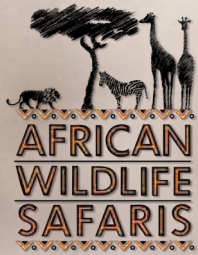


NATURAL FOCUS



CELEBRATING
37 years
OF INSPIRATIONAL JOURNEYS

THE TALKING DRUM

2022 Newsletter - Volume 1



NATURAL FOCUS

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND
ANTARCTICA & THE ARCTIC
CANADA & ALASKA
INDIA, SRI LANKA, NEPAL & BHUTAN
SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA



AFRICAN WILDLIFE SAFARIS

AFRICA
INDIAN OCEAN
NORTH AFRICA
THE MIDDLE EAST



We are bursting with enthusiasm and happiness as we welcome you to our first printed newsletter in two years. Borders are fully open, people are exploring the world again and already some of our clients and staff have travelled and returned, full of their joyful and inspirational experiences. Steve and I have just returned from a fabulous safari in South Africa and Zambia with seven clients. How good it was to be back in the African bush, breathing in the fresh air, the scent of wild herbs and watching wild animals going about their business. The dry, sunny weather and outdoor lifestyle was a world away from our long covid winter.

Others at AWS and Natural Focus have travelled too - to Europe, Africa, India and Canada. Our GM Anne-Marie recently undertook a "recce" to India and is looking forward to leading a full Taj, Temples & Tigers tour in February 2023. A second trip, escorted by Steve will follow on in March (see page 16). Life is returning to normal at long last.

This newsletter is a rich smorgasbord of some of our favourite destinations and experiences as well as an update on what has been happening over the past

two years, and what to expect into 2023 and 2024. Our Northern Australia Safari has already been a hit with many of our clients as they discover amazing Top End wildlife and landscapes. You can read about the wonderful work being carried out at Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve in South Africa, and about legendary Chitabe in Botswana, celebrating 25 years this year.

Expedition style cruising is having its own resurgence, and we have featured adventures in the Galapagos, the Antarctic, the Arctic, Alaska, the South Pacific and New Zealand. You can also get up-close and personal with polar wildlife on a floe-edge safari in the Canadian High Arctic, or with grizzly bears on the sublime British Columbian coast.

Once again, the world is our oyster, but there is heightened pressure on accommodation and flights as everyone gets travelling again, so it's important to book early. Our destination specialists are ready to help you plan and book your holiday for a seamless experience, so please call us sooner rather than later to avoid any disappointment.

With our best wishes for happy travels,



Steve and Sara Cameron - Founders



Internal photographs courtesy of: Aditya Singh, A.Russ, Alistair Guthrie, Ally Ross, Arctic Kingdom, Aurora Expeditions, Bamuru Plains, Destination BC, Bushcamp Company, C.Hill, Churchill Wild, Dave Hamman, Emeco, Faraway Bay, Frontiers North, Henrik Nilsson, Heritage Expeditions, Jeremy Cameron, K.Riedel, K.Terence, MalaMala, N.Russ, Potato Bush, Richard I'Anson, S.Bradley, Sabi Sabi, Silversea, Steve Cameron, Thorntree, Tirath Singh, Tourism NT, Travel Manitoba, UnCruise, Wilderness Safaris

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On the cover CHEETAH FAMILY

© Dave Hamman Photography





LUXURY NORTHERN AUSTRALIA SAFARI

"The three lodges gave us a unique insight into the outback, with extreme contrasts between areas; in particular the fauna and flora that each region offered. The hospitality throughout the trip was also incredible".

| GARY SEMPLE - JUNE 2022



Over the past year Australians have been discovering their own backyard, and wow! does Australia have some amazing experiences to offer. A stand-out favourite has been our 10-day Luxury Northern Australia Safari. This fabulous itinerary incorporates everything that Natural Focus and African Wildlife Safaris are known for - intimate and personalised private safaris to remote and beautiful wildlife and wilderness areas.

This all-inclusive package combines Australia's Kimberley Coast and exciting Top End, staying at three exclusive lodges that offer an array of wonderful activities to create a truly authentic outback experience.

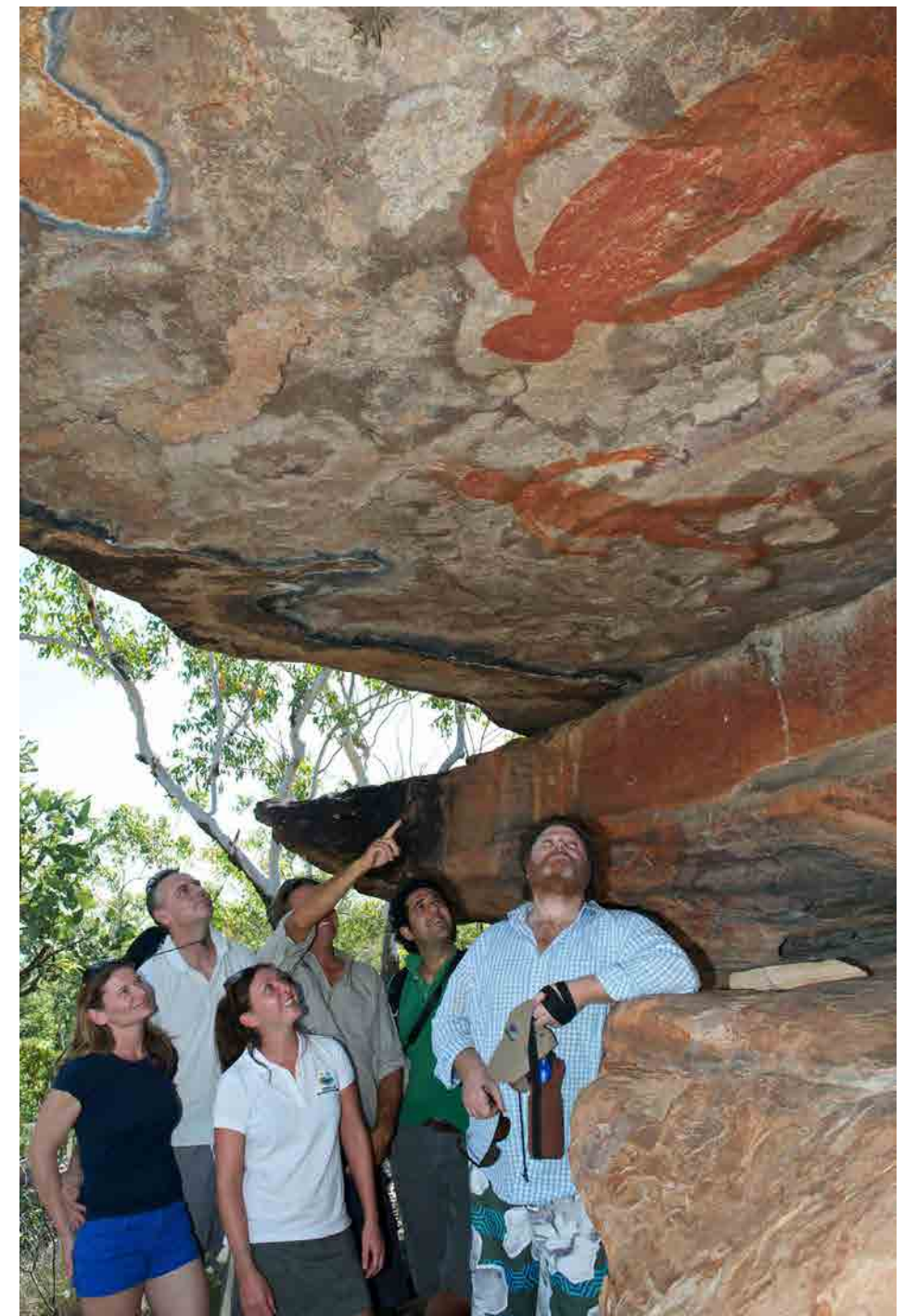
Your luxury adventure starts in Darwin with a light aircraft flight to beautiful Faraway Bay Lodge, located on a cliff top on the Kimberley Coast. Highlights include Indigenous rock art tours, remarkable King George Falls and excursions to secret waterfalls and freshwater swimming holes.

Next wing your way to Bullo River Station and discover outback life firsthand. Home to some of Australia's most iconic wildlife, over 180 bird species and the rare pygmy crocodile, you will get to explore this vast 2,000 km² station on guided excursions by foot, horseback, 4WD or boat.

Finally cap off your outback adventure at Bamurru Plains – a Luxury Lodges of Australia member – located on the Mary River floodplains on the edge of Kakadu National Park. The lodge has exclusive access to 300 km² of floodplains and savanna woodland home to a profusion of native birds and wildlife. Activities include a 6-metre high wildlife viewing hide with 360-degree views, guided walks and open top 4WD safaris. An unquestioned highlight is the thrilling air boat ride across the floodplains.



For more information on our Luxury Northern Australia Safari call us on **1300 363 302** or **scan the QR code.**





*“No one will protect what they
don't care about; and no one
will care about what they have
never experienced”.*

Sir David Attenborough

CELEBRATING CHITABE

25 MAGICAL YEARS

Nestled in a secluded pocket of Botswana's Okavango Delta, sits the exclusive Chitabe Concession. The legendary camp first came into existence in 1996, when owners Dave and Helene Hamman were awarded the tender, and permitted to construct and open Chitabe Camp in July 1997.

Both Dave and Helene are avid wildlife, conservation and photography enthusiasts, and visited several locations that were up for tender at the time. They chose the Chitabe Concession because of its remarkably diverse habitat

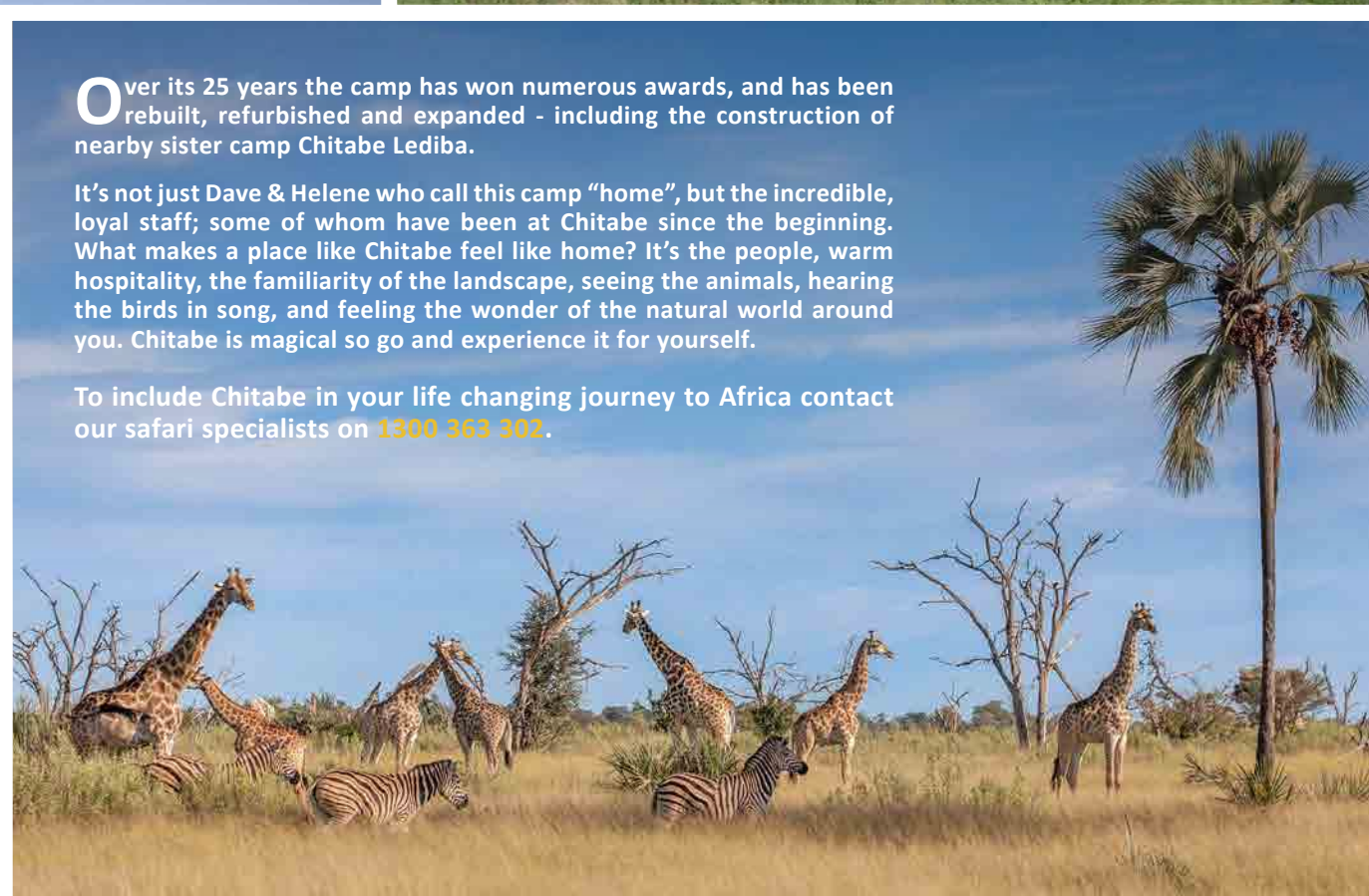
and its prime position; bordering the renowned Moremi Game Reserve and sitting within two river systems, the Gomoti and the Santantadibe. These two reasons are why Chitabe's game viewing is so varied and consistent.

Today the concession boasts exceptional wildlife viewing and is renowned for its big cats and wild dog sightings. However, there is far more to this breath-taking region than just the predators, with plentiful plains game and birdlife in abundance.

Over its 25 years the camp has won numerous awards, and has been rebuilt, refurbished and expanded - including the construction of nearby sister camp Chitabe Lediba.

It's not just Dave & Helene who call this camp "home", but the incredible, loyal staff; some of whom have been at Chitabe since the beginning. What makes a place like Chitabe feel like home? It's the people, warm hospitality, the familiarity of the landscape, seeing the animals, hearing the birds in song, and feeling the wonder of the natural world around you. Chitabe is magical so go and experience it for yourself.

To include Chitabe in your life changing journey to Africa contact our safari specialists on **1300 363 302**.



YESTERDAY, TODAY AND OUR PATH TO TOMORROW

Despite us all having to settle into a new normal caused by an uninvited guest, exciting times are once again here, as countries across Africa are open for travel. South Africa is one. The tourism industry has received a much-needed breath of life with travellers enjoying safaris in the bush. With all this excitement, our long-time partner Sabi Sabi has taken an important opportunity to reflect on a post-covid world.

As a business on the conservation frontline for more than 40 years, Sabi Sabi have overcome profound challenges in becoming one of South Africa's leading safari operators. Their four beautiful properties epitomise style, sustainability and comfort, whilst their high standards of service, genuine hospitality, incredible field guides and tracking teams create an unforgettable experience for their guests.

The wilderness is a myriad of interconnected ecosystems that offer an extraordinary perspective on life - it's impossible not to appreciate our existence, as well as the fragility of life when witnessing the delicate balance between life and death out in the wild.

With this in mind, the devastation brought on by COVID-19 has re-confirmed that in some parts of the world biospheres are approaching their 'tipping point', imminently set to be tilted out of equilibrium.

Humanity has long perceived nature as an element to be conquered, instead of understanding that we are part of the natural world. As a global society, our actions have an impact on this delicate balance, and we need to strive towards strengthening our connections with nature.

Sabi Sabi is centred around the progress towards a balance with the natural environment. The crucial pillars of conservation, ecotourism and community integration have

been at the forefront of their purpose and has allowed them to deliver meaningful experiences that guests have come to love and cherish.

The current situation is the best time to reflect and look forward. This pandemic has taught us many lessons, one being the need to build sustainable societies which treat nature with respect.

Within the chaos there is always opportunity for hope towards a brighter future. In the early stages of the pandemic, Sabi Sabi made a commitment to ensure the sustainability of the guest experience, offering job security to their amazing team who are the heart and soul of the company.

They continued with whatever training was planned for their staff during global lockdowns, with many staff returning to the bush or the office with additional skills once lockdowns ended. Their priority was to secure skills so that when tourism bounced back they would welcome guests from all over the world with the same, if not improved, service and hospitality.

Sabi Sabi also invested in new Rangers despite tourism being switched off, ensuring that training continued, remaining ready for when guests could be welcomed back. Conservation, habitat management and anti-poaching efforts were also maintained, investing in the future and safeguarding the environment, ensuring it remained unaffected by global events.

Their mission (and ours) continues to be greater than just a tourism organisation. It is about building a sustainable future by instilling knowledge and inspiring advancement. We know that this can only be done with you, and we look forward to helping you create new experiences out in the African wilderness.



"What extraordinary gameviewing we enjoyed at Sabi Sabi. Staying at beautiful Selati Camp, it was an incredible experience even for seasoned African campaigners. Sabi Sabi lived up to our expectations, and it was fantastic to be back in the wide-open spaces of the African bush!"

African Wildlife Safaris CEO Steve Cameron - Aug 2022



SPIRIT OF THE SERENGETI

WILD EXPERIENCES WITH LEMALA

With properties in Arusha, Tarangire, Ngorongoro Crater and the Serengeti, Lemala has Tanzania's northern safari circuit covered.

Their range of tented camps and lodges are small and more intimate, offering exclusive and stylish accommodation in some of the best wildlife locations. Lemala's properties boast breath-taking communal spaces including open-air lounges and indoor and outdoor dining areas.

Mpingo Ridge Lodge in Tarangire National Park sits on the top of the escarpment and has undoubtedly one of the best views in Africa. On the eastern side of the central Serengeti is contemporary Nanyukie Lodge, that features just 15

outstanding suites with expansive decks and free-standing bathtubs. To the north, luxurious Kuria Hills Lodge is nestled in the scenic Wogakuria Hills. The 15 glass-fronted suites offer mesmerising views of the rolling plains below. Lemala's classic mobile tented camps - Lemala Mara and Lemala Ndutu - in the Serengeti are perfectly positioned to follow the renowned wildebeest and zebra migration.

For a truly wild experience look no further than Lemala Wildwaters Lodge in Uganda. Accessible only by boat, the lodge is positioned on Kalagala Island on the Nile River. Uniquely perched on huge granite rocks with awe-inspiring views and roaring rapids all around, a stay here is the perfect complement to a Serengeti safari.

For more information on a Tanzania or Uganda safari contact our Africa Specialists on 1300 363 302.



WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Black rhinos, once abundant in East Africa, have suffered for decades due to poaching. These critically-endangered members of "The Big 5" live within the greater Serengeti ecosystem, and this unique Rhino Tracking Experience is one of the best ecotourism and conservation initiatives guests can help support.

Guided by qualified and expert guides with years of experience, travellers are in safe hands, exploring some of the most pristine areas of the park. Not only will participants go in search of rhinos

on foot, but also gain valuable insights into the challenges they face, visiting the Memorial Museum for legendary conservationist Michael Grzimek, and the Black Rhino Conservation Centre.

The proceeds of the walk will go directly to help fund the sustainability and prolonged protection of these animals.

For more information on Lemala's Rhino Tracking and other wild experiences, please contact us on **1300 363 302**.



Wildwaters Lodge Uganda



ZAMBIA - INTO THE WILD

BY SARA CAMERON

**"ABSOLUTELY AMAZING!!!
Everything was perfect.
The bush camps were
incredible. Potato Bush
was a wonderful way
to finish. Steve & Sara's
expertise & knowledge
shone through as the
itinerary was perfect."**

CATHY FLOOD - SEP 2022

Leopards lazing in trees, hippos wallowing in lagoons, and fabulous sunsets over the wide Zambezi River. This August, after a two-year delay, we finally embarked on our escorted safari to the wilds of Zambia's South Luangwa and Lower Zambezi national parks.

Without doubt these parks offers a unique experience reminiscent of the days of old - small, intimate bush camps, fewer tourists, and the liberating feeling of nature in the raw. We were accompanied by expert local guides who imparted their knowledge and enthusiasm as we discovered the wonders of the bush on foot and by vehicle. We saw mating lions, lions on kills, leopards in trees, and followed a huge pack of wild dogs on the hunt. Whilst enjoying our morning tea on the edge of wide seasonal rivers we gazed at crocodiles and hippos lounging on the sand banks. One evening, with sundowner drinks

in hand, we watched elephants crossing the river in the deep, orange glow of an African sunset.

From our private, luxury camp in the Lower Zambezi National Park we took guided canoe trips down the famed Chifungulu Channel where elegant white egrets stood in the shallows, and hippos, crocodiles and elephants seemed heart-stoppingly close. We explored the river by motorboat, went fishing for tiger fish, and had lunch out on a sandbank, our feet in the flowing water.

With so many special experiences this was a safari to remember, and August/September was the perfect time of year to visit - warm, dry, with unbelievable wildlife viewing. We can't wait for next year's trip. We hope you join us.

Sara & Steve Cameron



SENSATIONAL ZAMBIA

17 days/16 nights - 23 Aug 2023 ex Lusaka

AUD \$28,846 per person twin share

Escorted by African Wildlife Safaris CEO Steve Cameron this 17-day safari visits some of Zambia's most prestigious wildlife areas staying at remote and exclusive camps. Expect expert guides, games drives, exciting walking and canoeing safaris away from busy tourist areas guaranteeing an unrivalled safari experience. Designed on an all-inclusive basis (except in Lusaka) relax, enjoy and make the most of this unique and off-the-beaten-track safari of a lifetime.

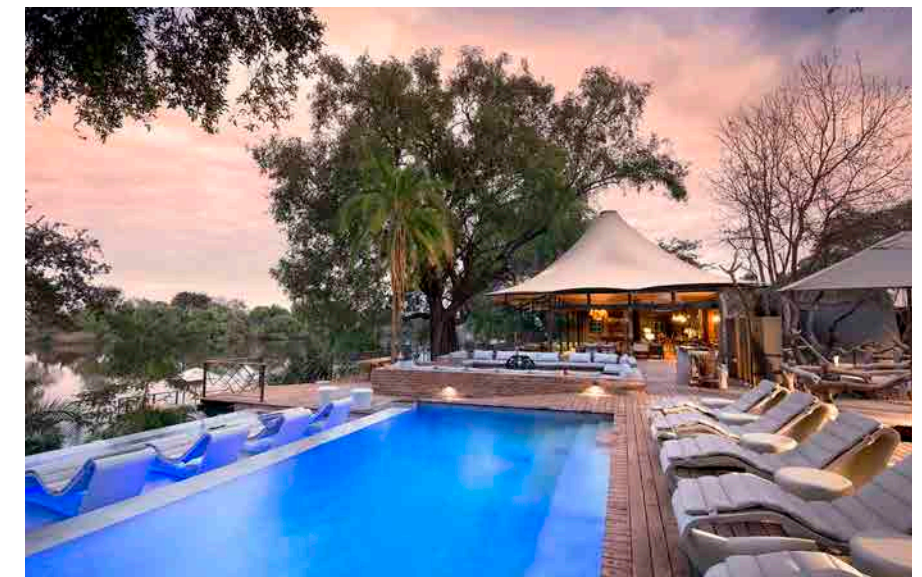
Departing on Wednesday 23 August 2023 from the Zambian city of Lusaka, this special departure unveils the wonders of Zambia during the peak wildlife viewing season.

Please note: Maximum group size is 8. Singles on request. We can assist with your airfares and book your flights in your preferred class of travel.

For further information and full itinerary please don't hesitate to call our Destination Specialists on 1300 363 302.



ENQUIRE NOW



TAJ, TEMPLES & TIGERS

DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO JOIN OUR SECOND TAJ, TEMPLES & TIGERS GROUP TOUR IN MARCH 2023.

Join us for our second Taj, Temples and Tigers in March 2023 – our most successful and popular escorted small group tour. If you love wildlife, history and culture this is perfect for you, with unprecedented opportunities to get up-close to the majestic Bengal Tiger. Nothing can prepare you for the excitement of seeing this magnificent creature in its natural habitat, a privilege that few people will ever experience. Throughout this 18-day trip you will be escorted by our CEO Steve Cameron, who first created our India program over 20 years ago. His knowledge and passion for India (and travel in general) is legendary, as well as naturalist Tirath Singh who has accompanied many of our previous tours. Whilst this tour visits two of India's national parks there is also plenty of time for cultural experiences and historical sites.

DEPARTS EX DELHI

Monday 13 Feb 2023 - **SOLD OUT**
Monday 06 Mar 2023 - **BOOK NOW**

TOUR COST EX DELHI

AUD \$11,995 per person twin share
Single Supplement AUD \$ 2,421

HIGHLIGHTS

- Total of 11 guided tiger safaris in Bandhavgarh and Ranthambore
- The avian paradise of Keoladeo National Park
- Jhalana Leopard Reserve
- The historic treasures of Delhi, Jaipur & the beautiful Taj Mahal
- Accompanying naturalist and Australian escort

TOUR ESCORT

Steve has been travelling the world for over 40 years. His love of travel first started in Africa, where he begun leading overland safaris in 1982 across the length and breadth of Africa, before returning to Australia and co-founding African Wildlife Safaris with his wife Sara. His passion for travel, adventure, wildlife and wilderness took him to India, and in 2000 he began setting up Natural Focus' India program. Since then, Steve has been to the subcontinent several times, leading tours including our legendary Taj Temples and Tigers small group tour. Steve is an outgoing and insightful travelling companion, with many stories from around the world.



KAZIRANGA EXTENSION

There is also an option to extend your time in India and add a 3-night stay at Kaziranga National Park. Located in the north east of the country in the state of Assam, Kaziranga is home to the endangered one-horned Indian Rhinoceros.

Dont miss out - Limited places!
For further information and to reserve your place, please call us on **1300 363 302**.



TREASURES OF EGYPT & JORDAN

For millennia, the Middle East - the lands surrounding the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea - have been home to ancient cultures and kingdoms.

Egypt and Jordan are two countries that have a rich and deep history within this ancient landscape - and evoke an incredible “living history”.

Home to the legendary pharaohs of old, Egypt is scattered with over 1500 age-old temples and other magnificent sights.

There is no better way to explore Egypt than travelling slowly along the mighty Nile River by traditional Dahabiya. Return to the gracious era of turn-of-the-century travel, sailing aboard this boutique river vessel from Luxor to Aswan.

This section of the river is home to countless wonders, including the majestic temples of Kom Ombo, Edfu and Philae.

Luxor, once ancient Thebes, has often been described as “the world’s greatest open air museum”, and was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979. The temples of Karnak and Luxor stand on the East Bank, while across the West Bank is the Theban Necropolis - the Valley of the Kings - the famous burial ground where pharaohs such as Tutankhamun and Seti I were entombed.

No itinerary to Egypt is complete without a stay in the country’s capital, Cairo. Discover 5,000 years of history at the Grand Egyptian

Museum (set to open in November 2022), explore the legendary pyramids of Giza, the mighty Sphinx and visit the ancient Egyptian capital of Memphis and time-worn Sakkara, the site of the first pyramid of King Zoser.

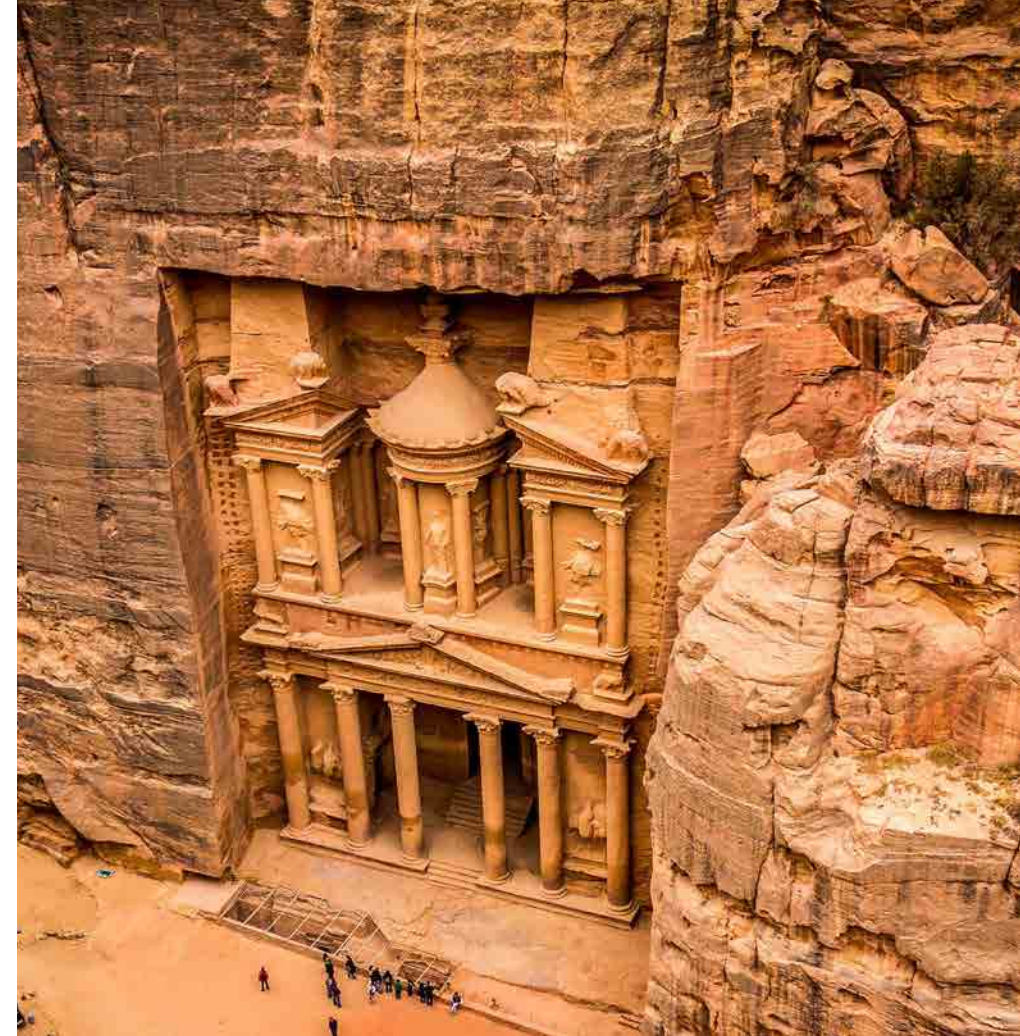
Across the Red Sea, Oman and neighbouring Jordan offer plenty of cultural and historic options to discover with a different flavour.

At the cross-roads between east and west, Jordan is a treasure trove of historic and religious sites, filled with temples, mosques, churches, mysterious ruined cities and romantic desert castles. Travel back in-time, discovering the archaic Greco-Roman ruins of Jerash and fortified Kerak Castle of Crusader fame.

Jordan’s crowning jewel is unquestionably Petra - “The Lost City”, with its incredible Treasury building and winding catacombs.

The country also boasts wondrous scenery, from the salty waters of the Dead Sea to the breathtaking landscapes of Wadi Rum Desert - made famous by British officer and writer T. E Lawrence (of Arabia).

For more information on our range of Middle East programs, including Egypt and Jordan, contact us on **1300 363 302**.



THE ORIGIN OF THE GALAPAGOS



Remote and starkly beautiful the Galapagos Islands have been formed as a result of millions of years of volcanic activity. Their location above a volcanic hotspot has created the islands we have come to know today - a paradise filled with unique and diverse species.

Located 1,000 kilometres off Ecuador's coast, the islands were made famous by Charles Darwin after the Naturalist published his ground-breaking "On the Origin of Species", in November 1859. Since then they have inspired explorers, scientists, filmmakers and travellers to discover their incredible natural wonders.

There is no better way to experience these islands than onboard a luxury expedition vessel with expert guides who have knowledge of the geology and natural history of these volcanic islands.

Silver Service

Founded in 1994 by Antonio Lefebvre, Silversea Cruises are one of the world's leading luxury cruise and expedition operators. Over the last 25 years the company has built an enviable reputation and is known for their high quality service and luxury ships.

Silver Origin

Silversea's newest vessel, purpose-built for sailing the islands is the elegant and ultra-luxurious Silver Origin. Guests can expect all-suite accommodation aboard this superb expedition vessel, with elegant interiors, horizon balconies, butler service and the highest crew-to-guest ratio (90:100) in the Galapagos. The Silver Origin offers guests exclusive onboard spaces, such as the interactive "Basecamp" area, that houses information on the islands' flora and fauna, two lounges, two restaurants, a spa and a fitness centre.

To find out more about these luxury Galapagos cruises, contact our Specialists on **1300 363 302**.



ADVENTURE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD

In 2008 Silversea expanded into the expedition cruising market and today boast an outstanding global portfolio of vessels that operate life-changing itineraries to all seven continents. Antarctica is one of those.

The final frontier for many travellers, Antarctica is unlike any other destination in the world. It offers a surreal mix of breath-taking, silent landscapes, punctured only by the raucous noise and chatter of penguin colonies, the cracking of Antarctic ice, and the roaring of Southern elephant seals that laze along its magical coastline.

The continent is only accessible during the summer months when the ice recedes and temperatures rise. The challenge that

stands in the way of many travellers reaching the continent is the notoriously turbulent Drake Passage. But now, guests can fly from the Chilean city of Punta Arenas to King George Island, and embark aboard Silversea's luxury ships from there, avoiding the 2-day crossing. These departures vary in length from 5 to 9 days and are ideal for those short on time, allowing you to spend more time in one of the world's most spectacular regions.

For a memorable and personalised journey to Antarctica, call one of our Polar Specialists on **1300 363 302**.



 SILVERSEA®



INTO THE HEART OF THE ARCTIC



The Arctic is home to breath-taking scenery and unique wildlife. There is no better way to experience its wonders than on a purpose-built expedition ship with a team of polar experts. Onboard Aurora Expeditions' two state-of-the-art cruise ships you will have the chance to see polar bears in their natural habitat as well as beluga whales, narwhals, seals, reindeer, arctic foxes and rare arctic seabirds.

With Aurora, the Arctic offers unparalleled encounters with the natural world at its most rugged and wild; from the incomparable glaciers of Greenland to the frozen tundra of Svalbard, the dramatic volcanic landscapes of Iceland or the labyrinthine waterways of Arctic Canada.

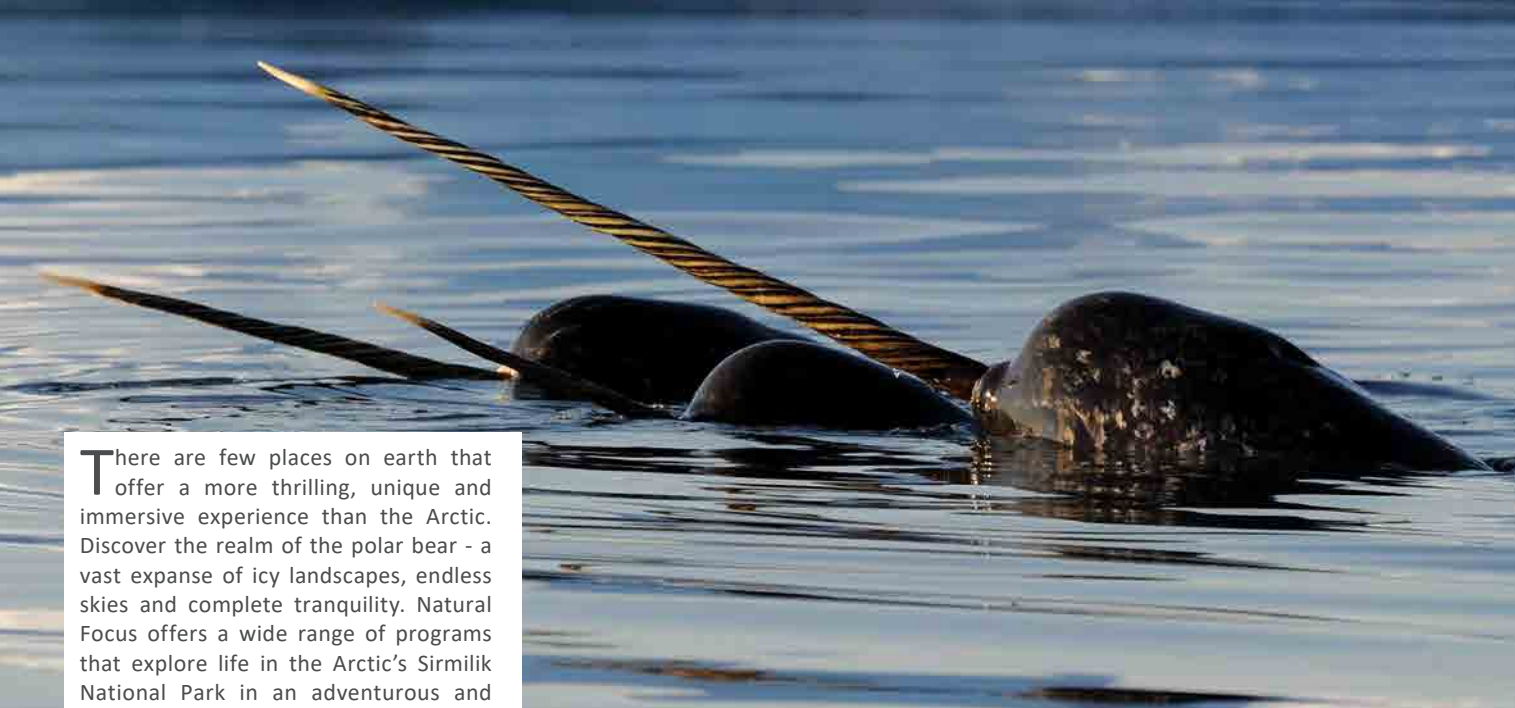
There will be plenty of time for immersive guided activities such as zodiac cruising, guided hikes, sea kayaking (additional cost), photography and more. Go ashore and discover small arctic communities full of life and explore the rich and diverse history of this remote region.

Some forthcoming expeditions we highly recommend include the 22-day Northern Lights Explorer, the 15-day Across the Arctic Circle, and the most adventurous of all, the 30-day Complete Northwest Passage.

For full details call our Polar Specialists on **1300 363 302**.



LIFE ON THE FLOE EDGE



There are few places on earth that offer a more thrilling, unique and immersive experience than the Arctic. Discover the realm of the polar bear - a vast expanse of icy landscapes, endless skies and complete tranquility. Natural Focus offers a wide range of programs that explore life in the Arctic's Sirmilik National Park in an adventurous and intimate setting.

One of these is the superb 8 day/7 night Narwhal & Polar Bear, A Floe Edge Safari, the perfect option for all travellers that wish to experience the Arctic in all its glory; with excellent chances of viewing narwhals, polar bears, seals and a variety of bird species.

Intrepid travellers are guided by experienced Inuit guides, who know the landscape like the back of their hand. Guests will stay in a comfortable canvas tented camp - reached by qamutik (traditional Inuit sled) - perfectly positioned, with views of Bylot Island and access to world-renowned Eclipse Sound.

The sound is one of the very best places to see narwhal, as they migrate past and socialise in pods. This itinerary also provides guests with the chance to snorkel or kayak amongst the sea ice.

For more details call our Arctic Specialists on **1300 363 302**.

NARWHAL & POLAR BEAR, A FLOE EDGE SAFARI

Departs ex Ottawa, Canada
May/June

2023 - Waitlisted
2024 - Dates to be confirmed



POLAR BEAR MOTHER & NEWBORN CUBS SAFARI

You'd be hard pressed to find anything cuter than a newborn polar bear cub! Be one of a lucky few dozen travellers to witness the magic of newborn cubs emerging from their winter dens on this 10 day safari.

Departs ex Winnipeg, Canada
February/March

2023 - Waitlisted
2024 - Dates to be confirmed

ISLANDS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC



The pioneers of small-ship expedition cruising for over 35 years, Heritage Expeditions offer incredible voyages to a profusion of remarkable and inspiring destinations in the Southern and South Pacific oceans.

These regions are home to some of the least visited islands in the world, rich in culture, history and biodiversity. The sensational itineraries Heritage offer will appeal to a range of travellers - from keen birdwatchers and photographers, to wildlife enthusiasts and those who simply love to explore off-the-beaten-path destinations.

Based in New Zealand, the company is best known for their unique Antarctic and sub-Antarctic island expedition cruises. However they also operate several voyages in neighbouring Melanesia and Indonesia, sailing from one island to the next. Their 17 day Discover the Secrets of Melanesia starts in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and cruises through the stunning turquoise waters of the Solomon Islands before finishing in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Just some of the highlights include visiting remote communities still living traditional lifestyles, learning about WWII history on Nissan Island, searching for rare birds and swimming or snorkelling along pristine reefs.

Japan is the newest destination the company has expanded into, with three exciting voyages departing in May and June 2023. The country offers travellers a tantalising concoction of ultra-modern living, fascinating culture, pristine national parks, ancient customs and

untouched islands. Located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, Japan's archipelago of islands offers a myriad of inspiring landscapes to explore. Highlights might include places such as the UNESCO World Heritage listed village Shirakawa-go, the remote islands of Rebun and Rishiri, rarely visited Dogojima Island, Hiroshima and the famous Shinto Shrine and Torii Gate on Miyajima Island.



NATURAL WONDERS OF NEW ZEALAND

A cruise around the 'Land of the Long White Cloud', Aotearoa/New Zealand, reveals the surreal beauty, pristine landscapes and legendary Maori culture of this remarkable country. The stunning coastline is indented with magical fiords, quiet bays, calving glaciers, unique wildlife and a plethora of birdlife.

The exclusive Heritage Explorer is an intimate 18 passenger expedition yacht that traverses in and out of the country's beautiful fiord systems and islands. There is no better way - and sometimes no other way - to see some of New Zealand's most

hard-to-reach places, including the islands of the Hauraki Gulf (at the top of the North Island), Marlborough Sound & Tasman Bay, the Southern Fiords, and time-forgotten and wildlife-rich Stewart Island/Rakiura, located a stone's throw from the port town of Bluff at the bottom of the South Island.

The 7-day Southern Fiords Discovery is a perfect example of why New Zealand is best explored by small ship, as it showcases the country's untamed wilderness on a grand scale. Those on board will marvel at soaring, ice-carved mountains, wild forests and unique wildlife, sailing through places

such as Doubtful and Dusky Sounds, as well as Preservation Inlet.

The company's flagship vessel - the Heritage Adventurer - also operates around New Zealand, including their 15-day The Best of New Zealand itinerary. The vessel will be making its maiden voyage this October, travelling through the tropical waters of Indonesia.

For more information on New Zealand itineraries, and the full range of expedition cruises available, please contact us on 1300 363 302.





GLACIER BAY CRUISE - NATIONAL PARK (7 NIGHTS)

Departing from Juneau, discover the wonders of Tracy Arm, impressive Frederick Sound and enjoy two-days in the UNESCO World Heritage listed Glacier Bay National Park. Guests are accompanied by expert guides on daily excursions including nature hikes, kayaking, paddle-boarding, exploring remote inlets by motorised dinghy and beach combing tidal pools. The region is rich in wildlife and wildlife sightings may include humpback whales, harbour seals, sea otters, black and brown bears and a plethora of bird species.

Prices start from **AUD \$5,485** per person twin share. Single travellers on request.

Save **\$750** per couple when booked by 30 November 2022

2023 Dates

16, 23 & 30 Apr
07, 14, 21 & 28 May
04, 11, 18 & 25 Jun
02, 09, 16, 23 & 30 Jul
06, 13, 20 & 27 Aug

For more information on their full range of cruises, contact our Destination Specialists on 1300 363 302.



ALASKAN ADVENTURES

Is there a more awe-inspiring destination than Alaska's Inside Passage?

The experts in small ship cruising, UnCruise offer outstanding opportunities to uncover this rugged land of fjords and rainforests. With over two decades of experience, their comfortable vessels carry no more than 88 passengers, ensuring there are no queues to view attractions or to take part in the many activities available on every departure. So what can you expect on an UnCruise Alaska voyage?

Compact with shallow drafts, UnCruise ships can enter narrow channels to get up close to glaciers that few other vessels can. What's more, nearly the whole fleet carries equipment such as kayaks, skiffs and stand up paddleboards so you can explore secret coves and feel the spray of waterfalls on your face.

The pristine waters of Alaska's Inside Passage support a wealth of wildlife, from otters and orcas to sea lions and porpoises. Dense coastal forests shelter black bears, grizzlies and mountain goats. Watch for the tell-tale blow of a humpback whale from deck and have your binoculars ready to spy on bald eagles and puffins.

Southeast Alaska are the ancestral lands of the Tlingit and Haida people. Learn about the significance of totem poles from native guides, be moved by stories of the tribal communities who fought to keep their traditions alive and perhaps even visit an original clan house full of legends and lore.

UnCruise's passion for remote adventure and immersive experiences has led them to other destinations around the world, including Central America, Hawaii and America's Pacific Northwest - sailing down the Columbia and Snake rivers.



DON'T MISS THE BOAT!



CONNECTING CANADA - VIA RAIL

With a comprehensive network linking the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, plus a wide range of affordable fares, VIA Rail is the perfect choice for hassle-free travel across Canada.

Their rail system seamlessly connects the country's major cities including Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal. Simply sit back in your spacious seat and let the many sights of the world's second-largest country roll by. For longer itineraries trains are conveniently equipped with comfortable sleeping berths with shared washroom facilities, or private cabins for one or two guests, with their own washroom and toilet. Some also offer indulgent private ensuite

cabins complete with personal concierge service - known as Prestige Class. Below are two of VIA Rail's most popular routes, that will have you well on your way to exploring all Canada has to offer.

The Canadian - The Great Western Way
Covering a colossal 4,466 scenic kilometres between Vancouver and Toronto, The Canadian is your window onto the diverse scenery of Canada. From twinkling city lights to wide open prairies and snow-capped Rocky Mountains peaks, this 4-night route has got the country covered.

Launched in 2015, the best way to travel onboard is in the Prestige Car - that features

a spacious L-shaped leather couch by day and a Murphy bed for two at night. Guests also enjoy their own private washroom with a shower, complimentary bar service, priority seating in the dining car and a personal concierge attendant. There really is no better way to travel across Canada.

Corridor

This 1,765km-long line between Quebec City and Windsor traces the mighty St Lawrence River and the shores of Lake Ontario. With stops in Toronto and Niagara Falls, this route connects some of the country's most renowned and beautiful cities. Reap the benefits of timely and direct downtown transfers, bypassing all urban traffic.



Winnipeg - Churchill

VIA Rail also boast several "adventure" routes within their network to iconic Canadian destinations such as Churchill in far north Manitoba and Prince Rupert on the west coast, via breath-taking Jasper National Park and the Canadian Rockies.

THE TRACKS LESS TRAVELLED

Winnipeg - Churchill

Leave the clamour of Winnipeg behind as you enter the realm of the polar bear. At the end of this 2-night 1,697km track is Churchill, where sub-arctic species prowl the tundra beneath skies illuminated by aurora borealis as the weather turns cold. Churchill is known as "The Polar Bear Capital of the World", and during October and November offers visitors some of the very best polar bear viewing in the world.

The train accommodates guests in comfortable Economy Class - with recliner chairs - or Sleeper Plus - with lie-flat beds, access to the 'dome car', private washroom and shared shower facilities. In the summer months (July to October) Via Rail's glass-domed observation car (pictured above) gives passengers unrivalled views of stunning Canadian scenery and magical night skies.

The train runs year-round twice weekly departing Winnipeg on Tuesdays and Sundays.

Jasper - Prince Rupert

Follow salmon-rich waterways from historic Jasper in the Canadian Rockies to Prince Rupert, a bustling port set amid dense temperate rainforest. Expect gorgeous alpine vistas on this spectacular 1,160km railroad.

To book, call one of our Canada experts on **1300 363 302**.



The Canadian

www.viarail.ca
VIA Rail Canada



GATEWAY TO MANITOBA

When planning a Canadian adventure, Winnipeg is a fascinating city to explore on your way through to another destination, such as Churchill. Whether in winter or summer, the city is both captivating and cultured, with many hidden gems to discover, including superb museums and galleries, historic neighbourhoods and a burgeoning dining and craft beer scene.

The city sits at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers; known as “The Forks”, this area of Winnipeg has been an important meeting and trading site for over 6,000 years. Designated as a Natural Historic Site of Canada, the area is a popular day spot for travellers.

One of the best places to visit is the award-winning Canadian Museum of Human Rights. The museum boasts 11 galleries and is dedicated to sharing stories of struggle, sacrifice and triumph - both within Canada and from around the world - whilst also acting as a beacon for a better future. Afterward, a walk through the famous Forks Market is highly recommended.

Winnipeg is surrounded by beautiful parkland, woodland and scenery, and Assiniboine Park is another beautiful area to explore. Nearby Fort Whyte Alive is another superb attraction, offering visitors insights into First Nations culture as well as bison tours.

Finally, Canadians take their sport very seriously, and Manitobans are no exception. For sporting enthusiasts (or those who wish to simply enjoy the atmosphere), going to see the Winnipeg Jets in a game of ice hockey is a unique Canadian experience not to be missed.

To include Winnipeg in your itinerary, please contact our Canada Specialists on **1300 363 302**.



Manitoba
CANADA'S HEART BEATS



BEAUTIFUL BEARS & BELUGAS



The remote frontier town of Churchill in Manitoba is one of the best places in the world to see polar bears. Mid-October to mid-November is considered the peak time to go, but the summer months of July and August are also superb, with the chance to see polar bears frolicking amidst a sea of summer flowers.

The other bonus of exploring Churchill at this time of year is the sensational whale watching — in particular beluga whales.

Belugas are one of the most iconic whale species in the world, thanks to their stark white colour and strange, globular shaped heads known as “melons”. Their “melons” are incredibly flexible and are capable of changing shape. More than 60,000 belugas migrate into Hudson Bay, and are often seen in large pods along the Churchill and Seal rivers. Extremely inquisitive and social, they are also referred to as “the canary of the sea” for the wide array of bizarre vocal sounds they can produce.

Natural Focus offer several 6 or 8 day programs that combine the thrill of whale watching with classic land-based bear viewing tours - either lodge-based or by specially built tundra vehicles.

With over 300 nights a year of Northern Lights activity, Churchill sits below the Aurora oval, ideal for those looking to tick off another item on their bucket list - The Aurora Borealis (see page 32).

For more information on these exciting safaris contact our Canada Specialists on **1300 363 302**.

NORTHERN LIGHTS & WINTER NIGHTS



WILDERNESS IN STYLE

YOUR WINTER WONDERLAND AWAITS

Witness one of the seven natural wonders of the world in the tiny town of Churchill on Canada's Hudson Bay. Located beneath the auroral oval, this remote subarctic community is one of the best places on Earth to experience the aurora borealis. In the experienced hands of our partner, Frontiers North, you will set out on an intimate and momentous adventure with exclusive access to a new and extraordinary viewing location each night.

By day you'll experience the history and culture of this unique northern community,

enjoying activities including snowshoeing, an exhilarating dog sled ride through magical, snow-covered boreal forest, and a tour of the local Itsanitaq Museum. Your Northern Lights & Winter Nights experience also includes an evening at Dan's Diner, enjoying regional cuisine on the frozen banks of the Churchill River.

There are several Northern Lights & Winter Nights itineraries to choose from, all led by an Interpretive Guide and departing from Winnipeg. The 6-night itinerary is by air from Winnipeg to Churchill, while

the 8-night itinerary takes the more scenic route overland by train to Churchill. Another option for keen photographers is the 8-day Northern Lights Photo Tour, which is led by a Photo Specialist guide and focuses more on photography and less on cultural activities.

For more details on this fabulous winter experience, and full itineraries please contact our destination specialists on **1300 363 302** or info@awsnfs.com.



Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge, nestled on the banks of Vancouver Island's Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, is accessed via a memorable 45-minute float plane from Vancouver, or 35-minute boat journey from Tofino. This breath-taking region provides 600 acres of pristine rainforest for visitor exploration, on horseback, by foot or in a helicopter, as well as the waters of the sound itself.

Boat-based exploratory tours include bear and marine-life viewing. For water activity lovers, there is the chance to explore nearby canyons, or hop in a kayak or canoe for some exploration of this unique location. At the end of the day retire to the Healing Grounds Spa for a rejuvenating treatment, or return to your own amazing luxury canvas guest tent (one of 25 here), overlooking the waters of the sound. Only the final indulgence awaits – dining at the lodge's restaurant – where its diverse menu featuring locally sourced produce completes your full immersion in this natural wonderland.

So how do you explain the BC Effect to those who are yet to experience it? Well, ironically, it is when the wildlife simply ignores you. When you can sit quietly above a rushing river while just below, a black bear fishes for salmon, oblivious to its audience. When you gape in astonishment as a fast moving pod of orca dive under the water, and then back in front of your boat, without even noticing you. It is when you are fully immersed in (and a part of) one of the world's greatest wilderness areas. That is the 'BC Effect', and it is an effect that will stay with you forever.

BC - A LAND BEFORE TIME

| BY JUSTIN WALKER

British Columbia, Canada, is wildlife encounter heaven; from Vancouver Island’s inlets to the ocean waters of Johnstone Strait, through the immense, 6.4-million hectare Great Bear Rainforest that spreads over BC’s central and northern coast, and over the Coast Mountains to pristine Bella Coola Valley. The province is one of the world’s most biologically diverse areas containing a quarter of the world’s remaining temperate rainforest, with an immense 25,000km of coastline.

Whether you’re viewing orca in Johnstone Strait (one of the world’s best orca-viewing locations) from the shore, a boat or kayak, or you are deep in the Great Bear Rainforest, taking in the spectacle of black, grizzly, or rare, white-furred Kermode (Spirit) bears fishing during the annual salmon spawn, you will feel like you’ve entered a breathtakingly raw and wild land, where time has no meaning, and you will never want to leave. Speaking of which...

BC has an abundance of unique – and spectacularly located – wilderness lodges that combine that longed-for feeling of being hidden away from the busy world, with the chance to get you closer than you thought possible to the region’s wildlife.



"You will feel like you’ve entered a breathtakingly raw and wild land, where time has no meaning, and you will never want to leave"

In the Bella Coola Valley region, you will find pristine Tweedsmuir Park Lodge, nestled between Mt Melikan and Mt Stupendous, beside the Atnarko River. With fly fishing, guided river-boat bear viewing, the opportunity to explore the surrounding provincial park on foot, bike, or go high into the surrounding mountains on a heli-hiking adventure, there are countless experiences on offer.

For an equally rich Indigenous experience, join a Nuxálk guide on a walk to Bella Coola’s 5000-year-old stone-carved petroglyphs, hidden beside the waters of pretty Thorsen Creek. Each day you return to the lodge, with the chance to soak in a sauna or simply return to your perfectly-located timber chalet, with its views across the lodge grounds, the Atnarko River and on toward the majestic Coast Mountains in the distance (if you’re fortunate, you may spot a bear or two lounging on the lodge grounds). Then, the day’s adventures can be recounted while dining at the lodge, with gourmet meals containing plenty of local produce, whether freshly caught seafood from Bella Coola, or food grown at the lodge itself... it’s not a bad way to finish a day in the wild.



THE BC EFFECT

When the only sound you can hear is that of your kayak paddle dipping slowly in and out of Knight Inlet's crystal-clear water, and beside you, on the banks of the narrow channel you are gliding through, a female grizzly and her two cubs ambling through lush and rich vegetation, you know you're experiencing the famous 'BC Effect'. In this case, it is the sensation of being surrounded by a natural silence, with no words and no intrusions from our crazy modern world. That is the type of silence that defines what is, at this exact moment, an incredibly rich and immediate connection to the natural world you, your kayak – and those bears – are part of.

This is where the wild things are.

