

# 1992

## Tom & Lorraine Preston, who visualised and built The Hide in 1992 with Pondo.

This picture was taken not long after the camp first opened. The McGeorge brothers, well-known photographers, were visiting The Hide to take some promotional shots. "Pondo", as we called him, was a magnificent old bull elephant who wandered into camp on a regular basis, and this was one such occasion, which the McGeorges captured beautifully.



## The very first underground hide - a place to see unseen...

This was Tom's idea, to set up a secluded and hidden place from which keen photographers could observe wildlife and take pictures without being observed by the animals. A used container was sunk into the ground and covered with logs and sticks to disguise it. Safari enthusiasts could look out of the cut-out viewing slot onto the waterhole. One year, after particularly heavy rains, the container popped right out of the earth along with the rising water table! One night, from the dinner table, a series of flashing lights was seen coming from the general direction of the hide. After some debate, the erstwhile guide clapped his hand to his forehead and announced that he'd forgotten to collect his guests, who were sending out frantic SOS signals with a cigarette lighter!



## The Dove's Nest was once just a simple platform overlooking the vleei...

This quirky treehouse was the brainchild of former Hide manager Bruce Elliott. He built a viewing platform in an old Leadwood tree, known to be the biggest specimen in Hwange National Park and offering impressive views right across a huge grassland corridor. Today, as then, the multiple storey Dove's Nest with bedroom, bathroom and deck, is rather ingeniously constructed within but not attached to the tree in any way.



## A staff team shot taken in 1994...

Top, left to right: Anastasia Jidne (laundry) Simon Manzurew (mechanic, then qualified as a professional guide) Thando Maphosa (chef), Obert Ncube(head chef), Bigboy Ncube (assistant chef). Bottom, left to right: Sikhangele Mbara (head waiter) Ishmael Sibanda (bedroom hand) Otto Sibanda (waiter).



## The famous, big 22-seater dining table that we've always had and still do.

This magnificent table was commissioned by Tom especially for the camp. When it first arrived, it was too small, and didn't seat the required 22. So it was promptly sent back and rebuilt to Tom's original specs, which allowed for a full complement of guests and a manager/host and guide. Although now not in one piece, but rather a few smaller versions of its former self, our beautiful teak table saw many a feast and plenty of festivities.. it would certainly have a few tales to tell! Tom had strict rules for anyone seated around the table - no swearing and no politics!



## The rooms were originally designed with a distinctly African feel, popular at the time

Today, The Hide has a distinctively classic safari style, after various remodels. Bruce Elliott and his wife, Des, were responsible for the first makeover and since then Angus' wife, Pam has taken it on, enjoying the sourcing of some of the décor elements from local craftsmen.



## We've even had a wedding or two...

The Hide offers the perfect small wedding venue - and many special spots to choose from to say those important vows and celebrate in style. We've hosted couples upstairs in the A-frame, out under a tree on the vleei or in front of the waterhole - and even been honoured guests at a unique reception in the forest area behind the camp. We pride ourselves in working closely with couples to give them a truly unforgettable wedding day and/or honeymoon in the bush.



## The iconic 'A'-frame was first built in 1992 and has had a couple of makeovers since then

From The Hide's opening day, the A-frame has been a much-loved element of the camp. To get it completed in time, Tom set a challenge to the builders, who were split between the two sides of the very steep roof, offering a reward for the "team" that finished their side first. The challenge worked and, the high-pitched feature of the camp has been a solid fixture from Day One.

## In 2014, the newest underground hide was built

Tom's son, Angus Preston, came up with this idea. He wanted to create an opportunity for guests to take themselves off to a hide at whim, without the need for a guide to accompany them. So, right in front of the A-frame, where guests gather to dine and relax, he built an underground hide, accessible from the veranda down a tunnel and into a relatively spacious hide right on the edge of the waterhole. This element of freedom and flexibility has added a very special touch to the camp's activity offering.



# 2017

## And here we are today... 25 years on!

The Hide is open all year round and has seen an average of more than a thousand guests a year revel in its wonderful luxury safari offering. That's an impressive amount of dinners, sundowners, game drives and cheerful morning wake-up calls! The Hide is a remarkable manifestation of a visionary man and the ongoing efforts and care of his family, who call this special place home.

## Bumpy, the warthog. He used to sleep on the beds!

This little orphan warthog was raised in camp and became a familiar sight amongst the tents. He loved taking afternoon siestas in the seclusion of the ironing room under the table, but one day a horrified honeymoon couple discovered him reclining casually on their bed! Bumpy soon grew too big to hang around guests and his growing tusks a little threatening. He found a new, loving home at an animal sanctuary.



## In 2014, we also added a wine cellar, which is just off the new hide in front of camp

Again, Angus is to blame for this rather splendid idea... how about we build a wine cellar just off the tunnel leading down to the new hide? The underground conditions would be perfect for wine's exacting criteria. There's a surprisingly impressive collection of unique wines from around the world in this neat space and guests are invited to make their selections for dinner.

