

Ron & Mary Simon
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To: Katja & Diethelm Metzger, Hugo Kotze, and Julika Schmidt
CC: Patty Curnutte (Global Sportsman), Steve Turner (Travel with Guns)

On August 17, 2015, we (Mary & Ron Simon) took off on a wonderful African adventure to Namibia. With any three week trip, there are unknowns and trepidation as to how it will all go and we had those feelings with this trip. The good news was, all concerns were removed as we meet first Hugo and Willa and then Julika.

We arrived in Windhoek, Namibia early August 19th and Hugo was at the airport to meet us. That was a welcome reassurance for us.

We did not realize when we arrived that a 170 km drive to Ilala would be a three hour drive over dirt roads and paths through a desert landscape. At that time we knew we were in for an adventure and a pleasant one at that.

We had booked a 12 day leopard hunt and a 7 day photo sightseeing tour. Mary had never been on a hunt prior to this, so this was a total new adventure for her. Her anticipation was that the sightseeing would be the most enjoyable for her but she was interested in the hunting activity.

Wednesday the 19th we arrived at Ilala about 11:00. We unpacked and then had lunch (a great treat). After lunch, we got settled in, cleaned up from travel, rested and went out to sight the rifle, a wonderful 7mm Mag. After sighting, we drove around and came across a group of zebra. Needing zebra for leopard bait, I had my first opportunity to try the rifle for real. One shot, 120 yards, one zebra. Wonderful mountain zebra with great color. It will make a wonderful pedestal mount display. Mary was surprised that I was hunting already but loved the trophy.

Hugo and Julika that evening demonstrated how the days would go from here on. Mary and I left our room around 6:00pm to go to dinner. We were greeted with a nice fire to sit by and enjoy conversation. Unfortunately, Julika was working away to present one of her many WONDERFUL meals. Hugo, Mary and Ron sat by the fire enjoying conversation, beverages, and an inviting atmosphere. We enjoyed a wonderful dinner (as we did every evening) followed by more time around the fire with a beverages and conversation. THE HOSPITALITY, CONVERSATION, FIRE and ENTIRE ATMOSPHERE were beyond our expectation.

The next day, and for several days, Mary joined in the hunt, changing bait, checking bait and trail cameras, etc. The mountain passes were unbelievable. Hugo, with his GREAT SKILL, navigated "roads" in a fashion that was incredible. Hugo is truly a PROFESSIONAL in his ability, knowledge and skill.

On August 22nd, Mary was with me to hunt a trophy gemsbuck and on the 26th with me when we got a very mature springbuck. On the 23rd a trophy klipspringer was taken and on the 29th a second mountain zebra (for a rug) was taken. Each of the trophies has a story that will last forever in in our minds.

The morning August 24th started the most memorable day of the hunt for when we checked the baits, by the first mountain pass, a big tom leopard was on the trail camera enjoying the bait. Game was on.

Hugo and I got ready for a long evening of sleeping in the mountain. Again, Hugo being the professional he is, he had bed rolls ready and all the equipment needed for the hunt. We did not know if the leopard would show up at all, but more specifically would it be at dusk or dawn. It was a guessing game.

We got settled in about 2:00pm. We found the most comfortable ROCK to lie on and what... We were (I was) very fortunate. At last light the leopard (big tom) came to the bait. Hugo signaled me and I crawled up to the rifle. I settled myself by taking several DEEP BREATHS as I watched through the scope. One squeeze of the trigger, the leopard spun and was down. I am one BLESSED LUCKY hunter.

THANK YOU HUGO!

Ok enough with that, even though we could go on and on and on about the incredible mountains, desert, high plains, dry river beds, foliage, animals, birds, etc.

The real story to make an experience like this meaningful is the people.

We enjoyed Hugo and Julika. Willa was in camp a few days and we enjoyed conversation with her and time in Windhoek with Willa. Julika's children Oskar and Lotta then also were in camp and we enjoyed time with them by playing cards and Mary teaching them a new card game. The food and hospitality at Ilala was superior to that we experienced at the two Wilderness Camps, which is a great complement to all involved. Our hats off to Makadi Safaris. This was an experience of a life time.

By the way, Lotta, the "friendship bracelet" is still in good shape...thank you Lotta! And Oskar and Lotta, we enjoyed your little skit you performed.

Thanks to all!

Sincerely,

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