

REFLECTING ON AFRICA

Hamiltons Tented Camp

It is the moment everyone has been waiting for. There, in front of us, perched high on a sturdy Marula tree limb, lies a magnificent and very content leopard. She has already had her fill of the unfortunate impala wedged on a fork of the branch. .

Text by Fransje van Riel / Photography © Hamiltons Tented Camp



The extraordinary sighting is not far from Hamiltons Tented Camp, a genuinely romantic safari camp named after Colonel James Stevenson-Hamilton and one that perfectly reflects the classic *Out of Africa* - style so archetypal of the early 20th century safaris. Both the main camp's canopy and the six lavishly appointed elevated safari tents are a dreamy cream colour. Furnishings are luxuriously resplendent; think king-size beds, wall-attached hanging lanterns, brass light switches, a quaint writing desk with a black and white photograph of a young Colonel Stevenson-Hamilton in a frame, ornamental stowage trunks, Victorian chairs and glass-cut ice-bucket with similar glasses with a complimentary bottle of water and a tumbler with sherry.

The six suites are connected to one another and the main area via wooden walkways. Each suite boasts wooden decks with plunge pools and exquisite private salas to while away the day overlooking the seasonal N'waswitsontso river. The panoramic views across the river are stunning; riverine trees are a favourite roosting area for the local troop of baboons. The en-suite Victorian-style bathroom is equally romantic, with a white slipper bath, double basin, separate toilet, and rain shower that offers equally breathtaking views. Modern mod-cons such as a tea and coffee station, copious plugs for charging camera batteries, and an air-conditioning unit ensure an optimal and luxurious tented safari experience.

The main interior of the camp is open to one side and serves as the lounge area. Its plush sofas and chairs, nostalgic lamps, and coffee tables make it the perfect place to sit and just quietly enjoy the charming setting. There is no cell phone reception; however, Hamiltons now offers guests Wi-Fi connectivity in the camp's main areas.

The lounge is extended by a teak main deck, where guests enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner. Breakfast is a buffet feast of croissants, pastries, cereals and yoghurts, platters of fresh fruits, cheeses and meats, followed by a hot plated dish, all enjoyed in the dappled shade of the deck's magnificent sausage tree. For those keen to indulge, bubbly is already on ice.

With a few short hours at leisure before lunch, guests can opt for a snooze or, as in my case, indulge in a foot massage on my private deck.

Lunch is served from 13h00. Impeccable butlers serve a delicious fresh beetroot salad, complimented by avocado, slices of tomato and greens. The silver cutlery and cut glassware make it all the more enjoyable. High tea is served at 15h30, just before departure on the afternoon game drive.

Nick, our knowledgeable guide, steers the vehicle onto the road that meanders along the camp on the opposite riverbank, which gives lovely views of the tents. We drive through the riverine forest before emerging at a clearing where a large elephant bull is drinking from a small pool of water.

About ten minutes later, we find ourselves on the road alongside a dry riverbed where we encounter a lone lioness walking ahead. She looks hungry, and when she spots a large male impala, we are treated to a series of crouches and stalks. It is fascinating to see, but unfortunately for the lioness, she has been noticed, and her plan is foiled.



As if out of nowhere, a number of other lionesses suddenly appear from the dense foliage on the other side of the bank. It is the Hamiltons Pride. The two dominant males are not with them, but later, after our fabulous stop for sundowners, we are surprised to come across a large male lion very close to camp.

It is pitch black by now. We can see dozens of impala eyes following the lion's movements as he calmly strides alongside our vehicle; he is seemingly not interested in a meal and instead begins to roar. It is primordial magic.

Upon return to camp, we are welcomed by butlers bearing glasses of sherry and refreshing towels. It is time for this evening's three-course dinner and, seated at my table for one, with its classic white linen, crystal glasses and silver cutlery highlighted against the night sky by the flickering golden glow of the paraffin lamp, I can't imagine any other experience being able to beat this.

Hamiltons Tented Camp's ultra-romantic atmosphere, spectacular setting, exceptional service, and attention to detail makes this a phenomenal wildlife destination to which I will always want to return.

To make your reservation, call Reservations on +27 11 516 4367 or email res@extraordinary.co.za. For more info, visit www.hamiltonstentedcamp.co.za.



POWER IN
PERFECT
BALANCE

+27 (0)21 569 0362 | winepod@stellenzicht.com | www.stellenzicht.com



DRINK RESPONSIBLY. NOT FOR PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18.