

MATWETWE SAFARIS

2025 NEWSLETTER

As we look back on an incredible year, we're reminded of the true privilege it is to share time with both old friends and the many new faces who joined us. From unforgettable moments in the bush to the thrill of each safari, this season has been filled with adventure, laughter, and the beauty of nature at its finest. Thank you for being part of our journey and for making every experience one to treasure. Thank you to our Creator for entrusting us with the great responsibility to be Stewards of this incredible part of His Creation called Africa.

Let us take a peek into a few of the highlights of the 2025 season.

This year we started at a very unusual time of the year. Our Canadian friends Joe and Lisa Kerr just couldn't get the time off during the regular season, so we made it work for them during January. It turned out so well that we took 32 animals all together and had a great time with the weather being the biggest surprise. The coolest January we've ever experienced. What a fun bunch with Nic Doyle, Addison, Dennis and Alvin joining them. Dennis's kudu(at 58") made the no 7 position on the Matwetwe Top 10. Excellent shooting had no less than 3 of them earn the Harold King Award. Great start for a new season.



Fun group





58" Kudu for Dennis



When the normal season started in late March, Bronson Clayton his girlfriend Rose as well as David and Terri Drenth joined us on safari. The previous summer's high rainfall caused its challenges for this year's hunting. A much thicker bush didn't only provide more cover for us, but also for the animals. We did have a wonderful time, took some great animals and visited interesting places. They also brought some well needed blue bags for the school.



Sable. Baboon cliffs



Zip lining.

School visit



Early April brought one of the most colorful weeks of the season when Dan Taylor showed up. He brought friends Brian & Keri Howell along. Seasoned hunters is an under statement. They were after a very wide variety of species. A buffalo hunt delivered the perfect opportunity at a 46" bull and Dan made it happen with his .458 Lott. They went on to take Serval cat, Caracal cat, Hippo, Brian's beautiful kudu and several more. But it was the 16" Common reedbuck and the 25 1/2 inch impala that were the cherry on the cake, both made the Matwetwe Top 10.



Dan



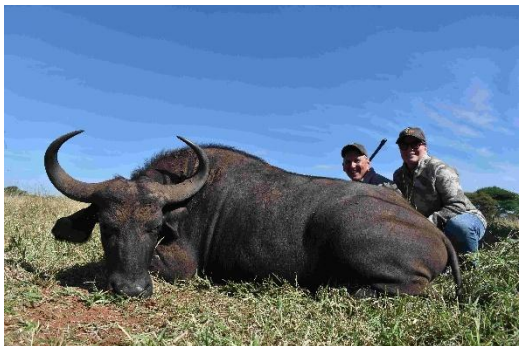
Brian



#3 on MTT Caracal cat



Tom & Aimee Johnson were up next. Tom had a buffalo dream to fulfill and decided to go after a cow buffalo. We ended up stalking a herd that was over 100 strong. It took several hours before this old cow gave an opportunity, and Tom dropped her in her tracks. They went to Kruger Park and made every opportunity count. They will be back for more, for sure.



Tom & Aimee





Unusually late rains made Scott Yachcik's first African safari far different from what he expected. On the very first morning, we were soaked to the bone, and Scott joked that he must have landed in the Congo. Despite the challenging conditions, we still loaded the truck with a beautiful zebra and impala. Scott worked hard for his sable, and after a few days of steady patience, he was rewarded with an exceptional 47-inch sable bull, earning him the 9th position on the Matwetwe Top 10. Thank you for joining our Matwetwe family, Scott.



The Back 40 Taxidermy family—Tyler, Trisha, Carter, and Axel LaRue—joined us for their long-awaited family safari, and what an unforgettable trip it turned out to be. After many conversations at the shows, the moment finally arrived. Carter kicked off the adventure on the very first afternoon with an incredible start, and the quality continued from there. Not to be outdone, 8-year-old Axel joined the fun and made a perfect one-shot harvest on a beautiful old blesbuck. Once all the men had taken their first animals, the pressure shifted to Trisha—and she couldn't have begun her African collection in a better way than with a magnificent giraffe. The standout trophy of the safari, one that will be remembered for years, was Tyler's exceptional 19-inch white blesbuck, earning him the number two position on the Matwetwe Top 10. Congratulations on all the outstanding trophies and thank you for the wonderful time spent together as a family. A special congratulations as well to Tyler and Carter, who both received the Harold King Award for their excellent marksmanship.



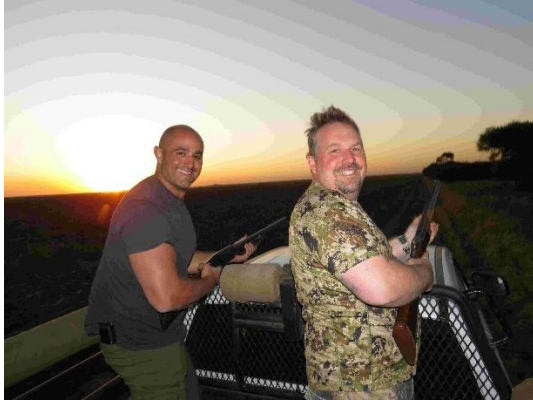
Sean Friedlund and his buddy Will Solomon joined us next. Sean runs a major shipping and import/export company in the US and is into the trophy shipping part of things now. What a welcome part of the Matwetwe chain it is. They took some great trophies on their hunt, with Sean's 31-inch Waterbuck being a highlight. It made the no. 6 position on the MTT this year. Just great guys to be around.



Sean



Will



"John Wainig"



George, Bonnie, Shawna & Jason Hoppert came in early June. George took a beautiful zebra and ostrich while Jason was after waterbuck. He made a perfect 300-yard shot and yet it took us a while to find it with no blood trail in the thick woods. This big baboon showed up while waiting at the waterhole for warthog. Jason just had to take this great opportunity.



One of the absolute highlights of the season was when Evert & Marcia Helms, Doug & Sheryl Ulberg, Bruce & Karen Sterk and Roger & Linda Van Dyke were here. They came on a Hunt/photo safari combination, did some tiger fishing and saw some of the true African gems when they visited Victoria Falls and Chobe National Park. Their honest appreciation of God's Creation and their close relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ created a warm atmosphere in their presence.



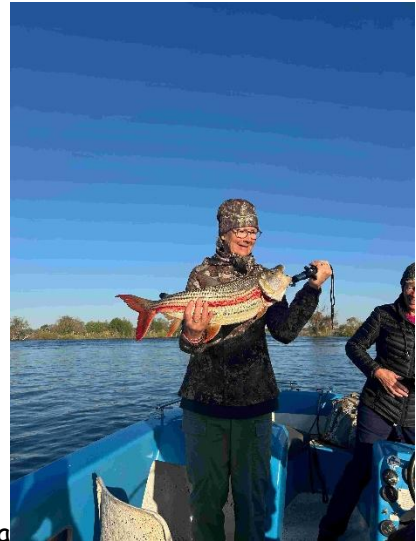
Evart



Roger



Doug - Victoria Falls - Linda



Bruce



Rich & Sarah VanDyke brought their son Levi and daughter Dana on a true African safari. They hunted hard, got some beautiful trophies and spent some quality time together in Thorny Bush (Kruger). Both Sarah and Dana celebrated with their first animals. Rich's dream was a nice sable but got a whole lot more.



Rich's Nyala



Levi

Dana



Sara

Amy and Ben Kuncaitis enjoyed a truly magnificent safari together—wonderful people, unforgettable moments, and the beauty of the bush all around them. From exceptional animals to evenings filled with laughter and quality conversations around the dinner table, every day offered something special. It was a trip marked by great company, great memories, and a shared appreciation for an extraordinary time in nature.





Matt and Lori Balsbaugh, along with their daughter Maddison and her husband, Ryan Brummans, enjoyed an unforgettable safari with us. They made the most of every moment, harvesting a wide variety of exceptional animals and creating memories to last a lifetime. Matt added to the excitement with an impressive hippo, followed by the biggest buffalo ever taken in Matwetwe Safari history—a massive 49-inch giant. That buffalo earned him the no: 1 position on this year's Matwetwe Top Ten. Ryan took a kudu high up in the mountains which made for quite an adventure to get it on the truck. A truly magnificent time together.



The big stuff



Maddy & Ryan



Ryan Lieber and Nick Salmon made the most of their safari despite losing time to flight delays, and what an incredible hunt they had. The highlight came during an unforgettable night hunt when they encountered a group of bushpigs and each harvested one—Ryan taking an exceptionally large boar. They also secured their small-spotted genet cats and added wildebeest, warthog, blesbuck, and impala to the list. A fantastic experience filled with great luck, great skill and great memories.



Tom Bruno and his son Justin enjoyed an incredible safari together, hunting multiple species and sharing unforgettable moments in the field. From long hours spent stalking a determined buffalo to the laughter and stories shared along the way, their trip was truly special, even when the shooting sticks broke after a 2-hour stalk and still shot the buffalo from the broken sticks. It was a privilege to host a father and son with such a strong and genuine bond.

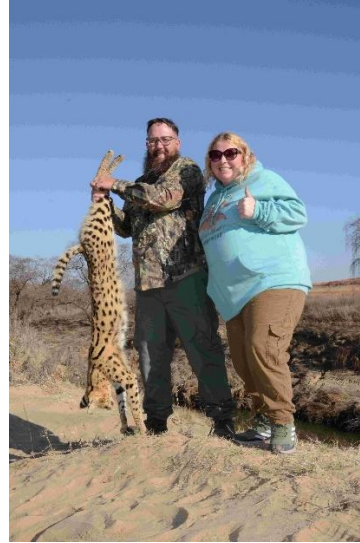


Tom & Justin



Mike & Kathy Behunin returned for the third time. This year Mike wanted Hippo and Croc. He was successful after quite a colorful hunt. I never knew this big guy can sneak up to a croc in such total silence. We always admire a true rifleman's rifles, but this year was special when Mike brought his .450 Rigby and .375 H&H Blaser. Their daughter Laura and her husband Dave also joined them. Dave took a huge Serval cat after the luck turned his way.





Mike Kozak and Mike Moore enjoyed an incredible safari when they brought their families over, despite losing precious time to flight delays and ending up with only three days to hunt. They made the most of every moment, harvesting a great variety of animals, including a superb black impala, a nice old waterbuck, and a beautiful nyala. A special highlight was when Ari (8 years old) bagged her very first animal—an impala. The families also visited Mystic Monkeys and played with lion cubs, creating unforgettable memories for everyone.



Ari



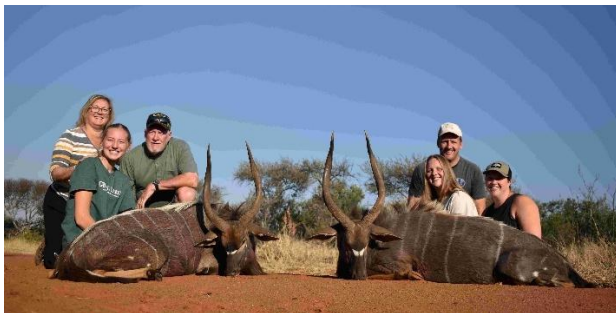
Dave and Jane Owen treated their granddaughters, Lexi and Maggie, to a wonderful safari this year, and it was truly their turn to experience the adventure. Joined by Brandon and Renee, they enjoyed an unforgettable trip, including a visit to Kruger National Park and harvesting their very first animals. The highlight was a rare double nyala taken on the same afternoon. Great people, great memories, and a privilege to welcome the Owen family back once again.



Maggie Lexi



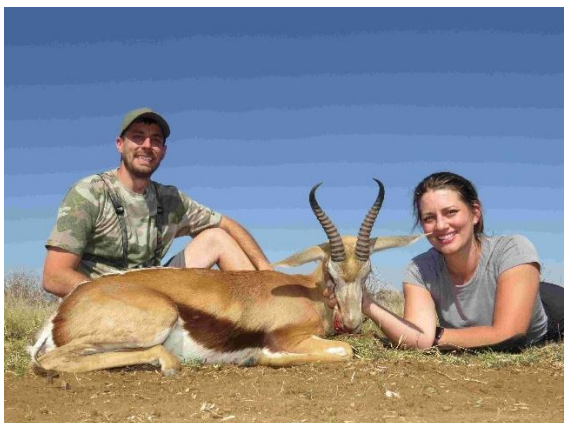
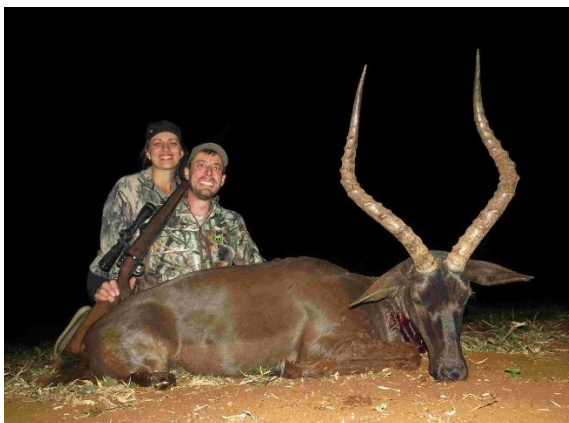
I don't know who was proudest? Maybe Grandpa. An Owen trip just wouldn't be the same without a visit to the NH School. This year we made them work a bit.



Dirk and Ciril Blunk enjoyed a truly memorable safari together as Dirk brought his son along to train him on open sights, using a special Swiss Army rifle to stalk in close and teach real field skills. They also did some long-range shooting with the .22LR, impressively taking birds at over 140 meters—remarkable marksmanship for a young hunter. Following proudly in his father's footsteps, he is becoming a true outdoorsman. Dirk had a new stock built (with African wild pear wood) for his .416 Rigby and just had to take something with it. Trip number 25 was especially meaningful this year.

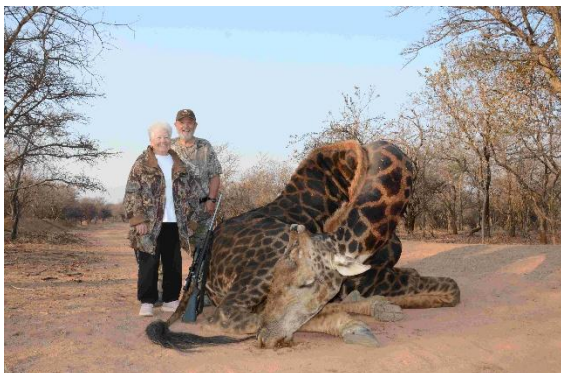


Tyler and Nicole Spratling returned for their second safari with some unfinished business, and they made every moment count. Hunting with PH Herman, they enjoyed an exceptional trip filled with great memories and exciting stalks. The highlight was a beautiful 25-inch black impala, earning Tyler the number 5 spot on the Matwetwe Top 10. Wonderful people and a pleasure to host, it was truly special to have them back in camp again this year.





Jeff and Shirley Lee, together with Gary and Catherine Fickling, enjoyed a safari filled with remarkable moments. Jeff kicked off his hunt in spectacular fashion, taking two beautiful cats behind a pack of well-trained hounds on the very first day. The ultimate highlight, however, was fulfilling a lifelong dream by harvesting a massive black giraffe bull, a true brute of a trophy. A seasoned hunter, Jeff embraced every moment, and the entire group had a wonderful journey through Africa.



Mike and Mary Veely returned to us on their 54th wedding anniversary for another unforgettable safari. After traveling to the Free State to complete their wish list with several beautiful and unique animals, their trip took an unexpected turn when Mary fell and broke her hip. She underwent a full hip replacement in a private South African hospital—and, remarkably, just three days later, she was back in the field, harvesting six animals to win the Harold King Award for the second time. Mike also took several fine trophies. Despite the setback, they turned hardship into triumph. Truly incredible people and absolute joy to host.



Tony and Shawna Brown joined us for their first safari with Matwetwe, arriving with Cape Buffalo as their main goal but quickly embracing every opportunity the bush presented. When the Honey Badger didn't appear on the first night, Tony knew it was a rare opportunity and took a beautiful bush pig. The 6-inch duiker was the biggest common duiker ever taken at Matwetwe and earned Tony the number 4 spot on the Matwetwe Top Ten. From start to finish, they seized great chances and collected remarkable trophies. Tony also received the HKA for his formidable marksmanship. Wonderful people, incredible attitudes, and a true pleasure to host throughout their unforgettable safari.



Zach Ratliff and his buddy Tyler Rodney enjoyed an incredible first safari together, starting with an intense two-and-a-half-hour stalk on a herd of 80 buffalo, where Zach successfully took a cow buffalo. They quickly fell in love with the excitement of night hunting and were fortunate to harvest a variety of beautiful nocturnal species. It made us all very happy when Zach's kudu measured 54 inches. We even joined a church fundraiser where Zach won a lamb in the lucky draw—then generously donated it back, help raising a small fortune. Wonderful people, memorable moments, and a truly unforgettable safari from start to finish.



The Vobach family enjoyed an unforgettable African adventure. Ken Vobach purchased a buffalo hunt, and when his brother and seasoned hunter, Steve heard about it, he couldn't resist joining. After two days without luck, day three delivered something extraordinary—two Cape buffalo taken only five yards apart, a first in our history. Once the first bull was confirmed down, the second was cleanly taken moments later. Ken's sons, Cameron and Chris, also harvested several impressive plains game animals, and Ken added a massive mountain reedbuck to his trophies. Between hunting and a few enjoyable rounds of golf, we shared an incredible safari with truly wonderful people.





On the second-to-last safari of the season, Mark Austin, Steve Watkins, and Jeff Weiswasser joined us at Matwetwe and were genuinely impressed by the exceptional trophy quality available so late in the year. Their experience proved once again that, with top-class hunting areas, you can pursue remarkable animals all year round. Great company, great hunting, and a fantastic way to close out the season with three outstanding gentlemen.

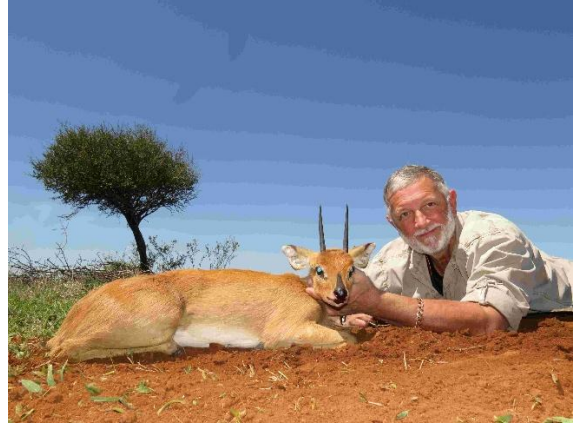


Jeffery





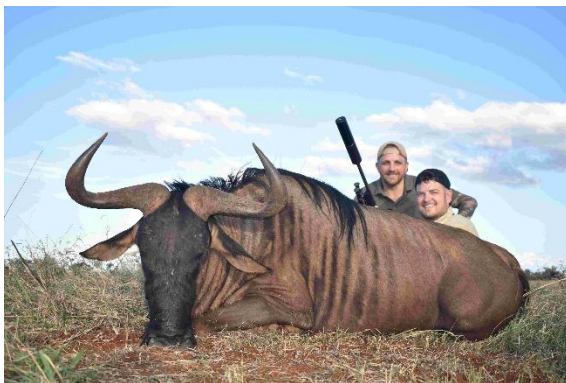
Mark



Steve



John Foran and Jamie Manning closed out the season with an unforgettable safari filled with laughter, great memories, and plenty of celebration. They visited the local bar, and even ended their safari with a Cape Town trip as the cherry on top. Jamie began his hunting journey in style with a beautiful impala, harvesting his first-ever animal, and a beautiful 17.5-inch blesbuck as his second. Wonderful people, great moments, and the perfect way to end an incredible season.





Bar Golf



What an incredible season we have had. With deep gratitude, we want to thank everyone who joined us, shared in the adventure, and made this year truly special. It was a privilege to spend time with such wonderful people, both in the field and around the fire. Above all, we thank our Heavenly Father for giving us the opportunity, strength, and protection to enjoy and celebrate another successful season. We wish everyone a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year—

Until we meet again.

Hendrik & Harm Botha