

*“Africa, being as old as it is, makes all people except the professional invader and spoilers into children. No one says to anyone in Africa, ‘Why don’t you grow up?’ ” Ernest Hemingway – True at First Light*



## THE SAFARI WITH KIRK AND ANNE

### HOW WE MET

It all started at the 2004 Safari Club International show in Reno. I met a lovely couple looking for their first safari to Africa. There are some people at the shows that you get a good feeling about, and Kirk and Anne were one of those couples.

On the Friday night of the show, after rushing back to the room for a quick shower, change and turn around I walked briskly to the elevators to make it just in time for my dinner reservation with some new clients. As the elevator doors opened, there stood Kirk and Anne. We chatted briefly, said good night and off we went our separate ways. Little did I know that they would almost beat me back to the booth in the morning to book a safari for May 2005!

*“You arrive as clients, and leave as friends.”*

*Hunters Namibia Safaris’ motto*

Anne and Kirk, much to Kirk’s delight, had their second date at a shooting range. She has been shooting

ever since. After we met, Anne started shooting in

earnest, this time much to Kirk’s dismay. She went through rounds as quickly as he could buy them, having him make balloon targets for her until his lungs wanted to explode. And then she discovered shotguns...

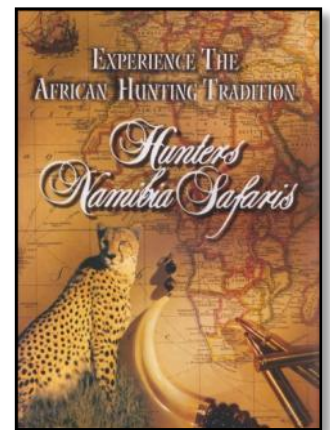
For more on their practice regiment, please see the insert at the end of this story by Kirk Smith, “How to Prepare Yourself for Shooting in Africa”.

### 1<sup>ST</sup> SAFARI – MAY 2005

Arriving in May, Kirk and Anne were to beat me to Namibia. I had a hectic early season in Namibia, and jetted to the U.S. for a week to be a groomsman at a friend’s wedding, using this event also as a little excuse to visit my future wife-to-be, Monica.

Kirk took a magnificent greater Kudu with my father, Joof Lamprecht, much to my annoyance. One of my great passions is Kudu hunting, like my father. I was looking forward to hunting the end of the Kudu rut where big bulls seem to appear from nowhere.

Early one morning, we spotted a large herd of Red Hartebeest in the distance. We went to investigate, and got



right into the herd. The herd bull was decent, but I told Kirk, "We can do better!" and started back to the truck. On our way back, an unknowing Red Hartebeest bull that "we would struggle to do better" walked right to us. Kirk blasted him at close range, and Kirk's second trophy, the first with me, was in the salt.

***And we walked and walked, but no Zebra.***

Anne had decided that she wanted a Warthog. This again, to Kirk's dismay, was to become a passion. Whenever a likely 'tusker' was spotted, Anne would grab my belt, get in rhythm with my steps, and literally put her feet where I did. How many P.H.'s are out there that wish their hunters would do just that??? I am not going to tell the story of the first pig, because there are better ones, believe me!



***And we walked and walked, but no Zebra.***

We walked a lot, laughed too much and drank a few gin-and-tonics. Needless to say, plans for the next adventure were already in progress. We had walked many miles after Zebra, but it was not meant to be this trip. In addition to the above trophies, the Smiths took a fantastic Black Wildebeest and an Oryx.



## 2<sup>ND</sup> SAFARI – MAY 2007

On the first evening, after sighting in the rifles, my hunting assistant spotted a large herd of Burchell Zebra peacefully grazing at a distance. We all grabbed our gear, and off we set, determined to settle our score with the Disco Donkeys! The golden light of the last hour of the day had passed, and the bluish purple evening sky had made its grand appearance. There was no time to lose. We closed the distance quickly, with tense concentrated steps. The herd was grazing lazily to our right. We got a little ahead of them, and set up the sticks. The shoulder high camphor and raisin bush was interspersed with large Camel-thorn trees and made the Zebra 60 – 80 yards in front of us appear and disappear, seemingly like magic. The last Zebra in the herd is assuredly the stallion, and nothing but the best and most magnificent specimen would do for my now very close friends. The Zebra, with his big head, thick neck, and wide chest with some character scarring on his flanks stepped into our shooting lane. Broadside, with his front leg stretched forward, the opportunity was now perfect. The blast came from Kirk's .338 Winchester Model 70 Sterling Davenport rifle, with the 250 grain projectile. This produced a clear dust eruption, and was all we needed to release all tension. It is often the species you most desire and work almost 'too' hard for, and rush, that you must then pursue often and walk many miles to conquer. Nevertheless, this victory was sweet, the joy complete, and a tangible air of the love of the hunt in the air at last light. A beautiful trophy was down, with a great shot made by wonderful friends.

***And we walked and walked, but no Eland.***

On a crisp and fresh morning, shortly after we rolled out after breakfast from the Lake Lodge, we spotted a magnificent Waterbuck bull. His horns glistened in the morning light, the ivory fronts of his horns shining white, thick bases massive on his skull. We pursued this bull, and after some time got a long shot at him. He went several hundred yards with the shot and after some masterful tracking by Abiud, and a quick bay and frenzied bark by Umbra, the bull was Kirk's.

Abiud went back to fetch the truck while we admired Kirk's trophy. On arriving back with the truck, he told us that there was a huge Warthog in a hole close to where the Waterbuck had fallen. Anne had taken her second Warthog in two safaris the day before, but said, "Why not, let's try!", and off we went with her little 30-06 Ruger. Now the problem was with the pig being in the hole. There was no way of getting a shot into the hole without putting Anne in harm's way. With loaded rifle, we stood on top of the hole, the tunnel exiting away from us. I had Abiud climb a tree to see if the Warthog was still in the hole. Apparently seeing Abiud twice in quick succession did not go over too well with the Warthog. He came out the hole like a rocket! Anne was ready, and at 10 feet, after much sporting clay practice, she drilled the Warthog through both shoulders and it was over. Everyone stood there in shocked silence. I drew my pistol, anticipating the Warthog to come back to life, but approaching this good 'tusker', realized that he was dead as a stone. Double trophy photos anyone? With much laughter, and reliving the moment, we honored our prey by photographing them in a respectful way.





***And we walked and walked***, and on the last day, we tracked a herd of 12 Eland bulls. We approached to 50 yards, and Kirk took a magnificent old bull with a single shot.

Our trophy sheet on the second safari consisted of Anne's two Warthogs, Waterbuck, Blue Wildebeest, Burchell Zebra, Kudu, Oryx and Springbuck.

Our adventure next took us to the Caprivi and the Okavango River, where we enjoyed our photographic safari.



### 3<sup>RD</sup> SAFARI – MAY 2010

Kirk and Anne returned for Buffalo in Waterberg National Park. It was very early in the season and the difficulties of hunting at this time of year were described in the story: **“Patience, endurance and plain hard work”**.

On the first morning we tracked, stalked, crept and then ‘hoovered’ up to a breeding herd of cows and calves. There was a magnificent herd bull, but his one horn was broken off at the ear. We do not like tracking breeding herds, preferring to go after the smaller groups of dugga boys.

After lunch on the second afternoon, we bumped a solitary old dugga boy next to the road – massive bosses, and a good spread.

We had the vehicles engine running grabbed our gear and cut around the block on foot, hoping to intercept the Dugga Boy as he crossed the road. The truck then rumbled on a mile up the road to misdirect the bull that we had left.

After failing to intercept the bull crossing the road, we decided to back-track and see if he crossed our tracks. Finding that he had not, we cut into the block to take his track into really thick stuff



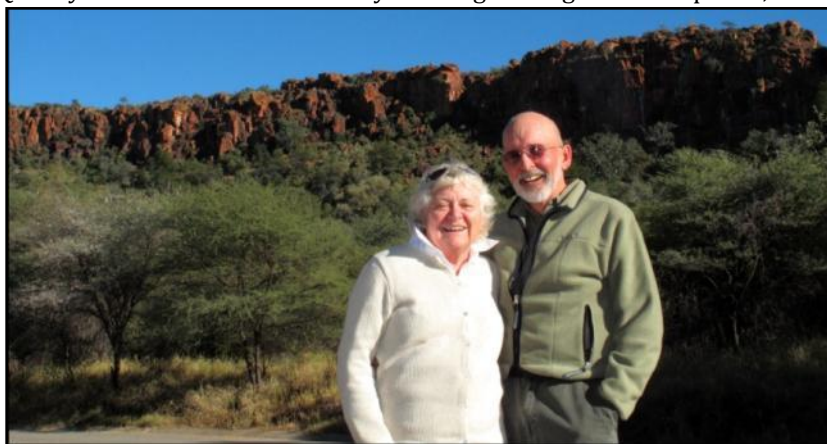
*‘Hoover’ or ‘to Hoover’ – A style of stalking used on final approach, where you sit on your butt, and scoot forward using your hands and feet, with a rifle laid across your lap.*

and after 50 yards I stopped the hunting party to check a particularly big and dark shadow in the bush. And there he was, quartering slightly away at 40 yards with a tree obscuring his shoulder.

Sticks went up, and I turned to Kirk and asked, “See the big black thing?” “Yes!” exclaimed Kirk. “That’s your Buffalo, shoot just to the right of the tree”, I instructed. At this angle, the bullet would go directly into the boiler room and we would hopefully not have a very long follow up.



At the shot, the 400-grain **soft** Barnes triple shock bullet founds its mark and the Buffalo went down as if struck by lightning. Quickly we advanced another 20 yards to get in a good backup shot, which Kirk did with the speed and agility of a man half his age.



“Shoot again!” was the instruction as the **solid** Barnes bullet zipped straight through, with little to no effect, a cloud of dust and sound of ricochet from the far side of the Buffalo.

Joyful cries were shouted from Abiud and the game scout, and there was much patting on the back and shaking of hands.

“We will go get the truck and get it through this bush” said Abiud, turning to walk back to the road.

Cautiously we approached the Buffalo from the rear of the down animal as he gave his death bellow. Still vigilant, I approached even closer. The saying, "It's the dead ones that kill you", was ringing in the back of my mind. The Buffalo lurched and started getting to its feet again, with his battering-ram head up. Kirk positioned to my right side, the instruction given to shoot, "Now and quickly!" I was ready, but I don't like to shoot at my client's trophies unless there is a life-threatening situation, or I gauge that we could lose the animal. With two more shots, it was done. Turning to Kirk, shaking his hand and congratulating him, I noticed the blood running down his face. His .416 Rigby made by Dakota Arms had bounced off his forehead in one of the hasty last shots, but through it shone a smile that no money could buy.



We spent the third day exploring Waterberg National Park's dinosaur tracks, bushman etchings and caves as well as doing some game viewing in both vehicle and sunken blind.



On day four of their safari, we returned to the Lake Lodge and our five Jack Russell's to continue hunting plains game.

Kirk took a magnificent Sable bull, Hartmann Zebra and Anne took a monster 'tusker' (her biggest of four) and a beautiful Burchell Zebra stallion on the last morning. Anne also got her fill of wing shooting, shooting at least five boxes of shells at anything with feathers I allowed her to shoot at.

**Note on Kirk and Anne:** They were 73 and 72 years old respectively on their third safari, and were fitter than some hunters half their age. In two and a half days, Kirks pedometer measured 30 miles of walking in Waterberg National Park. Bravo to them for looking after themselves as they do! Their exercise regime is almost as diligent as their shooting regimen below.



# HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR SHOOTING IN AFRICA

By Kirk Smith

General rifle practice and trap shooting at the Carroll County Fish & Game Club in Madison, New Hampshire.

Sporting Clays as well as bird shooting - pheasants, chukar partridge and ducks - at the Green Mountain Shooting Preserve in Ossipee, New Hampshire.

*During the winter most of the ranges are close so we can only shoot trap once a week for 50 or 100 targets.*

Starting in March to get prepared for our trip to Namibia the weekly schedule was something like this:

- Monday: Rifle (25 – 50) rounds .22 LR; (20) rounds 30-06; (4-6) rounds .416;
- Tuesday: Trap 75 – 150 targets;
- Wednesday: Rifle (25 – 50) rounds .22 LR; (20-40) rounds 30-06; (6-10) rounds .416;
- Thursday: Exercise
- Friday: Sporting Clays 150 targets;
- Saturday: : Rifle (25 – 50) rounds .22 LR; (20) rounds 30-06;
- Sunday: Trap (50 – 100) targets;

*After all of this cleaning the guns is a big project!*

## **Additional things you might want to know are:**

- .22 LR shooting at spinning metal disks is good practice.
- The Center Fire rifle shooting is at the Safari Press Big Five and Plains Game targets at ranges of 25, 50 and 100 yards.
- Except for sighting in, I don't shoot from the bench but shoot standing, sitting and kneeling with and without shooting sticks.
- Anne's routine is similar except she shoots fewer 30-06 shots and, of course, no 416's.

*Since we passed the ultimate test by shooting some fantastic trophies with Jofie, we will now relax and slow down this training schedule a bit!*



2010 SAFARI IMAGES WITH KIRK AND ANNE

