

**David Herbert: Founder and Managing Director
African Travel Inc.**

Since 1976 David Herbert, Founder and Managing Director of African Travel Inc., has been a leader in travel to the African continent. Over the years, his company has not only set the pace in organizing deluxe safaris to South Africa, but has been instrumental in introducing travelers to destinations throughout southern and eastern Africa. More than thirty years later, he continues to guide this high-end, custom-designed safari company.

In The Beginning

British-born Herbert first discovered South Africa as a college student in the 1960s, and immediately fell in love with the country. Living in Cape Town and working as a safari guide, he started an overland camping tour company with several partners. In 1968 they organized the first overland tours for cruise passengers, giving them the option of traveling three days along "The Garden Route," from Cape Town to Durban, a distance of 1200 miles. In 1970, the successful venture was sold and Herbert headed to Johannesburg where he started African Travel Supervisors, a company serving the European market. Four years later that company had six offices in four countries.

The 1970s saw Herbert founding Gametrackers, one of the first companies to develop wildlife lodges in Botswana and South Africa. Under Herbert's leadership the company converted former hunting lodges into photography preserves for tourism, relocating game that had gone into hiding. Gametrackers grew to six camps in Botswana, and was eventually sold to Orient Express. Herbert would continue to develop lodges for two decades in places such as Botswana's Okavango Delta well before anyone had heard of the area, as well as in Mozambique. In Botswana he trained a local staff of 170 and in Mozambique some 200 people, providing much-needed employment and education. Ever the entrepreneur and statesman, in the 1990s Herbert extended his activities to Egypt, building a resort hotel in the Sinai, on the Red Sea, with an Egyptian developer. The start of a new century once again found Herbert returning to Mozambique, heading a company with four small wildlife lodges in the Vilanculos Coastal Wildlife Sanctuary, as well as two wildlife lodges in South Africa.

The American Connection

While developing tourism enterprises in Africa, Herbert simultaneously expanded his horizons to the U.S. During his first trip to America in 1974, Herbert traveled extensively throughout the country, selling his first charter for 180 passengers to Kent State University. Subsequent trips found him supplying African travel arrangements to several respected U.S. tour operators, including Lindblad Expeditions.

Convinced of the enormous potential for South Africa in the US market, Herbert opened his own company, African Travel, in Chicago in 1976. Using his African connection, he acquired the U.S. representation for Sun Hotels in South Africa as an anchor account, and the business took off.

In 1979, Herbert moved the company to the Los Angeles area, where it remains today. Since the 1990s African Travel Inc. has grown more than three-fold, from a staff of three to more than 30 today. Herbert has continued living on two continents, spending time developing a quality product in Africa, and marketing the company in the U.S. Always taking a personal interest in his clients, Herbert is known for paying them a surprise visit while on tour, or making a personal phone call to see that all is well.

Throughout his career, Herbert has been active in travel industry relations, serving as Chairman of the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA) from 1997 to 1999.

Giving Back

David Herbert has been a strong conservationist and a believer in giving back to Africa. “Socially conscious travelers need to recognize that tourism is a very good thing for the African people,” he says. “Tourism puts economic development right into those remote areas that most need it.”

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