

THE EXPERTS

This month's **Health** **Books** **Food** **Advice**

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WHAT YOU WANT TO DO THE WILD THING IN AFRICA WHO YOU NEED SAFARI MAN WILL JONES

Will Jones grew up in six different African countries. For a while his family had a shack on the western shore of Lake Langano, south of Addis Ababa, in Ethiopia. That side of the lake was completely denuded. The trees had long since been turned into charcoal. One day Jones, who had recently graduated with a degree in environmental science, crossed to the other side of the lake. The trip, in an under-powered dinghy, took about three hours. He was rewarded with the spectacle of a dense, thriving forest of native podocarpus. Something about the place struck a deep chord. He spent the next three years there, first as a volunteer raising money to protect the forest, then managing an eco-lodge. He went on to found Journeys by Design, a bespoke-safari outfit that operates across much of the continent, from the highlands of Ethiopia down to the South African veldt. It attracts families and first-time travellers, as well as those looking for the most far-flung frontier experiences, matching destinations and accommodation accordingly. Lately, Jones' attention has been absorbed by a new project, Wild Philanthropy, which launches on 1 June. The idea is to bring would-be philanthropists together with stakeholders in large-scale conservation projects in Africa. 'It's not about travel as such, but about the issues that surround travel, about eco-systems and how to maintain a healthy mosaic.' He aims to sell 75 memberships, which will generate £500,000 a year and allow the trust to help conserve more than two million hectares of wilderness. Jones's own journey – from bush baby to tree-hugger to luxury-tour operator to this – didn't always proceed entirely by design. But it possesses a pleasing kind of symmetry. 'Ultimately, everything I've done has been about getting back into the forest.' STEVE KING www.journeysbydesign.com