Livingstone journey on the Shongololo Express, a Cape Malay experience, the chance to volunteer in a South African orphanage or work as a junior ranger safari in Tanzania, and stays in Sanctuary Retreats in Botswana.

Unique to the brochure are experiences such as hot-air ballooning over the Serengeti, elephant-back safaris and lion walks, trips on the Zambezi Queen Houseboat, and up close and personal experiences with cheetahs and leopards in Okonjima, Namibia.

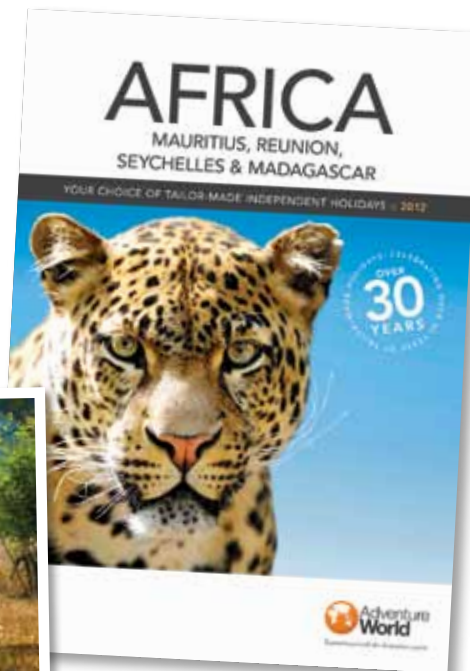
KENYA AND TANZANIA DISCOUNTS

In celebration of the new brochure launch, Adventure World is offering substantial discounts on tours in Kenya and Tanzania.

Save \$400 per couple on the seven-day, six-night Makutsi Safari Springs package, now priced from \$1,445 including breakfast and dinner daily, three game drives, a Kruger National Park excursion, Blyde River Canyon excursion, tribal village visit and return transfers from Hoedspruit or Phalabowra airports.

The offer is valid for sale until 31 December and for travel between 15 January and 31 March 2012, and 15 April and 31 May 2012.

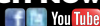
www.adventureworld.com.au



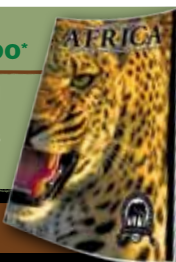
ESSENTIALLY SOUTH AFRICA 15 DAYS FROM \$2290*

South Africa is as diverse as it is beautiful. Discover South Africa on this 15 day tour, exploring all the essential and exciting tourist areas of this wonderful country. From Big Five game viewing in the world famous Kruger National Park to the beautiful city of Cape Town this tour has it all. Excellent quality hotels, sightseeing and excursions accompanied by your expert local guide to escort you from arrival to departure. *Airtfares not included. Per person, conditions apply.

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CALL NOW FOR OUR 2012 BROCHURE!





APT's African Adventures

APT's impressive global portfolio has just grown a little larger thanks to the addition of its inaugural Africa brochure, launched last month.

OFFERING SEVEN small-group adventures, the brochure covers experiences from South Africa to Tanzania, Kenya and Egypt for the 2011-12 season.

The tours are designed to cater to groups of no more than 28 people. According to APT general manager marketing, Debra Fox, this is so guests can truly capture the continent at its best.

"We have taken care to ensure our Africa adventures meet our clients' discerning expectations," she said.

"On our private four-wheel-drive game park safaris, there are no more than eight passengers because there's this tangible intimacy and connection with what is being experienced, and that connectedness deserves close attention and exploration.

"We've taken the best elements of independent African travel and enhanced them to create these incredible journeys through the wilds of Africa, staying at luxury lodges and camps set in the heart of Africa's iconic game reserves. These journeys are inclusive of unbelievable outdoor dining experiences, special encounters with incredible wildlife and local Masai and Zulu people."

Also included in the tour price are all flights in Africa, and opportunities to see standout attractions such as the Big 5, Kruger National Park, Madikwe Game Reserve and Victoria Falls.

EARLYBIRD SPECIALS

APT is offering a \$1600 per couple earlybird discount for bookings made before December 31, 2011.

A lead-in tour is the 29-day South Africa Highlights with Kenya & Tanzania package,

which includes Cape Town, Garden Route, Zululand, Victoria Falls, Kruger National Park, Serengeti, Masai Mara and Ngorongoro Crater.

It is priced from \$17,195 per person, twin share (based on a May 12 departure including the \$1600 per couple earlybird discount) and includes coach and 4WD touring, accommodation in private game lodges, luxury camps and hotels, most meals, local guided excursions and game drives, tipping and an experienced APT tour director. www.aptgroup.travel



Africa

South Africa | Kenya
Tanzania | Egypt



THE APT DIFFERENCE

- ✓ Small group touring – Maximum of 28 guests on tour
- ✓ 6-8 guests in each 4WD on game park drives
- ✓ Watch for Africa's Big Five – the Buffalo, Elephant, Lion, Leopard and Rhinoceros
- ✓ Stay in Exclusive private game lodges and luxury camps



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*Conditions apply. Prices are per person, twin share and include savings. Book by 31 Dec. 2011. Contact APT for full terms & conditions. Australian Pacific Touring Pty Ltd ABN 44 004 684 619 Lic. No. 30112 MKT9829