

PH Spotlight

RUSSELL LOVEMORE

PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCE



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Born in 1967, in Port Elizabeth, EC, South Africa, Russ grew up on a dairy farm. While his father was not a hunter, both grandfathers were, and they taught him to hunt. He started with birds and rabbits and never looked back.

Russ started his hunting career in 1994 by doing a voluntary apprenticeship. The license came in 1996 as well as hunting in Mozambique. Operating now in South Africa as Safari Trails International, and in Mozambique as Safari Trails Mozambique, Lovemore has owned and operated the Chawalo area for four seasons. They look forward to improving the area in the years to come. Julie became his wife in 1992 and they have two sons, Chad, 19 and Mitch, 16.

What do you wish a first-time DG client knew before arriving?

I hope they have taken the time to study up on the animal they plan to hunt. Things such as shot placement, what caliber and bullets would be best. They need to practice with the firearm that they are bringing to a point where they are confident and proficient with it not only on the bench but also in most field scenarios, i.e., off the sticks, from a tree or termite mound. They need to be prepared for practical hunting scenarios.

How often do things go about as planned?

I think on the whole most safaris do, mostly, go according to plan. However, a lot of dangerous game safaris take place in remote parts of Africa where logistics are, at best, a

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challenge. As far as equipment goes, things do sometimes go wrong. As far as the animals and hunting go, these are wild animals we are dealing with, and as much as we plan, they sometimes just do what you don't expect.

Who and how many people make up your best DG hunting team?

The best case scenario would be my tracker, Akim, myself, the client and our ever-present game scout. However, it seldom works that way, and there is often an observer and a cameraman and one just has to do the best you can. Although I have only been hunting with Akim since I took over Chawalo Safaris, which is four years, we have a good bond and understand each other well and have shared many hunts now. He has been hunting this area for 14 years and knows it well. Akim has many

years of tracking experience and has been hunting for 25 years. He is from the region and has a wife and four children.

What makes a good client into a great client?

A great sense of humor and adventure that does not sweat the small stuff but goes with the flow of life in Africa. Someone that enjoys the WHOLE safari experience and not just the success of killing his chosen quarry.

Do clients do a “starter” safari on plains game, but then “graduate” for a second trip? Or do you have clients who want to DO IT ALL?

Operating in both South Africa and Mozambique we tend to get both but the clients coming to Mozambique generally tend to have already done a safari or two before graduating to the dangerous game. In South Africa, we offer all species and types of hunts but this is certainly the best place, in my opinion, to start one's safari hunting experience. The Eastern Cape is certainly one of the finest hunting destinations in the world with an incredible variety of game and luxury hunting camps and lodges.

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What was the best thing about your first dangerous game hunt, either as a pro or on your own?

On the first hunt, which was for buffalo, I was thinking to myself “this is exactly where I want to be.”

Besides not finding an appropriate and legal animal, are there any reasons you would back away from a hunt, or a shot?

Every approach up to a dangerous animal is unique so there is no hard and fast rule. If for any reason you feel that it is too dangerous or risky, then I would advise pulling back. You can always make another approach but the safety of all in the party is your responsibility. You also have a responsibility to the animals and if a situation may result in you possibly having to shoot the wrong animal unnecessarily then it is better to pull back.

What is your favorite dangerous game species and why?

Although the thrill of getting a leopard or lion on bait is very exciting, there are usually many very long boring days that precede that moment. I prefer a busy tracking hunt on buffalo and elephant.

What's the best advice you received as you were growing up and doing PH apprenticeship? Who are your mentors and heroes?

It is best to learn what to do but also what not to do. Almost every PH has something positive and something negative you

can learn from them. You are never too old to learn.

What are your experiences with poaching, anti-poaching, and anti- hunting efforts?

Although I have hunted Mozambique for many years I never really had much to do with any anti-poaching efforts until I acquired the Chawalo Safari area in the Tete province of Mozambique. I now have 12 scouts in the field all the time, and we are continuing to improve our results by improving equipment and training.

Do you have favorite dangerous guns, optics, and gear?

For many years, I used my old trusty .416 Rigby in a Ruger M77. For the last six years, I have used a .500 Jeffery but have a .500NE Heym on the way which I am really looking forward to. I use Swarovski optics and cannot see any reason to change. But the less I need to carry the better, so add to that a good GPS and knife and a trusty Land Cruiser.

Let's have some fun. What is your favorite celebratory food and drink after a successful hunt?

A good single malt whisky is a must.

If she was willing, would you take your mother on a dangerous game hunt, and would you be her PH?

That would never happen as my mother is not a hunter, but if she was willing, yes. I would love to take her and show her just what it is that I enjoy so much about the bush and hunting.



Lovemore and wife, Julie

If you knew you had just 10 days left on the planet, what would you do with that time?

I would definitely like to spend it with my wife and two boys just having fun. This would most likely include some hunting. I have always wanted to hunt a Lord Derby Eland for myself, and I would like to do something to honor my God who has made it all possible. 🐘