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A Guide to Intelligent Travel

February 8, 2010, 5:30 PM

A Floating Safari in Bostwana

By HUGH RYAN



Zambezi Queen

Ever since Katharine Hepburn declared "I never dreamed that any mere physical experience could be so stimulating!", African river boating has been a booming industry.

The Zambezi Queen (www.zambeziqueen.com) a new 150-foot-long river boat described by its owner, Tony Stern, as a "five-star floating boutique hotel," is a far cry from Hepburn's African Queen. But it does offer a luxurious new way to explore one of the lesser-known waterways of the continent: the Chobe River in Botswana.

The mighty river, which runs through Chobe National Park, supports an array of wildlife, including elephants, waterbuck, giraffes, zebras, impalas, wildebeests, kudus, warthogs and giraffes.

The Zambezi Queen bills itself as eco-friendly, with solar-heated water, jet propulsion (instead of propellers) and no air-conditioning. All 14 suites are appointed with private balconies, modern colonial-style décor and plenty of mosquito netting. The ship also has a bar, reading room and plunge pool.

Tours are two or three days, and cover 20 miles of the river, with prices ranging from \$800 to \$3,600, depending on length, time of year and accommodation.

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