

On December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, we finally boarded our flight from Stavanger, Norway, via Amsterdam and boarded the plane bound for Johannesburg. A long flight, but uneventful and comfortable. We arrived at Joburg around 22:00 hours and was met by Chi Chi, a pleasant representative from Afton Lodge as an aid to guide us through customs/police with our firearms. This worked out just fine and we were handed over to and greeted by Harry Kitney, a young PH working for Debbie and Ben the driver of the luxurious bus to take us to the NB Safari Game Farm in Sterkrivier in the Limpopo province. We arrived safely at 1:30 AM and was guided to our 3 bedroom/living room bungalow (Kudu House) where we were to sleep over the next couple of weeks.

I woke up early on New Year's Eve to the most wonderful view of a sun rising over the bushveld where I could see numerous black, blue and golden wildebeests, blesboks and impala's and a cacophony of bird song and insects. Finally, the dream had come through. After a good and strong cup of coffee and rusk, unpacking of our rifles, we were taken to the range to check the zeroing on our rifles. My Blaser R8 Professional with both .30-06 and .375 H&H Mag hit the targets where they should and so did my son's Howa Hogue 1500 in .30-06. We had chosen Federal Trophy Bonded Bearclaw, 200 grs. bullets for the 30-06's and Plains Game. Federal Trophy Bonded, 300 grs./Trophy Bonded Sledgehammer Solid, 300 grs. bullets for the .375 H&A and buffalos. All approved by both Neil and Debbie up front.

On our first drive, we spotted a magnificent Golden Wildebeest bull in the woods. A quick chat and negotiation with Debbie made us to swap the Blue Wildebeest with this one, and my son, Harry, Beckham (the cameraman) and Gabriel the tracker left the car to stalk the wildebeest. After some 30 minutes a shot was heard and the first kill for this hunt was done. A most impressive animal and a proud moment for both son and the father 😊.



Following the pick-up of the wildebeest by the skinner, we went back to the lodge for a solid lunch and a siesta before taking on the afternoon hunt! Towards the end of the day on New Year's Eve we were on our way back over the bushveld when we spotted a magnificent Zebra stallion in a small herd. Time to get out of the truck and get stalking! Either it was a long day with a lot of impressions to absorb, or buck fever, I don't know. But I managed to shoot low and hit him in the front leg. And off he went with the rest. We spent the rest of the day and evening chasing him and the rest of the herd but could not succeed in making the final shot. I felt terrible for leaving that animal to suffer throughout the night and did not sleep well at all. At 4 AM the following morning we were up and, on the chase, again. Luckily for me (coming from Norway), it was cloudy, a little rain and windy which made the walk and stalk not too cumbersome.

I think we tracked the zebras for approx. 10 clicks if not more without getting to a shooting position before we contacted the driver to take us to the zebra plains where the herd was headed. After another chase I was able to put another bullet in him that really slowed him down. Harry's fantastic hunting dog Zimba was let loose, and she bayed him until we could get in to give him the coup de grace. End of zebra hunt!



The following 2-3 days was all about looking for the right buffalos for me and my son. On January 2<sup>nd</sup> I was guided through 6 different stalks with buffalos at the end by Debbie Barnard. Some were shooters and some were too young, some were only 40-50 meters away and some were at a 100+ meters, but a good shot could not be achieved due to the thick bushes they were hiding in/behind. By the end of the day as we were driving back to the lodge for a shower and dinner, Harry the PH asked if we were up for some Blesbok or Impala hunting as we could see the herds all over the bushveld. As soon as he had said this, one of the trackers pointed towards the tree line and said "Buffalo". And right he was, 5 bulls were grazing. Blesbok and Impala were immediately forgotten, and we focused on glassing the buffs with our binoculars. There was one bull that distinguished himself from the 4 others, and Debbie Barnard said this was the one. A magnificent creature and probably the dominant male of the group. We climbed down from the truck and started to walk slowly towards the buffaloes using whatever bush and grass we could use as shelter. At 150 meters + they noticed us and stood motionless, just eyeballing us with the look that Robert Ruark so eloquently described. They look at you as if you owe them money!! We walked closer and at 100 meters + I put my Blaser R8 Professional with .375 H&H Mag barrel, Blaser Infinity 4-20 x 58 scope and rounds of 300 grs. Federal Trophy Bonded Bearclaw and Sledgehammers in the magazine on the sticks waiting for the bull to get broadsided and to receive Debbie's approval. That took some time, long enough for me to get a cramp in my leg and back. Finally, the bull stood right, and I exhaled and pulled the trigger. Good shot said Debbie, he's done for 😊. Although he didn't go down at once, I could clearly see that he was struggling to stay on his feet. He turned around heading for the trees together with the 4 other and then collapsed. What happened next is something I will never forget. The other bulls turned against him sensing his weakness/smelling the blood and started to gore him. One of the other bulls put a horn underneath him and toppled him over as if he was a rag doll, then they moved away from him and stood observing us again as we moved closer. The bull was twitching, and at 35 meters I gave him a sledgehammer in the heart. Soon after, we could hear the loud death bellow and he went silent. The other bulls turned around and ran into the woods, and we could hear them fighting horn against horn to find out who was next in line as boss!



Debbie Barnard's skills to guide me to the buffalo including the 5 previous stalks was impressive, even more so as she was 8 months pregnant while doing so. What an Amazon, Outfitter and PH! I would like to see any man that could and would do this!! 😊. For me, being used to snow, rain and heavy wind up at the cold North, was not uttering a word about the heat, flies and other nasties encountered in the bush, that's for sure 😊.



My son Thomas together with PH Harry Kitney had to work a bit harder for his buffalo as they were looking for an old dagga boy with a partially broken left horn. 2-3 days by stalking, flying and glassing did not help. The buffalo was clearly an old cunning one and managed to stay hidden and get away at the last crucial moment. In the end they had to give up the search for him and go for the second best one. This buffalo was also shot with the Blaser in .375 H&H Mag and Federal 300 grs. Bearclaw/Sledgehammer ammo. But he needed a few more rounds to go down, including a couple of rounds from Harry's .450 Watts rifle borrowed by my son. He crashed finally in the bushes, and another buffalo was sent in the salt. What a thrill for a 25-year-old 😊, and a proud moment for me as his father as well.



Now that the buffs were in the salt, we could take it a bit easier and relax some before we started hunting the rest of the plains game we had on the list. Relaxing in the swimming pool at the Lodge while observing the game wandering over the bushveld was just amazing to do, and taking a nap in our Bungalow. What a paradise on earth?







While driving around looking for Warthog and Bushpig we came across several magnificent Sable antelopes grazing. Once we had ascertained which one was the oldest and with the biggest horns, I was guided to this great Sable bull by Debbie Barnard's life partner Hanno van Rensburg, also owner of Authentic African Adventures. Hanno is not only one of the tallest persons I have ever encountered in my 61 years of living (2.14 meters in height), but also one of the gentlest and funniest persons to be around. And not to speak about his guiding skills.



Over the following days, Harry Kitney the young and already seasoned and extremely positive and skilled PH guided my son to a great Impala and Nyala and myself to a great Blesbok over the next couple of days. The Nyala stalk was spiced up with us being stalked by a male ostrich while getting in position for the Nyala. Suddenly I felt that someone or something was behind me, and yes, there he was ready to defend his territory. In the end Harry had to chase him away with the shooting sticks. Great add on the experience!









The Ghost of Africa, the greater Kudu Bull on the list and the Common Springbok took some more time to find. Due to the season, the thick bush, it appeared that the mighty bulls had retreated to more desolate areas of the hunting grounds where there were no roads. This forced us to take the truck and go to Hanno van Rensburg's place, some 2-1/2 hours' drive from NB Safaris. Upon arrival we were greeted by Sonia and George, the caretakers of the hunting farm. After a great lunch, we headed out to look for Kudu and Springbok. Pretty soon we observed a few interesting springboks that we stalked. To Harry's disappointment I was too slow to get the rifle on the sticks and get a good aim before they ran away and disappeared.

On the way back to the truck and our driver/tracker William we saw a couple of interesting Kudu bulls at some distance. After glassing them for some time, Harry concluded that they were both proper trophies and worth taking a closer look at, we disembarked from the truck and began stalking. After a while and at some 60 meters, the bull we wanted was grazing, quartering away from us. Harry told me to shoot as soon as he lifted his head and came a little more broadsided. The head was lifted but he didn't move, so, Harry said shoot altogether and so I did. The bull ran approx. 20 meters before he crashed to the ground.



Following a hearty lunch, we went out to look for Springbok. Soon we came across a small herd and Thomas my son and Harry went after them. I decided to stay in the truck, relax in the shade of a marula tree and enjoy a cold beer. After all hunting is a tough thing and it is important to uphold the fluid balance 😊. Pretty soon I heard noises behind me, and it was Thomas and Harry trotting back. They had come across a monster Waterbuck that was lying down and came back to ask for permission to shoot. Permission was given and they trotted back hoping he was still there. After an hour we (or more correctly William) heard one shot. He said we should get back and find out. So, we did. Standing beside one magnificent Waterbuck was two happy and grinning persons. If it had not been for their ears, the grins would have gone all around their heads 😊. They told me they had returned and low and behold, the Waterbuck was still lying down resting. Thomas had stood with the rifle on the stick for 30-45 minutes before they decided to wake him up to stand. He stood up, perfectly still and broadsided and took the bullet in the heart/lung area from my son's Howa 1500 Hogue and .30-06 Federal Trophy Bonded Bearclaw, 200 grs. and went down in an instance.





That night we had a wonderful barbeque of kudu and impala tenderloin and boer wurst of blesbok. What an end to a great day 😊.







The following day we started to hunt springbok again. Thomas was gracious to hand the springbok hunt back to me. Soon after we spotted a herd in the distance and Harry said we needed to go for a walk/stalk. I grabbed my Blazer R8 with .30-06 barrel and loaded a round of Federal Trophy Bonded Bearclaw, 200 grs. After a 30-45 minutes stalk we managed to get in position to put the rifle on the sticks. A nice Common Springbok appeared in the scope and as soon as Harry gave me the nod that it was the right one, I pulled the trigger. One beautiful ram went down. We hurried over so that I could witness the prong that the springbok will show just for a few minutes after they have been shot. What an experience! I also got to smell the honey flavor that were inside the prong 😊.





After yet another hearty and delicious lunch followed by a siesta we decided to go to a blind/tower nearby a waterhole to see if we could get our Warthog. To the blind we went, and soon after climbing to the top we were witness to and experiencing one of the fiercest thunderstorms I have seen (with thunder, lightning striking in all directions, heavy rain and wind). The tower was taking a real beating but remained standing until it was all over. Soon after we observed a mother warthog with 6 piglets visiting the waterhole. The piglets were dancing and prancing around until they were startled by a flock of guinea fowls emerging from the bushes, and suddenly they were all gone. An ostrich was also nearby making a lot of clucking sounds and a couple of springboks and impalas rested nearby as well. Suddenly I saw movement in the bushes, and a single warthog emerged. It turned out to be an old and barren female. As we had yet to see any trophy males both at NB Safaris and here at Authentic African Adventures, we decided that this was a chance not to miss (as the tusks were impressive). A shot was fired and down she went.



In addition to the above game, we also had a Black Back Jackal and Bushpig on the list. One afternoon upon returning to NB Safaris, Harry our PH took us out into the field to call for a jackal. Once on location, the electronic caller started, we waited. Suddenly Harry whispered, "can you see him". Honestly, I couldn't see a darn thing. Then he said, at your 12 o'clock, 100 yards out. And low and behold there I could see the critter standing and observing. I put my rifle and scope on the stick, and while hearing Harry saying; don't screw it up, because I don't want to have an educated jackal running about, I let loose and down he went!



The very last game on the list turned eventually out to be impossible to bag. We monitored and put out bait for bushpig at two locations and checked the cameras regularly. We saw only one pig while driving about, but it rocketed away from us. Due to the time of year with multitude of food in the bush, they would only visit the bait sites at irregular times. So, the bushpig will have to be on the list for another time. One thing is for sure, I am going back for another hunt. I think they call it Africa fever 😊.



I wish to give credit to the NB Safari and Authentic African Adventure owners and staff, from the cleaner of our bungalow/clothes washer Helen, our trackers Lucas, Gabriel and William, the Skinners, Tanya, Tanja and Bee's fabulous cooking of fine cuisine for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and I must not forget to mention the fantastic Bunny Chow with Kudu that Tanya made, the Pecan Pie (the best I have ever tasted) made by Tanja (must have forgotten to take a picture of it as I probably was to occupied guzzling it down) and many other succulent dishes we were exposed to during the stay.





To Harry our ever apparent and available PH, up early to prepare for the day, ready to guide us to our game in the most professional way and to have a cold beer ready when needed, and his ever-cheerful humor. To Hanno (the Gentle Giant) the owner of Authentic African Adventure for taking us to his Safari Farm for a couple of days of fantastic hunting and guiding me to a great Sable bull. To Sonia and George for welcoming us and ensuring our welfare was well taken care of while being there. And finally, to my heroine and most impressive Debbie Barnard for her relentless wish and effort to ensure we were taken good care of and treated like royalty during our almost 3 weeks stay, the timely and informative communication during our almost 2 years of planning.

When time comes for me to book another hunt, I see no reason why it should be with any other Outfitter/PH than Debbie and NB Safaris – South Africa. In the meantime, I wish them all the best for now and the future, and what I hear there is already a new member of the NB Safari family present. Welcome to Hunter Val, Debbie's and Hanno's newly born daughter and a sister to Debbie's son Daniel. Thank you for a life turning event for me and my son.





PS! If you wish to look closer into NB Safaris, you can access their website and FB site as follows:

Website: [NB Safaris Home](#)

Facebook: [NB Safaris South Africa | Facebook](#)

Best regards,

Tom and Thomas!