



ZOOMER

**ELECTION
2019**

**I'M
ONE!**

**Helen
Mirren**
WHAT A DAME
AT 74

**SECOND
ACTS**
HOW TO FOLLOW
YOUR PASSION
AND START
A BUSINESS

**MOSES'
LAST WORD**
THE GLOBAL
RETREAT
TRUMP, PUTIN
AND BORIS
WALK INTO A...
Pg. 146

**ELEVATE
YOUR LIFE!**

BODY | MIND | SPIRIT

HORMONES & YOU | BRAIN HEALTH NEWS | 20 WAYS TO GET HAPPY

TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE ♦ TRUST IN LOVE AGAIN

ENTERTAIN IN STYLE FOOD, FASHION, HOME, DETOX

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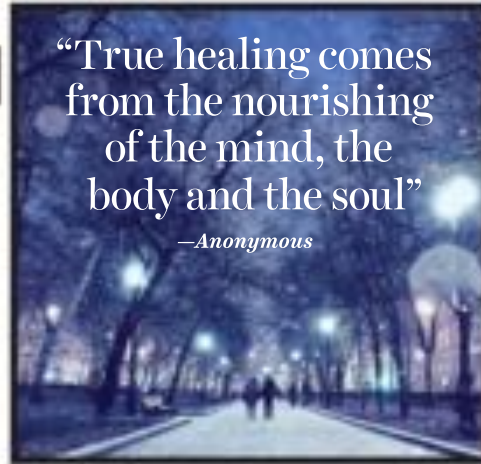
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“True healing comes from the nourishing of the mind, the body and the soul”

—Anonymous



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ON THE COVER

Helen Mirren photographed by Scott Trindle/August Image To get her seriously strong look, try for hair L'Oréal Paris Studio Pro Boost It Volume Mousse for touchable volume and hold; for dramatic eyes, L'Oréal Paris Voluminous Lash Paradise mascara; for defined lips, try L'Oréal Colour Riche Lip Colour; for full coverage, try L'Oréal Paris Infallible 24h Fresh Wear Foundation. Warming trend: like the look of her chunky sweater? Check out the Canadian knitwear brand, Line, for something similar. www.linethelabel.com

PHOTOGRAPHY: KICHIGIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

From the Editor



WE ARE NOT GOING to be doing personal attacks. We're not going to be playing the politics of division and fear," Justin Trudeau told senior editor Peter Muggeridge and me when we quizzed him last year on the approach he would take to his re-election campaign. As we go to press, that campaign is in full swing (see our coverage in "The Zoomer Primary," pg. 34), and this issue will be on newsstands when you go to the ballot box. Whatever Canadians decide, with the older demographic – meaning us – being the deciding factor, it will be interesting to see if the Prime Minister will indeed be able to walk the path of Sunny Ways 2.0.

These are incredibly polarizing times, with an overwhelming amount of unsettling information – or is it disinformation? – a biblical-level deluge of news – or is it fake news? – and, speaking of biblical, Old Testament-

like weather events tied to the real and existential threat of climate change. It's unnerving and soul-shredding. Which is why this, our annual Body, Mind, Spirit issue – designed to be a salve and a guide to a better sense of self and happiness as we navigate our inner and outer worlds – has never been more topical.

And despite it all, there's heapings of good news. For the body, scientific breakthroughs in hormone therapies ("The Pendulum Swings," p. 60) and dementia treatment ("Decoding Dementia," pg. 68). For the mind, pathways to a passion-driven career second act to unleash the entrepreneur in you ("Whistle While You Work," pg. 72). And for the spirit, exclusive insights from the self-help guru Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat Pray Love* ("Life Lessons From Liz," pg. 86) and a hopeful story of one woman's journey to a healthy, functional relationship and marriage ("Third Time's a Charm," pg. 94).

Engage is another word to consider. This is also the time of year that we gather with family and friends. Celebrate with ideas from our "Get Into the Spirit" holiday entertaining package (pg. 45) with its handy detox section just in case you over-indulged. In a real-life case of "I'll have what she's having," I would be apt to do that with the "Helen F***ing Mirren" cocktail that arts and entertainment editor Mike Crisolago discovered when he profiled the great dame in "Acting Her Age" (pg. 37). Of aging, "You have to embrace it and go with it," she told him. "So find a way of living with it and making it work for you, making it a positive thing."

And if all of the above isn't a mood-booster, try some – or why not all? – of the ideas from our "20 Tips for Getting Happy in 2020" (pg. 22). But don't wait. Start now.

Contributors



Vancouver-based travel writer and photographer **Mark Sissons** covers everything from heli-skiing and desert adventures to sea kayaking and mountain trekking, working with *National Geographic Traveler*, *Huffington Post* and the *Globe and Mail*, among others. Sissons has been to Africa more than a dozen times, recently returning to Zimbabwe and its ellies for "Heartbeat of Hwange" (pg. 130).



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Amid deadline and the throes of TIFF, arts and entertainment editor **Mike Crisolago** did double duty this issue. First, in a special "Zoom In" dedicated to the male psyche, he reports on three legendary leading men (pg. 15). And then there's Dame Helen Mirren. He once enjoyed a pre-interview chat about the virtues of hotel coffee with her and, from that moment on, he was hooked (on Mirren, not coffee). He reconnected with the Oscar-winning actress recently for our cover story, "Acting Her Age" (pg. 37).

PHOTOGRAPHY, GEORGE PIMENTEL (BOYD); MARK SISSONS (SISSONS); TRAVIS WOOD (CRISOLAGO)



In the wild heart
of Zimbabwe's Hwange
National Park, a journalist
finds his purpose.
The result, an inaugural
and now annual donor
safari that saves lives.
Consider it adventure travel
on a conservation mission

**Written and
photographed by
Mark Sissons**



A SA TANGERINE African sun sinks beneath the horizon, the diesel engine rumbles to life, piercing the silence. Alerted by its familiar thumping, a

bull elephant emerges from the thick mopane bushes on the edge of the arid waterhole, his parchment-dry skin flapping over protruding ribs. Lifting his trunk like a periscope, he sniffs for danger, then approaches the concrete trough to drink.

More elephants arrive at Mfagazaan Pan deep in this remote corner of Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park. Haggard and thirsty, they've marched many kilometres across the sunbaked savannah to reach this place. Weary matriarchs and testy bulls face off, trumpeting and jostling for space at the trough. Babies hide beneath their mothers, waving their tiny trunks playfully. Tonight, these elephants will drink their fill, partly thanks to the group of tourists crouched behind the pump.



"I've been on other safaris but I feel that this is a much more meaningful trip, one that leaves you more connected to the place," says Carolyn Zehrer, a middle-aged management consultant from Chicago, as we watch the ellies drink. Carolyn is one of 10 participants in the inaugural Water for Hwange donor safari organized by Seattle-based outfitter Wildland Adventures.

Designed to offer these conservation-minded travellers an opportu-

ity to inject a higher sense of purpose into their journey, this unique safari is about forging a connection with the places, people and wildlife they encounter here in one of Africa's largest national parks. In addition to the cost of their trip, each participant has contributed several hundred dollars toward purchasing and installing solar-diesel hybrid game water supply systems like this one at Mfagazaan Pan. Each is also helping to fund a rural free school lunch program and solar-powered village water wells near Hwange.

According to Taleb Rifai, secretary-general of the UN World Tourism Organization, purposeful travel is already one of the most transformative human forces of the 21st century. Here in Zimbabwe's oldest, largest and most ecologically diverse game reserve on the northwestern edge of the Kalahari Desert near the Botswana border, it just feels like the right thing to do.

Unique among Africa's great parks, Hwange has no rivers and few endemic natural water supplies. Despite this ecological handicap, its bountiful wildlife – including nearly 50,000 elephants – survives on artificially supplied water pumped from boreholes during the dry season, as do dozens of impoverished communities bordering the park. Now, with Zimbabwe facing its worst drought in nearly half a century and famine ravaging much of the country, keeping Hwange's water flowing and its people fed is more important than ever.

I first visited Hwange National Park in 2015. Cecil, the lion, had recently been poached here by a Minnesota dentist named Walter Palmer, catapulting the park into worldwide headlines. I came to photograph and write about Hwange's legendary elephants, among the last of the continent's remaining pachyderm populations not yet eradicated by industrial-scale poaching. A century ago, Africa was home to around five million elephants. Today, it is estimated that less than half a million remain, and at least 55 elephants are murdered every

day for their ivory. Many experts predict that if poaching is not curbed, elephants will be extinct within just a few decades.

Two weeks later, I left Hwange with a newfound understanding of the realities of human-wildlife conflict here on the front lines of African conservation. And felt the urgency of keeping this immense park's water flowing for the sake of its wildlife and surrounding communities. If Hwange's pumps stopped running and its waterholes ran dry, its elephants would begin to die, tourists would stop coming, the park's already fragile infrastructure would collapse and the international poaching syndicates would pounce. Here, as in many parts of Africa, responsible safari tourism literally saves lives. So explained my host, an extraordinary Zimbabwean with enough passion to dream of moving mountains and the manic energy to succeed.

Today, Mark (Butch) Butcher is the managing director of Imvelo Safari Lodges, which operates several luxury camps in and around Hwange and nearby Victoria Falls. A committed naturalist, he has spent decades in the bush, first as a zoologist and then as a Hwange Park game ranger before entering the safari business in the early 1990s. When Butch fetched me from Victoria Falls airport that broiling October afternoon in 2015, he promised me a total immersion into the realities of life in Hwange for its animals and its people.

We set off in a Land Rover to traverse Hwange's 14,600 square kilometres of thick mopane and Zambezi teak forests, rolling grasslands and undulating Kalahari scrublands, staying at Imvelo camps. Butch called it the "pump run" – a multi-day overland mission to deliver fuel and supplies to Imvelo's team of waterhole pump attendants scattered across the far reaches of this vast reserve. We also visited schools and villages and went out on patrol with an anti-poaching squad Imvelo funds called the Scorpions. Everywhere, we encountered elephants, mostly gathering by the dozens at waterholes where Imvelo operates water pumps.

What I learned speaking with locals challenged my notions of conservation: for us, Africa's iconic animals – especially elephants – were magnificent. But for rural villagers subsisting on the perimeter of game reserves like Hwange, wildlife had always been the enemy. Elephants raided their crops, and lions and leopards killed their

livestock and terrorized their children. Tourists were just strangers who travelled past in buses, waving and tossing candy and pencils but spending their money at fancy lodges usually owned by foreigners. Poaching wasn't inherently evil; it was often the only way to survive in impoverished countries like Zimbabwe.

Butch set out to change this paradigm, first building safari lodges and camps within the communal lands and peripheral areas surrounding Hwange, then staffing them with local people. Eventually, he convinced indigenous leaders that protecting park animals made more economic sense than killing them because their communities could share in the proceeds of increasingly popular photographic safaris, where guests learn to shoot better photos, often under the tutelage of a professional wildlife photographer.

Finally, a symbiotic relationship between conservation, responsible tourism and local communities began to emerge – all while adding immeasurably to Imvelo's safari experience, lending it a sense of common purpose.



Mark (Butch) Butcher

One afternoon, as Butch and I watched exhausted elephants alerted by the sound of one of his pumps literally run toward a waterhole called Secheche, he turned to me, shaking his head. "I've seen people watch all of these elephants standing around drinking and think it's wonderful," he said. "What they don't understand is that these animals are at the absolute end of their tethers. We've appointed ourselves to be the caretakers of these creatures by supplying water to them. Now we are morally obliged to not just turn off the taps and walk away from it."

Hwange's original caretaker was a 22-year old colonial official named Ted Davison who was appointed head warden shortly after this former big-game hunting ground was granted game reserve status in 1928. Davison soon realized that Hwange's future as a viable tourist destination depended on making sufficient water for its wildlife available even during the harsh six-month long dry season. With no need to migrate in search of water and no longer fearful of being hunted, Hwange's elephants and other wildlife would remain and flourish. So in 1935, Davison sunk Hwange's first borehole, using a windmill to power its pump. Eventually, he drilled more bore holes and started using diesel engines. He was right. The ellies stayed and Hwange survived. ▶

Thanks largely to Davison's intervention and to the added protection of inhabiting a game reserve, Hwange's initial elephant population of around 5,000 exploded over the ensuing decades. But by the 1990s, the chronically underfunded Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority was struggling to keep the pumps running. Eventually, most were abandoned, and as Hwange's wildlife desperately competed for water, conditions within the park further deteriorated. Animals died in droves; dried-up waterholes and poorly patrolled wilderness areas became prime poaching grounds. That's when Butch and several fellow safari operators stepped up, reopening and maintaining many of Hwange's pumps, then gradually replacing them with environmentally cleaner solar-diesel hybrid models like the ones our donor safari is funding. The ultimate goal is



to run everything entirely on solar power once Butch can raise enough money to purchase batteries. Until then, the sun will power Hwange's pumps by day, and diesel fuel will keep them running all night, when most elephants drink. Butch calls them Hwange's heartbeat.

Inspired by Butch's unflagging dedication to Hwange's wildlife and rural communities, I returned home, determined to help. I had found a cause that combined my love of animals with my passion for Africa's wild places. I wrote stories, started an informational website called *waterforhwange.org*, contacted potential donors about sponsoring pumps and did whatever else I could to help raise awareness about Hwange's water issues. It felt satisfying to finally find a purpose for my travels and a direction for my work; even if it meant saving just one elephant or helping just one child not go hungry.

I eventually connected with Wildland Adventures, an ecotourism company, already working extensively with Imvelo, and we all partnered to create Water for Hwange, an initiative designed to raise funds for new pumps. They subsequently won a \$20,000 grant

from the Adventure Travel Conservation Fund. Then Wildland launched GoFundMe campaigns and this annual donor safari, which combines an unforgettable adventure travel experience with the opportunity to take an active part in conservation. Now its first participants are seeing firsthand the impact of their decision to travel with purpose.

Departing from Imvelo's Gorges Lodge perched on a cliff high above the Zambezi River outside of Victoria Falls, we board the Elephant Express, a unique transfer by refurbished private railcar that runs along the old railway line from the falls to Hwange, stopping at historic sidings along the way. It's a nostalgic way to enter the park, snacking and sipping gin and tonics as we pass elephant, kudu, wildebeest and zebra, occasionally stopping to let giraffe cross the tracks. Our destination is Imvelo's most luxurious property, Camelthorn Lodge, a collection of spacious bungalows nestled in the serene woodlands on the southern edge of Ngamo's famous plains. That night, Butch delivers an enlightening lecture on the realities of rural life in Zimbabwe, a prelude to our opportunity to "meet the neighbours" early the next morning.

Shortly after dawn, we're off, driving across a sandy track toward nearby Ngamo Primary School. Soon, children dressed in maroon school uniforms come running to hitch a ride to class with us. Hopping aboard, they laugh and sing, delighted to interact with their visitors. Many of these kids walk as many as 10 kilometres to and from school each day, where headmaster Moyo Mthenjwa and several teachers hold classes in tidy cinder-block classrooms funded by Imvelo and other safari operators.

"Your visit is a great opportunity for you to learn about our school and about how we live, survive and progress," says Ngamo Primary's proud headmaster as he shows us around. Inside their classrooms, children and teachers welcome us with smiles and invitations to share something about where we came from. Soon, our group is busy showing the kids photos, as well as asking them about their studies. Watching their easy interaction, Butch is reflective: "I remember visiting here in the late 1980s when the school consisted of just a few ancient buildings with collapsing roofs, dirt floors, very few desks and major cracks in the walls. There was just one teacher here then. The kids used to huddle in a shadow as it moved across the classroom wall to escape the heat."

At noon, dozens of children line up for their daily lunch of beans and sudza, an African cornmeal staple. Prepared by village women and funded by Imvelo's Hwange School Feeding Program, to which we've all contributed, these simple meals provide Ngamo ▶

Primary's students with essential nutrition for just \$4 a month per child – about the cost of a Starbucks latte. And yet they are often the difference between a child continuing in school or dropping out, too tired and hungry to attend, as we quickly come to appreciate.

Situated in the remote and seldom explored Dzivanini wilderness area in the southwest corner of Hwange, Imvelo's Jozibanini tented camp is the sort of romantically remote outpost that Hemingway might have written about. This is an untamed land of wind-blown fossil sand dunes and Zambezi teak forests where roads of any kind cease to exist. Built near the site of a long-abandoned ranger station, "Jozi" was until recently prey to gangs of elephant poachers; they poisoned nearly 300 elephants near here in 2013. Soon afterward, Butch and his Imvelo team decided to establish this camp as a base for both management of water resources and a safari experience unlike any other. Jozibanini Camp's presence in the area now deters poachers and is even staffed by ex-poachers Butch convinced to go to work for him instead.

To reach Jozibanini, we embark on an extended pump run that combines an epic game drive with the chance to see our donations in action. First stop is a dusty village called McKenny on the park's boundary where elated villagers applaud us for supporting a new solar pump that will save them hours of labour having to draw water by hand. "We want to create things here, not just struggle. If we have water, we have life. Thank you for your help," says the headman, a Mr. Dumisani, clutching his guests' hands in welcome. It's initially embarrassing, being hailed as heroes for merely giving. Kimble Smith, a retired engineer from the San Francisco Bay area, later puts it in perspective: "Donating to large charitable organizations, you don't always see the effect of your contribution," he said. "But here we saw the direct impact. I wouldn't even call it charity. It's more like helping lift these folks up to the point of sustainability while we get to go out and have fun on safari and reconnect with nature."

Late that afternoon, we arrive at a waterhole called Mbazu Pan to christen another new hybrid pump. As Butch hangs a commemorative sign containing our names on the twin solar panels, elephants begin arriving to drink, almost on cue. Carolyn Zehrer expresses what everyone is feeling: "To see my name up there among my fellow donors on Imvelo's pumps and to know that I'm as-

sociated with something that is making a real difference makes me want to keep doing more."

Watching this emotional scene unfold, my mind returns to that dusty afternoon in 2015 at Secheche Pan with Butch, watching those emaciated ellies drink. Our germ of an idea then to offer safari guests the satisfaction of visiting the pumps they have sponsored is now a reality. It's a beautiful thing to know that what you dream of can come true.

This is travelling with a purpose, making a real difference at the grassroots level in sustainable ways, all while enjoying an incredible adventure. One night we sleep out on bedrolls under the stars at a "fly-camp," listening to the not so distant laughter of hyenas as the "heartbeat" of the distant pump lulls us to sleep. At Jozi, we ride mountain bikes along ancient elephant paths. At Imvelo's Nehimba Lodge in the northern part of Hwange,

we are treated to a cinematic nocturnal spectacle as dozens of elephants come to drink from the swimming pool just metres from where we dine. We also embark on pulse-pounding walkabouts in the early mornings, and each night, no matter where we are, enjoy hearty cuisine and toast another unforgettable day with sun-downer G and Ts. We even paddle through rapids on the mighty Zambezi upstream from Victoria Falls in inflatable canoes, steering well clear of snorting hippos and sly crocodiles.



A solar-powered water well

But it's on the afternoon we reach Jozibanini that perfectly encapsulates this experience for me. Butch leads us down into a half-buried shipping container disguised as a termite hill to observe elephants alerted by the waterhole pump starting up. Soon, we watch, spellbound, as these gentle giants splash around like children at a waterpark. They come so near that we can almost touch their enormous spongy feet, but they remain blissfully oblivious to us, who have journeyed from half a world away to visit and help them. Sliding open a panel in the wall, Butch motions to me to look. The fiery setting sun has backlit another herd of ellies marching toward us through a haze of dust. As I snap photos, the man who has arguably done more than anyone to keep them alive smiles. "Magnificent, aren't they?" he says. Yes, Mr. Butcher, they truly are, as is this safari that saves lives. 🐘

For information about upcoming Water for Hwange donor safaris, go to www.wildland.com. For more about safaris that help support Hwange National Park, go to www.imvelosafarilodges.com.

