

MATWETWE SAFARIS

2022 NEWSLETTER

It was Albert Pike who said: "What we do for ourselves dies with us, but what we do with other people and for other people, is immortal." This year was yet another opportunity to influence other people's lives by sharing those intense moments with them which so often occur while out hunting and pursuing our dreams.

Not long after my return from Michigan in March, the season kicked off on a high note when Tom and Mary Westerbrook as well as John and Heidi Huizinga joined us on safari. The 2021/2022 rainy season was way above average. That taught us early on that finding an animal after a lethal shot were not as easy as before. What a wonderful time we've had with these great people. It reminded me again on how lucky I am to have this job.



Drinks around the BBQ

Paul Reenders had the opportunity to join his son Sam on a safari with us after Sam worked for a few months as a physician in Malawi. They travelled down to Cape Town and came on a cull hunt with us and spent some quality father and son time together. As a seasoned Michigan hunter, the rainy weather was no problem for Paul. He enjoyed himself immensely and took a few great shots.



Phil and Karen Glupker returned to hunt with us in April. Phil had a Roan at the top of his bucket list. He took a beautiful big bull but when we saw that huge Tsessebe bull that was wondering around by himself, we had to go look for it. He measured a staggering 14 inches and got Phil on the Matwetwe Top Ten (MTT) this year. They took a helicopter ride over our beautiful area to end their safari on a great note. Numbi our new puppy, was into this hunting thing from the get-go.

During this hunt we unfortunately had to say goodbye to our cook Marietjie when she retired after getting Covid and did not fully recover. Over a period of 17 years Marietjie prepared many scrumptious meals for us. She will be greatly missed!



After 5 years our Bonnema family from Grand Rapids come to visit us again this year. This time bringing all 8 of them. We did not hunt but had a wonderful time together. Annie took a few days off at work and we tested out the new private camp in the Thorny Bush area of Kruger National Park for a few days. That proved to be a very luxurious and firsthand experience of the Kruger Park Safari. We saw all the big 5 in two days and got really close to all of them.



It was mid-May when Joe and Karen Antku as well as John and Ellen Spinks joined us for a safari. They took some beautiful trophies and went to Kruger Park to end their safari on a relaxed note. Joe's black impala was the healthiest, shiniest skin on an animal I have ever seen. John took a 17 and a half inch blesbuck that got him on the Matwetwe Top Ten. Joe was a crack shot and became the first hunter for the season to receive the Harold Kind Award.



An old friend Dennis Sprick booked his Buffalo hunt a few years ago but Covid ruined the plans more than once. Finally, this year we had the privilege of hunting together again. The excitement was high as we tracked an old bull that we spotted on a previous occasion. After a lot of walking the old brute gave us a shot at last light. Dennis made a perfect spine shot out of his Blaser R8 (375H&H) and anchored him in his tracks. A dream came true that night and I was so very thankful to have been a part of it. Dennis also took a beautiful Roan and Black Impala.



More than 10 years ago I met Jeff Ellen at a trade show where we were working neighboring booths. Then already, I could tell that we were going to have a great time hunting together. Jeff decided to bring his wife Angi as well as their wonderful daughter Audra on safari with him. This hunt was truly the highlight of this season. Not only because of the real nice trophies we took but mainly because of the way they appreciated life, and all the privileges God give us in it. Audra walked away with the prize of the season that gave her the no 1 spot on the Matwetwe Top Ten when she took this monster of a Nyala that measured 30 inches. The Gemsbuck was a long story with a great ending. Jeff went on with his super good marksmanship and became the second of only 3 guys to win the Harold King Award this year.



When the Reisner's and Bock's from Ohio joined us in June we were lucky to have gotten a new hunting concession that wasn't hunted for 7 years. The trophy quality was exceptional. Jeff Reisner took advantage of the opportunity and bagged this very impressive wide 57" kudu as well as a 29" Nyala there. Gill and Jody each took a Blesbuck on the same morning with excellent shooting. Larry Bock took a beautiful Blue Wildebeest and Gill captured it all, frame by frame with her huge Canon. They had a wonderful time, and I am sure they will be back some day.



When Matt & Jenny Ewing together with Matt Schmitt and his girlfriend Gill came over, I couldn't believe my eyes and ears. I never thought that this much laughter and fun was possible in a week. Matt E brought the biggest cigar that I have ever seen to celebrate his Sable. It wasn't long before he had to light it up. Jenny made a perfect heart shot on her Red Hartebeest after a long stalk and was rewarded with exceptional horn quality. Matt S and I ambushed the baboons and just when we were ready to pull the trigger on a big male, the biggest dark male baboon pushed our target off from the orange pile. Matt was ready and bagged one of the biggest Chachma baboon I have ever seen. A great week was celebrated on the last day with drinks and snacks at the baboon cliffs. The next morning Gian took them to Kruger Park for the last leg of their safari. What a blast!!!



Joebear Miles was next. He came by himself. We hit it off from the start. He didn't hold anything back and took a bundle of trophies. Joe was like a kid in a candy store. For his 8th animal he decided on a buffalo and anchored him with two perfect shots out of my old faithful .375. His buffalo measured 40 inches and had no teeth left, what a trophy! He went on to take several other animals amongst a 24" black impala and a big black giraffe. He often had a famous quote: "I'm not here for a long time, but for a good time". Joe received the Harold King Award for his outstanding marksmanship.



Curt and Denice Tefft booked their bow hunt 4 years ago. This year it finally happened. They brought their good friend Don Henze with them. The unusually wet winter that we had didn't help the bow hunting much, but they still bagged some beautiful trophies with their bows. Denice took a 43" Sable with a perfect heart shot. Curt took a huge 29" Nyala and a 16 and a half inch Bushbuck to complete his spiral slam. Both these animals made the Matwetwe Top Ten. A great privilege it was for me to spend 2 weeks with great people that figured out what the important things in life are. Don hunted with Herman and had one lifelong dream which were to get a shot at the grey ghost with his crossbow. His beautiful old bull measured just under 55". He went on to take a few more and had a blast doing so.



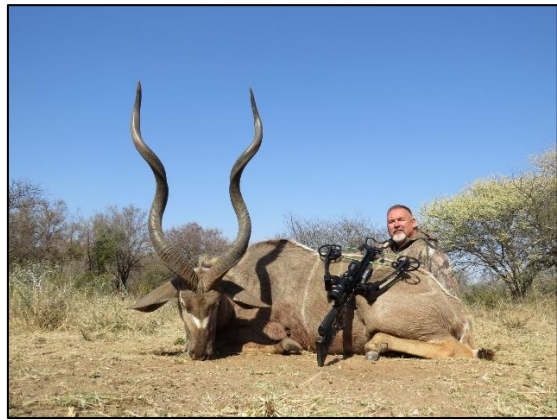
On his third trip with us Gary Tatro decided to bring his wonderful girlfriend Karen with. Jay Grebner joined in like always. We went up to the Mpumalanga highveld after Black Wildebeest and Springbuck. The different terrain brought a new dimension to the hunt and their great shooting skills brought them good success. Karen wanted to take an animal with her dad's old rifle. She decided on a Blue Wildebeest and now have a great story to tell. Like before we truly enjoyed the week with them and went on to take a few more nice trophies to expand their collections.



A Sable was the animal that Curt Johnson wanted reel bad. We were lucky to find this 44 incher in the middle of a big open field. We worked out a plan that got us within range and Curt did the rest. Jacob and Andrea Robinson joined Curt and his wife Paula on safari. They went on to take several very impressive trophies during the week but the conversations and discussions at dinner was a highlight of their stay.



On their first trip to Africa the Seldens and De Witts thought they were in paradise. The number of animals and the variety were what amazed them most. Don took a wide 55" Kudu with a perfect shot from his bow. He wanted something big and dangerous and decided on a Buffalo cow. This old cow was somewhere between 15 and 18 years old with no teeth left but still showed us how tough these beasts can be. With some good marksmanship Tammy also bagged a few of her own. Tim and Amy De Witt joined them and from the start were a great team with PH Herman. Harm joined us halfway through the hunt and we all just had a great time.



Richard Russel was well prepared and did all his homework before his trip. Richard and his wife Mandy brought their daughter Addison with them. Addison wanted a Zebra and made a one-shot clean kill on this very beautiful Burchell's Zebra. She is hooked now and wants to return soon for more of this kind of excitement. Sorry Rich, it's going to cost you. Richard took an almost perfect Blue Wildebeest that earned him the second spot on the MTT. This wildebeest had a width of 30" long tips and heavy bosses. It was great to see a family having such a great time together.



When the Owens come visit (most every season except for Covid), it is always a highlight. This year was the first for their daughter Jodi. Jodi took a Zebra which was her first animal in Africa. The coat didn't look good from up closely, so she took another one. Both with well placed shots. Congratulations to Jodi! Dan wanted a Mountain Reedbuck. He took a very good shot through a very small opening in the brush. Somewhat of an anticlimax when I saw that the one horn didn't have a tip, so we had to hunt on and find him a proper trophy. Luckily Jane had the hawk eye and spotted the ram. Dan made a perfect snapshot at close range, but this one had a bad cape with a snare around the neck, well cut into the skin. At least by then we had a proper set of horns from the one and a good cape from the other. We were all set and happy. Dan became the third and last hunter for 2022 that was awarded with the Harold King Award for his fine marksmanship. From there we went to Thorny Bush in Kruger National Park and had a blast. It was another humbling experience to visit the locations where their Pursuing a Dream Foundation supports so much and makes such a big difference.



It was mid-September when Dan & Doreen Jones brought their daughter Alice and husband Mike on safari. The girls each took very good Red Hartebeest, but it was Dan and Mike that each had the Impala luck in their favor. Dan's measured just under 25" and made the MTT. PH Herman went the extra mile for them and ended a perfect safari with an afternoon game drive at Entabeni.



Dan



Mike



Doreen



Alice

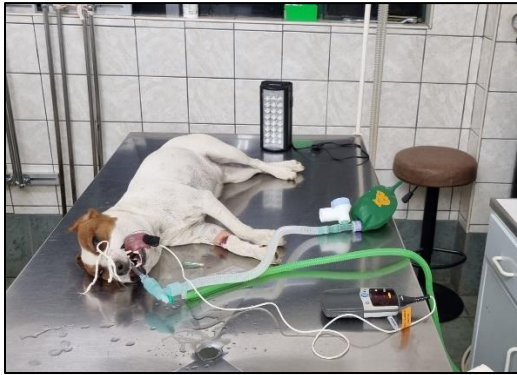
When Max Tait had to pull out of the trip at the last minute, Max's son Josh and his aunt Shirley decided they are not going to let this come between them and a good time. Josh wanted buffalo with his 500 S&W. His first shot was where it was supposed to be and anchored the bull. We had a great adventure together when we went after baboon and ostrich in quite a spectacular way. Josh had chef Leon prepare the biggest drumstick I have ever seen, for him. Josh danced around the fire like a Viking and celebrated a great hunt. Aunt Shirley was a great sport and took us out for a beer at the local bar. Great memories!!!



Our last hunt for the season was at the end of October when Ron & Carol Hughes came on safari with us. It was a great honor to be the host of their 19th trip to Africa. Ron was crazy about shooting Impala and took three nice ones. Carol was one of the most experienced lady hunters I have ever guided. She was a crack shot and didn't take much time to pull the trigger. The highlight was when they each took a very similar Black Impala on the same morning. Unfortunately, Carol had some medical issues and we had to help her get medical treatment and arrange for an early return to the US. That all went smoothly, and she is doing much better now.



Then I must also report the bad news. One evening, at the end of the season, Nandi fought with a puffadder (snake) and got bitten twice. I rushed her to the vet right away. We struggled for hours to help her breath. She was even connected to a ventilator for a few hours but without success. She died during that night and left us with great sadness. Good news is that we have a new member in the family. Her name is Tsitsi which means "Little one". I have high hopes for her and will have to improve on the snake training.



Nandi in ICU



Tsitsi

It is with a warm heart and great appreciation that I look back at the past season. Again, we've met a bunch of new people and reunited with some old friends that all share the passion for the outdoors. For me as a professional hunter and guide, there is no bigger reward than the true joy on people's faces when they experience in person what they dreamed of all their lives. Thank you all for trusting us with your precious time.

A great thank you to my staff for their hard work all season. It was quite an emotional moment when Jimson saved up his gratuities and bought himself his first car that he has ever owned in his life. Thank you Leon, for feeding us every day and making sure everything works in camp. Thank you to Annie for the support and understanding she gives so generously.

Looking forward it is with great excitement that I can officially announce that Matwetwe Safaris is entering a new era from 2023. God has blessed me with two exceptional sons. Harm, my youngest has earned his degree in Agricultural economics with distinction at the end of 2022. As from 2023 he will be joining me full-time at Matwetwe Safaris. I am very excited about this new chapter and know that he has a lot to contribute to the Matwetwe team. I can only humbly thank the Dear Lord that He has blessed me in so many ways.

Harm and I are planning to do the rounds again on our annual marketing trip to Michigan during February/March next year. Please come by, say hi and catch up. We would love to see you all again.

Merry Christmas to everyone. Make sure you spend quality time with your loved ones and thank Him for saving us all through His Son Jesus Christ.

Until next time.

Hendrik Botha