

# TRAVEL MAGAZINE essence

ISSUE 6 • DECEMBER 2020



INSIDE AN  
ADULTS ONLY  
AFRICAN ISLAND  
PARADISE

.....  
**KRUGER  
SHALATI**  
*unveiled*

.....  
ASANTE  
TRAVEL ON  
GIRLS' TRIP  
DESTINATIONS

*White  
Desert:*  
From Cape Town  
to Antarctica

CEO OF KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA  
**LEE KELSALL**


ON BUILDING LEGACIES



A portrait of Lee Kelsall, a man with a beard and short hair, wearing a dark blazer over a light blue button-down shirt. He is standing outdoors with a scenic background of a coastline, blue water, and mountains under a clear sky.

*Meet*  
LEE KELSALL,  
CEO OF KER &  
DOWNEY® AFRICA



The background of the image is a scenic view of a coastal town, likely in Hawaii, with white buildings and greenery overlooking a blue ocean under a clear sky. The image is split vertically by a white line.

# BUILDING LEGACIES THROUGH *LUXURY* TRAVEL BUSINESS



**1. DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN TWO SENTENCES.**

I am a budding entrepreneur and investor, former lawyer, happy husband, and father of two (Hi Susie, Hector and Bella)! I am passionate about travel, sport and culture and committed to life-long learning and leaving a positive legacy for my children and the communities I serve; that is Ker & Downey® Africa, my family and friends, the African travel landscape and so on...

**2. LEE KELSALL IS WELL RECOGNISED AS A BUSINESS LEADER IN THE SAFARI TOURISM LANDSCAPE AS THE CEO OF THE KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA GROUP. TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE COMPANY AND ITS UNIQUE SELLING POINTS?**

Ker & Downey® Africa is a luxury travel company founded with the mission to create personalised trips to Africa that challenge, connect and leave a legacy. Our tagline 'Pioneering African Travel' is a daily challenge to every member of the Ker & Downey® Africa team. We aim to push the boundaries of African travel with a spirit of quality, adventure, and exploration.

As a leading luxury travel company, we do not believe in a one-size-fits-all approach. Our LuxVenture® Designers take pride in creating one-of-a-kind luxury itineraries that not only promise a seamless travel experience but are tailored to meet each client's individual needs and preferences - with a few unexpected surprises along the way.

Headquartered in Cape Town, South Africa, and with a base in Arusha, Tanzania, our diverse team representing South Africa, Germa-

Great Migration safari in Tanzania



Hot air balloon safari in Tanzania







ny, Brazil, Australia, China, Tanzania and the UK have first-hand knowledge on planning African trips for luxury clients and connect our clients with the very best experiences, local communities and wildlife encounters throughout Africa.

Our team is trusted for our reliability and expertise and guests can feel safe in the knowledge that should anything go wrong; we are on the ground to assist. Our luxury concierge team, known as Customer Experience Coordinators, provide the next level of service to each trip. This includes personalizing activities such as arranging private dining options,



making bookings at the most exclusive restaurants, and setting up world-class spa experiences. Our Customer Experience Coordinators are available 24/7 throughout each client's stay and are available to assist with whatever the client needs.

Our clients get the benefit of our extensive network of accommodation suppliers and service providers receiving agent specific deals and value adds, as well as access to our local expert insights, expertise, and concierge services. In essence, it does not cost you more to book through a travel company as opposed to booking directly.

### **3. TAKE US THROUGH THE FOUNDATIONS THAT LED YOU TO EVENTUALLY STARTING AND RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS IN LUXURY AFRICA SAFARI TRAVEL? WHAT WAS THE SEASON OR MOMENT THAT BECAME CONFIRMATION THAT THIS WAS IN FACT WHAT YOU WANTED TO DO?**

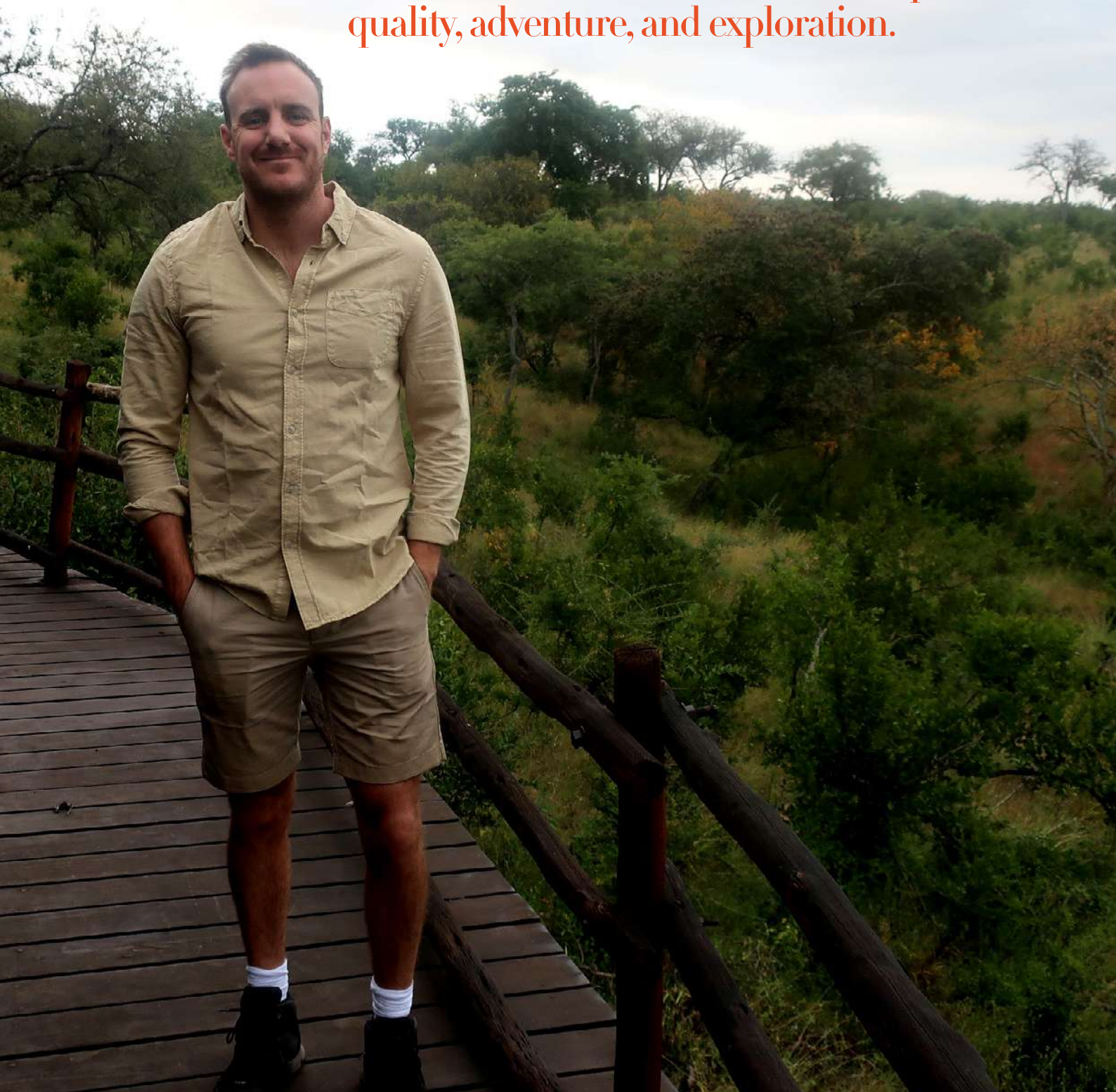
Prior to relocating to Cape Town, I was a corporate lawyer in London working for US law firm, Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy, and global law firm Norton Rose Fulbright. During the financial crisis, the firm offered a 3-month sabbatical to everyone, so I took the opportunity to travel to Kenya to live with a Masai tribe, which ignited my love for African travel and the bush. A few years down the line I jumped at the opportunity to move to Cape Town to head up the online retail division of Ker & Downey® Africa and I haven't looked back since!

Law taught me the value of building a service that focused on exceptional customer service and attention to the smallest of details. It required mindfulness and a commitment to excellence at all times. Law is also an industry based on the trust and integrity of the lawyer-client relationship. I think all these things are equally important to bespoke travel.





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**4. KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA GROUP'S MISSION IS TO "CREATE UNIQUE ADVENTURES THAT CHALLENGE, CONNECT AND BUILD LEGACIES." SHARE WITH US THE PROCESS THAT LED TO THIS BECOMING A PART OF YOUR MISSION STATEMENT. WHY IS THE ASPECT OF BUILDING LEGACIES IMPORTANT TO YOU AS AN ENTREPRENEUR AND TO THE TEAM YOU WORK WITH?**

Our team noticed a growing interest amongst luxury travelers seeking a more purposeful travel experience that fulfills the soul, particularly when traveling to Africa. This inspired our mission to create adventures that challenge our clients with the most unique experiences, connect them with the people, culture, and spirit of the destination that they visit and leave positive legacies in Africa.

Based in South Africa, our team is acutely aware of the impact of tourism (both good and bad) on the communities and wildlife of the different countries we operate in and aim to offer our clients with responsible travel experiences. Thankfully, we work with some incredible suppliers who are focused on the sustainability of African safaris and our product team works hard to vet the suppliers we work with.

There are several ways our clients can leave a positive legacy. Firstly, just by travelling with us to Africa they will be supporting a whole host of jobs and conservation projects across the whole tourism ecosystem. COVID-19 has highlighted the huge importance of tourism to the GDP of Africa and the absence of tourists is having a devastating impact on jobs, the economy and conservation projects that were supported by the funds raised through tourism. I think that international tourism contributed 8% to the GDP of South Africa in 2019 by the time you factor in the indirect spend on local businesses.

Our clients can also make a difference by donating to one of the NGOs we support or to a local project sponsored by one of the suppliers we work with. In some instances, we will at the client's request, set up experiences for our clients to get directly involved in local projects that they have heard about or that we recommend to them. We don't go out of our way to push any particular project but if the consultant gets to understand where the client's interests lie then we will of course seek to facilitate an introduction.

**5. "LUXVENTURE TRIPS" IS A TERM THAT'S BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA GROUP. WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS YOUR UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION AS YOU CURATE TRIPS FOR TRAVELLERS OF DISCERNING TASTES?**

LuxVenture® is a product category inspired by the team's passion to create innovative African experiences that are nothing short of life changing. The only way we know how to do that is by creating original and thrilling adventures for our guests that challenge them, allow them to connect with the people and cultures they visit and leave a positive legacy in Africa.

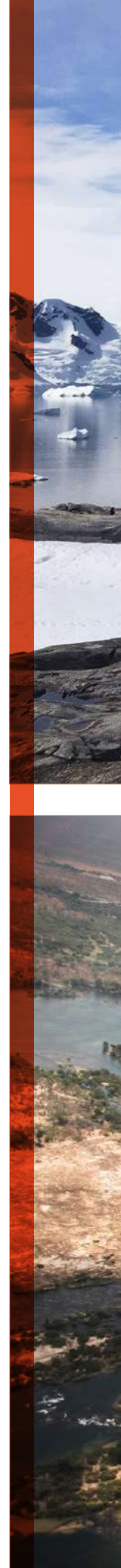
Take for example our 12-day Culinary Journey to Morocco where guests can discover the distinct flavours of Morocco alongside culinary expert and food journalist, Tara Stevens. Or our 10-day South Africa to Antarctica Expedition which combines a traditional safari experience in a private concession in the Kruger National Park with an exciting expedition to one of the last untouched wilderness areas in the world, Antarctica.

Each LuxVenture® journey combines exceptional, bucket list worthy experiences with world-class luxury to satisfy our clients' desire for adventure and cater to their needs for the finer things in life. Our team has invested decades of experience, passion, and creativity into our LuxVenture® experiences. This means that nothing in our trips is designed by accident, every transfer, lodge, and route has been crafted specifically for the best possible travel experience.

However, these luxury safaris are just a taste of what an Africa travel experience with Ker & Downey® Africa could look like. Once you make contact with us, you will be assigned a personal LuxVenture® Designer. They will combine your interests with their expert knowledge to curate your one-of-a-kind safari.

**6. YOUR PACKAGES COVER A GOOD BIT OF AFRICA - FROM MOROCCO TO RWANDA, MAURITIUS TO BOTSWANA. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ELEMENTS YOU LOOK FOR WHEN CURATING LUXURY EXPERIENCES FOR GUESTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE WELL TRAVELLED AND HUGELY CONNECTED?**

Being in the luxury travel industry means that compromises can't be made on the standard of service or luxury. This largely dictates the destinations that we are willing to sell confidently to our high-end clients.





Antarctica



Helicopter flight over  
the upper Zambezi





We strongly believe in specializing in areas that we know like the back of our hands where we have tried and tested all aspects of our offering. Our team travels extensively throughout the African continent and dedicates their time to uncovering unique products and experiences to ensure that we are always on the forefront of luxury travel to Africa.

With regards to our suppliers, we vet each property we sell to ensure that their offering meets the very best in world-class luxury. This encompasses exclusive locations, unparalleled wildlife encounters, unique experiences as well as a more privatized accommodation experience that can tailor their offering to meet each client's needs and preferences.

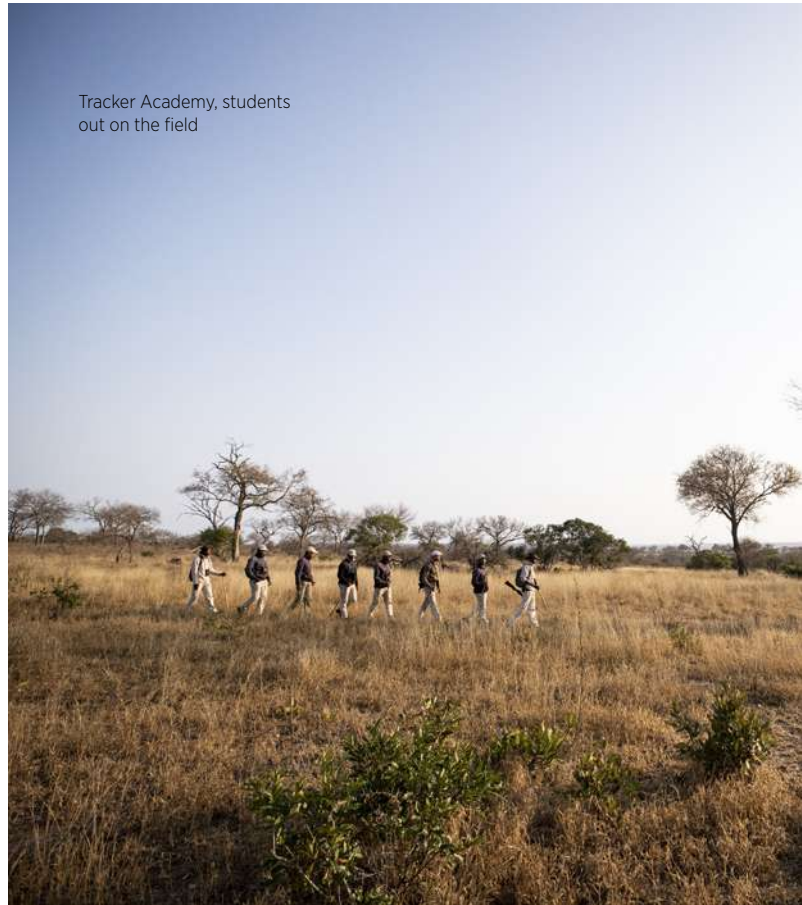
**7. KER & DOWNEY® AFRICA GROUP RECENTLY LAUNCHED AN EXCITING CONSERVATION FOCUSED TRIP IN COLLABORATION WITH THE TRACKER ACADEMY? OUTLINE THE KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS TRIP, AND WHY CONSERVATION IS A CRITICAL SUBJECT FOR BOTH THE TOURIST AND THE TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS OF AFRICA?**

Tourism in Africa plays an integral role in funding costly conservation projects and community upliftment programmes throughout the continent. In 2020, many African countries immediately closed their borders to reduce the spread of the COVID-19. As a result, the tourism industry, which is a vital employer in rural areas in Africa and employs 24.6 million people across the continent, was hit the hardest and the downturn in tourism revenue, as well as donations, posed a range of threats for the ongoing work needed to ensure the safety of Africa's endangered wildlife and people.

Reactivating tourism to Africa is crucial not just to protect livelihoods but also to help ensure the continued protection of its wildlife. Going forward, we believe that people will approach travel from a more sustainable perspective and will consider the environmental and social impact of their holidays, and as a result, provide revenue for much-needed cultural and environmental preservation.

Our 12-day Conservation Safari in South

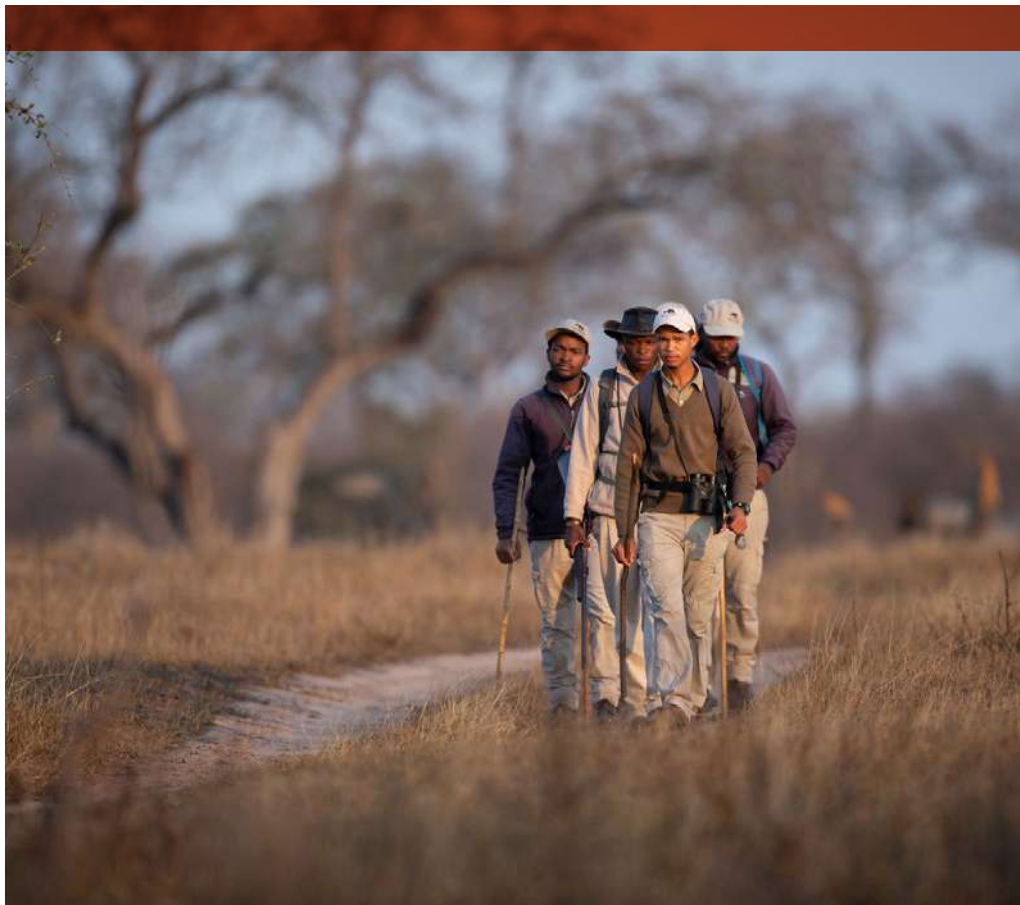
Tracker Academy, students out on the field



Tracking experience at Londolozi











Africa was crafted alongside The Tracker Academy – a non-profit organization that serves to restore the ancient artform of wildlife tracking by offering a formal qualification to youth from disadvantaged backgrounds in South Africa. We created this itinerary to showcase the pivotal role trackers play in wildlife conservation and protection, as well as give back to the broader cause of funding the education of local trackers through a \$100 donation per trip sold.

The itinerary transports guests to the Tracker Academy's base camps located at Tswalu Kalahari and Londolozi Private Game Reserve and allows them the opportunity to track some of South Africa's most unique wildlife alongside the students and graduates of this life-altering programme.

The itinerary begins in Cape Town where guests will stay at the prestigious Ellerman House before flying directly to Tswalu Kalahari. Here, guests will have the opportunity to visit the Tracker Academy and explore Tswalu's unique terrain as they practice their tracking and conservation skills as well as enjoy private game drives, horseback safaris and guided bush walks. The itinerary concludes in Lon-

dolozi, where guests can enjoy Big 5 encounters and wildlife conservation experiences alongside expert guides and trackers.

## 8. BESIDES TREKKING THE PLAINS OF AFRICA, WHICH WE IMAGINE IS PRETTY AWESOME IN ITSELF...WHAT IS LEE'S FAVOURITE PASS-TIME?

Outside of travel, I love to spend time with my family, braai (South African barbecue), workout, listen to music and go for hikes on Table Mountain.

## 9. AFRICA IS ENDOWED WITH 54 COUNTRIES WHICH IS A HUGE POOL TO CHOOSE FROM. WHAT ARE YOUR THREE FAVOURITE AFRICAN DESTINATIONS TO VISIT AND WHY?

My favourite destination is South Africa. It's been my home of seven years and continues to delight. I love the diversity of landscape, culture, and experiences on offer. Joint second would be Tanzania and Morocco. Tanzania for the wildlife experience of the Serengeti and the majesty of Ngorongoro Crater. Morocco for its cuisine, architecture, and nightlife!

## 10. WHAT LEGACY DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE, AND ALSO THROUGH THE WORK YOU DO?

I want to know that my time on this planet has been well spent. I seek that feeling that comes from knowing that I've had a hand in creating something of intrinsic excellence that makes a contribution to society. I want to raise a son and daughter who feel secure, optimistic, and inspired by the beauty of life. 