

YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO PARENTING IN STYLE

# little london

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017 • £3.99

Cate  
Blanchett

talks films  
and family

The  
**SPRING**  
edit

FASHION, INTERIORS, TRAVEL AND  
LIFESTYLE FOR THE NEW SEASON

PEPA & CO  
BEHIND THE SCENES  
WITH THE ROYALS'  
FAVOURITE BRAND



LITTLELONDONMAGAZINE.CO.UK

BEAUTY OF  
BOREDOM  
WHY DOWNTIME  
IS A GOOD THING

AFRICAN  
ADVENTURE  
THE MAGIC OF A  
SAFARI HOLIDAY

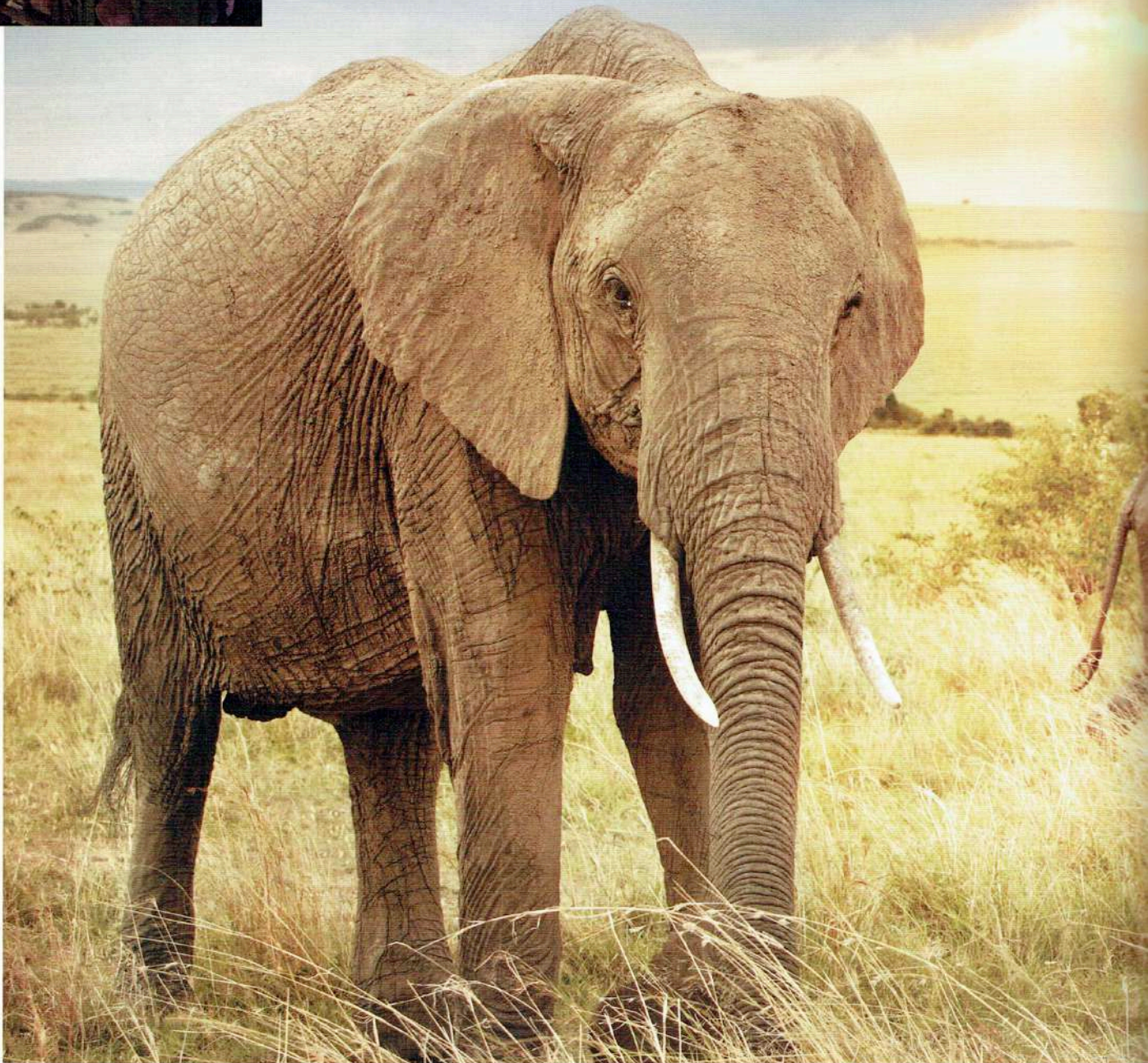
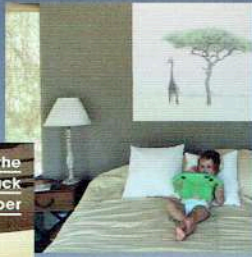
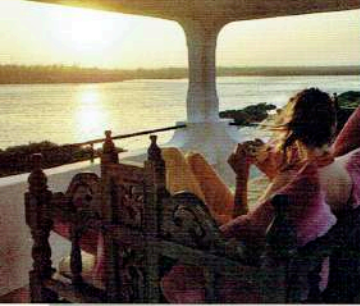
ANNABEL  
KARMEL  
EASY RECIPES FOR  
THE WHOLE FAMILY

YOUR  
FAMILY  
GUIDE

GOING RETRO

*Vintage style  
for cool kids*

Saying goodnight to the sun before heading back for supper

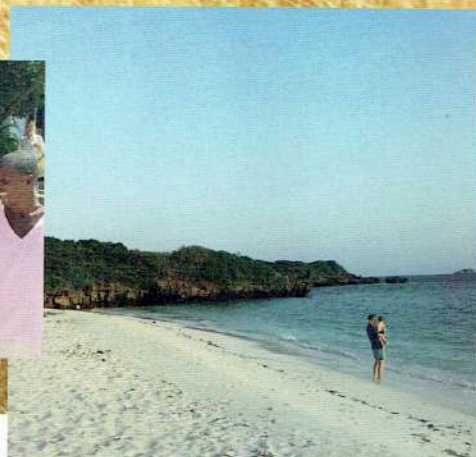


# Into the **WILD**

SAFARI WITH A TODDLER? NO PROBLEM. **CLAIRE EASTWOOD** PACKS UP HER HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER, WILLOW, AND HEADS ON AN AFRICAN ADVENTURE



Staff and locals couldn't do enough for the family



In August we set off for Kenya, determined to revisit the safari that had proven such a magical setting for our honeymoon a few years earlier. Needless to say, our luggage was very different this time round, owing to the fact we were bringing our lively two year old, Willow, with us.

Travelling with a child at the best of times is a challenge so we were conscious that we didn't want to move around too much. Kenya has some of the most fantastic beaches, so a 'beach and bush' combo for our African holiday sounded ideal.

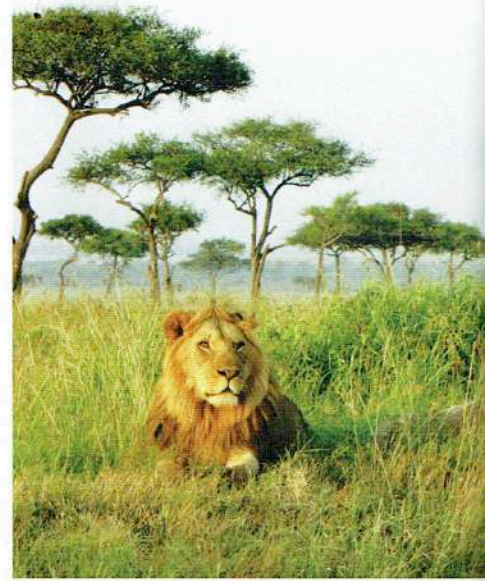
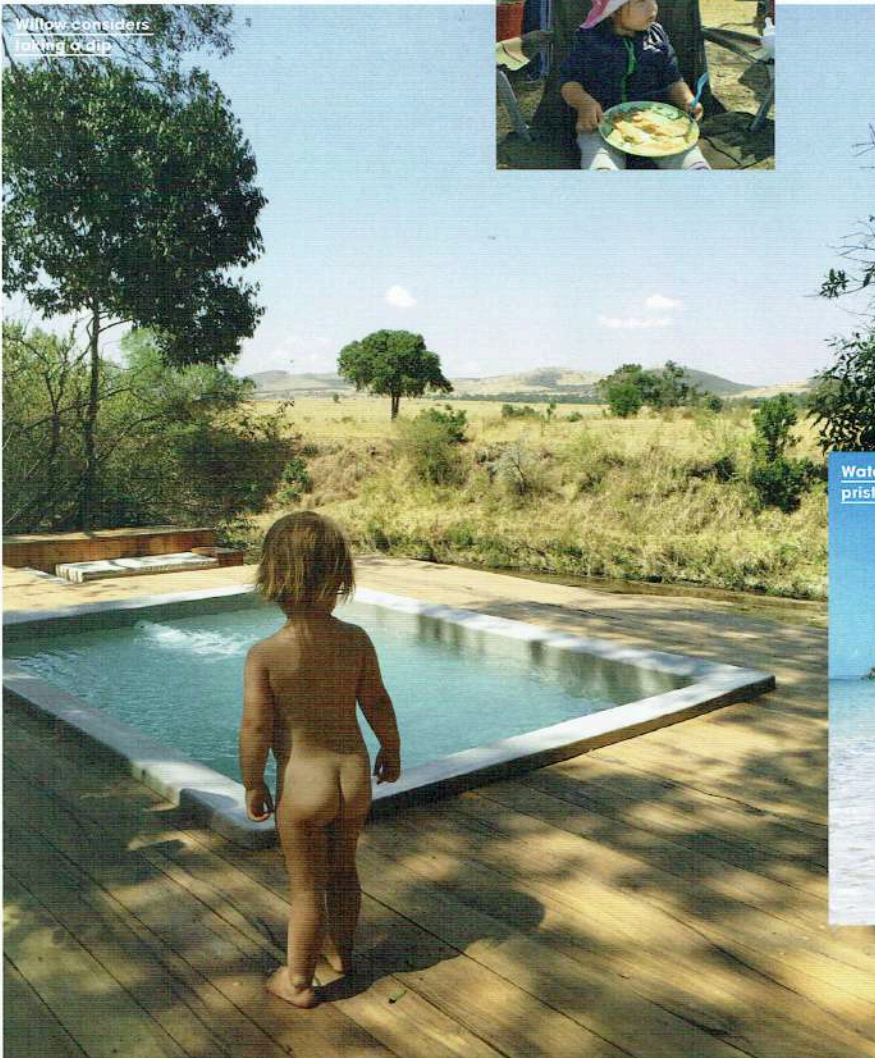
As we started our journey in New York, we decided to hit the beach first to recover from jet lag. While there are some great hotel options on the coast of Kenya, there are also some fantastic villa rentals. This can make the whole trip more affordable and also, with a young child, a little more relaxing not having to worry about other guests. We headed to a small coastal village called Watamu where many of the villas are exquisite, with pools, beach access and importantly, staff! What

a treat to be taken care of for a whole week, eating divine food prepared for us and having a lovely nanny called Nancy take care of our daughter Willow. It was heavenly. Watamu has pristine, powder-soft beaches and is on a marine park. From exploring rock pools at low tide to running in and out of the waves at high tide, the beach, of course, provided much entertainment. Watamu is also a community very passionate about conservation – we were incredibly lucky to see a turtle released back into the wild, something Willow still talks about, as well as a turtle nest hatching.

All the restaurants were kid-friendly and the staff went out of their way to accommodate everything – all with a smile and an ease that is so appreciated as a parent, especially when the little ones aren't cooperating. We loved the Kobe Suite Resort for its laidback vibe and stunning setting on



Willow considers taking a dip



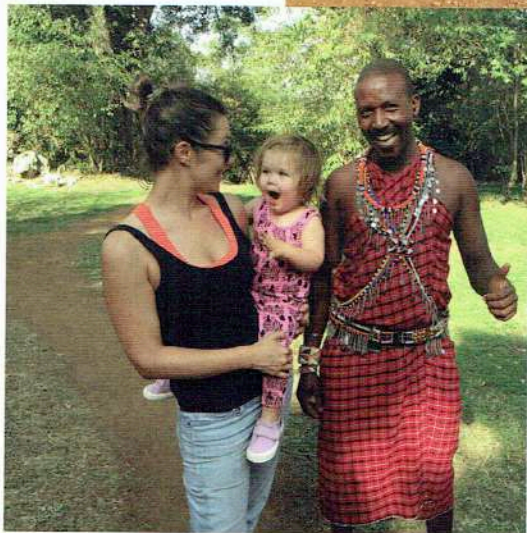
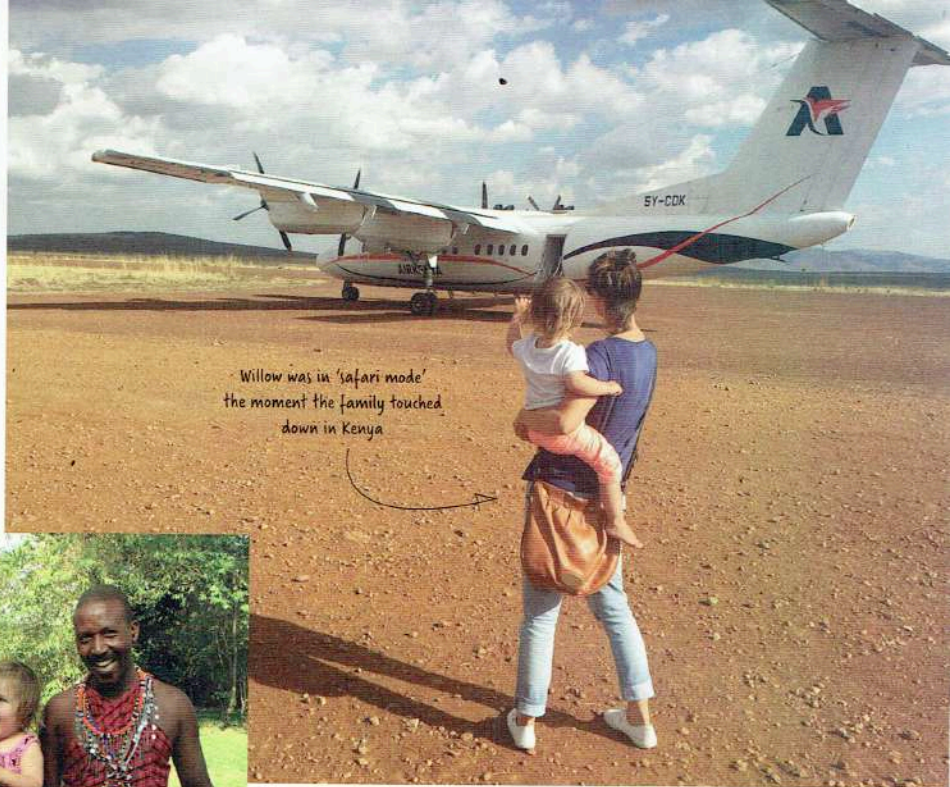
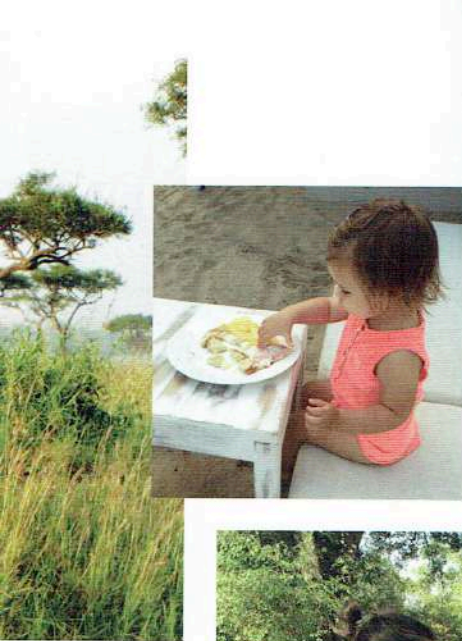
the beach, and also the Pilipan restaurant, which offered a fantastic international menu. A must-try for parents was the Dawa cocktail – *dawa* meaning 'medicine' in Swahili (enough said, really). A delicious sip of vodka, crushed ice, local honey and fresh limes, all bashed together. No doctor's note required.

After a wonderful week, we headed to Kenya's famed Masai Mara. Many camps won't allow children under seven years old, so it was a joy to discover Sala's Camp which welcomes families of all ages.

Sala's, while an upscale camp – with stunning views of the Sand River – was also friendly, low-key and unpretentious, with exactly the right sort of atmosphere for families. With only seven luxury suites, it felt intimate and private. With all the amenities of a five-star hotel, just in the most remote of settings, it also provided a beautiful cot for Willow as well as an array of kids' meals and snacks for us to take out on the game drives. No need to have packed the microwave mac-

Watamu is home to pristine white beaches





“It was amazing to watch her explore something totally alien, yet embrace it wholeheartedly”

and-cheese box I had brought along, that returned home with us! The chef would often come out and ask Willow what she wanted, much to her excitement.

From the moment we touched down, Willow loved pointing at all the zebra and giraffes we saw immediately after getting off the plane. I told her she had to whisper when we saw animals, which she understood. That was, until she boomed, “Dada, did you say hello to the lion?”. I remain convinced that the lion appreciated her enforcing her sense of safari etiquette.

Tailoring our day was not that difficult. Having decided that this was somewhat of an ambitious trip to start with, we opted for short game drives in the morning, when Willow was bright and excited, stopping for

bush breakfasts later on, thoroughly enjoyed by all and a great chance to stretch our legs. We then returned to camp so not to push our luck. During the afternoons we stayed at camp, but as we generally saw so much animal activity in the morning, we didn't at all feel cheated or like we were missing out. We saw an abundance of game, lion, cheetah, leopard and some fantastic elephants – we took in the whole *Lion King*.

Our guide was kind, patient and exceptionally interactive with Willow, helping to keep her attention. Safaris, it turns out, are a dream vacation for kids. There is nothing like the amazement on a child's face when giraffe and zebra are so close you can smell them. Teachable moments abound, from flowers to trees and birds. Willow delighted in

the quiet moments, too, pointing out buffalo poo – also something she hasn't stopped talking about since returning to New York, much to people's surprise. “Mama, look, buffalo poo!” “No darling, that's a manhole.”

After lunch and naps, we spent the afternoon playing in the little plunge pool at our room, running around the lawn and enjoying just a spot of Peppa Pig now and again (everyone's favourite travel companion). As early evening rolled around, we would go for a short drive, find a good view – which is not difficult in this part of the world – for an evening sundowner, waving goodnight to the sun, listening for the crickets, before returning to supper and a lovely hot bath. Willow was so tired each night she slept solidly. Another lovely nanny was available to come and sit with her while we escaped for dinner under the African skies, and maybe another Dawa or two.

It was emotional leaving Sala's, as our little girl had just had so much fun. It was amazing to watch her explore something totally alien to her, yet embrace it wholeheartedly, as only children can. I left with the feeling that children are never too young to explore Africa and all it has to offer. There's a certain awe and respect this magical continent inspires, even in the very young. ①

**For more information on Watamu villa rentals, and to book, visit [discoverwatamu.com](http://discoverwatamu.com). For information about Sala's Camp, part of the Safari Collection, and to book, visit [thesafaricollection.com](http://thesafaricollection.com)**