



MACATOO, BOTSWANA

Where in the world am I? After flying to Maun, you'll be picked up by jeep and then transferred by boat, swishing your way through endless water lilies, to a half-million-acre private concession in the mind-blowingly beautiful Okavango Delta.

Where am I heading? Base is the Macatoo Camp, from which you will ride into pristine wilderness every day, seeing not another soul.

Who's in charge? John Sobey, a cheeky chappy with an impish sense of humour who wants to ensure everybody has the best time. 'Take a good look at those chipmunks eating your breakfast – that's all the wildlife you'll see this afternoon,' he jests, before you enter a ridiculously enthralling *Jungle Book* adventure.

What are the horses like? A mix of Namibian and Hanoverian thoroughbreds, Kalahari-Arab crossbreeds and 17-hand Percherons, with one to suit everyone, even the slightly overweight huntsman. The bigger breeds don't make way for bushes, and simply barge straight through them. You change horses several times during the trip, which keeps you on your toes. Be careful of all-conquering Caesar – before you know it, you'll be leading the ride.

Need to know This trip, started by Sarah Jane Gullick, is almost considered a rite of passage by those on the inside track.

Do I need to be fighting fit? At times your horse will be swimming through deep waters and long grasses (with you still on top), so you do need to be competent and confident.

What will I see? You'll find yourself galloping with herds of giraffes or dazzling zeals of zebras – totally thrilling views one minute, peaceful and calm observation the next.

Where will I sleep? In supremely comfy and eerily isolated semi-permanent canvas tents. As you are walked back to your room, there are visitations by elephants, deer and the occasional lion – which all adds to the excitement. Be warned: snoring, farting elephants can be a source of sleepless nights.

Top tip Non-riders can easily accompany friends, enjoying endless hours of boat rides, walking safaris, fishing and the chance of seeing even more wildlife than those on horseback.

Book it *Wild and Exotic* offers seven nights from £4,020, including flights, transfers and activities (wildandexotic.co.uk or 01439 748401). ▷