

UNDER AFRICAN Skies

Our Stories from the African Wilderness



So Much More Than Just a Safari

Part 1 Guest column by
Rick Fitzgerald, Tasimba Guest, March 2016

It has been two years since I ventured to Zimbabwe for **the most memorable experience of my life**. As a member of Tasimba, the African safari leadership adventure, I signed up for a week-long immersion in the African bush for an event that promised to be “**so much more than just a safari**”.

A few weeks ago, I fondly flipped through the many pictures of my days with the professional Tasimba team of Hugh and Heather; the excellent staff of the Linkwasha camp; and my precious fellow camp colleagues, Strat, Paul, Jeremy... it seems like yesterday. As the first group to immerse themselves in this new wildlife and leadership development journey, we were given the aptly chosen name “the “Dangwe Clan” a local Shona language term meaning “First Born”. Perhaps the urge to re-visit my journal and the many photos was brought on by the sad knowledge that one of the great fellows, Jeremy, with whom we shared this tremendous experience, had most unexpectedly, passed away from a heart attack in California. He was the youngest member of our clan, the least likely you would have thought to receive such news about. He was larger than life, a good looking, tall, strong, strapping all-American. Looking back, what a pleasure it was to have been in the company of all these unique individuals!

Beauty and comfort

We had seven days together in the vast, unspoiled wilderness of Africa. Our days were filled exploring a land with seemingly endless horizons that left us with **wide-eyed wonderment, incredible adventures and endless learning**. Then majestic, impossibly painted sunsets held us captive in their rich, simple beauty that eventually gave way to billions of stars sprayed across the inky black night sky.

The [superb camp Linkwasha](#), is in the midst of a vast, private wildlife concession in game-rich Hwange National Park. Our home for the duration were tents but far from being any kind of hardship! Beautifully equipped and comfortable, they were luxurious in every way.

So many animals!

Well fed and watered each morning, noon and night, we were well equipped to explore the plains, forests, waterholes and surrounding landscape by 4x4 vehicles. On some mornings instead of a drive we took walking safaris under the careful leadership of the highly **professional guides**.

All around us, **the wilderness teemed with animals**; giraffes, cape buffalo, ostriches, zebras, hippos, gazelles, cheetah, lions, elephants, hyenas, wildebeest, antelope, vultures, baboons, jackals, tortoise, and so many more species that I stopped counting. And singing and strolling amongst all that wildlife were birds galore, one of the highest concentrations of different species anywhere of unbelievable size and colour.

Disconnect to reconnect

Tasimba offers an experience like no other. Here's why. The opportunity to be [totally cut off from the day to day connectedness of cell phones and WiFi](#) at first seems to be an inconvenience until you realize that it is a vital part of what you are there for. You begin to realize that this a huge part of why you came here: to get off the grid, to get **out of your comfort zone** so you can be open to learn new things about where you are in life and who you really are. I found the quiet "**Africa Time**" in the afternoon to be a liberating luxury I never found the wisdom to permit myself in the hustle and bustle back home. Time passes differently in Africa and on the Tasimba journey, not more quickly or more slowly, but differently. It seems to allow you more space to **reflect upon just you**.



Perhaps more than anything **I became mindful** of how much we take for granted in our everyday lives. When flying into the bush, you see the various game trails which lead to and from the waterholes. It is a series of intricate, centuries old, well-worn trails made by the animals to find life-sustaining water. We turn on the tap at home and expect the water to flow, both hot and cold. How complacent we have become in our lives, I realized!

One of the many other reflections I took away was **the awareness of the need to de-clutter, to simplify**, to get rid of the unnecessary baggage that we seem to think is important enough to carry around with us.

While in Linkwasha, we got into the habit of writing in a journal several times a day, in part to record what we were experiencing, but also as a means to **explore our thinking about what we were seeing and feeling**. It was very freeing, cleansing in a way. Taking the time to ponder and **reconnect** with what's important to me without the distractions of smartphones, social media, Netflix, and the constant intrusion of never-ending 'Breaking News,' I have continued with the habit of making notes of significant events in my journal.

It's just one of many pleasant souvenirs of my extraordinary week with Tasimba.

Our next Tasimba safari experience: **October 29th to November 5th**.

For more information, please contact:

Hugh Coppen at 415-805-8611
or email to: hughcoppen@tasimba.com
or visit our website www.tasimba.com

