

PRIVATE SAFARI CAMPS

"Up until a few years ago, there were very few good

private lodging options in Africa, apart from the odd home on an old ranch rented out so the owners could earn some extra money," says Cherri Briggs, founder of Explore, a Colorado-based safari company that develops bespoke itineraries for clients seeking "the real Africa." Now, adjusting to a boom in demand, more and more villas, camps, and lodges can be exclusively, i.e., privately, booked, ensuring clients (including the American Museum of Natural History, *National Geographic*, and the Smithsonian) both a dedicated army of attendants—often including a butler, chef, ranger, and guide—and freedom from pith-helmeted crowds. These properties offer flexibility that typical lodges and camps may not. Guests can tweak menus, arrange a last-minute safari walk, or schedule a sunset barbecue in the bush. "With a private vehicle and a guide, you're not locked into camp routine or the 6 A.M. game drive," says Briggs.

"Half my clients are now interested in exclusive-use properties," Briggs continues. **Chamilandu** in South Luangwa National Park, Zambia,

is "remote," says American Barbara Hollweg, who stayed there with her husband two summers ago, "but for anyone who wants a slice of the real Africa, this is it." More than two hours from the park's nearest entrance, the camp's three thatch-roof chalets each sleep two people, sit eight feet above the Luangwa River, and face the rolling Nchindeni Hills. Nine on-site staff members include a camp manager, room attendant, chef, and guide.

Kiba Point, in Tanzania, is right in the heart of the Selous Game Reserve, Africa's largest wildlife sanctuary, and is just a five-minute drive from its affiliate, the Sand Rivers Selous lodge. The four A-frame stone, thatch, and wood cottages sleep up to eight people total, and each comes with its own plunge pool and indoor-outdoor showers. Kiba Point provides all services, and guides lead game drives, sundowner boat trips, walking safaris, and fishing excursions—the cooks will gladly turn the hard-won tiger fish into a bar snack.

In Kenya, **Cottar's 1920s Safari Camp** is redolent of colonial safaris past; four exclusive-use luxury tents in white canvas—each with two double bedrooms, a private game vehicle, and a butler—sit on a 250,000-acre concession that abuts the Masai Mara, Serengeti, and Loliondo reserves. Calvin Cottar, the safari camp owner and an honorary warden for the Kenya Wildlife Service, conducts tours by special request. "He took us climbing behind camp to look for colobus monkeys and to his favorite swimming hole," says Juliet Shield-Taylor, who visited earlier this year with her family—her youngest is four. All camps are available through Explore (888-596-6377).

—M.D.



CHAMILANDU, ZAMBIA

Remote but authentic. Three elevated chalets, each sleeping two people. Minimum recommended age is 12. Priced at \$590 per person a night



KIBA POINT, TANZANIA

Best for groups and families with kids six and older. The four cottages come with private plunge pools. Priced at \$7,400 per night for the eight-bed camp



COTTAR'S 1920S SAFARI CAMP, KENYA

Exclusive-use two-bedroom tents that sleep four. Each has a private butler, game vehicle, and lounge/dining area. No minimum age. Priced at \$2,800 a night per tent



**LITTLE MADIKWE HILLS,
SOUTH AFRICA**

Overlooking the Madikwe Game Reserve in northern South Africa, this two-bedroom, four-person villa (dining room shown here) comes with its own butler, chef, ranger, tracker, and babysitting services. It includes modern amenities like satellite TV and, perhaps most important, air-conditioning. A raised walkway leads to the main Madikwe Hills Private Game Lodge, which has a fully equipped gym, a shop stocked with safari gear, and a holistic spa. Priced at \$2,600 per night

