

RECENT CLIENT TRIP REPORTS AND COMMENTS – APR-DEC 2007

South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana – April 2007

“I am writing to give you feedback from our recent Safari to South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana... Firstly I would like to say that the whole trip was very well organized and everything that had been planned went more smoothly than I had expected. This resulted in a relaxing and stress free vacation for all the family – myself especially. I would like to thank you for making the arrangements which resulted in a truly fantastic experience.

I feel that overall AAC did a very good job of addressing our request for ‘a bit of everything’ in our safari experience. The whole trip went very well and was enjoyed by all of the family. I was impressed by the professional way in which our trip was organized, especially with the amount of traveling involved and the logistics of this. It all worked very well and the timing was excellent. Both Alison and myself have said we will be visiting South Africa and surrounding countries again in the future for another vacation. The kids enjoyed it immensely, though it was tiring for all of us.

I would again like to thank you for organizing the trip for us and will be recommending your services to some of my colleagues who wish to have the same type of experiences. I have attached a couple of photos from our trip for the competition.”

*Jeff and Alison Knight and family
Aberdeenshire, United Kingdom*

Botswana - June 2007

“We wanted to send a Huge Thank You to Africa Adventure for our safari in June of this year.

Our trip was everything we could hope for & more. Our guide Brookes was outstanding in every way. He is bright & funny. He did a great job in meeting the desires, needs & safety of our group.

We saw more wildlife than we had a right to see on one safari.

This was my (Lou's) dream trip. Cheri has always longed to go to Alaska, now she is willing to skip Alaska for another trip to Africa.

Sorry we are so slow in sending our thanks; we took over 3,300 digital photos & printed approximately 600 for our album. Cheri & I have been busy showing our photos to family, friends & co-workers. Thanks much.”

*Lou & Cheri Firehammer
St Louis, MO*

South Africa and Zambia – June/July 2007

“One New Year's resolution that I'm still trying to keep is to catch up on some important thank yous. The Treesh family had a wonderful experience on our safari to South Africa and Zambia last June/July, in no small part because of your patience, helpful advice and support! We reminisce about the trip at least once a week, and each of the kids has told me several times that we have to go back to Africa before they go off to college... it is gratifying to know that we were able to create such happy memories and strong desires to return as a family.

Madeleine is even willing to try a tent for our next safari (though I daresay it will have to be a permanent tented camp -- baby steps). So, I wanted to finally say "Thank you, thank you, thank you" from all of us, and to let you know that we will return to Africa soon. I hope my thanks rings even more sincerely as it is coming with a strong promise to use The Africa Adventure Company to assist us for the next trip.

Thank you again, and I look forward to working with you again in the not -too-distant future. Warm regards."

*Kevin Treesh and the Treesh family
Darien, CT*

Botswana – July 2007

"Janet and I got back from our trip yesterday and I wanted to write you as soon as I could to let you know that we had, literally, the time of our lives. There were moments on the trip that were transforming, and some that will stay with me for the rest of my life – such as sleeping out in the middle of the pan under the stars on our last night at San. We saw all the wildlife we wanted to see (with the exception of a rhino, which I know is almost impossible). I was astonished at how close we were able to get to all the animals.

Everything went perfectly. All the connections connected. And most importantly, the itinerary you and Andre put together could not have been better. We saw all (or at least most) of the features Botswana has to offer. At all the camps we were asked by our guides what our itinerary was, and when we told them they always had the same response – that we couldn't have done better.

So thank you very much. You have made a lifelong dream of mine a reality, one that was better than I had expected and in fact was better than I had hoped. Most sincerely,"

*Bill and Janet Backs
Evanston, IL*

Botswana – July 2007

"This summer's safari was the BEST, MOST AMAZING family vacation!

As you know, our family had always dreamed to taking an African safari - but were unsure about where to go, how old the boys should be to truly appreciate the experience and how to organize a trip so that we could relax and enjoy the sights and sounds of Africa. After our discussions, we put our "trip of a lifetime" in your team's hands - and the result was more than we could have ever imagined!!!

Thank you and the members of your team for all the hard work that went into our trip. The advice on where to go and what time of year was perfect. The camps you suggested were amazing and offered our family an opportunity to see and experience wildlife in their habitat. The people we met on our trip were wonderful and your selection of Matt Copham as our guide was perfect for our family.

Please thank everyone at African Adventure Company for making this safari a Trip of a Lifetime!"

*Dave Bossung
Indianapolis, IN*

Botswana – July 2007

“We wanted to thank you for arranging our trip to Zimbabwe and Botswana. It was incredible! Victoria Falls, Duma Tau, Tubu Tree, and Mombo were all wonderful places. And all the people were extremely friendly and gracious. In every phase of our trip, we were met punctually and with a smile. The camp staff and guides were absolutely fantastic. And the camp facilities were very well done and comfortable. Mombo was especially nice! The food was great, too! And then there was the wild life. It exceeded our expectations. Every game drive was a new and exciting experience. We had close encounters with herds of elephants, zebra, antelopes, and hippo. We watched troops of baboons play and herds of giraffe gallop across the plains. We watched lions and hyenas feed on a kill (at one time, there were over 30 hyenas at the dinner table!). We saw an amazing number of birds of every shape and color. It was a trip of a lifetime that we will definitely be doing again! Thank you!”

*Mark Carey,
Cincinnati, OH*

Botswana, Namibia and Zambia (Livingstone) – July 2007

“I wrote after our first trip to Africa in 2002 that I felt as though “I had reached out and touched the face of God,” witnessing dawn breaking over the Mara from a balloon as the drama and splendor of the African plain went from shadow to light below. In 2003, there was spectacular game encountered, the big five in our initial hours at Mombo, along with five star cuisine and hospitality savored while ensconced in places indescribably beautiful and exotic. There have been countless children at the side of the road, dirt streaked faces with arms raised, their fingers splayed, moving rhythmically, eyes searching “Do you have a pencil or a sweet”? There have been endless nights gathered around a fire, a chorus of African voices raised, singing harmonies so tender and pure that it brings tears to my eyes more than the acrid smoke of the Mopani wood fire. We have witnessed night skies embedded with too many stars to fathom, and the Milky Way so close we could lose ourselves in its shroud. Then too there has been the intoxicating smell of wild sage, its herbal scent perfuming the thick air that we want to take home with us so much. And finally, there has been the sound of Africa. So unique and colorful, punctuated by intense yellows, bright reds, deep indigos, and verdant greens. It is the sound colors of hippos snorting, lions huffing, hyenas calling and birds singing in the bush.

This trip was no less astounding. The bleak moonscape of the Skeleton Coast with its towering sand dunes, shipwrecks and ghosts meandering down the beach, was another assault on the senses. Our time in Namibia has left us breathless, pondering the cataclysmic forces of earth and water, and cultural change. This is the Africa you have shared with us. It has seared us and shaped us and we will certainly answer her call again and again.

On a lighter note, there are many stories to recount, some hilarious, and some haunting. We loved the beauty, comfort and hospitality of the Zambezi and the River Club. Chuck and I had the honeymoon suite and this time got to share it with one another instead of the kids!!!! A delightful elephant ride and encounter (although nothing will ever come close to our experience at Amalinda). In Botswana, the “kid car” careening over terrain with children intent on the hunt, in search of Nick’s “Animal that shall not be named.” The “adult” car, piloted by Brian, with such calm professionalism and wickedly dry wit, the short end of which I found myself on more than one occasion. The fantastic level of service offered by both Nick and Brian and the staff, one could not desire anything without it appearing on the table, snuggled in the lunch or placed delicately in one’s hand. The sheer pleasures of watching two huge lionesses with five cubs hone their parenting skills. And the harsh realities of the bush when coming upon them dragging a baby giraffe back to the cubs to feed, the mother giraffe risking her life and searching ever closer driven by instinct to discern her baby’s sad fate. We repeatedly visited the leopard beauty queen who preened and posed for us throughout our stay at the Moremi Camp.

We took pictures of her lying on a termite mound, her paws draped delicately over the edge just so. We also courted her with our cameras: dragging her kill up a tree, stretching, yawning, eating drinking, napping or simply gazing at us. We were like voyeurs watching her as she positioned herself just so in the dappled sunlight, having chosen the perfect gnarled branch. We know her agent had called to inform her she was up for a spread in National Geographic. One cannot share thoughts on mobile camping without mentioning the walks, the sunrises and the sunsets, and of course, Sundowners. Your thorough knowledge of your guests and the bush was evident throughout our travels. Capture Africa is a top of the line venture...Nick is extraordinary. He entertained, taught, played with and managed three teenagers and a preteen with the skill of a clown and demeanor of a saint... The quality of the guiding is what makes the African experience go from good to great and again you work with the best. These are people we all so thoroughly enjoyed that it was hard to part so soon. The timing was perfect knowing we left sated but wanting more.

In Namibia, it was such a distinctly different experience. The Mars like terrain, the spectacular beauty of the canyons and desert, having Hoanib Camp to ourselves. We loved the four hour walk we took clambering up the hills and along the dry river bed there. At Research Camp, it was unbelievable. It will take time for it all to sink in. We arrived late in the day and the final meters were driven at twilight. John, Austa and I were on top of the vehicle, wrapped in blankets and freezing but unable to go below because we were mesmerized by the vistas unfolding before us. I don't think we have ever witnessed a landscape so desolate and unforgiving. It was hard to imagine where we were in relationship to the things we know. As the sun completely disappeared and darkness fell the hurricane lamps glowed weakly up the canyon and we arrived to the welcome sight of a few tents and a small fire. After a very cold shower we joined Callie, our guide for dinner by candle light. We had been traveling for upwards of 11 hours and I think our senses were on overload. The next three days were spent exploring the terrain, the Himba village, the riverbed and of course the coast. It was hard, long, cold, hot, and extraordinary. We are so grateful to have witnessed these amazing ecosystems and peoples before they have been impacted to a greater extent by our presence in their midst. Along the way were treated to a desert lion, elephants, lots of giraffe, black back jackal, baboons, the worst smelling seals on the planet and our favorite, a pair of rare peregrine falcons soaring in the river bed. I actually got pictures of them in flight.

Our return to reality in Swakop (as we locals refer to it) was great. The quad biking a blast, although John and I wanted to bust loose and go for it. We agree we must do that again. Bigger hills, faster bikes!

Last but not least, sundowners on the beach brought tears to our eyes. The champagne and oysters, perfection, the camaraderie with Africa's own another gift to our hearts.

So how do we begin to thank you? I guess the true answer is that you have to believe that we love her almost as much as you do, and that someday, with God's grace we may be blessed for a short while to call her home. Until then we will depend upon you to take us there. Blessings, T,C,A&J"

*The Jakway Family
White Bear Lake, MN*

Zambia – August 2007

"The longer we are back home the more it is sinking in on what an exceptional trip we had. For us I think it will truly be a once in a lifetime trip!! Pretty much everything we were told to expect and everything we read about the lodges/camps turned out to be on the money.

The guides across the board knew their plants, birds and animals. Since we took a lot of bush walks we were teamed up with the most knowledgeable guides...Since game drives are more popular than bush walks, Bonnie and I were most often the only customers on the walk. This allowed me to have the guide focus on the birdlife of which I was most interested. I observed 164 new birds to add to my "life list".

Each camp staff was very attentive to all our needs and interests. They really went out of their way to set up what ever we wanted to get done...Each of our chalets was well appointed and completely satisfactory.

TAITA FALCON LODGE

The lodge layout was more formal than in other camps with stone bordered and lighted paths and small gardens throughout. The individual chalets were large, permanent good looking structures with their own small gardens. Night guards would turn on individual watering systems so that in the morning the little gardens were attracting birds. A large chest for locking valuables was available in each chalet. The dining area on a deck overlooking the gorge was beautiful. Nicky was definitely a positive. With no predator animals around walks only required a guide. A good variety of terrain was available for bush walks down into the gorge and up on the more flat areas. The many activities in the Livingstone area are readily accessible from Taita FL.

NKWALI LODGE

This Robin Pope facility has beautiful permanent chalets very well appointed. Being right on the Luangwa River we heard the hippos all night long. The animals can move right through this camp so night guards made sure we got to our chalet ok...The evening dinner and breakfast served up quality meals as we continued to experience throughout our safari.

TENA TENA

Another Robin Pope facility that Bonnie and I really enjoyed. Located on a branch of the Luangwa River there was much animal and bird activity that could be seen with long sweeping open views of the river. The Carmine Bee Eaters had returned early to their nesting holes in the bank above the river just a few hundred yards east of Tena Tena. We felt most at ease and relaxed in this camp...South Luangwa has such diverse landscapes. We never took the same walk. One drive to visit the so called "salt flats" took us two hours to get there and we never saw another vehicle. The salt flats created a lush green valley from a hot geyser that bubbled out of the ground. It attracted all kinds of birds and game. All of our activities were set up and handled by the staff...Just a great camp to relax, slow down and enjoy the day. While there we observed two leopards on night drives and one during a bush walk. Two lion prides were found most days.

CHIAWA

If you are on a honeymoon this is the place to go. They even feature a honeymoon chalet set off by itself. The staff likes to surprise guests with little personal treats, like lunch served on a boat complete with white linen covered table, and formal place settings all for a few guests. One evening all the guests were boated across to an island in the middle of the Zambezi. There they had set up a formal dinner under the stars. Lanterns lit the area and most of the meal had been prepared on wood fires. The kitchen staff of about 8 was all dressed in the same native shirt and they serenaded us with local gospel songs. Their voices blended well and I was told they had even made a CD. Paul and Daniel were excellent guides on walks, drives and canoe activity.

The broad Zambezi River provided the setting for a lot of Chiawa's activities. Guests could go fishing, tour the river and islands by motorized boat, canoe quiet channels that parallel the river and the river was used to transport guests by boat to drop off points for walks, sundowners and to transfer to other camps. The chalets had power 24/7 and were well done if a little close together.

Bonnie and I really enjoyed our African Safari. We want to thank you and your staff for your help putting it all together. It went pretty much without a hitch.”

*Pat Baines
Charlotte, NC*

South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe – August 2007

“We had a wonderful trip to Africa. I really was spectacular in every way and we had a great time. All the camps were very different and we never felt like we were doing the same thing. Each day was a new adventure and every drive a new story.”

*Bob and Denise Blackney
Upland, CA*

Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe – August 2007

“We’ve just returned from our latest African Adventure. We’ve been to many camps in various countries in Africa, but this last trip was a whole new level of excitement. In addition to Game drive at Chitabe Trails in Botswana; Shumba Camp in Kafue NP Zambia, Ruckomechi Camp in Zimbabwe, and Vundu Camp in Mana Pools NP Zimbabwe, we did night drives in the first 3 camps, boat game drives on the Zambezi River, a canoe trip down the Zambezi, and walking safaris in Mana Pools at Vundu Camp in Zimbabwe.

Vundu Camp showed us the “real African Safari”. We drove around Mana Pools NP and when we saw an interesting animal in the distance, we parked the car (cars are not allowed off the roads in Zimbabwe NPs). I grabbed the camera gear, the guide grabbed his rifle, and we walked. The result was a fantastic experience. When we returned home and told our family and friends that when we saw tracks from 5 lions, we go out of the car and tracked them down, they said we must be crazy. Our guide, Nick Murray, kept us safe. We stayed with the lions till well after dark and walked back to the car in pitch darkness. The photos of the lions were fabulous. For 4 mornings, I was up and out of camp by 5:30 in search of African Wild dogs. It took a lot walking, but we found their den and were rewarded with excellent photos of 10 adults. The photos of the Bull Elephants standing on their hind legs to reach up to eat the Apple Peel Acadia Trees could only be obtained after a walk. Walking felt like a real safari. Zimbabwe is the place to go for anyone serious about photography. The scenery, the animals and above all else the light was fabulous. The haze in the air from the smoke generated from the burning across the river in Zambia provided extraordinary light. And I captured it. One night at sunset we had red light. I got a photo of a baboon in red light. How cool was that! This baboon looks fabulous.

I must take some time to say thank you to all the camp staff and guides. All the camps, guides and staff were fabulous – as they were in all camps we’ve been to in the past.

When I asked you to plan this trip, I said we wanted to see Wild dogs and I didn’t want to be with the crazy number of cars and people like in the Mara. You gave us your recommendation and I trusted your opinions. Vundu Camp is not affiliated with Wilderness Safaris and I couldn’t find too much info about it prior to leaving. My faith in your recommendation was well rewarded. Vundu is not an extravagant place – only the basics – but it was the definition of “safari”. Thanks for your expert opinions. I had asked you for 3 camps, 4 nights apiece, but you threw in 2 nights at Ruckomechi. This turned out to be our only disappointment. We should have stayed 4 nights. Ruckomechi and Zimbabwe rocks!

I've enclosed a few of my favorite photos. I like the classic photos where an animal occupies the full frame, but on this trip I was looking for photos that "tell the story of Africa". I was looking for photos of animals in their environment: the Okavango Delta of Botswana, the Busanga plains of Zambia, the mighty Zambezi River, and the Mopane forests of Zimbabwe. You booked us a plan that really delivered.

On one of our airplane hops out of Zambia I talked with a guy name Rob from Wilderness Safaris who was doing research on the African Wild Dog. I mentioned that we had seen a pack of 6 adults and 6 pups about 2 mos. old at Shumba. He asked me to send him any photos I had of the dogs. I guess each dog has unique colors and he was tracking the movements of the dogs. I've enclosed a second CD entitled Wild dogs to you. The WS guy told me to send this disc to Mark and that Mark would know how to get it to the right people at Wilderness Safaris.

Thanks again, not only for making our arrangements, but for that piece of your mind that put us in position to have the safari of my lifetime. I seem to remember that I've said that already after the first and the second safari you booked for us. Can't wait for # 4."

*Gene and Teri Covey
Manchester, NH*

Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa – August 2007

"Hello, Mark and Company,

I'm sure you hear this quite regularly from clients, about what an extraordinary time we had in Africa , and what a marvelous job you all did in making it such a sweet success. Half -way through the trip, after making several connections in tiny airstrips, being shuttled through various and sundry queues, and always, at every stop, being greeted by name by a pleasant and helpful someone who was looking out just for us, it dawned on me what a bargain we made by using your company to manage the logistics. I know from painful experience how it can go really wrong, and how much of the pleasure of a trip can be lost by confusion, arguments, and missteps. It was smooth sailing all the way.

In particular, I want to call out Adrian Dandridge for special recognition. If we had known in advance what to hope for, Adrian was what we wanted and more. He had extensive, interesting information about everything we saw or asked about, and never seemed to tire of our questions, or run out of energy for the last little effort. He was courteous, always gracious, always thoughtful – he'd position the vehicle just so to get the best light for photos, or to make sure we had a clear view, all the while keeping us in as much shade as he could manage; he searched out beautiful spots for breaks, lunches and sundowners; he planned a full itinerary and at the same time kept it flexible, listening to what we wanted to do; he maintained a friendly respect for us AND for the staff; and most of all, he communicated a deep love and esteem for his country and the animals. We grew to appreciate elephants and warthogs and hippos, and also beetles and birds and termites in a way we hardly expected. Capture Africa, the outfit that managed our time in Botswana, hired a professional, classy individual in Adrian to represent them. We came away with a lifetime of memories from that part of the trip thanks to him and to their set-up.

...The great time we had in Mana Pools with Nick Murray. Nick is a real pro, and we had a wonderful time with him at Vundu Camp. A lovely spot. Being able to walk around with Nick and get really personal with the wild animals was breathtaking; both awesome and scary. We loved it. And the canoe trips on the Zambezi were everything you promised.

Tom caught a great tiger fish our last afternoon and we had it for dinner that night. The staff prepared it over coals, burnt to a crisp, head and scales still on. It was delicious.

I realize I could go on for pages, now that I am well into remembering the stories. Thank you for everything you all did to make this such a splendid adventure. When we go back, we'll be in touch to help with the plans!"

*Nancy Winship and Tom Fish
Renton, WA*

Botswana and Zimbabwe – September 2007

"We are back from our 'Call of the Wild' safari in Botswana and Zimbabwe. I received your letter asking for our feed back about the trip, so here it is.

Both of our guides, Nic Polenakis and Nick Murray were excellent -- very knowledgeable, friendly and enthusiastic about what they do. The game viewing was excellent, and both Nic and Nick made it really come alive with their knowledge of the behavior of the various types of animals, and at times knowledge of specific individual animals. As you said, this seemed to be a great time of the year to go for the best game viewing. The tented camping was fun and comfortable. The meals exceeded our expectations, and the staff in both countries were great -- great service and friendly people. The staff in Botswana even sang a few traditional songs to us.

The visit to Monde Village that you arranged was just the kind of cultural experience that we wanted. Even though it was a Sunday, two teachers came to the school to meet with us. Our visit to a family homestead really gave us insight into the daily lives of the local people. Our guide Venasto was helpful and friendly (he even took us to his own modern home so that we could see another side of the local culture).

The white water rafting was all that I had hoped for. Great rapids, and the Shearwater guides were friendly, fun loving guys.

Overall, this was a fantastic, unforgettable trip. We hope to return to see more of Africa in the future. And we certainly hope the best for the poor citizens of these countries. We feel a bit more connected to Africa after this trip. Thanks!"

*Steve Beck
Danville, CA*

Zimbabwe and South Africa – September 2007

"I just wanted to thank you for an awesome safari experience! My brother and I had a really great time and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of our trip to Africa. Both safari lodges that we stayed at were really nice, and the food they served was really good. At Makololo Camp we saw a young pride of lions feasting on a buffalo on our first night. We also saw a rhino and many elephants as well. We even got a rare glimpse of an aardwolf. However, it got a bit windy on our last day and a lot of the wildlife went into hiding.

At Mana Pools the scenery was fantastic, and we got to see a pack of wild dogs. We even did a half day canoe safari and saw tons of hippos and crocs. It was very cool, but also very nerve-wracking.

I can't wait to do my next safari in Africa in the future and would recommend you to anyone I know who wants to go on safari. Thanks again for an awesome trip! Thanks again for everything!"

*Darryl Luke
Palatine, IL*

Botswana and Zimbabwe – September 2007

"In response to your kind letter of September 21, we would like to offer an informal review of our recently concluded travel arranged through The Africa Adventure Company.

We begin with a word of great thanks to you, Andre, for upgrading our hotel arrangements in Johannesburg to the Saxon. This was without doubt among of the very best lodging we have ever experienced! The fact that Mr. Nelson Mandela himself lived there while writing his book made it even more memorable.

The safaris in both Botswana and Zimbabwe far exceeded our expectations, which were quite lofty. We saw all the game that we so looked forward to seeing, with the exception of cheetah which we saw only in captivity at the De Wildt Cheetah Center in South Africa. Among the many highlights were extended periods viewing leopards at Moremi Reserve, an encounter with three rare black rhino in Matusadona NP, an opportunity to study a pack of wild dogs in Mana Pools NP, and lunch with some 14 -16 elephant in the Khwai concession in the Okavango Delta. For Becky, the chance to interact with the resident warthogs, her favorite animals, at the Khwai campsite was an unexpected delight.

Our guide Nic Polenakis possessed an infectious enthusiasm that carried us along with him over the trails and paths in Botswana. Both his obvious love for and understanding of the land and its denizen, along with his interest in us, made for a completely enjoyable experience. We understand why many of his guiding clients are repeat visitors, as indeed we intend to be.

Mark McAdam was a complete professional and we benefited from his qualifications as a registered Professional Guide and River Guide with the Zimbabwean National Parks Authority and his 15 years of guiding experience. Richard Taylor, who accompanied us on safari in Zimbabwe, impressed us with both his personality and his enthusiasm in videotaping our adventures.

We doubt we would have seen the black rhino had not Mark kept us on foot and moving through the brush, then sliding over elephant dung to reach a suitable vantage point to view the rhino. We would like to point out that Nic, Mark, Rich, Jenny Fisher of Rhino Lodge, Esther Gwekwerere in Victoria Falls and members of the camp staffs in Zimbabwe performed their roles as complete professionals despite the current dire economic and uncertain social situations in their country. We are satisfied we did the right thing in disregarding dire warnings about travel in Zimbabwe so that we had the opportunity to travel with and get to know them. We applaud their determination to overcome and get past the difficulties they now face and pray that they may be safe and well.

As for mobile tenting, we could not agree more that this is where unspoiled Africa exists, where the special privilege of absorbing the awesome, majestic grandeur of the African landscapes and its wildlife is still possible." Now, of course, we can't imagine going on safari any other way.

We have been wholeheartedly enthusiastic in referring friends to the Africa Adventure Company. Thank you for a memorable trip!"

*Becky and Scott Osborne
Nashville, TN*

South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana – September 2007

“I recently returned from a South Africa (and Zimbabwe & Botswana) trip and wanted to let you know both my wife and I had a fantastic time. Everything went very smoothly with respect to flights, transfers, and reservations. We were very pleased.

The people and service at the Djuma Game Lodge are outstanding. They are the greatest. Very nice and very accommodating. And the game drives were the best of the entire trip.

The food at the Chobe Game Lodge was just unbelievable (very nice staff there as well). I never imagined that there would be such a spread and so elegantly arranged.

At Victoria Falls, I don't think we could have gotten a better guide than Esther. She is a wonderful lady and very knowledgeable guide.

I've got lots of great photographs (still on digital files at this point) that I'd be willing to share with you.

We very much enjoyed this vacation; it is one of our favorites.”

*Thom and Patricia Smith
Spencerport, NY*

Botswana and Zimbabwe – October 2007

“George and I are finally back home in New York. But memories continue to linger as it usually happens after an extraordinary holiday trip. We can't stop reminiscing about the beautiful landscapes we saw in Moremi Game Reserve, the enthralling magic of its prolific wildlife, and the wonderful people we met at the mobile tented camp. (How could we ever forget the thrill of five leopard sightings in six days, the joy of leisurely observing a pride of lions with many cubs, the excitement of following an impressively big male lion at night, the privilege of observing the daily survival of predators and preys in accordance to natural laws, etc., etc.)

Matusadona and the Mana Pools National Parks, the enthralling magic of their prolific wildlife, and the wonderful people we met at the Rhino Lodge Safari Camp and the Vundu Campsite. (How could we ever forget the excitement of tracking black rhino by foot in the wilderness of Matusadona, the jolting surprise of Mvura's visit to the Rhino Lodge with her baby calf, the marvels of canoeing along the Zambezi River enjoying its paradisiacal wonders, the joy of leisurely admiring large elephant herds crossing the river, the thrill of tracking and finding a pack of wild dogs with pups, the privilege of observing the daily survival of predators and preys in accordance to natural laws, etc., etc.)

George and I want to thank you again for your endless kindness, thoughtfulness and generosity. Africa Adventure Company (AAC) should be very proud of you because you have what it takes to enhance people's lives. Dave Carson's passion and enthusiasm are contagious. We admired his great sense of humor and "joie de vivre" -- not to mention your encyclopedic knowledge of African flora and fauna. We admired Mark's love for every form of life -- his passion and enthusiasm are contagious. This was our sixth African safari and I can safely say that Dave Carson and Mark McAdam are indeed the BEST naturalists and safari guides we have ever had. In my humblest estimation, both of you have few or no peers in your line of work. We anticipated that AAC's "Call of the Wild" signature safari would be full of surprises, but I think Dave and Mark were the best surprises.”

*Kembell Huyke and George Mullane
Flushing, NY*

South Africa and Zimbabwe – October 2007

“I’m finally getting caught up and want to fire off an email to tell you what a great trip we had. Rovos Rail was simply wonderful. We especially enjoyed the service and the food and wine! The daily excursions were great! One minor suggestion to them would be for an exercise car with a couple of tread mills etc. to work off the wonderful food! We got a kick out of taking a photo of Mr. Vos (owner of Rovos Rail) himself cleaning up trash along the railroad tracks! He sure sets an example for his employees!!

The animal viewing Safaris, food & wine and service at MALA MALA were also excellent! I took over 500 photos and am getting them into a photo book!

All six of us agreed it truly was "The trip of a Lifetime." Thanks for the great organization and the abundant information you provided for us! I will surely recommend the trip! Saludos,”

*Gerald C. Nielsen
Columbia, CA*

South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana – November 2007

“Well, I am back and still jet-lagged, but I wanted to write and thank you and The Africa Adventure Company for the amazing and wonderful experience you provided for us in Africa! This was my fourth visit to the Dark Continent and by far the best --the excellent planning and organization which your company provided ensured that everything went smoothly --quite a feat in Africa. I especially appreciated the wonderful little surprises that awaited us, courtesy of Africa Adventure Co., at each location...

Our visit to Djuma exceeded our expectations as well. A friendly and helpful staff catered to our every need and we appreciated the complimentary drinks throughout our stay. One of the biggest thrills of the trip for me was the sighting of a leopard on our first game drive. He had just finished a big meal of impala and he snoozed and posed in the grass for us for about 45 minutes. I must have taken 50 photos! The food at Djuma was delicious ... We were fortunate enough to be there for one of their evening dinners in the bush --a bonfire, candles and lanterns everywhere, and an interesting, tasty meal.

As you had assured us, Victoria Falls felt completely safe. And Esther was a gem! Thank you so much for sending her to us and providing that fascinating tour of the Falls. She was such a delight--her demeanor reminded me of a favorite teacher or a beloved aunt. We spent that next morning at the craft market and then went to the Victoria Falls Hotel for high tea in the afternoon. All in all we felt we experienced what Vic. Falls is like these days and found the people to be friendly, if a bit desperate due to their situation --very sad to see, but they don't seem to be wallowing in self-pity. Rather, they are quite ingenious about thinking up ways to get a few dollars from the tourists. Can't say that I blame them!

Of course we were floored when we arrived at Chobe Chilwero and thought we had entered an episode of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous"! What a fabulous way to end a vacation! The accommodations, the food, the service --all were amazing. The manager (whose name I've forgotten) was knowledgeable and entertaining and his wife was the epitome of grace and courtesy.

We loved the wildlife--a highlight here occurred during our boat ride when we encountered 2 hippos in the midst of a romantic interlude. Lots of roaring in each other's faces which gave us some great shots of wide-open hippo jaws!

Truly, this was the trip of a lifetime!... Again, many, many thanks for your hard work and the excellent care you took of us throughout the trip. Although I had planned for this to be my last trip to Africa, Jeremy and I are already talking about a possible trip to Kenya with Africa Adventure in a couple of years. So, I hope to be talking with you again!"

*Shannon Borrego
Palm City, FL*

South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana – December 2007

"Dear Africa Adventure Company -

I'm finally getting around to letting you know that my trip to Africa was amazing... Kyle did an excellent job of setting up my itinerary and everyone I spoke with at your company was great - professional, friendly and so helpful. Everything on my trip went very smoothly. Each of the places I stayed was lovely and all of my transfers were on time, friendly and efficient. Most of my transfers were like mini tours with knowledgeable drivers happy to share their stories and local information with me. Your local vendors are doing a great job taking care of your travelers. A particular highlight was my tour of Victoria Falls with Esther. She was so knowledgeable and made the experience very memorable - not just amazing views of the falls, but a background on the history, geology and cultural features of the falls. I never expected a private tour- what a treat to spend that time with Esther.

As for the time I spent at the lodges and on safari activities, I'm sure my photos will only give you the slightest idea of what amazing things I saw. The staff and guides at Djuma were so fantastic. Their warmth and willingness to share their stories of the animals, their families, and their experiences added so much to the game drives and at meal times... My friends that recommended Djuma were right - it was the best.

Muchenje was also a wonderful place and it was great to get the different perspectives from the two parks. At Sabi Sands we saw leopards everyday, got very close and saw lots of small groups of different animals. At Chobe we saw large groups of elephants, hippos, stalking lions and I especially enjoyed seeing the animals at the river's edge from the boat. Even though there was quite a lot of rain during my trip, it never slowed us down or seemed to affect our ability to see animals. We also did see tons of baby animals. There were a few times when I was concerned about how close we were getting to some of the animals (not because of safety, but to make sure we weren't impacting the animals), but the guides were great at describing their approach and explaining how the animals have become used to the vehicles throughout their whole lives. I was able to see that the animals could have easily darted into the brush to avoid us at any time and yet they just went about their normal activities - sleeping, hunting, interacting with each other, only rarely even noticing we were there. I recommend that you continue to work with parks and guides that are concerned about any impacts they may be having on the wildlife.

Thank you for all your efforts to make sure my trip went smoothly. I have been passing out your cards and recommending you to everyone who asks about the details of my trip. I am confident that you will take good care of any friends I send your way. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about my experience or if you would like to use any photos. Thanks again."

*Lynne Barre
Seattle, WA*