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[Networking Clubs](#) | [Video](#) | [Contact](#)



[back](#)

Explore with The Exploration Company

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Marcela Kunova

Nicola Shepherd, founder of The Exploration Company, organises unusual trips for HNW clients ranging from birthday parties at an Indian Maharajah's palace to reliving Sir Vivian Fuchs's 1950s expedition to the South Pole. Citywealth caught up with her to talk about trends in the luxury travel industry.



Nicola Shepherd, founder of The Exploration Company, travels to Africa every year to research new properties.

Tell me about The Exploration Company.

I started the company twenty-eight years ago when I arrived in England from Africa. Every year, all our specialists and I spend time researching new properties in Africa. We have also recently opened a new US office in Washington DC.

Tell us about your philanthropy?

The Exploration Company has supported charities in the countries we operate in. We have built schools and sand dams, educated children, helped with conservation initiatives and assisted orphanages throughout Africa, Latin America and Asia. We are now developing a new initiative where our clients pay a minimum percentage of their holiday to a chosen community, conservation or combined charitable project, and then they stay at these places, seeing exactly who their money is benefiting.



A rugged desert landscape set the perfect backdrop for Sorris Sorris Lodge in Namibia.

Can you tell us an interesting client story?

A client had his sixtieth birthday and was celebrating with all his family. He was an expert fly fisher and was keen

on being in India where he could fly fish for mahseer, a legendary, giant South-Asian fish. We set up a luxury, mobile camp for his party in Kashmir and arranged for the Maharajah of a palace in Ladakh, an Indian region, to throw a party for his birthday at his palace.



Mkombe's House is a large property in Serengeti, Tanzania, with views on and unending landscape.

What adventures are you planning for clients?

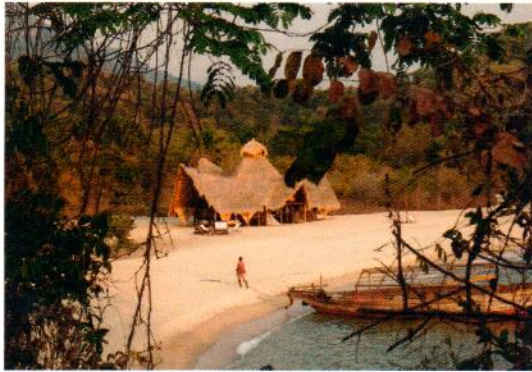
We are organising an expedition to the South Pole driving across the Antarctic Peninsula. The clients will fly from South America to Union Camp on Antarctica before setting off driving from Union, via the Ronne Ice Shelf which is where Sir Vivian Fuchs started his historic trip in the 1950's, to the South Pole and then continuing onward to the Ross Ice Shelf on the other side of Antarctica. Total driving will be roughly six days.



The Exploration Company also organises an expedition to the South Pole driving across the Antarctic Peninsula.

How much do your clients pay for a trip?

Our trips tend to start around £15k per person without airfares, the most expensive trip being £1.5 million for a client who wanted a super yacht in Alaska followed by a week at a lodge with use which included unlimited flights in a Super Cub, a two-seat, single-engine plane, during their stay in Alaska.



Greystoke Mahale in Tanzania is a tiny resort hidden from the civilisation, accessible by boat.

What do you do with time off?

Spending time in the bush too be still, seeing the myriad of stars above me and to hear the roar of a lion in the distance.