

Game for **African** adventures

Safari trip becomes a board game by Jess Lee, 28 March 2014



Andrea Crompton gave Mark Jennings an ultimatum when he proposed to her. "I said 'If you take me to Africa then we'll get married'," Ms Crompton says. Mr Jennings fulfilled his end of the bargain.

But among all of the adventures they have found themselves on, making it to the altar has never quite fit into their plans.

The Grey Lynn couple lived side-by-side with elephants while volunteering at a game reserve in South Africa, travelled for weeks on the back of a truck from Victoria Falls to Nairobi and stood inches away from wild gorillas in the jungles of Uganda.

It's a life-changing experience, Ms Crompton says.

"I'd go back in a heartbeat. Seeing elephants and gorillas so close like that - it's surreal."

They have made two trips to Africa in the decade since Mr Jennings popped the question and are still yet to tie the knot.

The adventurous pair has created Game Drive, a board game inspired by their time exploring the continent to help support conservation efforts there.

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/local-news/auckland-city-harbour-news/9873826/Game-for-African-adventures>

It sees players become conservationists working in southern Africa, travelling to reserves and sighting the animals known as the Big Five - lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos and buffaloes.

Volunteering in Africa wasn't exactly on Mr Jennings' bucket list before they met.

"I'd never even thought about going to Africa so it was quite an adventure."

Having a "cuddle" with a newly-rescued three-month-old elephant was a highlight for them both.

"I followed Andrea's lead as I normally do and it was just lovely," Mr Jennings says.

A terrorist threat nearly halted their plans to take an overland trip to Kenya but nothing was going to stop Ms Crompton from fulfilling a life-long dream, she says.

During their time in The Gambia, keepers were forced to move a rhino that had wandered into another male's territory and the couple helped prepare it for transport.

"When two male rhinos come together within their territory they will fight to the death. It was incredible to see the rhino darted and then moved off."

Rhinos in independent game reserves are under the threat of poaching. A percentage of the profits from sales of the couple's board game will go towards the Rhino Protection Trust as a way of giving back to the continent. They hope to return to Africa next year.

Go to www.gamedrive.co.nz for more information.

