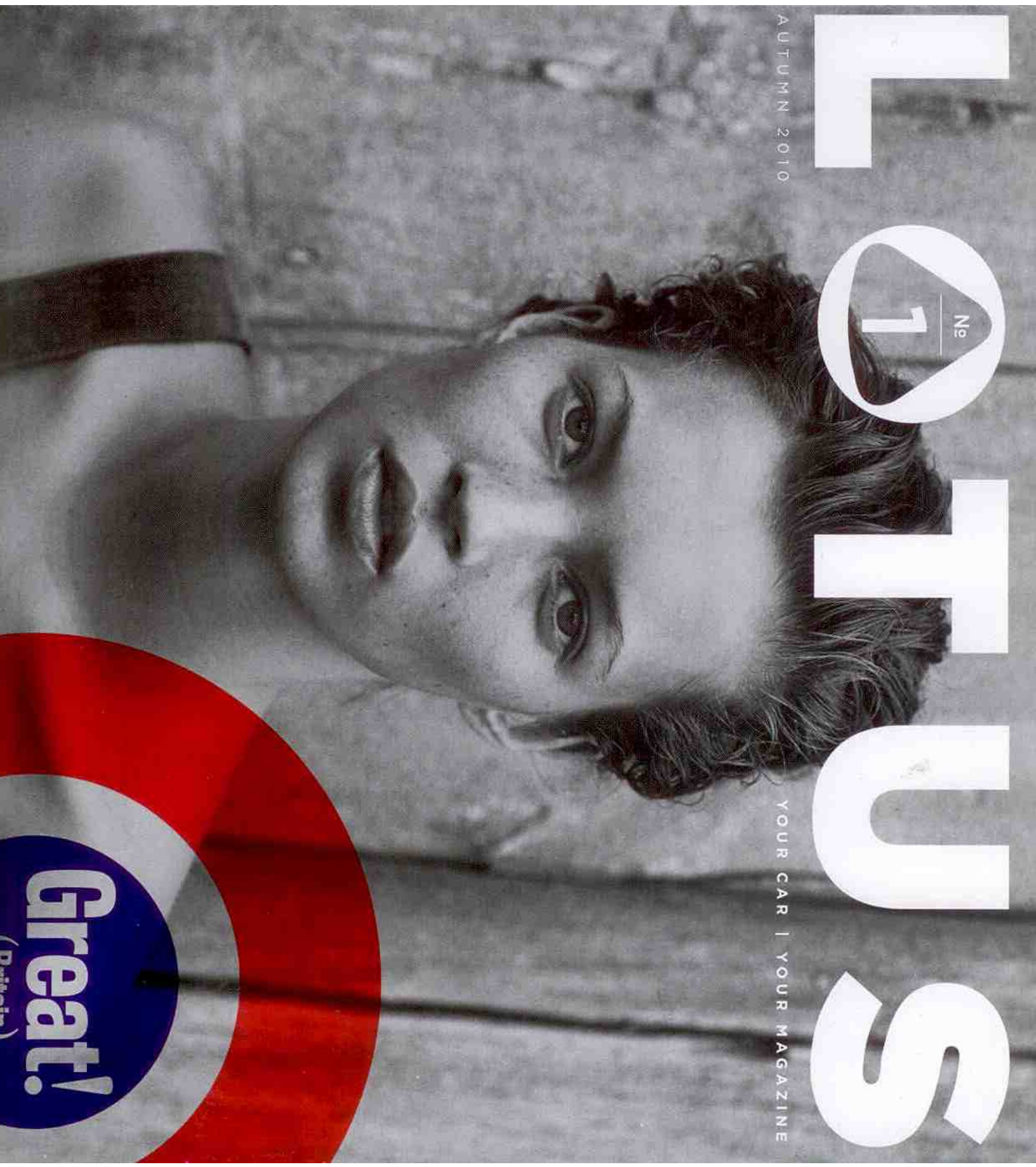


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5 | Where the Wild Things Are

Safaris that uncover an Africa you thought was gone

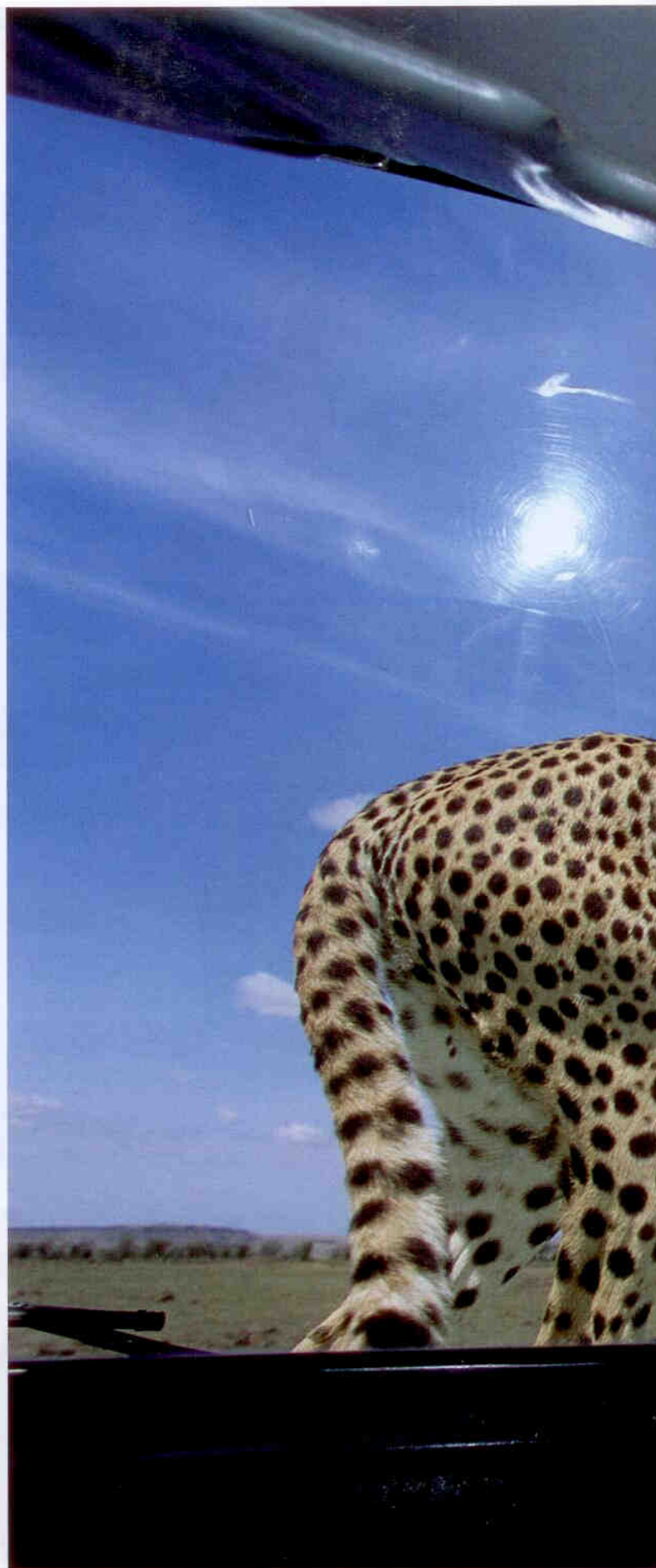
"Some safari companies think it's just about a fancy chandelier over the bathtub," says Will Jones, the founder of the British-based tour company Journeys by Design. "We go much further in depth than that — we have the little black book to Africa." Having been raised and educated in six different countries in Africa before working in various national parks on the continent, Jones isn't making any sort of idle boast. While many tourists settle for merely viewing the "big five" game animals (elephant, leopard, rhino, buffalo, and lion) and enjoying a gourmet meal under the stars, Jones caters to the most discerning of travelers: corporate tycoons, royal families, and high-profile types like Ralph Lauren, who recently took his family on one of Jones' well-curated trips.

Journeys by Design produces only about 50 custom trips each year, so guests can expect a once-in-a-lifetime experience. A safari to Kenya may include anthropologist-conservationist-scholar Richard Leakey giving a lecture on the origins of man along with a personal tour of the excavations at Lake Turkana, where fossils of the earliest human have been discovered. Knowing that his VIP customers have little time to spare, Jones tailors daily safaris according to the guests' interests — including, perhaps, a quick helicopter ride to watch a wildebeest migration in the Serengeti or to track gorillas in the hills of Rwanda.

For the traveler who has seen it all, Journeys by Design can take guests even farther, traveling into the most remote parts of, say, Ethiopia. Jones, who created the first not-for-profit camp in the country, has access to all sorts of marvels there, from the magnificent rock-hewn churches of Lalibela to the Omo delta, home of some of the most remarkable indigenous groups in the world, including the crocodile-hunting Dassanech tribes, the lip-plated Mursi, and the Hamar, who have mastered the body-decorating arts. Visitors get to see Africa as Jones knows it — diverse, raw, and staggeringly beautiful. And they'll get to feel good about it as well — Journeys by Design gives a percentage of its profits back to local schools, medical clinics, and foundations.

— Maura Egan

Jones' hand-tailored daily safaris may include a quick helicopter ride to watch a wildebeest migration in the Serengeti.



1. Little Governors' Camp has been rated as Kenya's leading safari lodge by the prestigious World Travel Awards for 2010

2. Cottars 1920s Camp, in the Masai Mara, is the oldest safari lodge in Africa, registered in 1919 – still owned by the Cottar family.

