

GREYSTOKE MAHALE LAKE TANGANYIKA, MAHALE MOUNTAINS, TANZANIA

This lodge is one of *Harpers'* favourite retreats in Africa, and the setting is magical. The forested peaks of the Mahale Mountains rise up to a height of more than 2,000 feet behind the six thatched *bandas*, which have been rebuilt this year. In front of the *bandas*, the white sandy beach spreads before the translucent blue water of Africa's greatest freshwater lake, which teems with exotic fish and is safe to swim in. The lodge owns a dhow that can sail you across the lake's unruffled surface to fish, snorkel or watch hippos dance gracefully underwater.

The main reason for making the long journey to Greystoke is to watch the wild chimps living on the Mahale Mountains; the group of 100 or so here are familiar enough with human visitors to allow close observation. To sit on the cool forest floor in their company while they go about their lives – yawning, munching, playing, snoozing, fighting and scratching – unbothered by your presence is utterly amazing.

Four nights full board, from £2,500 a person, including flights and all activities, with Audley Travel (01869 276220; www.audleytravel.com).

ISHASHA WILDERNESS CAMP NTUNGWE RIVER, UGANDA

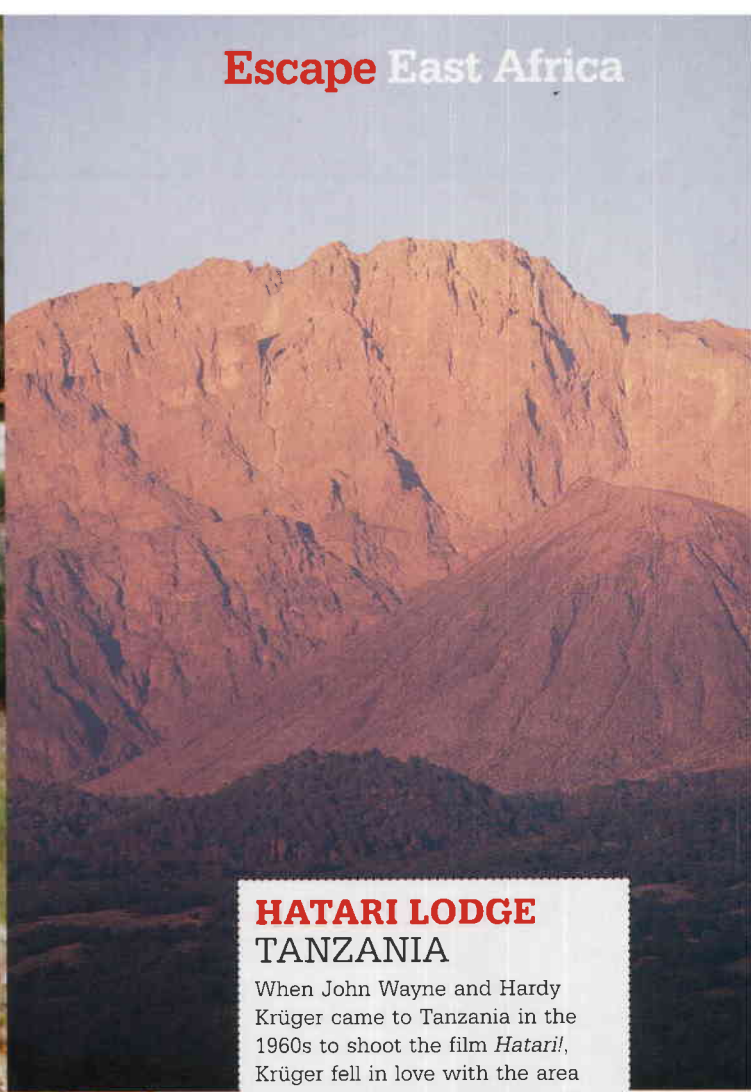
Uganda has some of the loveliest and most varied landscape in East Africa. Until recently, 'roughing it' has been the only way of travelling here, but now there is a simple *meru* (similar to a marquee) tented camp beside the Ntungwe river. All tents have ensuite bathrooms, hot water and outdoor showers. Buffalo, antelope and lions can be seen in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, and the camp is an ideal way to break the journey between gorilla-watching in Bwindi and the spectacular Murchison Falls. Visit www.wildfrontiers.co.uk for more information. A nine-night 'primates' itinerary costs from £4,489 a person full board, including two nights at Ishasha, flights and transfers, with Abercrombie & Kent (0845 070 0611; www.abercrombiekent.co.uk).

LITTLE SHOMPOLE GREAT RIFT VALLEY, KENYA

Shompole, the ultimate designer lodge, is an innovative addition to the African safari experience and has repeatedly been on *Harpers'* shortlist of glamorous favourites. This year sees the completion of Little Shompole, a self-contained mini-lodge built on the hill behind Shompole. It is designed on the same principles – free-flowing architectural lines with no walls or windows to

make the best use of the space, and to allow exhilarating views over the escarpment. The two new suites share a 37-metre lap pool, which looks out over Lake Natron, and the rooms have beds measuring nine feet square – large enough to accommodate an entire football team. Little Shompole also has its own dedicated team of staff with a guide and butler service, so privacy is a given. *Four nights full board, from £1,498 a person, with Journeys by Design (01273 623790; www.journeysbydesign.co.uk).*





HATARI LODGE TANZANIA

When John Wayne and Hardy Krüger came to Tanzania in the 1960s to shoot the film *Hatari!*, Krüger fell in love with the area and stayed on to turn the crew's accommodation into a guest house. But the rigours of running a business in the bush got the better of him, and the lodge was sold. In 2004, Jörg and Marlies Gabriel bought it and renamed it Hatari Lodge in honour of Krüger and his film. The 10 rooms are decorated with a retro theme, reflecting the film's Sixties style.

The lodge's setting is spectacular: it is flanked by the looming Mount Kilimanjaro on one side, and the imposing Mount Meru in the other. There are views across Momella meadow, where buffalo, waterbuck (a type of antelope) and warthogs feed daily, along with the occasional elephant and giraffe. Guests can walk to the nearby hippo pool; take a trek to Mount Meru; go to the Momella Lakes to see the flamingos; or stroll by waterfalls and see the birds, butterflies and wild flowers along the Ngare Nanyuki river. The lodge is a perfect place to recover after climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. *Three nights full board, from £600 a person, including transfers and park fees, with Cazenove + Loyd (020 7384 2332; www.cazloyd.com).*

TWIN PEAKS

A bedroom at Hatari Lodge. Above, from left: giraffe. A view of Mount Meru. Opposite: a banda at Manda Bay

