

DEPARTURES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011

In Search of the *New* New Age

Roads Less Traveled • COASTAL CALIFORNIA to BOTSWANA

CONTENTS

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2010

Features

66 IN SEARCH OF THE *NEW* NEW AGE

On a forgotten stretch of California's Pacific Coast Highway, **MICHAEL HAINEY** finds peace of mind and authenticity.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MOSES BERKSON

76 A TWIST OF LIME... A HINT OF CILANTRO

Four savory recipes, four world-class resorts—from Hawaii to Turks & Caicos.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM SCHIERLITZ

80 CRUISING: THE A-LIST

BEN CRAMER says a brand-new era of glamour, luxury, and value is sailing back in style.

PHOTO-ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN UELAND

86 AT HOME IN BOTSWANA

At Zarafa, the year-old safari camp in the Selinda Reserve of northern Botswana, exclusivity and privacy are matched only by the camp's commitment to being extremely green and sumptuously luxurious at the same time.

RICHARD DAVID STORY goes on safari.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXANDRA PENNEY

94 RETURN TO SPLENDOR

For the last two years, one of New York's most classic and beloved hotels underwent more than just a \$100 million facelift. **STELLENE VOLANDES** pulls back the curtain on a brand-new Pierre that's more elegant than ever.



66

Pfeiffer Beach, in Big Sur, California, one stop on the little-known Hippie Trail

AT HOME



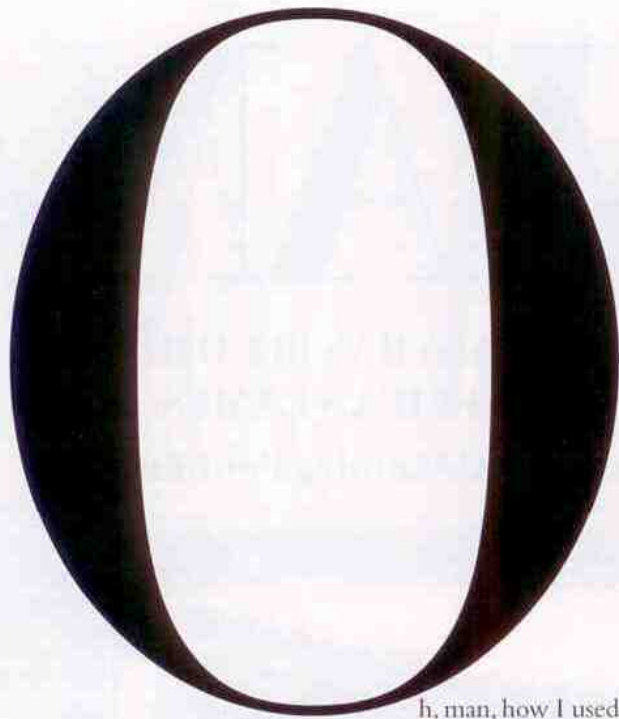
A leopard stalks not far from the grand canvas tent of the main lodge.

B*in* OTS WANA

WITH FOUR TENTS ON 325,000 ACRES, ZARAFI HAS BECOME THE MODEL FOR A NEW GENERATION OF AFRICAN CAMPS.

By Richard David Story Photographs by Alexandra Penney





h, man, how I used to love hippopotamus as a kid,” Dukes, a charismatic fortysomething Botswanan is telling me, blissfully remembering those days, not all that long ago, when his father would hunt, skin, gut, and fry the creatures. He’s telling me this as he and I—emphasis on the *he*—paddle our way down the Selinda spillway not far from Zarafa, the extraordinary and very private year-old safari camp opened by conservationist/philanthropist Dereck Joubert and his Great Plains company. It’s just the two of us in a shallow, old-fashioned canoe. Photographer Alexandra Penney and her guide, Michael, are following behind. Here on the river, shortly before the sun sets, all is quiet, peaceful—and then they appear.

“You wouldn’t believe how good fried hippo is,” Dukes is saying. “Yummm...so juicy and fatty...!”

Right at this moment I wish I could enjoy his enthusiasm, but in front of us are three 10,000-pound hippos gliding, floating, paddling, or whatever the hell hippos do. We were told from day one that hippos are among the most dangerous creatures in the Okavango Delta. In fact, barring mosquitoes, hippos kill more people than any other creatures. Nor does one ever want to cross the river in front of them, especially toward evening. Everything that had always appeared endearing about them is now not cute at all—not those giant Easter Island-like heads, devil-horn ears, or bulging eyes. It’s all just one bobbing, throbbing mass of danger right within throwing distance of our canoe.

“Ummm...Dukes, ummm...What do you think we should do?” I ask, not knowing whether to paddle or freeze. “Just how dangerous are these creatures?”

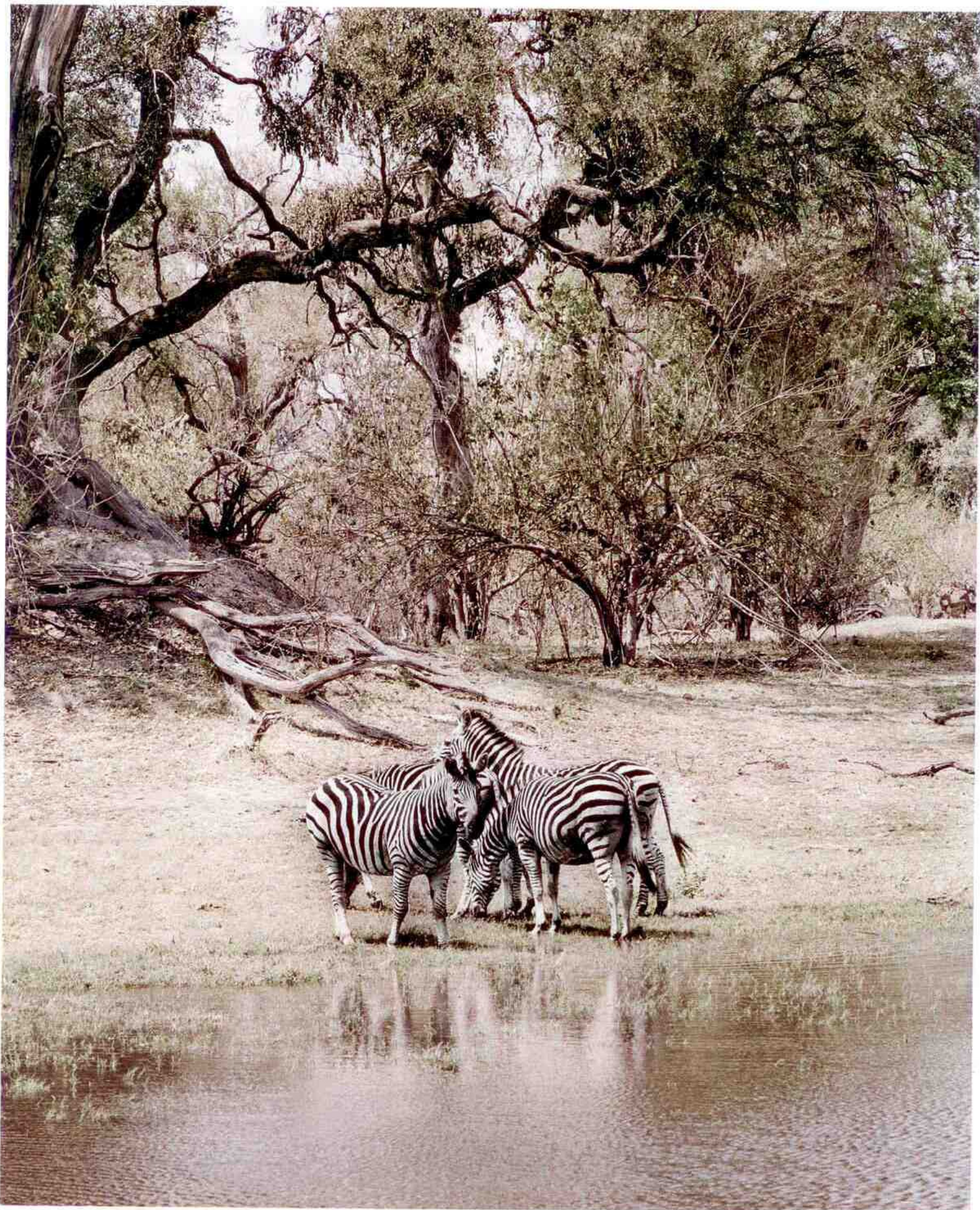
“They’re dangerous, but we’ll be okay.” And so, long, terrifying story short, we were.

The first safari I ever took was to Singita Sweni, in Kruger National Park, South Africa. I came back raving: Yes, yes, I saw the Big Five—lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo—and you wouldn’t believe the food! And the camp itself? Six perfect suites nestled into the river; they were so minimal and cool they could have been designed by Le Corbusier, albeit with WiFi and laptops. More recently I was in Tanzania at Grumeti Reserves, whose grand main lodge is outfitted with an English-style billiards room, art by Peter Beard, and a plunge pool in each of its stone “cottages.” **CONTINUED »**





On the deck of Zarafa's living room overlooking Zibadianja Lagoon





*Sako Dux "Dukes" Motakatshipi rules
as chief guide/counselor/scholar/friend.*

"But in the end, we really don't come on safari for a five-star hotel. Shouldn't we leave that sort of thing to the likes of the George V?" asks Dereck Joubert.


For the past 25 years, Joubert and his wife, Beverly, have committed themselves to helping save African wildlife through fund-raising, Emmy award-winning documentaries, and a series of books written by Joubert and photographed by Beverly. *Eye of the Leopard*, which was published by Rizzoli in September, follows a leopard cub from eight days old to five years. In 2007 Joubert founded Great Plains with former Wilderness Safaris CEO Colin Bell, and Zarafa is their first foray into ecotourism. The intention is to make all the projects long-term and sustainable which, in the case of Zarafa, means exclusive and expensive. "The only way to guarantee sustainability is through an appropriately high tariff. For a family of eight to take over the entire camp, which was how it was conceived, is \$12,000 per night."

In its understated way, the camp is about as close to five stars as one could hope. Its four tents—yes, only four, for a maximum of eight people—are not only extremely comfortable but very beautiful: Persian rugs, copper bathtubs, and thread counts to die for. By any standard Zarafa would be extraordinary, but because it was built to the particularly demanding ecostandards of Joubert, this camp, on the Selinda Reserve, in northern Botswana, one of the richest natural habitats on earth, is also a model of low-risk luxury. The in-house electricity generation system (Zarafa is powered entirely by 136 Sanyo solar panels that deliver 220-volt electricity 24 hours a day), coupled with stringent use of recycled hardwoods (the furniture is built from Indonesian mahogany, much of it salvaged from the 2004 tsunami) and careful operating processes (all vehicles run on recycled cooking oil), help to keep the carbon footprint to a minimum.

Joubert says he hopes that Zarafa will make a difference. "I will feel we've done our job if a guy who comes here for, say, two or three days, then leaves on his G5 for Geneva to close a deal, is influenced even this much," he says, pressing his fingers together, "by the green technology and ethics of this camp." The hope is that business decisions will be impacted in some small way by what is learned here. So committed is Joubert to getting it right that Great Plains's self-described policy is "copy lift rather than copyright," meaning

the company actually *wants* to share its business plan with as many people as possible. The entire step-by-step process of building Zarafa, complete with architectural and environmental details, is available to any and all.

Zarafa's day-to-day operations are run by Stuart Bell and Tessa Campbell, an attractive, well-educated couple who understand the art of hospitality as much as the landscape around them. Campbell counts among her proudest achievements her staff, singling out cook Lindie van der Heever. For Bell, it's the solar farm. For me, it was Botswana-

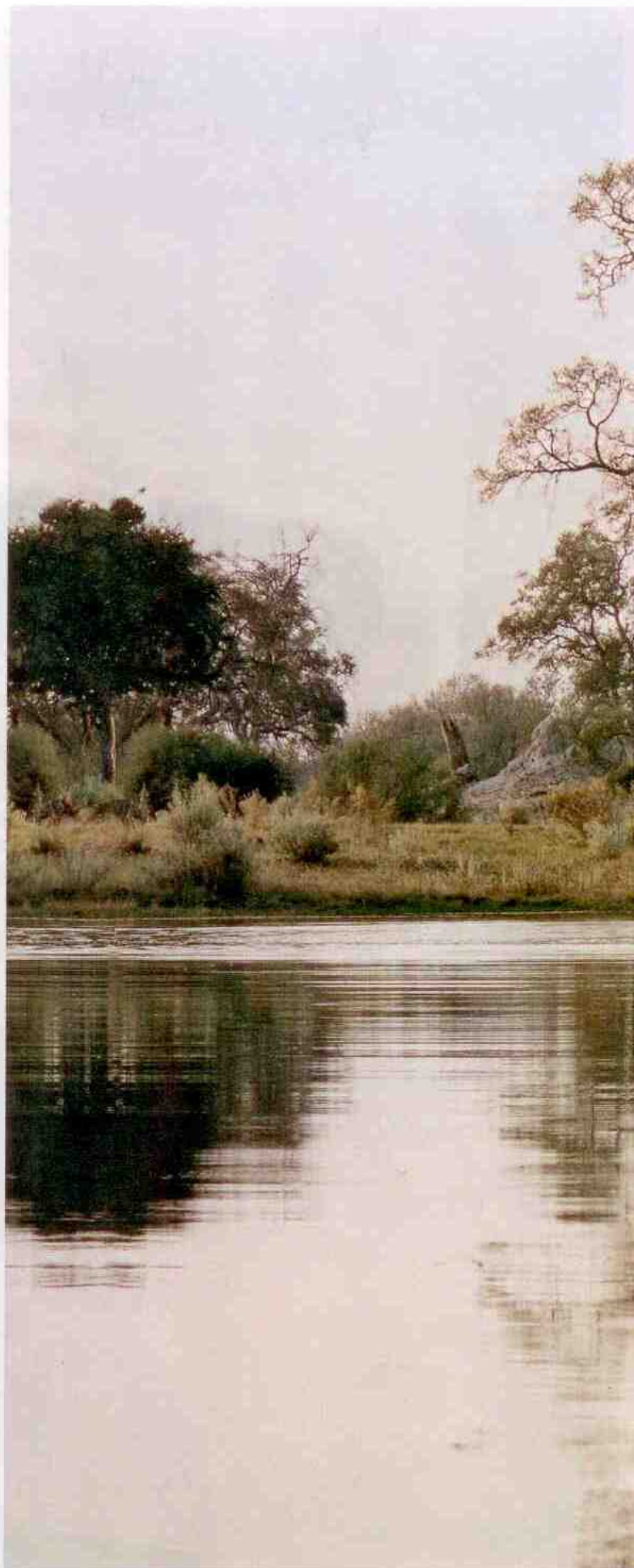


This story was photographed in Botswana in September 2009 with a Canon EOS 5D Mark II and Canon Powershot G10.

born Sako Dux "Dukes" Motakatshipi, Zarafa's chief guide.

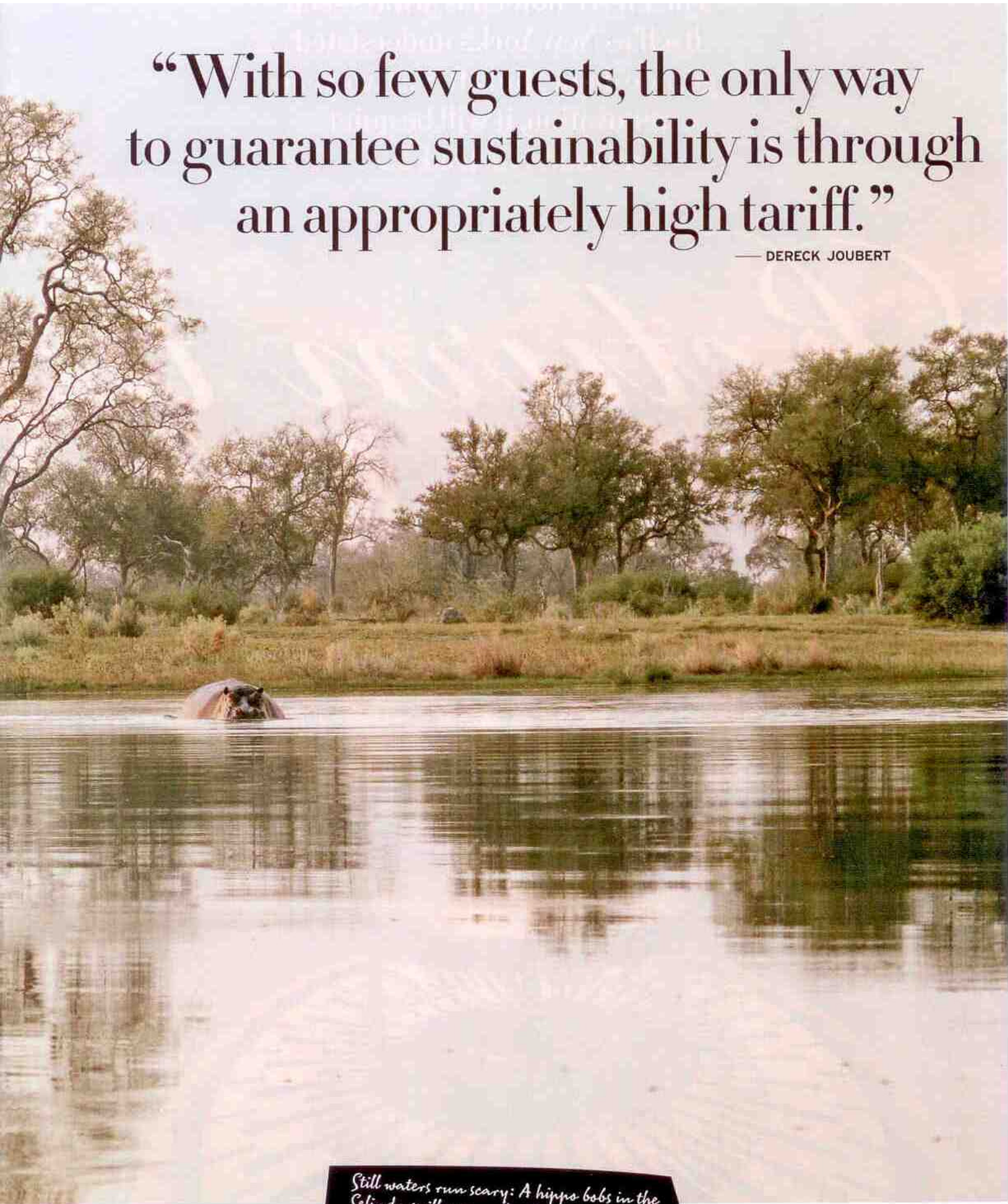
Joubert says it was a friend of his—an international businessman and billionaire, in fact—who inspired Zarafa. "He told me he had cancer and didn't expect to live much longer. That said, he loved Africa and safari. He asked me, quite literally, 'Where on earth should my last safari be?' That's the sort of place I wanted this to be." ■

Costs on a fully inclusive basis include all game activities and start at \$1,400 per person per night in high season (June through November). For more information, go to journeysbydesign.co.uk.



“With so few guests, the only way to guarantee sustainability is through an appropriately high tariff.”

— DERECK JOUBERT



Still waters run scary: A hippo bobs in the Selinda spillway under the midday sun.