

Horse & Rider

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From the horse's mouth

Limpopo Horse Safaris

Anthony Ball of Anthony Ball Photography joins the Horse and Rider page this week. After a recent trip to Botswana, the photographer has kindly agreed to share some of his photos with the Beacon.

WE first met Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris (LHS) at the Hartpury International Horse Festival in August 2013, where I was exhibiting and launching my equine photography for the first time," said Anthony.

"When I suggested to Randall (UK representative of LHS) that I would love to take some marketing photographs and help design a new marketing photo album for LHS, I didn't seriously expect an invitation to travel to

Botswana. But two weeks after the show, Louise wrote inviting my wife and I out in February 2014 to take photographs and provide some photography training and guidance to the guests. Below are just some shots taken by the Coleford photographer, as well as some tales from his stay.

"There is an old Arabian proverb that says 'The wind of heaven is that which blows between a horse's ears' and there

can be few places on earth where this is more true than the wilds of south-east Botswana, in the Land of Giants. Mashatu Game Reserve is where Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris (LHS) can be found.

Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris is situated in Tuli block where two rivers and three countries meet. The mighty Limpopo dominates much of the area, and forms the borders between Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana. The stables are a

five minute drive from the Pons Drift border with South Africa, where we met our host, Louise Carelsen for a late lunch and a welcome cold drink. We changed into our riding gear, were introduced to our horses and rode off for Two Mashatus, the permanent camp 10km into the African bush.

On that first ride to camp, we were overwhelmed with game sightings: giraffe, wildebeest, impala, elephant, kudu, sable back jackal, zebra and eland. It was a magi-

cal start to our safari. The rest of the week followed a gentle pattern; up early (5.30am), out for a three - four hour ride, back for lunch and a few hours rest, an evening ride lasting about two hours before dinner.

The horses graze in full view of the guests. On a couple of evenings, the horses were given a rest and we were treated to a jeep safari guided by one of the staff from Mashatu main camp. As well as mongoose, Kori bustards, eagles, elephant, impala,

kudu, zebra and giraffe, we came across a hyena den with a number of cubs varying in age from three to eight months old.

"This is definitely a riding trip for riders. While the horses are fantastically schooled and very responsive, the terrain can be challenging and of course, you need to be able to gallop away from danger should the need arise."

Photos courtesy of Anthony Ball Photography. www.anthonballphotography.co.uk

HORSE & RIDER

DATE finder

A selection of just some of the events going on in the Welsh Borders

MARCH

- 19th** Showjumping clinic with Ros Morgan. Triley Fields Equestrian Centre, Abergavenny. 01873 890523.
- 19th** Modern Eventing lecture/demo by Chris Bortle. Hartpury College. 07581 357439.
- 21st** Tack sale organised by Offa's Dyke Family Riding Club. Bream Cricket Club. 07798 872984.
- 26th** Malvern performance horse and pony sale. Three Counties Showground. 01568 619777
- 29th** Indoor hunter trial. Alps Court, Cardiff. 07970075812.
- 29th** Two-day anatomy and biomechanics course. Royal agricultural college. 01159 212648.
- 29th** Monmouthshire Hunt point to point. Great Killough, Llanvapley, Abergavenny. 07809 502690.
- 29th-30th** Howick Horse Trials. Howick Farm. 01594 529543
- Marie Ryan, Howick Farm, Chepstow. Open to all riding club members from area. 07733 118274

APRIL

- 2nd** Simulated cross country with Katie Williams. Triley Fields Equestrian Centre, Abergavenny. 01873 890523.
- 2nd** Blue Chip Championships. Hartpury College.
- 5th** Grand National Day. Aintree. 08445 793001 for tickets.
- 9th** NAF five star winter dressage championships. Hartpury College, Gloucestershire. www.bdchampionships.com
- 9th** British Eventing Sapey one day event. Welferlow, Bromyard, Herefordshire. 01886853582.
- 9th** Showjumping. David Broome Event Centre, Mount Ballian Manor, Crick. 01291 418125.
- 11th** Abbey Equine Clinic open day. Llansabbath Barns, Llanover. 01873 840069.
- 12th** Unaffiliated Dressage. Chepstow Racecourse. 01291 622260
- 27th** Vale of Usk Riding Club combined training and dressage competition. Usk Showground. See www.vouridingclub.co.uk for further details or email nikkifmwatson@hotmail.com
- MAY**
- 7th-11th** Badminton Horse Trials. www.badminton-horse.co.uk



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