

FIRST SAFARI

in Africa

– LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #62 –

It was a typical 'first safari', nine-days of plains game hunting with a standard package of trophy animals, and options for many others. But for me it certainly wasn't typical, as I never fired a shot – however, that was the plan from the beginning. Understanding that there would be a time when our kids would be engaged with their own families, and not available to hunt with mom and dad, Brenda and I planned this 'first safari' for the kids – Russell and Sara. Well they weren't really kids; they were 19 and 17 years of age and had both been hunting for ten years, with lots of whitetail deer, prairie dogs and jack rabbits to their credit.



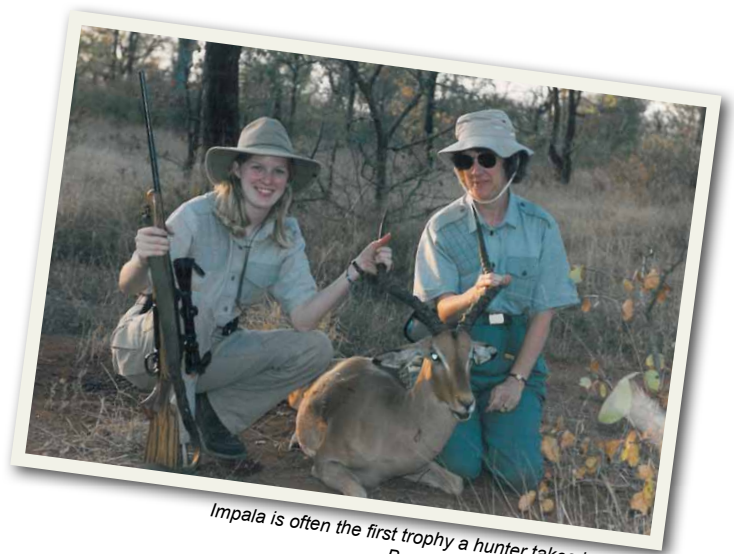
The bushbuck gets his name because he hangs around the bush areas, rather than the open plain. Russell is pleased with his trophy.

The six hour drive from the airport to the hunting ranch, in a right-hand drive Lincoln Continental, was an unbelievable experience; there weren't many cars, but

people were walking everywhere on both sides of the road, and often the women were carrying large baskets of goods or bundles of wood on their heads.

There were two safari cars (Toyota Land Cruisers), each with a Professional Hunter (PH) and a team of trackers; every day Brenda and I would switch cars, so we had an equal amount of time with each of our kids.

Impala, warthog, zebra, duiker, bushbuck, kudu and wildebeest – for each hunter -- were all part of the package and none of us had ever seen any of these animals in the wild. The most-difficult of all the trophies was the zebra,



Impala is often the first trophy a hunter takes in Africa. Brenda, with our daughter Sara.

as they tended to stay in the brush and stand-off at two to three hundred yards or so -- and didn't stand still very long. Russell took a long, hurry-up shot at one and we tracked it for several hours before getting the final shot. I remember commenting to the PH that the zebra was losing a lot of blood and he responded that the wounded zebra could go two or three days losing that much blood – wow! The African animals are often much more difficult to kill than a whitetail deer, especially when marginally hit.

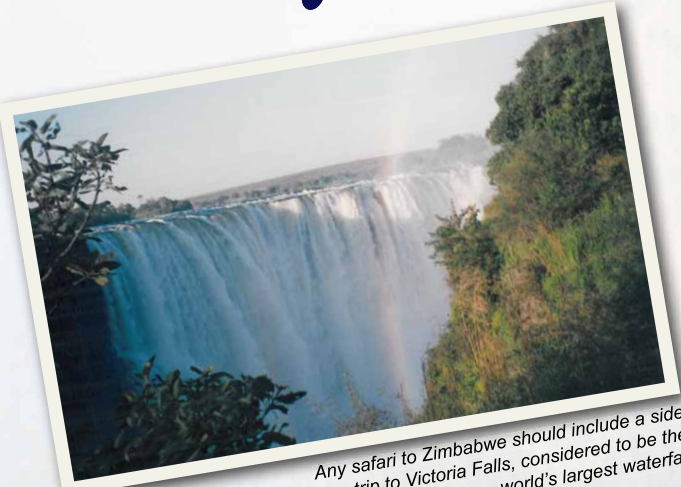
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Besides the hunting, I have vivid memories of the multi-course dinners, hot tea at the tent door with our wake up call, the skinning shed, baobab trees, hippos in the water and Victoria Falls. It was a memorable first safari in Africa, and I never even fired a shot.

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Nuanetsi Ranch
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Any safari to Zimbabwe should include a side trip to Victoria Falls, considered to be the world's largest waterfall