



CONSERVATION, COMMUNITY & COMMITMENT

Volcanoes Safaris Celebrates 25 Years at the Forefront of Eco-Tourism & Announces 2023 Plans to Open 5th Lodge in Kibale, Uganda



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Kampala, Uganda (October 11, 2022): As we step into a new era of travel, one which prioritizes planetary wellbeing, authenticity and transparency, [Volcanoes Safaris](#), pioneers of gorilla and chimpanzee eco-tourism in Uganda and Rwanda since 1997, reflects on the last 25 years while looking ahead as they announce the launch of their 5th lodge to open in 2023 near Kibale National Park in Uganda for chimpanzee trekking.

Volcanoes Safaris has long showcased how conservation and hospitality can come together to create a regenerative travel experience which brings rewards for both the local economy and the planet. Offering inspiring immersions across four leading boutique lodges in East Africa, visionary founder Praveen Moman puts conservation, wildlife protection, local culture and community empowerment at the forefront of his vision.

Praveen says, *“At the age of 12, I first went walking in Mgahinga, in the Virungas, with my father. It was around the time that Dian Fossey started her seminal research on the gorillas high up in the Virungas. I think by then I had these romantic notions that ultimately spurred me into the safeguarding of wilderness.”*

Widely recognised as a pioneer and legacy maker, Praveen’s achievements over these 25 years in the incredibly challenging environs of Uganda and Rwanda, embody the responsible and positive approach to

tourism that is now so urgently entering mainstream consciousness. Praveen has long honored the idea that purpose and mindful impact should define modern-day escapism.

A typical once-in-a-lifetime experience with Volcanoes Safaris might include morning hikes to see the gorillas in their natural mountain habitat, spectacular savannah game drives, and river cruises to see a wider selection of species including elephants, hippos, crocodiles and over 1200 species of birds. These experiences fall against a backdrop which has witnessed the mountain gorilla population almost double in the last 25 years, to about 1100, and the Kyambura chimpanzee population increase to over 30. Whilst still critically endangered, Praveen is rightly proud of the collective work he champions around gorilla and chimpanzee ecotourism and the rich biodiversity of the Albertine Rift Valley which is under enormous threat from human activities.

Praveen Moman shares, *“Our journey has tried to connect small-scale, sensitive and controlled ecotourism to the conservation of threatened gorillas and chimpanzees, the protection of habitats and the need to give local communities a stake in the forgotten forests of Rwanda and Uganda. Our conservation model has put communities at the center of the equation - communities must be an integral part of tourism and conservation, otherwise, the wildlife and habitats will not exist in the future.”*

The safari group’s lodges have been largely hand-built, using sustainable materials by local craftspeople, reflecting the aesthetics, culture and hospitality of the Great Lakes Region. Over the last five years, they have been reimaged and upgraded to represent the best in locally sourced food, top-level amenities and superb service.

A team of outstanding 100% African staff at the lodges - with about 50% of the managers in the company being women - has given Volcanoes Safaris a world-class reputation rooted in the modesty, quiet dignity, and indomitable spirit of the people of the Great Lakes.

Praveen Moman shares, *“Today we thank them for their hard work and dedication: it is for the people of our lands to take pride in their lodges.”*

Through the Volcanoes Safaris Partnership Trust, projects have been launched to link the lodges to communities and conservation, including the Batwa project at Gahinga; the Kyambura Gorge Eco-tourism Project; Bwindi Bar hospitality training; and the sheep, solar power and water tank projects at Virunga.

Looking ahead to 2023, to mark the 25th-anniversary Volcanoes Safaris will also start building a new, fifth lodge at a site near Kibale National Park in Uganda, home to about 1,500 chimpanzees, one of the largest communities of chimpanzees in Africa. This expansion complements the existing circuit of lodges developed by Volcanoes Safaris to offer a seamless safari across Rwanda and Uganda, putting guests in the countries’ most beloved parks for great ape trekking and wildlife tourism.

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BACKGROUND NOTES FOR EDITORS

Volcanoes Safaris is the leading ecotourism voice in the space around advocacy for the Great Apes, the threat to biodiversity in the Albertine Rift and the importance of peace in The Great Lakes region to safeguard these assets. Their work with different partners over the last 25 years includes the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, Jane Goodall Institute, Gorilla Doctors, Grasp, Conservation through Public Health, Fauna & Flora International, Tusk, International Gorilla Conservation Programme, Bwindi Community Hospital, Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the Adventure Travel Trade Association, the Adventure Travel Conservation Fund, The Ros Carr Imbabazi Foundation for orphans of the genocide, and the East Africa Association.

The History & Legacy of Volcanoes Safaris

- 1937 - The founder's father **Kuldip Rai Moman**, followed in their footsteps to East Africa, starting his colonial service in Kenya. He was passionate about the wilderness from childhood and an edited version of his reminisces - 'In search of the Zakhira- the Wilderness' will be published by Volcanoes Safaris for the 25th anniversary.
- 1972 - The family became refugees relocating to the U.K. under the directive of then President Idi Amin
- 1997 - Praveen founded Volcanoes Safaris in Uganda, three years after the genocide in neighbouring Rwanda, which triggered the Great Lakes conflict. He started building Mount Gahinga Lodge on the border of Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC
- 1999 - Volcanoes Safaris opened a basic camp at Bwindi
- 2000 - Started taking guests to Rwanda and set up Volcanoes Safaris in the country during the so-called second Congo War
- 2004 - Virunga Lodge in Rwanda is built, the first international lodge to be built after the conflict in Rwanda. Volcanoes Safaris was at the forefront of rebuilding gorilla tourism in Rwanda through the Volcanoes Safaris Business Linkages Challenge Fund, supported by the British government.
- 2011 - Kyambura Gorge Lodge in Uganda is built, as part of the Kyambura Gorge Ecotourism Partnership Project to protect the threatened community of 15 chimps which has now increased to 30
- 2022 - Completion of a five-year renovation project to upgrade and reimagine all four lodges
- 2023 - Planned opening of Volcanoes Kibale Lodge Lake Lugembe in Uganda

About Volcanoes Safaris:

Volcanoes Safaris is recognized as the leader in great ape tourism specializing in mountain gorilla and chimpanzee trekking in Rwanda and Uganda. With four eco-safari lodges and a fifth opening in 2023, guests can enjoy all the highlights of Uganda and Rwanda in comfort and style while primate trekking through Africa. Guests can also experience and take part in the eco-tourism and conservation efforts with the local communities, developed by the Volcanoes Safaris Partnership Trust (VSPT).

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