

# Mattanu A GIFT *from above*

by Pat Botha

**T**he Mattanu Private Game Reserve is located about 50km north-west of Kimberley in the Northern Cape province. The rich history behind Mattanu is impressive and not only reads like a novel, but typifies what it means to build a family business for future generations.

Dr Johan Kriek, wildlife veterinarian and until recently, commercial helicopter pilot, moved to South Africa from Zimbabwe in 1980. He started with a mixed veterinarian practice and imported wildlife from Africa to realise his dream of owning a game farm. This became a reality in 1991,

when he started breeding rare antelope and sable, followed by the first private disease-free buffalo breeding project.

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Mattanu Private Game Reserve, Northern Cape, South Africa. The Kriek family bought the farm in 1991 and developed it as a breeding area for rare antelope species. In 2006 Mattanu opened its doors to the public as an eco-tourism destination.





A JetRanger turbine helicopter was used in 1991 because of the altitude and the fact that most of the roans were carried to the trucks in nets due to the inaccessible terrain.

In 1991, Dr Johan Kriek imported roan and sable from Malawi to South Africa. This importing project is considered the most successful and meaningful project in the game industry in southern Africa. The profit returns from the Malawi operation was used to purchase Mattanu Private Game Reserve. For a detailed report on the project, refer to *Wildlife Ranching*, issue 5, 2015: 'Historiese wild-invoer uit afrika'.



Scan the QR code or visit [www.youtube.com/watch?t=56&v=b62Ez7t0tNs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=56&v=b62Ez7t0tNs) to watch the video: 'Roan and Sable import from Malawi in 1991'.



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The Kriek's younger son, Jacques, finished his degree in tourism and marketing, and in 2006 Mattanu opened its doors to the public as an eco-tourism destination managed by Jacques.

Johan and his wife, Daleen, their two sons, Johann and Jacques, and daughter, Heleen, are all involved in the reserve and with all visitors to Mattanu. As a family unit they perfected exceptional hospitality for the whole family. Relaxation in the African Kalahari savannah amidst the camel thorn trees, you will savour uncompromising high standards of service, efficiency and personalised attention.





Luxury safari tents.

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Mattanu restaurant.

Five luxury safari tents, each with a private viewing deck overlooking a waterhole, jet-spa baths, full en-suite bathroom and luxurious wood furnishings are available for that bush safari excitement without compromising on luxury. Your choice might fall on a two-bedroom thatched roof suite comprising of a loft main bedroom opening onto a private deck, lounge, bar and two bathrooms, or a two-bedroom en-suite log cabin, complete with private jacuzzi, ideal for family and friends. The fire place and air conditioning in units add to your comfort during your fully or self-catered visit.

Daleen is actively involved in the catering at the luxury restaurant where the chef prepares true South-African cuisine, and a real treat awaits the wine connoisseur with an extensive wine collection in the underground wine cellar. Relax at the island-centre pool overlooked by a natural rock waterfall feature, accessible via walkways from all the accommodation units, or go for a pampering massage with a qualified therapist – Heleen's project, herself a qualified somatologist – or partake in any of the numerous activities on offer, making visiting Mattanu an experience you would want to repeat at least once a year. The list of activities on offer makes it hard to choose which to do



Three generations of the Kriek family. They are all involved in the management of the reserve.

From left: Back row, Dr Johan Kriek, Johann Kriek, Jacques Kriek, Burger Schoeman.

Middle row, Daleen Kriek, Dominique Kriek, Stephné Kriek saam met Jané en Heleen Schoeman.

Front row, Miné Kriek, Tiaan Kriek en Stephan Kriek.



Luxury thatched-roof self-catering accommodation.

first. Johan's eldest son, Johann, is a qualified commercial pilot and with Mattanu's private helicopters, the core being the new four-seater Robinson R44, you can book a spectacular game viewing experience. The helicopter can also be booked for fly-fishing trips, luxury transfers and Bushveld dinner fly-ins. Over and above the normal game viewing with a traditional game viewer vehicle, game viewing on a quad bike is popular among guests. For the young and active, paintball is an exciting activity.





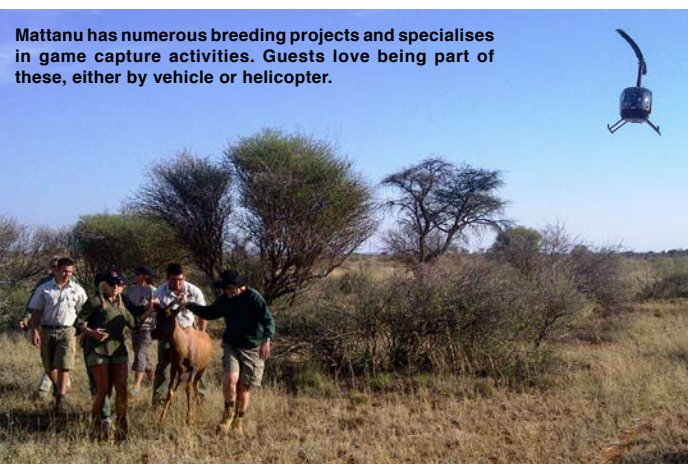
Roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*).



Livingstone eland (*Taurotragus oryx livingstonii*).



Mattanu has numerous breeding projects and specialises in game capture activities. Guests love being part of these, either by vehicle or helicopter.



Sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger*).



Mattanu has numerous breeding projects and specialises in game capture activities. Guests love being part of these, either by vehicle or helicopter. Drive to view their exceptional breeding animals and learn about the breeding of difference species, or hop on a helicopter for a game capture safari. Share Mattanu's conservational efforts with a sense of pure adventure.

Photographic and filming safaris have become a popular tourist attraction, and Mattanu also offer these. Kriek Helicopters have satellite branches in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Polokwane, Durban, Bloemfontein, Upington, to name a few, as well as in Botswana, Zambia and Namibia, and operate as members of the Heli Alliance, owned and operated by Kriek Helicopters. Kriek Helicopters have countrywide access to a wide range of helicopter types suitable for filming and photography. Having supplied their services to many filming companies they deliver a steady platform for filming at affordable rates. They cater for most filming operations and filming mounts can be arranged.

Whether your choice falls on game viewing by wheels or wings, it is a special experience for the wildlife

Gemsbuck (*Oryx gazella*).



enthusiast. Experience the thrill of viewing and photographing exceptional species in the breeding projects, like roan, sable, tsessebe, African buffalo, Livingstone eland, common, red and golden oryx, the saddle back oryx, which originated from Namibia, the black oryx, golden wildebeest and black impala. Other species like kudu with exceptional horn lengths are also part of the

breeding projects. During *Wildlife Ranching's* visit at Mattanu, we were fortunate to come across a bat-eared fox – an animal you don't see every day. A large portion of the 4 700ha property is open planes, home to as many as 36 different roaming species, which makes game viewing even more special. Mattanu is also a bird-watcher's paradise, being home to 250 bird species.



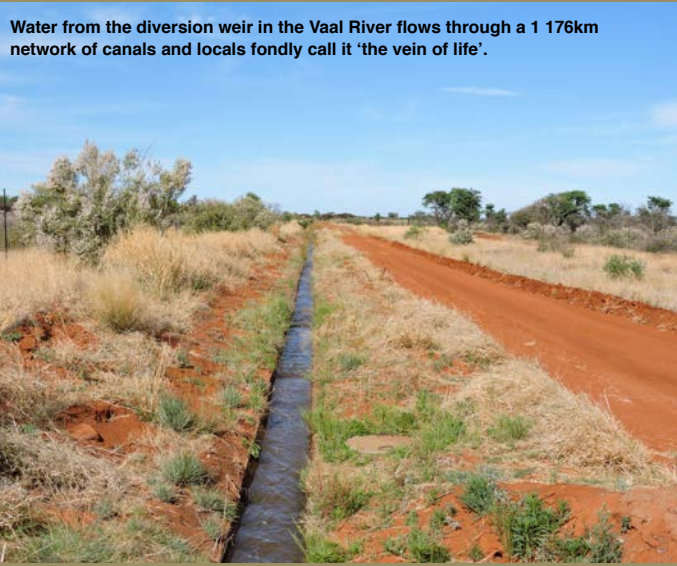


Tsessebe (*Damaliscus lunatus*).



Waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*).

Water from the diversion weir in the Vaal River flows through a 1 176km network of canals and locals fondly call it 'the vein of life'.

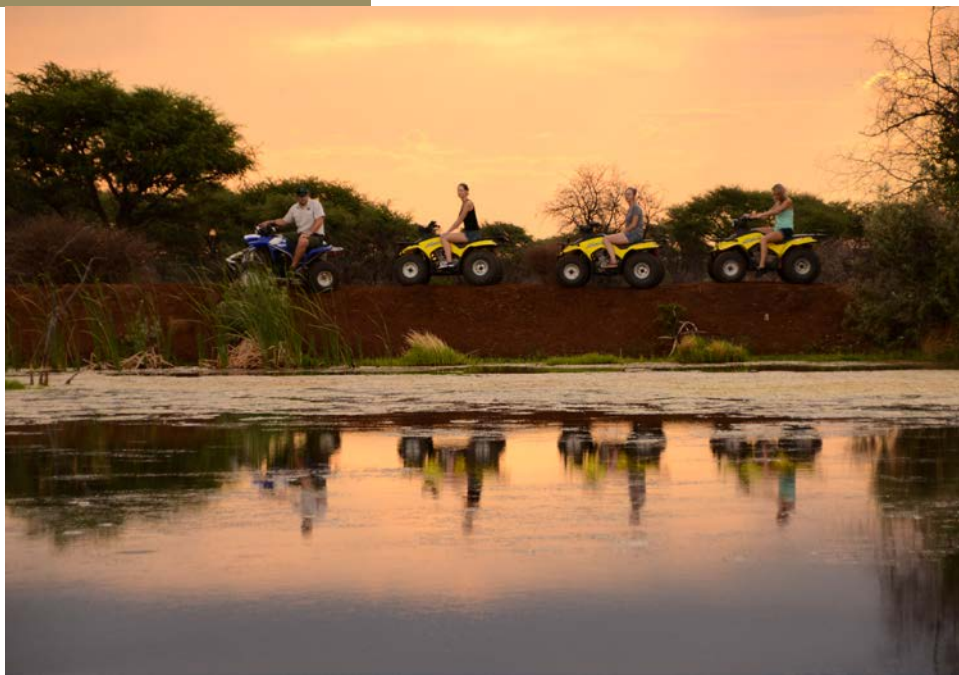


Bat-eared fox (*Otocyon megalotis*).



African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*).

the Vaalharts Irrigation Scheme Weir, which was built in 1938 and supplies water via canals from the weir to the area and is also used by Mattanu, still runs as well as it did when it was built.



Although drought is a factor everywhere in South Africa, we were pleasantly surprised to learn the Vaalharts Irrigation Scheme Weir, which was built in 1938 and supplies water via canals from the weir to the area and is also used by Mattanu, still runs as well as it did when it was built. Water from the diversion weir in the Vaal River flows through a 1 176km network of canals and locals fondly calls it 'the vein of life'.

Mattanu is also a popular choice as a wedding venue and for year-end functions and conferences. It can easily cater for up to 150 delegates. Numerous awards line the walls at reception, with the latest being the Lilizela Award for Best Accommodation Service Provider in the Northern Cape earlier this year. They also received

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this award in 2015. Other recent awards include the PMR Diamond Arrow Award for Best Game Lodge in the Northern Cape awarded in 2013 and 2014, Diners Club Diamond Wine List Award in 2013, and the national winner of the AA Accommodation Award for Best Game/Nature Reserve Experience in SA for 2012. Another five previous awards confirm this

family's dedication to excellent service. Through its warm hospitality, great attention to detail and exceptional personal attention, this family-run game reserve with its colourful array of activities will ensure a unique and memorable experience. Thank you, Mattanu, for sharing your gift from above with *Wildlife Ranching* magazine.

For more information, email [reservations@mattanu.com](mailto:reservations@mattanu.com) or visit [www.mattanu.com](http://www.mattanu.com)