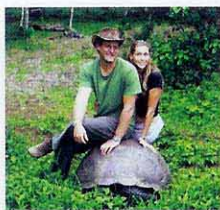


Get up and go

Two couples explain how they left England to start a new life, as well as luxurious safari experiences for travellers in South America and Africa



Stephanie and Michael Mesdag at their new Galapagos Safari Camp on Santa Cruz, Ecuador

Before they got married, Stephanie (half-English, half-Ecuadorian) took Michael (half-Dutch, half-Spanish) to Galapagos: 'We cycled around

Santa Cruz and found a farm with 360-degree views.' They bought it, complete with 80 cows and 55 hectares of guavas, bananas, oranges and coffee. A central lodge was erected, as well as six luxury tents from Australia which open to guests this month. 'The original camp design was Kenyan in style. But at 500 metres we get mists, so we needed a heavier structure,' explains Michael. Guests can walk, birdwatch, ride, mountain bike and dive. (00 593 9371 7552; www.galapagossafaricamp.com). Doubles from US\$400 a night full-board



Paddy and Amanda Bond Gunning of Black Pot Safaris

Paddy bumped into Amanda in London the day before she went to Africa for good. Four months later, he left his work to join her on her stepfamily's farm in Mpumalanga, near

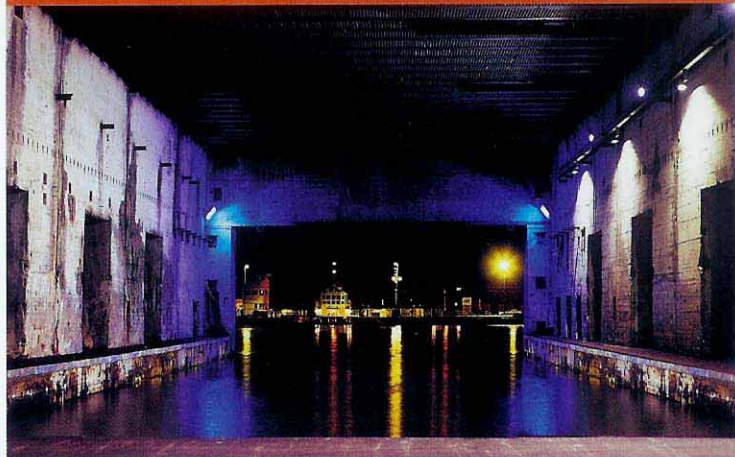
Kruger National Park. After exploring five countries and 26 reserves, they set up Black Pot Safaris in 2005, named after the black cooking pot, the 'Dutch oven', they took with them. They run escorted safaris for two months a year in Land Rover Defenders with fridges, rooftop tents and a black pot. New this year is the African Ivory Route around the Limpopo and Shoshi Rivers (pictured top). (00 27 13 733 3124; www.blackpotsafaris.co.za). 12 night/13 day safari in Botswana from £1,500 per person, based on four people sharing two vehicles

GO WITH THE CREATIVE FLOW

Picture this

From 1 June, the Loire estuary from Nantes to St Nazaire will turn into a 64km-long, open-air art gallery, with art on the riverbanks, in the water and in adjacent cities and ports, including a floating house and a 24-metre-high duck. Anish Kapoor is showing at Nantes Art Gallery, and from 1 July Nantes' shipyards will house an animatronic elephant, which flaps its ears, blows dust and seats up to 30 passengers. Sound artist Edwin van der Heide has created a visual-and-sound installation in former Allied submarine pen, Alvéole 14, and a 'mirror boat' will take visitors on three-hour cruises. (www.estuaire.com). A Loire Estuary 2007 pass costs €30 per adult and €20 per child, including entry to venues and a cruise

The Allied submarine pen, Alvéole 14, illuminated at night on the Loire River



BBQ DRILL

Stand to attention at this camouflage Weber BBQ, powder-coated by a company that supplies the US Army. It comes from a line of quirky home and leisure products made by Sundayland, a Californian firm owned by Argentinian architect brothers Fernando and Juan Diego Gerscovich. \$1,800, plus shipping (00 1 310 204 3848; www.sundayland.com)

CREASE FREE New this month is Donna Karan's ICONS line of black-jersey separates, from £345, perfect for throwing in a suitcase (www.donnakaran.com)