TRAVEL

In beautiful South Africa you're always a winner

In one respect and in no other, Africa is like Las Vegas. Some dnys you win, you hit the jackpot, and some days you don't.

One day you may stumble upon a rhinoceros and her baby or a pair of mating leapards, or you may spend one nwilely cold African night chasting a lion's coar without seeing so much as an impala. Fortunately in Africa, as opposed to Vegas, you always win some of the time, and your loss don't affect your etirement funds.

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This element of luck and chance makes it rather difficult to compare one safari trip to another. However, if you would like to put the odds in your favor, try the Nkombe Ranger Experience at Sabi Sabi in South Africa. One word of warningstains to the liyatt or the Ritz.

There is no electricity or running water at Nkombe Camp. The accommodations would best be described as luxurious canvas tents, and the bathroom consists of a latrine and two reed showers.

of a furme and cers.

Nkombe camp is not your traditional safari lodge. It is, in
fact, the training camp for Sabi
Sabi's game rangers. However,
in exchange for living like a

ranger for a week, you get to see the bush as few tourists ever do. Since Sahi Sahi is a private game reserve, you need not abide by all the restrictions at

Hot horn: The white rhinoceros mas once an endangered species because of



the Krueger National Park (bordering Sabi Sabi) or other public reserves in such countries as Kenya.

At Sabi Sabi the vehicles can have open tops so there is no barrier between you and the unimals.

You can walk through the bush (as long as you're with the ranger and his trusty elephant rifle), drive off road to follow the big five 'delephants, lions, rhino, cape buffale and leopard) or go on night drives, the best way to see lions and leopards in action. While you may be confined to Sabi Sabi's property, the animals are not, so you will see the same game as the visitors at Krueger or the ritzy Mala Mala reserve.

However, what separates Nkombe camp from Sabi Sabi's traditional lodges is flexibility, which, in the bush, means everything. You have your own ranger, tracker and cook. While everyone else must return to the lodge to have dinner, you can stoy as long as you wish, enjoying the company of animals without the crowd of four or five other Land Rovers. A fantastic dinner will be awaiting you at the camp when you return, whether it be at 8 p.m. or 10 p.m.

Staying at Nkombe camp is like having a private tour with-out the hefty price. Nkombe Camp runs from approximately April to October depending on the weather, mak-

ing it the perfect opportunity for a family summer vacation. In fact our summer, (which is Africa's winter) in the best time to visit Africa. While the last time to visit Africa. While the last weather and viewing of animals due to this time offers the best weather and viewing of animals due to the bare vegetation. Children (and adults) will love sitting in the tracker seat on the hoad of the Land Rover, shooting at targets with the elephant rifle and learning to track animals by their footprints.

The Nkombe Ranger Camp is only five days, so you'll probably want to extend your trip for a few more days. Try Victoria Falls, Cape Tewn or a totally different saferi experience in Botawana. Additionally, I highly recommend you book your trip through Christine Tyson at the Africa Desk (1-802-284-8796 or Cafrica@africadesk.com). Luckily, she joined us at the Nkombe Camp and was almost like a second ranger. She probably spends more time in Africa than in America and is an expert on hotels, restaurants and good South African wine. Either sho or her son-in-law Tristan will tailor your trip and make it the best possible experience.

Of course, you can't go wrong in Africa. You will see something spectacular, something that you won't forget (and if you do, you always have home you for so you friends.) While most Americans go to Kenya, there is no reason not to go to South Africa. Everyone is very friendly, the land is

videos). While most Americans go to Kenya, there is no reason not to go to South Africa. Everyone is very friendly, the land is beautiful and unspoiled and I've felt safer there than in man European countries. If I can't convince you, talk to Christine. She will.

She will.

Perhaps, I was wrong about the odd similarity between Vegas and Africa. Perhaps you never lose in Africa. Christine used to say "just another beauti-

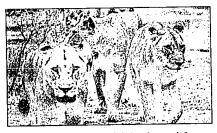


Nasty bunch: Hippopotamus, considered the most dangerous African animals, sunbathe in the Sabi River. Photos by Eric's brother David Rothfeder, a sophomore at Groves High School.



King at rest: A young male lion waits for confrontation with the male dominant lion of the pride.

ful day in Africa whenever we saw something spectacular. Even when our ranger woke us at four in the morning because he heard the roar of a lion, and we braved the cold African night without seeing a single animal, the stars were beautiful. They shined brighter than all the elec-



Stalkers: A pride of lions and their cubs search for

tric light bulbs of Las Vegas. Hills is a freshman at Yale Uni-Just another beautiful day in Africa. Africa and Zimbabwe with his family this summer. (Thanks Mom and Dad!)

GREAT ESCAPES

Great Escapes features various Great Escapes features various travel news items. Send news leads to Hugh Callagher, assistant managing editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax them to (313) 591-7279 or e-mail at hgallagher@ oc. honocomm.net

SKIING, SNOWMOBILE MAP

Travel Michigan has two new publications for winter sports enthusinsts. "The 1998-99 Michicultusinsts. The vinter sports cultusinsts. The 1984-99 Miting and Great Lakes. Great Sking brochure is 15 pages of information listing 42 downhill ski areas and 173 cross-country ski facilities. The brochure also contains a 2 for I discount coupon at participating ski areas. The free brochure is available by calling (888)78-GREAT (784-7328). Each listing offers information about the facility which includes the number of and length of longest runs and/or trails, availability of rental equipment, instruction and lodging and disping information.

ing information.
"The Michigan Snowmobile
Trail Map" is also available free

by calling (888)78-GREAT. Michigan's 5,800 miles of groomed snowmobile trails are featured on the free map, as are snowmobiling safety tips and a listing of additional sources for local, more detailed snowmobile

local, more detailed snowmobile trail maps.
Travelers may also call toll-free (888)78-GREAT to speak with travel counselors about planning a winter vacation and to request a free copy of the "Michigan Fall/Winter Calendard of Events & Travel Guide," 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday-Friday and 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

and Sunday.

RAVEL PROGRAM

Marie Woo and Gloria Frank
of the Michigan Oriental Art
Society will give a talk on "Journcy to the West in China" about
their two month trip in western
China this past pring surveying
'the decline of craft ceamics
produced in traditional villages,
The program of the Michigan
Oriental Art Society in 130 p.ms
Sunday, Nov. 15, at the Troj
Public Library, Big Beaver at



42500 Heyes, Subs 400 Olivan Township, MI 46008

(810) 268 (1500)



75. The meeting is open to the public without charge.

BIME MOUNTAIN SKI TRIP

Schooleraft College EdgeRunner Ski Club is spensoring a trip
Ski Blue Mountain, Ontario,
Feb. 5-7, 1999. The trip includes
two-night condo accommodations, two day/night lift passes,
two breakfosts, one dinner, hot
tubs, saumas and more. The club
offers this trip at a special price
of only \$159 to its members and
\$189 for non-members. You must
be 18 to participate. For more
information, call (734462-4422.

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GRAND TRAVERSE PACKAGES
Grand Traverse Resort has
designed three new packages
and redesigned two perennial
favorites for the winter season.
Just For Family is priced at
\$349 per room and includes two
nights accommodations; a breakfast basket each day; rental of

bicycles, in-line skates, crosscountry skis or skates; one free inroom movie; video game tokens
and a snowman accessory kit.
Golden Days priced at \$129
per person (double occupancy)
includes two-nights accommodations, free casino shuttle, two
casino discount books, breakfast
each day and shopping discounts.

Let It Snow is priced at \$189
per person (double accupancy)
and includes two-nights accommodations, ski lift ticket discount for your choice of Traverse
City region ski area, two welcome cockulis, breakfast each
day, two logo fanny-packs, real
of cross-country skis or snowshoes for use on Grand Traverse
Resort Trails.

The continuing packages are
the Just the Two of Us getaway
prices at \$359 per room which
includes dinner at the Trillium

Restaurant and Carefree Get-nway priced at \$139 per person. For more information, call (800)748-0303.

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CRIM CRUISE
Former Metro Detroit TV news anchor Mort Crim will host AAA
Travel's Mort Crim Celebrity
Cruise on the Grand Princess,
April 25 to May 2.
The seven-day cruise will vist ports of call in St. Thomas, St.
Marten and Princess Cays.
In addition to a welcome reception, where guests can mingle with Mort, there will be a book signing even, a presentation

with Mort, there will be a book signing even, a presentation "How to Watch TV and Still Be Happy" and a Bon Voyage gift Crim's new book, "Second Thoughts."

Thoughts."
Rates for cruise begin at \$1,079 and include airfare. For more information on the Grand Princess, visit the ship's web site at www.grandprincess.com. For

more information, call any AAA Travel office.

HOTEL HONORED

The Days Inn & Suites of Tra-verse City was named 1998 Hotel of the Year by Days Inn of America.

The criteria for this award is based on guest satisfaction, con-dition of the hotel, quality assurance scores, occupancy, revenue and public relations.

Busch Gardens of Tampa Bay is offering a "Christmas Celebra-tion." Nov. 21 through Jan. 4 at the African-themed family

adventure park.

More than a dozen singers and dancers combined with a winter wonderland set will be featured



