



## BLESSED BY LEGENDS

**A shark expert, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Sir Elton John, and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were just some of the extraordinary characters that came to define a rather spectacular Brown + Hudson journey.**

A couple from London wanted to enjoy experiences that were out of the ordinary, thrilling, ultra-luxurious, and most importantly, hard for their peers to match. They were adventurous and active types with an interest in history and politics.

Their dream journey had classic African experiences at its core: spectacular game safaris, tracking rare species on land and at sea, culinary adventures and cultural learning. All this was to be rounded off with a blissful week on the beach.

For Brown + Hudson, their brief was a mere canvas. From here we set out to make every stage of this trip extraordinary and utterly bespoke. Using insights about the couple's dreams and wishes we pushed the boundaries of what is considered 'possible' - far beyond the norm.

We started at the exquisite Molori, where we selected the suite that many consider South Africa's finest; heads of state book the *Metsi* when they go on safari. But the choice wasn't just driven by the accommodation; Greg Lederle had recently been elected as the country's best safari guide. We couldn't imagine a more suitable expert to introduce our clients to the wild.

The property proved to be an excellent choice as they saw not only the charismatic Big 5, but also plenty of rarer game, including Wild Dog with their pups. Seasoned safari aficionados dream of such encounters. Dana Allen, Southern Africa's leading photographer, documented it all for us. We had involved him to coach our clients in the fine art of wildlife photography.

At Tswalu in the Kalahari, our clients not only saw rare desert species such as Pangolin and Meerkat, but we also arranged a rather exclusive glimpse behind the scenes of a world-class conservation initiative. Flying by helicopter, they spent a day with a team of vets participating in tracking and sedating wild rhino, before witnessing how microchips were implanted into the animals' horns for their protection.

Given the groom's strict marathon training regime, we convinced South Africa's leading sports scientist Professor Tim Noakes to lend us his expertise. As a regular visitor at Tswalu, veteran of over 70 marathons and author of one of the sport's essential textbooks, he was uniquely qualified to create a personalized wilderness running guide for the Kalahari. Based on his recommendations, we mapped out and secured a stunning 18 km running route within the reserve.

The uber-romantic Birkenhead House in Hermanus became their next base. As they were going to be there during the peak of the whale season, we felt the couple should spend some time with the man known as 'The Whale Whisperer'. Few know the Southern Right Whales in the bay better than he does. During their stay they enjoyed spectacular sightings from the best vantage spots on shore, from their chartered yacht and even from the air.

To complement their discovery of whales, we introduced them to Chris Fallows, the leading authority on Great White Sharks. Despite his busy schedule shooting for the BBC and National Geographic he took time out to give our clients an unforgettable afternoon of epic shark cage diving and story-telling.

The next chapter was inspired by Elton John's private concert at our clients' wedding. The couple stayed at Franschoek's La Residence, where the artist had designed the very suite we chose for them. In the evening they were introduced to South Africa's most celebrated chef, Margot Janse. The recipes they created during their cooking class and enjoyed for dinner were specially selected to tie in with their gastronomic preferences, collected along the way by our staff.

The following day was truly dramatic: In response to their interest in local history and politics, we arranged an informal meeting with the Nobel Prize winner Archbishop Tutu. Over a cup of tea our travelers were charmed by His Grace's great wit, warmth and humanity. Rather appropriately for a honeymoon, the Archbishop also chose to mark the occasion by giving their wedding an informal blessing.

Given that the groom had been a member of his country's junior swimming team, their next encounter was highly topical. At our request, Ryk Neethling, South Africa's most prolific Olympic swimmer and gold medalist agreed to meet them for lunch and show them his new swimming academy for children. Amazing memories.

Arguably one of the best ways to get a first glimpse of beautiful Cape Town is from the air. With this in mind we had a helicopter meet our clients in Franschoek and fly them right into the heart of the city, of course via the Cape Peninsula, the 12 Apostles, Lion's Head and Table Mountain. In glorious weather the sights were





stunning. And so was their next residence, the wonderful Ellerman Villa, which we had reserved for their exclusive use, including their own staff, chef and spa team.

While pampering in these wonderful environs was high on the agenda over the next days, our travelers also visited Robben Island on the only private yacht allowed to dock there. Their visit was led by a former ANC activist, fellow inmate and contemporary of Nelson Mandela, whose stories gave them real insight into this dark chapter of South Africa's past. A more uplifting note was added later whilst visiting micro-development projects and schools in the townships.

After all the excitement and adventure, we flew the couple to the Seychelles by private jet. Here we had reserved the stunning Villa 11 at North Island, recently chosen by the newly wed Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the occasion of their honeymoon. 7 blissful days on the beach ensued, made even more dreamy with diving, snorkelling, sailing and a helicopter flight to nearby Praslin and La Digue.

Conceptual thought, creativity, imagination and access to incredible characters were the foundations of this spectacular experience but equally important were the details and romantic touches that made the trip exceptional.

In Johannesburg, the crew of the private jet welcomed the couple with an exquisite selection of flowers inspired by the wedding theme. Inside the jet, the headrest covers bore embroidery with their wedding emblem. Arriving in the Metsi suite they found a silver framed wedding photograph on their bedside table. On their departure day at Molori, the staff saw them off with African wedding songs and a Land Rover decorated in "Just Married" paraphernalia. Video libraries at Ellerman House and North Island were stocked to reflect their movie taste. Books from a specially tailored reading list were sent out to the properties so the couple could read up on their experiences. Needless to say, chefs were briefed well in advance on very specific dietary requirements, and conversations were held with spa therapists to ensure treatments were personally tailored. And there was more ...

*Among the many examples of our work we chose to share this particular one with you because it is a perfect illustration of what truly bespoke travel means to Brown + Hudson: everything is possible.*

*The experiences in this trip were hand-crafted and selected for these clients, your brief might be completely different. Please call us on +44 203 358 0110 to explore the possibilities.*

