



the metre-long horns portray a seriousness of purpose its daintier antelope cousins, the impala and springbok, could not hope to muster.

A few days later we had reached the Naukluft mountains at Sossusvlei, widely held to be Africa's most beautiful desert landscape.

It was not easy to abandon my safari buddies on our last day together, but it had been a record rainfall year and the Namib Desert was carpeted in grass and wildflowers for the first time in three decades.

The Wild Dog crew headed off for a sunrise trek into the dunes; I was going to see them from a hot-air balloon.

Travelling at exactly the same speed as the wind means you have no sense you're moving at all so, in a balloon, the earth slips by beneath you as if on a giant conveyor belt.

Things felt so completely still that when I spied an ostrich sprinting, a burst of sand erupting with each footfall, its movement seemed unrelated

to real time or the real world. And so, at last, being nibbled by one of the cats at Otjitongwe becomes the perfect remembrance of my visit to Namibia — world cheetah headquarters.

The Nels (Tollie, wife Roelen and son Mario) are getting on with trapping nuisance cheetahs on nearby farms and

giving them a safe home. The 19 cats fenced in on their property undoubtedly still feel wild — they are fed haunches of oryx, donkey and kudu only because there is insufficient prey inside the 240ha enclosure to sustain them.

I fancy there's a twinkle in Tollie's eye when he tells me that some inquisitive wart-

hogs regularly burrow under the fence and kudu leap over it.

"They don't last long," he tells me. "We're hoping to double the area when we can afford the fencing."

The gruff Afrikaaner farm-boss is now nowhere to be seen. "I wouldn't mind turning the whole place over to the cats one day," Tollie confides.

FACT FILE



GETTING THERE: Qantas (www.qantas.com.au) and South African Airways to Johannesburg; both SAA (www.flysaa.com) and Air Namibia (www.airnamibia.com.na) have connections to Windhoek.

STAY: Windhoek is clean, pleasant and safe to walk around. The few hotels are nothing special; a B&B or guesthouse is a better choice, and there is a good range, from cheap and cheerful to indulgent. At the Olive Grove Guesthouse \$110pp a night includes an excellent à la carte breakfast (+264-61-239 199; www.olivegrove.com.na).

SAFARI: Wild Dog Safaris is one of Namibia's longest established safari operators. Trips range three to 18 days, camping or lodge accommodation; +264-61-257 642, www.wilddog-safaris.com

BALLOON: Namibsky balloon rides depart daily from Sossusvlei in southern Namibia. One-hour flight with champagne breakfast and transfers \$500 per person; www.namibsky.com

CHEETAHS: Otjitongwe Cheetah Park is near Kamanjab and the southern border of Etosha National Park. Join staff in the wild cheetah enclosure at feeding time (3pm-4pm) and meet the tame family cheetahs. Campsites, bungalows and an outdoor bar and barbecue area; www.cheetahpark.com

NORTHERN TERRITORY

DARWIN ESCAPE
- 4 DAYS
\$695*

- INCLUDES:
- ✓ Return airfares to Darwin
 - ✓ 3 nights 5 star accommodation at SKYCity Darwin
 - ✓ Darwin Harbour Cruise
 - ✓ FREE Drink & Gaming Vouchers

Ex Sydney Code: TDTNS20

ULURU ESCAPE

- 4 days from
\$749*

Return airfares to Ayers Rock
3 nights accommodation
Ayers Rock Resort
FREE return airport transfers
FREE use of resort shuttle

SAVE \$115!

Ex Sydney Code: TDCNS12

RED CENTRE EXPLORER

- 7 days from
\$1125*

6 days car hire (small manual hatch),
Unlimited kilometres, 3 nights accomm
Ayers Rock Resort, 2 nights accomm Alice
Springs, 1 night accomm Kings Canyon
Resort, FREE Ayers Rock airport transfers &
Resort shuttle

SAVE \$249!

Ex Sydney Code: TDCNS13

TROPICAL TOURING

- 5 days from
\$795*

Return airfares to Darwin
4 nights accommodation Darwin
1 Day Kakadu Tour & 1 Day Litchfield Tour
with Australian Pacific Touring

SAVE OVER \$140!

Ex Sydney Code: TDTNS17



Territory Discoveries

enquiries@territorydiscoveries.com www.holidaysnt.com/specials

13 38 43

Conditions apply: *Price per person twin share, inclusive of GST and airfare related taxes and charges. Airfares correct as at 16Jan07 and are subject to change without notice and limited availability. Airfare prices based on direct routes, additional charges apply for indirect routes. Valid for sale until 27Jan07. Valid for travel 01Feb07-31March07. TDCNS11 Departs Thu & Sat. A business division of Tourism NT. ABN 43 978 766 299.

3 3
PR OOF OK CORRECTION SIGNATURE: ED
AD
876 412 124 678