

MEET THE TEAM AT MACHABA CAMP

Elcke & Shaun Malan



Machaba Camp is a beautiful safari camp located in the game rich Khwai Concession in the north eastern region of Botswana's iconic Okavango Delta, adjacent to the Moremi Game Reserve.

The camp has a fantastic management team with Elcke as the General Manager while Shaun is Camp Manager & Guide who, together with the staff, truly make guests feel like part of an extended Machaba family within minutes of arriving. We thought we'd get to know them a little better...

How long have you worked at Machaba Camp and briefly describe your journey to this point?

Shaun grew up in South Africa & has been passionate about wildlife as long as he can remember. He has a diploma in Nature Conservation & has been working in the lodge industry as a guide & manager for over 15 years. His passion for photography started at a very young age when he was gifted a camera by his dad. Ever since then he has been taking photographs...

Elcke was born in Belgium & got bitten by the travel bug when she was 18. After an exchange year in Maine, USA, she decided tourism was her niche. Her studies brought her to South Africa for a 4 month trainee ship in a family lodge in the Timbavati / Klaserie area. This is where we met and our story begins... well, sort of... Due to a planned world travel on Elcke's behalf, we were separated for a year... After we got married in June 2004, we moved to Belgium for almost 2 years where Shaun learnt to appreciate the Belgian chocolate & beer! He travelled extensively through Europe & this only strengthened his passion for the African bush.

Our return to Africa brought us to Botswana's Tuli Block. Shaun's time was spent heading a reintroduction project for white rhino... The Okavango Delta was calling & after a long stint on Chief's Island, Moremi Game Reserve we were pleasantly surprised: Nala had made her presence known... July 26th 2010 the Malan family expanded by one gorgeous little girl...

With her, a new adventure awaited us in Tanzania where we had the privilege to work closely with the Maasai. Nala spent her time learning to crawl while being shown the beauty the African bush has to offer. Due to medical complications during our next pregnancy, we returned to South Africa for a while. After Khan was born March 2012, we finally returned to Botswana. A year was spent exploring the extreme beauty of the Makgadikgadi Pans. When the opportunity arose for us to return to the Delta as a family this time, there was no doubt. Machaba Camp opened doors 6 years ago with us to run it... We have been at Machaba Camp with our kids for the past 6 years & still loving it!

What have you done to make your mark on the property/experience?

Having been at Machaba Camp since opening, we can proudly say that we have helped create & developed Machaba Camp to what it is today: an authentic, internationally acclaimed lodge with numerous awards behind it's name.

What three words would your friends use to describe you?

As a family – outdoorsy, adventurous & definitely out-of-the-box

What is your favourite thing about your job?

We are passionate about the bush & love to impart our knowledge and love for Khwai to our guests. I love having pre-dinner drinks with guests & sharing their stories – hearing about their lives.

Who is your longest serving staff member?

We have a few: Masole, Chief, Sox, Rachel, Leopard to name a few...

Do you have a favourite dish at the lodge?

Our home-made fudge! For sure!

An interesting fact about the lodge/reserve that is not very well known?

We hold the highest eco-tourism rating rewarded in Botswana

When is your favourite time of the year in the Reserve?

All year round – Khwai never disappoints & there is always something interesting going down.

What is it like bringing up a young family in the bush?

Challenging to say the least! Nala is now 8 years old & Khan is turning 7 in March. Both children are home-schooled. Finding time between being a teacher & camp manager is somewhat daunting some days... However the reward is that we are able to raise our kids in the African bush – hopefully instilling a sense of respect & understanding for nature & all its creatures.

If you could change something in the industry, what would it be?

The in-depth influence TripAdvisor has on certain guests

The rapid decline of wildlife areas in favour of human developments

What is the best advice you recall?

TIA – “This is Africa”! It is used by all I know to describe both the highs & lows of living in Africa. It's used as a somewhat (questionable) valid & accepted explanation for an array of inconveniences; from loss of power, lack of (fresh) supplies to general inefficiency & incompetency throughout. TIA is a reminder to let things go if you cannot change them, to shrug off the growing anger tantrum & replace it with collected calmness, to count till 10 before giving your final answer & to just accept that ‘This is Africa’. TIA: Slow down, go with the flow... Accept above all the beauty of the continent & learn to live with the flaws...

What item do you always take with you when travelling?

Camera for sure to capture the memories! 😊