



IT'S NOT OFTEN THAT YOU SIDE WITH A POACHER.

Or want to see things from their perspective, giving them the benefit of the doubt. But that's exactly what Brian Harris, former Wildlife and Community Development Manager of Singita Grumeti, did upon meeting Peter Andrew.

At 15 years old, Peter – with no other employment opportunities available to him in a little village on the outskirts of Tanzania – began poaching.

'It was a very dangerous job. But I had no other choice than to poach in order to eat and make money from what I was able to sell,' says Peter. 'Life as a poacher was not easy. It was very risky and I became ashamed that I was killing animals, but it was my only option.'

Being very fast on his feet and a skilled huntsman, poaching came naturally to Peter, and he was able to escape conservation officers time and again. That was until 2003, at the age of 24, when Peter met Brian.

'I thank Mr Harris every day for not giving up on me. It was a tough job convincing me to leave poaching. He pleaded with me many times. But I think when he made the effort to visit my grandmother, and speak with her too, he was able to change my mind; he



New lease on life

The remarkable story of Peter Andrew, who succeeded against all odds and went from poacher to pastry chef with the help and kindness of one man and a forward-thinking hotel group

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From far left: pastry chef Peter Andrew; a tiered cake stand of delicate desserts prepared by Peter; a lounge area of Singita Sasakwa Lodge in Tanzania

got me to stop poaching and join him working at Singita,' Peter continues.

It wasn't straight to the kitchen for Peter though. He started off assisting with the construction of Singita Sasakwa Lodge. 'It was very hard going from being a poacher to working in a professional environment in the hospitality industry,' says Peter. 'It was a tough journey, but the Singita family embraced me.' After a year, having shown interest in cooking and being involved in the kitchen, Peter was accepted as an apprentice chef at Singita Sabora Tented Camp.

He got the hang of things very quickly and excelled in the professional kitchen. 'I wasn't always easy to work with, and sometimes found it hard to obey the directions from my boss, but I worked hard and persisted,' Peter explains. He also took it upon himself to learn English and to specialise in pastry, so that he could further improve his situation.

Peter flourished and picked up the skills necessary quickly. By 2005 he was promoted to commis chef, and by 2011 he became a full-time pastry chef and moved over to Singita Faru Faru Lodge,

Left to right: Zebras lazily grazing on the edges of Singita Sabora Tented Camp; Peter hard at work at Sabora



Next stop: Rwanda

Singita will soon open a brand-new lodge in the misty mountains

Singita is going to launch its first property in Rwanda in August this year. **Singita Kwitonda Lodge** covers **178 acres** on the periphery of the spectacular **Volcanoes National Park**. With Rwanda home to more than one third of the world's remaining mountain gorillas, it was important for Singita to work in close partnership with the **Rwandan Development Board** and **local communities**. Therefore, Singita plans to take a measured, long-term approach to conservation, on the edge of the Volcanoes National Park, in line with the company's established 100-year vision to build sustainable revenue streams to fund the preservation of African wilderness for future generations. Singita Kwitonda Lodge's presence on the park border will help to create a natural space between agricultural plots and the habitat of the estimated 320 mountain gorillas that find sanctuary there. Ultimately, Singita hopes to be able to support the Rwandan government in finding ways to increase gorilla habitat while remaining sensitive in assisting neighbouring communities to thrive economically and socially. An extensive sustainability framework has been created throughout the design and architecture process, including selecting locally sourced and produced materials for walling, ceilings and surface finishing. The local community have also been involved in the building process.

For more information on the new lodge, visit rwanda.singita.com/



Singita by Numbers

- **12:** The number of lodges and camps owned and operated by Singita throughout Africa.
- **26 Years** of passionate commitment to conservation, local communities and eco-friendly tourism.
- **100+ Years** to which Singita's current future conservation and tourism planning extends.
- **120 Singita game scouts** protect 350 000 acres of the Serengeti annually.
- **10:** The number of students who get accepted into Singita's Community Culinary School at Singita Lebombo Lodge, teaching both kitchen and other practical industry skills to local youths.
- **125+** local and international industry awards won by Singita over the years.
- **274** pages in the new cookbook *Singita: Our Food Journey*, which celebrates the African-inspired dishes served at all the lodges and camps, as well as the stories of some of the people who work for Singita, like Peter Andrew. singita.com



PHOTOGRAPHY: SINGITA, COURTESY IMAGES

Top to bottom: A spectacular leopard sighting at Singita Faru Faru Lodge; the interiors of Faru Faru are understated, earthy and elegant

where he still heads up the successful kitchen today. 'I love working for Singita. I especially love talking to our guests and sharing my story. I want to keep learning and working hard; it is my dream to one day become a manager here,' he says. When asked how his relationship with and appreciation of animals have changed since working for such an environmentally aware company as Singita, he responds, 'I have a much better appreciation for all the animals now. I also like to educate other local people that killing animals is not the solution, and by looking after our animals, we actually bring more success to our country (in the form of tourism). I don't ever want to stop learning, and I want to continue helping to educate our people about the environment and conservation. It's so important for our future generations.' ✨