

photo session it was for me even more satisfying to see the fish released and swim away. Although the fishing is catch and release, what really impressed me was the care and concern shown by the guides. If a fish happened to pop up to the surface after release they would stop everything and try to revive the fish.

The 16 pounder was the start of an epic three days of fishing. Between the two of us we managed to catch and release over 300 pounds of tiger fish with the average weighing in at 7.6 pounds. To be honest we also lost a lot of fish due to "technical operator fault" as Willard called it that is, striking too soon or too late. My only regret is we didn't progress to the fly fishing stage of our competition, but to be honest it was too hot at 45 degrees Celsius and we were having far too much fun with the bait fishing.

Boating back to the lodge on our last evening with the sun setting over the horizon it was fitting way to end what was for me the most memorable fishing experience ever. Once again I contemplated how lucky I am to live in Africa. **W**

WILDSIDE Fact Tracker

Zambezi Valley – Chikwenya Lodge

Where: Chikwenya Lodge is in Zimbabwe, situated at the confluence of the Sapi River and the Zambezi River, on the eastern border of Mana Pools National Park in the Zambezi Valley.

How to get there: Fly from Johannesburg to Harare, take a charter (1.5 hrs) to Chikwenya. Wildside flew with Solenta Airways and found the flight an exciting aspect of the trip as you fly over the vast landscape before landing at Chikwenya. Access via road from Harare is the Chirundu highway. In the dry months, four-wheel drive recommended. From Harare, it's 430km, and a 6 – 7 hour drive. The caution is to secure fuel for the trip.

Accommodation: Nine double suites including the honeymoon suite and a presidential suite. All air-conditioned, beautifully appointed with private decks, indoor and outdoor bathrooms.

Rates: US 375 inclusive of accommodation, all three delicious meals per day, all activities game drives, boating, and fishing with expert guides and equipment. No fuel charges. Excludes park fees and drinks. Ask

about low season specials.

View on rates: The rates include all activities, such as game drives, boat trips and fishing which means fuel. As all logistics, fuel in particular, adds to costs, we feel the rates are fair all considered. However, it is flights that make the trip costly as the Jhb to Harare flights can climb to R6 000, and then there is the charter in US dollars. Despite this, the market at Chikwenya is predominantly South African many drawn to the world class tiger fishing.

Activities: Game drives, walks, boat cruises, night drives, bird watching and fishing on the Zambezi for the world famous tiger fish. All activities are done with top guides who are experts on the flora and fauna of the area.

To book: Email: reservations@chikwenyasafaris.com

www.chikwenyasafaris.com

Tel +263 (0) 4499875

Cell +263 (0) 77 2470 065

Contact: To enquire about specific lodge information, contact the lodge manager Sonja Clark: chikwenya.zambezi@solenta.co.zw



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