

Adventure of a Lifetime

The genesis of the idea came from an extraordinary, awe-inspiring moment in the African wilderness. Hugh Coppen was on a walking safari along the edge of a forest with two business colleagues. Suddenly, they heard a rumbling noise that became louder and louder. The ground began to shake. Then, out of the corner of his eye, Coppen saw in the distance a herd of buffalo stampeding across the African savannah, kicking up so much dust that it looked like a violent sandstorm. Coppen and his colleagues watched with wonder and amazement as the buffalo thundered past in a fierce firestorm of rage. “That moment is etched into our psyche forever,” Coppen says. “It had an extraordinary impact on us and as we talked about it late into the night over a campfire, it conjured up all kinds of inspirations about what we can learn per-



sonally and professionally from the African wild.”

That moment was the motivation for Coppen to launch one of the most unique and exciting businesses in the world: Tasimba, an Africa safari adventure for CEOs and other business leaders that ultimately leaves them awestruck

Hugh Coppen created one of the most unique businesses in the world: Tasimba, an intimate Africa safari adventure for CEOs and business leaders that leaves them awestruck from a captivating experience in the natural wilderness.



from an intimate and captivating experience in the wilderness that changes them -- and their perspective on life -- forever.

“There’s nothing like it – and I mean nothing,” says Paul Witkay, Founder of The Alliance of Chief Executives in the Bay Area. “It was a fabulous experience – the best I’ve ever had anywhere. I relish totally new and unique experiences and this was the ultimate. It was the mother of all experiences.”

Thanks to Coppen, who has spent the majority of his life in the African wild and is one of the most passionate and knowledgeable people in the world when it comes to safaris and his homeland.

“He possesses a deep, intimate and enduring connection to his homeland that is so evident when he discusses Africa’s natural wildlife,” Witkay says.



Coppen grew up on a 3,000 acre farm near Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, and he has experienced hundreds of safaris in the forests, plains and rivers of the stunningly beautiful and electrifying African bush.

Everything changed in Africa and for Coppen in the late 1960s when political strife tore apart his country. At the time, he was studying at the University of Cape Town, where he embraced racial equality championed by Nelson Mandela.

“After I graduated, I was faced with the prospect of returning to Rhodesia and being drafted into the military of the all-white minority regime,” he says.

He refused to return and instead emigrated to North America, where he ultimately became CEO of several companies. His heart and mind, however, never left his scintillating homeland and he returned frequently just to experience safaris. It was then that he fused his two deepest passions together – business and the African wild – to form Tasimba.

There are many companies that provide African safari adventures, but none truly compare to Coppen’s magical, unforgettable journey and his encyclopedic knowledge of Africa and its vast wilderness, where the wildest beasts -- lions, hippos, leopards, giraffes, zebras, impalas, cheetahs, elephants, antelope, baboons -- roam free in their natural habitat right before your very eyes.

“Experiencing Africa through the eyes and heart of a man who not only grew up there but who understands, reveres and has committed

himself to preserving the country’s unique cultural and ecological treasures is simply beyond description,” says Rick Fitzgerald, the former CEO of Diageo Beverages in Canada. “It’s the experience of a lifetime.”

What makes Tasimba so unique is that Coppen’s visitors occupy a private concession of 225 square miles of the renowned Hwange National Park – 144,000 acres – and live there by themselves for one week. There are no cell phones, TV or internet.

“It is like something out of an Isak Dinesen memoir,” says David Markus, another Tasimba guest, referring to the author of *Out of Africa*. “You are disconnected from the outside both figuratively and literally.”

Linkwasha camp consists of beautifully appointed luxurious rooms each of which has stunning views of the picturesque landscape. Guests can sit on their private decks and gaze out at the prairie to watch elephants and other species come to drink at a waterhole just a few feet from the tent.

“Our camp has one of the greatest concentrations of different species anywhere in the world,” Coppen says. “That’s part of the uniqueness we offer. We have sole occupancy of the camp. There aren’t any other people



checking in and out. There are no lines of tour buses scooting from one wildlife sighting to the next. There are no other tourists. It’s surreal.”

So how do these exotic journeys in Coppen’s expansive private wilderness impact people from a business and leadership development perspective?



“Tasimba was born with one purpose: to bring groups of leaders to the African wilderness because it is so unique, so different, so out of their comfort zone that they become open to new insights, new thinking, new ideas, new input and new thoughts,” Coppen says. The idea is to inspire and change business leaders “in the last remaining wilderness of our world,” Coppen says. “We bring in key-

note speakers like Neville Isdell, former Chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola, to set the tone for the week. Being here in this cradle of mankind, people come away with a completely different view of themselves, who they are, where they’re going and what’s really important in their lives. They emerge from our camp as being much more focused in business and in life. It’s that transformation of self-discovery and self-awareness that is the driving force of our adventure.” — *By Rick Weinberg, California Business Journal*

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