

OUT OF AFRICA

On a mission to create his fourth fragrance, our fearless Editor-in-Chief goes on safari to East Africa in search of new exotic and intoxicating notes. Grab your passport and tag along as he hunts high and low—all the way to the equator!—in search of undiscovered natural beauty.

IN A WORLD WHERE every star and supermodel has a perfume line, it seems infeasible that I would have one, too. I definitely don't offer up the kind of high-octane glamour or sexiness (you do not want to see me with my shirt off!) to justify having my own scent. So how did I end up with not one but three of my own namesake perfumes? Here's the scoop.

The story starts three years ago. I was helping a celebrity friend of mine figure out what would be a unique point of view for her perfume line.

Photographs by ARMANDO MOUTELA Story by DANNY SEO



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1. It's not hard to spot elephants. This one strolled in a grassy field by the campsite and could be seen as I lathered up in my outdoor shower.

2. Micato Safari's top guide—Philip Kibet Rono—is a silver-level guide, the highest rank Kenya awards. His specialty is crafting unusual safaris, and he tells me my request for a Fragrance Journey is a first. Scan this picture to watch Philip tell us about the Sandpaper tree: Mother Nature's microdermabrasion.

3. A spotted leopard perches in a tree and scans the landscape. Our SUV drives right up to her and she is completely oblivious to us. Cars are seen as non-threatening "animals" to predators.

4. Zebra and Bucks are abundant everywhere. Use the Mohawk Live app to watch the video on your smartphone and see how we used a hot air balloon to get closer to these herds.



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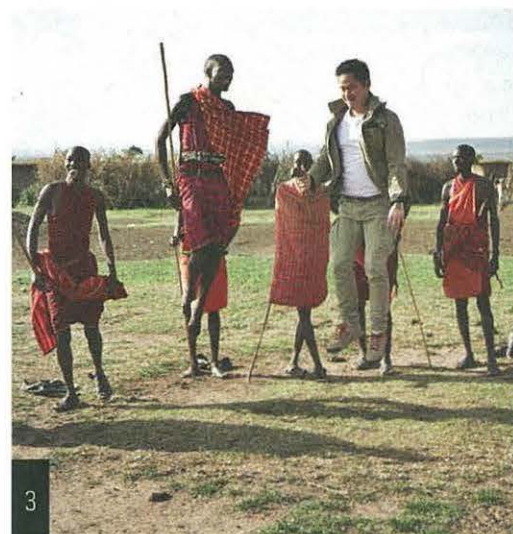


MEETING THE MASAI

Enough animals, please.

I ask Micato Safari's guide Philip if we can visit a local Masai

Village. The Masai are an indigenous tribe of people who are semi-nomadic and are unique to East Africa. They are known for their brightly colored wardrobes, intricate beaded jewelry, and communal way of living. There is a misconception that the Masai tribes are unhappy or poor, but that's simply not true. Many young adults leave the Tribe for further education but typically return to live this simple way of life. The afternoon is spent learning about Masai natural remedies. I learn there are wild leaves, flowers, and twigs that they collect and use for perfume, skin healers, and breath fresheners. Their resourcefulness is awe-inspiring.



1. The men of the Masai tribe greet us with a song and dance. Use the Mohawk Live app to watch and listen from your smartphone.

2. The candle bush is a wild flower that grows prolifically all over East Africa. On my visit with the Masai, I learn if you boil the flowers, you can use the infused water as a deodorizing footbath.

3. A jumping competition! Not bad for a short Asian guy!

4. Hand-beaded bracelets for sale. Bartering is accepted and wristwatches are in great demand, so bring a few from Target if you plan to shop.



CINNABAR GREEN



Philip senses my concern that my adventure has become more African-Safari vacation than a fragrance expedition. I can't

return to NYC with only a Masai beaded bracelet and a tip on how to make a floral footbath. So, we venture to Laipika, Kenya—which is on the equator!—where an organic farm at the base of Mount Kenya produces unusual oils and beauty products. Owner Penny Horsey started Cinnabar Green (named after a tube of paint in her art studio because she simply liked the name), where she grows fields

of organic geranium, lemongrass, calendula, lavender, and more.

Here, it's literally farm to (dressing) table: raw ingredients are grown, harvested, distilled into oils, mixed, and made into handmade beauty products, and then packaged to be sold.

Her home is also a place of beauty: It's luxurious, but not pretentious. Curated, but not *decorated*. There are found objects everywhere along with little luxuries to make this home an absolute slice of heaven.

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1. Fields of organic geranium are waiting for harvest to be distilled into luxurious oils.

2. The on-site distillation machine is fueled by locally harvested firewood. Bales of lemongrass are steamed to release natural, potent oils. These oils get blended with indigenous ones, like Cape Chestnut oil, to make Penny's luscious products.

3. Handmade soaps are all cut up and ready to be packaged. Luxury properties like the Fairmont Mount Kenya Safari Club stock her wares.

4. Dried calendula flowers are the secret ingredients in Penny's hand-blended soap; they are sprinkled in before the soaps are chilled into bars.

