

# DAVID SKILLAN'S WORLD OF TRAVEL . . .

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## NEWSLETTER

Winter 2012–2013

*Travelling the World Since 1951 → Leading Tours Since 1970 → Publishing Newsletters Since 1978*

### Dear Fellow Traveller:

On *60 Minutes* the other night I saw an intriguing interview with Dereck Joubert and Beverly Joubert, a Botswana couple who produce remarkable wildlife documentaries. Their specialty is lions. In Botswana, like everywhere else in Africa, lions are gradually disappearing, due to poaching and loss of habitat. Today there are only 20,000 lions in the wild, compared to 450,000 a hundred years ago. There are even fewer rhinos, which are gravely endangered. This emphasizes what I've been trying to get across for thirty years: the time to go to Africa is now! Unless this awful trend is somehow miraculously reversed, some of the African species we take for granted will vanish.

I've not met the Jouberts, but from time to time we come across documentary filmmakers while we're on safari. Last month we watched Jeremy Clarkson and his crew from the UK television series *Top Gear* filming against a backdrop of hippos in the Mara River. All of these filmmakers help create public awareness of this dire situation. Although we'll never again see the great numbers of wild animals I knew as a young man, I take the view that the more people know about it, the greater our chances of resolving this manmade dilemma.

I'm recently back from another outstanding trip to Kenya and Tanzania. There were so many highlights! We caught the great migration of wildebeest and zebra, one of the natural wonders of the world, as we always do in October. We also saw 56 lions, including a mating pair and many young.

We spent our last night at the famous Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi, a stately place referred to by just about everyone in the know as the best hotel in town. Next door is the main police station—a place I got to know many years ago. In the early 1960s, during my marathon world odyssey, I was often hard up. One night, after spending ten unbearably hot and humid days in the uncomfortable deck class on a Nile steamer, sharing my limited space with semi-naked Dinka tribesmen and their chickens and goats, and then hitchhiking through Sudan and Uganda into Kenya, I arrived in Nairobi, tired and just about broke. I stopped at the police station to see if I could leave my backpack there while I searched for a reasonably priced place to stay. The duty sergeant invited me to spend the night for free—in a cell! Though it was a little unusual, I was only too pleased to accept the offer.

It was March of 1963, I was 24 years old, and though I didn't know it, this was the beginning of my love affair with Africa. Nowadays I stay in fine hotels, but I often think back on that night in the Nairobi jail cell. It's memories like this that make travelling so rewarding.

On returning home from this last trip, I was delighted to get some of the best reviews I've received during my lengthy travel career. Nevertheless, some of my tours are not selling as well as I'd hoped, so I'm postponing a few. I hate disappointing people, and apologize for any inconvenience, but I have to concentrate on the tours with the greatest chance of success. Since I am best known for Africa, I will continue to focus most of my attention on that region. Please see pages 3 through 6 for overviews of my current tours.

My two- and three-week tours and safaris are a real bargain when you compare them to, say, a week in the South Pacific's Bora Bora, which costs roughly \$6,000 per person. Or a helicopter trip to a BC fishing lodge, which



can cost even more than that. I recently saw an ad for a seven-day trip to see the polar bears of Churchill, Manitoba, starting at \$8,795 per person. First you have to get to Winnipeg, where the tour starts. Most of my safaris and tours are a steal by comparison, especially when you consider everything that's included.

As you're no doubt aware, I supplement my twice-yearly newsletters with monthly email updates. Make sure you're on my email list, so you don't miss anything! Of course, whenever you wish, you can also visit [www.skillansafaris.com](http://www.skillansafaris.com) to view my slide shows and read my articles. I hope they inspire you to get up and go!



*We stayed in these luxurious tents on our last trip to Kenya. More and more of the camps offer charming accommodations like these.*

**UPCOMING TOURS**—My January tour of **Botswana & Zambia** is sold out, but you can still sign up for January of 2014. Unlike most other African safari destinations, in Botswana we see huge numbers of birds and animals right up close. We also get to see species you seldom see anywhere else, such as wild dogs and sable antelope, and we stay in luxurious tented camps.

**New Zealand** holds happy memories for me. I once spent six months there picking fruit, toiling on a sheep farm, and working as a mate on a fish boat in Milford Sound before desperate seasickness forced me to give it up. New Zealand a long way from anywhere, but it has everything you could wish for. It's the most beautiful country on Earth. After admiring the fall colours, you can relax on a Fijian beach for a couple of days. Call **Ernie Balint** at **Collette Vacations** to sign up for our April trip. He recently replaced Samantha Lutchman. I'm sure you'll find Ernie most helpful.

If you've never been to **Ireland**, why not come with me next summer? It's another place where I have close ties. Skillan is an Irish name, and my dad's dad came from Newry in Ulster. As a young soldier I spent eighteen months at Ballykinlar, a windswept peninsula overlooking the Mountains of Mourne in County Down. I canoed, kayaked, hiked, and climbed whenever I had time. I also went to a dance one Saturday night in Newcastle, a small town across Dundrum Bay, and met my first true love, a beautiful Dublin colleen named Eve. I've never forgotten her. I'm looking forward to our two-week trip to the land of saints, sinners, and scholars, which departs in just eight months.

My October tour of **Kenya and Tanzania** is my most popular tour, and for good reason. It includes some of the most famous places in Africa—the fabled Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, Olduvai Gorge, and the Maasai Mara National Reserve, scene of the annual great migration of wildebeest and zebra. These two countries boast the greatest abundance of wildlife on the planet. The last tour sold out, so be sure to call **Safari Studio** and book early.

In the last few years, **Morocco** has become wildly popular with Europeans, who know a dream destination when they see one. You'll see extraordinary sights, including the cosmopolitan cities of Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fez, Meknes, and Rabat. This exotic Arabian kingdom has one foot in the twenty-first century and the other in antiquity, resulting in a dizzying array of extremes and contrasts. I invite you to join me there next year!

**FUTURE TOURS**—I've listed my proposed tours up to the spring of 2014 on pages 3 through 6. Hopefully, things in Egypt will have settled down by then. One of the most alluring travel destinations on Earth, it always bounces back quickly after it's hit with any bad publicity. Although I haven't yet set dates, I also hope to visit Indo-China, Kenya and Tanzania, and Ethiopia in the fall of 2014.

When you join one of my personally escorted tours, you get great value and peace of mind. I promise you a journey that will provide memories you'll treasure for the rest of your life. Please join me soon on a life-enriching journey! And please be so kind as to share this newsletter with friends and relatives.

Wishing you and your loved ones much joy and happiness over the coming festive season, and good health and prosperity in the New Year. Go well, wherever your wanderlust takes you.

**David (Around the World in Eighty Months) Skillan**

*Incurable romantic, free spirit, and gypsy at heart . . . ➔*

## DAVID SKILLAN'S WORLD

### *An Overview of Upcoming Tours and Safaris Presented in Cooperation with Safari Studio and Collette Vacations*

#### **BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA SAFARI**

**Departs January 6, 2013 → 14 days →  
\$9,880 per person (sharing),  
including all taxes**  
**Departs January 4, 2014 → 14 days →  
Price to be announced**

***Adventure in style and comfort on this exclusive connoisseur's tour, which is limited to just twelve participants.***

Described by aficionados as "Africa's Gem," Botswana has become a favoured destination among seasoned travellers. Masses of wildlife roam the woodlands, savannahs, plains, and wetlands of this sparsely populated, landlocked country, including many species of antelope (nyala, waterbuck, kudu, sable, eland, tsessebe, lechwe, impala, and sitatunga), hyena, jackal, bat-eared fox, wild dog, wild cat, giraffe, zebra, wildebeest, hippo, and of course all of Africa's Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo). In this remote, peaceful region of Africa, we stay at the finest places, where food and service are second to none. Accommodations are in luxurious tented camps . . . travel is by specially chartered light aircraft . . . game viewing is by boat and open safari vehicle. Visit the Moremi Game Reserve, Kalahari Desert, Linyanti, the world-famous Okavango Delta, and breathtaking Victoria Falls. To learn more, go to [www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/botswana-safari.pdf](http://www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/botswana-safari.pdf). ***The 2013 tour is sold out, so book early for 2014!***



#### **FALL FOLIAGE IN NEW ZEALAND**

**Departs April 23, 2013 → 21 days →  
\$6,329 per person (sharing),  
plus taxes**

***Regarded by many as the most beautiful place on Earth, this small country has it all—beaches that rival Australia's, fjords that compare with Norway's, mountains that echo the Alps, and a countryside that evokes England.***

The extraordinary birdlife includes the flightless kiwi (New Zealand's national bird), the Takahē (the largest species of rail in the world, once thought to be extinct), the Campbell albatross, and the kea (the world's only alpine parrot). Visit the North and South Islands during New Zealand's gorgeous autumn. Stop in Auckland (consistently voted one of the best places in the world to live), Wellington, Rotorua, Picton, Te Anau, Arrowtown, Christchurch, and Queenstown (a world-class adventure capital). Visit a botanical garden, a sheep farm, and a hot spring. Spend a night with a local family. Cruise the world-famous Bay of Islands. Enjoy a Maori dancing display. Take a ferry ride across Cook Strait. Sip fine local wines in the picturesque Marlborough region. See the majestic Southern Alps by trans-alpine train. Walk on a glacier. Explore Milford Sound's remarkable fjords by launch. Take a nature walk to view Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain. And much more! You can even book a two-day extension to beautiful Fiji. ***Space is limited, so if you'd love to see New Zealand in its finest colours, book now!***



## IRELAND—THE EMERALD ISLE

Departs June 12, 2013 → 13 days → \$4,569 per person (sharing), plus taxes

**One of the most magical places on Earth, with a history that reaches back into the mists of time . . .** Ireland is a very pretty land, peopled with musicians, writers, poets, scholars, and smooth talkers. It was home to James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Jonathan Swift, George Bernard Shaw, and Saint Patrick himself. Join us as we trace their footsteps in Dublin, Waterford, Killarney, Limerick, Galway, Tullamore, Derry, and Belfast. Visit castles and pubs, where you'll enjoy a shot of Jameson whiskey, a pint of Guinness, and a bowl of Irish stew. Travel the Ring of Kerry, one of the world's most beautiful coastal routes. Bend over backwards and kiss the Blarney Stone. Meet an Irish family on a working dairy farm. Stand near (but not too near!) the edge of the dizzying Cliffs of Moher, and walk on the bizarre Giant's Causeway, where 60 million years ago molten basalt was extruded up through the chalk beds, forming a plateau of lava columns. Enjoy the wit and wisdom of the Irish, sharing the laughter of some of the most hospitable people in the world. This trip is guaranteed to enchant and delight! ***If you've never been to Ireland, this tour is an ideal way to see it! Sign up now!***

## KENYA & TANZANIA SAFARI

Departs October 3, 2013 → 16 days → Price to be announced

**The ultimate adventure . . . the two most famous safari destinations in Africa . . . a romantic journey that many dream about, but few experience.** This tour includes the finest game lodges and tented camps, splendid game-rich wilderness, and the magical Maasai Mara Game Reserve, Serengeti Plains, Ngorongoro Crater, Mounts Kenya and Kilimanjaro (the two highest mountains in Africa), Aberdares, Lakes Nakuru, Naivasha, and Manyara (home to extensive flamingo flocks), and the Olduvai Gorge (the Cradle of Mankind). Take a balloon ride over the East African plains. Visit a Maasai village. Tour Giraffe Manor, with its resident herd of the endangered Rothschild giraffe, and the elephant orphanage operated by the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in Nairobi National Park. See the land where Hemingway hunted and Karen Blixen (Isak Dinesen) was inspired to write *Out of Africa*. If you yearn to see an unrivalled wildlife spectacle, this is the tour for you! October coincides with the great migration of wildebeest and zebra—often called the greatest show on earth. Imagine warm, sunny days, spectacular scenery, and amazing experiences. This tour can be extended to include the exotic island of Zanzibar and Kenya's magnificent Coral Coast. ***Our last tour sold out, so book early for 2013!***

## MAGNIFICENT MOROCCO

Departs November 2, 2013 → 15 days → Price to be announced

**Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fez, Erfoud, Ouarzazate, Essaouira, Meknes, Rabat . . . the exotic cities of this Arabian kingdom await you!** Morocco is a land of mystery and enchantment, featuring ancient casbahs, desert landscapes, high mountains, and sandy beaches. Visit mosques, museums, palaces, Roman ruins, a spice market, a handicraft centre, and a romantic desert oasis. Take a camel ride, climb giant sand dunes, stroll through ornate gardens, and enjoy sweeping panoramas of the mountains and the coastlines of the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Watch in amazement as acrobats, jugglers, snake charmers, water vendors, and soothsayers go about their daily business. Listen to the muezzins calling from tall minarets, haggle for souvenirs in the colourful souks, and sip mint tea under star-filled skies. If you like Egypt, you'll be bewitched by Morocco! ***Plan now to join us on this magical journey!***



## WONDERS OF EGYPT

Departs February 5, 2014 → 14 days → Price to be announced

**Join us in the land of pharaohs, mystery, and enchantment!** This exciting tour with Lufthansa (a member of Star Alliance, so if you're a member you can collect points) includes Cairo, Memphis, Aswan, Luxor, the Pyramids of Giza, the Valley of the Kings, a four-night Nile cruise, and the famous temples of Abu Simbel, Philae, Edfu, Kom-Ombo, and Karnak. Visit the renowned Egyptian Museum, ride a camel, watch a belly-dance display, haggle for souvenirs, take a horse-and-buggy ride, sail in a felucca, and descend into King Tut's tomb. Shop for exquisite jewellery, beautiful hand-woven carpets, and the latest styles in leather jackets. ***If you've always wanted to***

***see one of the world's greatest ancient civilizations, this is the trip for you!***

## SPECTACULAR SOUTH AFRICA

Departs March 4, 2014 → 14 days →  
Price to be announced

**Described as “a world in one country,” the breathtakingly beautiful South Africa is one of the most diverse countries on earth.** South Africa has everything! Our tour includes both city and safari—Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, world-renowned wineries, the Cape of Good Hope, Blyde River Canyon, Zululand, Swaziland, Mpumalanga, Kruger National Park, and Hluehluwe Game Reserve. Enjoy day and night game drives in open safari vehicles. Take in the scenic Panorama route. Visit a penguin colony, rhino sanctuary, and the famous Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden on Table Mountain. Sip fine wines, enjoy gourmet meals, and experience close encounters with extraordinary bird and wildlife. You can extend your holiday with an optional foray into Zambia to visit Livingstone, the adventure capital, during a two-day excursion to Victoria Falls. You'll also enjoy a sunset cruise on the mighty Zambezi River and an optional helicopter, ultralight, or elephant-back ride. **Join us in March for the best of both city and safari!**



## UGANDA WILDLIFE SAFARI

Departs April 1, 2014 → 15 days → Price to be announced

**Often referred to as “the Pearl of Africa,” Uganda is a lush, green, tropical land with some of Africa’s friendliest people and a safari circuit that encompasses breathtaking landscapes.** The boat trips through the Kazinga Channel that links Lake Edward to Lake George and up the Victoria Nile River to Murchison Falls are among the most exhilarating in Africa! See the Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo) and hundreds of other animals, including four different species of jackal, pygmy antelope, Nile crocodile, bush pig, giant forest hog, the Uganda cob (Uganda’s national antelope), several species of monkey, and of course the endangered mountain gorilla. Uganda is a birdwatchers’ paradise, boasting the largest concentration of birds in all of Africa—more than 1,000 species. Our tour includes Lake Victoria (the largest lake in Africa), the Ruwenzoris (the Mountains of the Moon), and the acclaimed national parks of Murchison Falls, Queen Elizabeth, Kibale and Bwindi (home to chimpanzees and mountain gorillas, respectively), and Ngamba Island (a sanctuary for chimpanzees). If you’ve always wanted to see mountain gorillas in their natural habitat, and find out why their champion, Dian Fossey, loved Uganda so much, this tour should be at the top of your bucket list! It’s limited to 14 participants. To learn more, go to [www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/uganda.pdf](http://www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/uganda.pdf). **Call now to take part in this life-enriching tour!**



*Globetrotter David Skillan is a writer, photographer, and tour leader par excellence. He has travelled, lived, and worked all over the world, including the Far East, Australasia, Africa, and Latin America. He’s had a love affair with travel and adventure since childhood.*

*Since 1970, David has hosted more than 240 tours abroad, including more than 120 to Africa. He spends three to four months of each year travelling the world. Having seen it both the easy way and the hard way, he loves sharing his hard-earned international experience (albeit discreetly) with others.*

*David has been publishing articles and newsletters about his life, travels, and tours since 1978. →*

**EXCLUSIVE**

# The David Skillan Travel Collection

*A Special Series of the Finest Personally Escorted Tours and Safaris*

<b>2013</b>				
January 6	<b>BOTSWANA &amp; ZAMBIA SAFARI</b>	14 days	\$9,880	Safari Studio
April 23	<b>FALL FOLIAGE IN NEW ZEALAND</b>	21 days	\$6,329	Collette Vacations
June 12	<b>IRELAND—THE EMERALD ISLE</b>	13 days	\$4,569	Collette Vacations
October 3	<b>KENYA &amp; TANZANIA SAFARI</b>	16 days	TBA	Safari Studio
November 2	<b>MAGNIFICENT MOROCCO</b>	15 days	TBA	Safari Studio
<b>2014</b>				
January 4	<b>BOTSWANA &amp; ZAMBIA SAFARI</b>	14 days	TBA	Safari Studio
February 5	<b>WONDERS OF EGYPT</b>	14 days	TBA	Safari Studio
March 4	<b>SPECTACULAR SOUTH AFRICA</b>	14 days	TBA	Safari Studio
April 1	<b>UGANDA WILDLIFE SAFARI</b>	15 days	TBA	Safari Studio
<p><i>Tour prices are per person, in Canadian dollars. Taxes are extra, unless otherwise noted. Prices include all international and domestic flights (round-trip from Vancouver, Canada, though you can make your own flight arrangements and meet your tour), fine accommodations, most meals, and all sightseeing, as outlined in the respective itineraries. All dates, itineraries, and prices are subject to change. Most tours can be extended.</i></p>				

David Skillan's tours are marketed exclusively by Safari Studio and Collette Vacations. For full details, including the itinerary and booking information, please contact the tour operator indicated in the schedule above.

<p><b>Safari Studio</b>            #301 - 123 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street            North Vancouver, BC V7L 2P7            800-565-6670            or 604-990-1511  <a href="mailto:chrisb@safaristudio.ca">chrisb@safaristudio.ca</a>  <a href="http://www.safaristudio.ca">www.safaristudio.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Collette Vacations</b>            34 Pearl Street            Mississauga, ON L5M 1X2            866-358-0333  <a href="mailto:ebalint@collettevacations.ca">ebalint@collettevacations.ca</a>  <a href="http://www.collettevacations.ca">www.collettevacations.ca</a></p>
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**Call now for colour brochures and detailed itineraries! →**

## Excerpts from Recent Emails, Cards, and Letters



“Thanks for the great trip to Kenya and Tanzania. We would never have considered doing it on our own! As you said, it was quite different from Botswana and the Caprivi Strip. Difficult to compare. The animals in the Great Rift Valley were amazing.”

~Alison L and Bob P. (West Vancouver, BC)

“We’ve spent the weekend drinking Kenyan tea, listening to African CDs, and reviewing our more than 1,200 pictures. We continue to be amazed and grateful for this experience. Your part in this was key, and we would travel with you again in a heartbeat. Who knew there could be tents of such comfort and luxury? Then there were those incredible animal encounters—magic! Life on safari is good. Your attention to detail guaranteed that.”

~Sandy G. and Garry G. (Winnipeg, MB)

“Just wanted you to know how much I appreciated the tours I was able to take with you to New Zealand, Kenya, and Russia. You helped make some of my dreams come true. I now have some health problems and no longer travel, but I still enjoy getting your newsletters, and always pass them on. Keep up your enthusiasm!”

~Rita A. (Salt Spring Island, BC)

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of such comfort and luxury?  
Then there were those incredible  
animal encounters—magic!  
Life on safari is good.  
We’d travel with you again  
in a heartbeat!*

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“Thank you for the welcome-home note and the group photo. I shall be raving about our incredible African journey for months and years to come. I am so fortunate to have had the good fortune to accompany you. Coming down to earth has been a bit of a jolt! I would gladly travel with you again.”

~Sally B. (North Saanich, BC)

“Thanks for being a terrific host. I’ve already had a couple of people ask who I went to Africa with. I wouldn’t have wanted to brave the wilds of Africa without you!”

~Susan W. (Victoria, BC)

“A special thank you for the photos. I can actually now prove that I was on safari. Don and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. I don’t know how many times I asked someone to pinch me—am I REALLY in Africa, experiencing all this? We had a awesome time, and will spread the word.”

~Erica F. and Don F. (North Vancouver, BC)

“I’ve taken five safaris in Africa with you, and enjoyed every single one of them. I greatly regret not starting travelling with you earlier, and doing more when I could! I’d like to go again, but my legs won’t let me. Now I’m confined to my house, but still enjoy hearing from you.”

~Hans J. (Vancouver, BC)

“The Kenya & Tanzania tour was absolutely perfect. Reflecting on it all, we both agree that it was beyond our expectations in every way. And our travelling companions were great. We would definitely recommend you to family and friends.”

~Elaine S. and Graydon S. (Powell River, BC)

“My mom has recently moved into a care home. I wanted you to know that her several tours with you—from Australia and Japan to South America and the UK—played a significant role in her life. Thanks to you, she finally experienced travel in her later years. Taking those trips all over the world meant so much to her.”

~Margaret L. (Victoria, BC)

“We have very fond memories of our wonderful trip to east Africa, for which we can't thank you enough.”

~Jack C. and Gail C., Sechelt, BC →

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***This newsletter comes to you with our compliments.***

It's intended to create a greater awareness of the world we live in, promote worldwide travel and tourism, and inspire you to get up and go . . . on one of my exclusive, one-of-a-kind tours!

We must each try to live up to our potential. Otherwise we do ourselves a disservice, and perhaps others, as well. →



*From Turkey, with love . . .*

**Food for Thought . . .**

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

*~George Bernard Shaw*

“Nothing should be valued more highly than the price of each day.”

*~Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

“I cannot stand to see life pass by so quickly without some kind of accomplishment . . . .”

*~Terry Fox*

“I have enjoyed greatly the second blooming . . . suddenly you find—at the age of fifty, say—that a whole new life has opened before you.”

*~Agatha Christie*

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***“Adventure is the champagne of life!”***

*~G. K. Chesterton*