

A LONG HISTORY OF PRESERVING NATURE

So much development in South Africa has been down to the discovery of gold. When gold was discovered in what is now known as Mpumalanga in the late 1800s, the influx of people started having an impact on the wildlife in the area, and more hunting lodges started opening up.

The President of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger, realised that the fauna and flora needed to be protected, and the Sabie Game Reserve was declared in 1898. The first warden, James Stephenson Hamilton was appointed in 1902.

The National Parks Act was declared in 1926, and in 1927 the Sabie Game Reserve and the Shinwedzi Game Reserve were merged to form what is the Kruger National Park today.

The Sabie Private Game Reserve on the western boundary, was declared in 1934 and became known as the Sabie Sands in 1948.

The original owner of MalaMala, Wac Campbell, built a lodge on the current site in 1930 and for the next 30 years he recorded the wildlife in the area. In his last report, he noted that warthog were now fortunately on the increase, while sable antelope were on the decline.

After Wac Campbell died, MalaMala was sold to Mike Rattray and pure photographic safaris were introduced.

MalaMala has always prided themselves in their strong conservation ethic, and have held the belief that if you preserve the land and all the small things, the bigger animals will follow. One of the huge advantages today is that the reserve is unfenced, so the wildlife from the Kruger can move freely.

The bed and vehicle densities have always been kept to an absolute minimum, which means that MalaMala has one of the lowest densities of people on any private game reserve in the country.

Fortunately, MalaMala is strategically sandwiched between two sizeable protected areas, the Kruger National Park to the east and the Sabi Sands game reserve to the west. This makes access to MalaMala more difficult but even so, they have not remained unscathed, when it comes to poaching.

MalaMala spends millions of Rands annually in the fight against rhino poaching and they are continually bolstering their anti-poaching capacity. They have significantly increased their team of anti-poaching field rangers and have added multiple high-tech cameras with SMS functionality for real-time poacher identification.

And remember, MalaMala is one of the few genuine black economic empowered eco-tourism businesses in South Africa and they are committed to the delivery of long-term, tangible benefits to their local Community. MalaMala operates in partnership with the N'wandlamhari Community – they are shareholders in the business and over half of MalaMala's employees are community-based.