

# PH Spotlight

# GRAHAM SALES

Graham Sales was born in South Africa and was fortunate to have had the opportunity to hunt from a young age, alongside his father, on the outskirts of the Kruger National Park. Graham started his hunting career in 1999 in the majestic Limpopo Valley. His company is based in Nelspruit, 45 minutes from Kruger.



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### What do you wish a first-time DG client knew before arriving?

Above all, safe rifle handling. Practice shooting from and using shooting sticks as well as off-hand. Stay calm and trust your PH and team to create the perfect opportunity to make things happen.

### How often do things go about as planned?

Things usually go according to plan if well-planned! That being said, one can plan a safari to the last detail but one cannot plan the outcome. Generally, things always fall into place when hunting with an experienced Professional Hunter because he will make sure things stay in place with some creative problem solving if needed—I guess people call that plan B, I just call it experience.

### Who and how many people make up your best DG hunting team?

I always have Albert, my driver, and my two trackers, Kaunda and Stephan, with me. Kaunda, PH from Zimbabwe, and Stephan who has probably been on more than 1,000 buffalo hunts in the past 20 years. They are both fearless and masters at what they do, especially when “moments of intensity arise.”





**What makes a good PH into a great PH?**

Every PH should be able to read his client, his ability and needs very early in the safari and be able to create the best possible situation for his client, so they to make each shot the best possible. But the difference between good and great is the friendship that is formed during a successful safari.

**Do clients do a “starter” safari on plains game, but then “graduate” for a second trip? Or do you have clients who want to do it all at once?**

There is no special “formula,” if one can put it that way. Everyone is different and it isn’t only in Africa where one can gain hunting experience. I’ve had some great hunters on safaris who have never hunted anything bigger than a turkey or a deer!

**What was the best thing about your first dangerous game hunt, either as a pro or on your own?**

It was back in 1998 in the Limpopo Valley, two years before I got my PH license. I was the resident manager on a property which now belongs to South African National Parks.

We had a “problem” elephant permit at the time. As I knew the property very well, I was asked by the PH who came in with his client to hunt this elephant, to show him where to go to look for this animal. Fortunately, I had my .375 with me as I was waiting where we first found the tracks.

Unfortunately, the elephant got wounded by the client, and eventually the PH came running through the bush to me as the wounded animal was moving in my direction. I was standing right next to the PH when the elephant charged. I heard the first “click”

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and then the second “click” from the PH’s rifle – two misfires. The PH turned to get out of the way, and I shot and dropped the elephant at very close range. The best thing from this experience is probably the lesson I learnt that day – always use quality ammunition and always carry your rifle no matter if you are the acting PH or not.

**What is your favorite dangerous game species and why?**

Cape buffalo without a doubt. It is always challenging to track an old bull no matter what the terrain. It really gets the adrenalin going. Their temperament is just so unpredictable and to me, they are just one of the most impressive creatures on our continent!

**What’s the best advice you received as you were growing up and doing PH apprenticeship? Who are your mentors and heroes?**

During my earlier years of hunting, I learned a lot from John Abraham (Madubula Safaris). I will always be grateful for those years. I believe that one’s knowledge grows from years of experience hunting with clients.

**What are your experiences with poaching, and anti-poaching efforts?**

Rhino poaching is a huge problem in some of our areas. Due to the revenue that hunting creates, it is possible to keep it fairly under control. We had an incident where a rhino was poached during a safari in June 2015. The most recent poaching incident was during the first week of October 2017. That is still two rhinos too many.

In Mozambique, we have a team of 16 scouts with two Land Cruisers and two quad bikes. The poaching here is done by snaring of the animals and it usually gets worse during the drier months of the year since game is much more concentrated. We have it well under control!

**Do you have favorite DG guns, optics and gear?**

I used to carry my .450 Watts on dangerous game until I had a few very close encounters with Cape buffalo and lion! Not that the .450 isn’t capable of killing any dangerous animal, but it’s a bolt action. I decided to get a double rifle from Heym and now I carry a .500NE double rifle and that second barrel has come in handy on several occasions. Also, a binocular and my two-way radio. I like to keep it simple.

ONE’S  
KNOWLEDGE  
GROWS FROM  
YEARS OF  
EXPERIENCE  
HUNTING WITH  
CLIENTS.

**If she was willing, would you take your mother on a dangerous game hunt, and would you be her PH?**

My mother passed away in 2010, but I think she would have

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Joe Francois and Dr. Esrafil Shafiezadeh  
Kerman Sheep, taken March 2018


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appreciated it more if I took her to the Grand Canyon. She wasn't a hunter, but she wasn't scared of a 12-gauge shotgun at all! When we were kids, we used to call her when we saw a snake on our small holding. We had mostly black mambas and cobras. She would come with the shotgun, and take care of it. She shot 37 snakes one year.

**If you knew you had just 10 days left on the planet, what would you do with that time?**

Without a doubt, the last 10 days will be spent at home with my wife and my son. Give me 11 days, and I would take one day to contact the clients that became close friends to say thank you for sharing so many experiences with me. 

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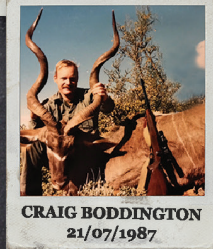


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