

# WA couple introduce an African odyssey

## STEPHEN SCOURFIELD

After 10 years working with the Department of Environment and Conservation (then CALM), last year Kate Hassall moved to South Africa with her partner Darren (Crusty) Humphrys to start their own "responsible travel and tourism business", Compass Odyssey.

It followed Ms Hassall receiving, in 2005, a Churchill Fellowship to travel to South Africa and Canada to look at successful ecotourism initiatives that involve partnerships between government, the private sector and indigenous communities.

Before that, her work with CALM involved drafting the policy that guided the designation of the wilderness areas in the Walpole Wilderness Area and also Aboriginal involvement in WA's national parks through tourism.

Ms Hassall says: "Darren is also an Aussie but has spent the last 10 years working as a guide for various overland safari companies throughout Africa and other parts.

"Our combined backgrounds have inspired the vision and purpose of our business here in South Africa.

"We aim to spend three to five months each year leading tours and



Compass Odyssey explores the African landscape. Picture: Stephen Scourfield

the remainder doing other travel and tourism related work."

Mr Humphrys is writing the first edition Morocco travel guide for Frommers and Ms Hassall is busy with the bookings and marketing for the 2007 Compass Odyssey South Africa tours.

"Our tours focus on South Africa's wildlife, its people and their culture," she explains.

"We visit wildlife conservation projects and social development initiatives along with some historical sites that many Aussies will be aware of.

"The intention of our chosen tour itineraries is to give our clients an understanding of both the problems and positives facing South Africa."

The couple's South Africa tour

has three sectors which can be booked individually or as one whole package.

The Compass Odyssey Johannesburg two-day mini-stay (October 2-3) is \$195, twin share. The Compass Odyssey South Africa 16-day tour (October 3-18) is \$3300, twin share. And the Compass Odyssey Cape Town six-day mini-stay (October 18-23) is \$995 twin share.

Compass Odyssey is aiming at Aussie baby boomers, who are semi or fully retired and keen for some "soft adventure" while also sleeping in a comfortable bed each night.

Mr Humphrys had already been well and truly bitten by the travel bug when he left Western Australia, in 1997, for Kenya and a two-month

expedition by overland truck to Zimbabwe. The journey literally changed his life.

Instead of flying back home once he reached the Zimbabwean capital of Harare, Mr Humphrys simply stayed on the truck as it was driven back to Kenya and asked the company for a job. Within three days he found himself employed as a tour leader for a British-based safari company, heading off to the famous Masai Mara with a truckload of fresh-faced passengers eager to be given their own "Out of Africa" experience.

Many tours and hundreds of passengers later, Mr Humphrys recently returned to Bunbury to catch up with some mates and take stock of the past 10 years.

"I love South Africa and have totally embraced living there," Mr Humphrys explains, "but I have to draw the line when it comes to the cricket or rugby.

"It's like barracking for the Poms — it just isn't right."

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For more information about Compass Odyssey tours, including a day-to-day detailed itinerary, email [info@compassodyssey.net](mailto:info@compassodyssey.net), or phone/fax +27 (0) 21 439 2225.

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