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Kalahari Resorts and Conventions — Where the Spirit of Africa Comes Alive

Detailing one family's epic adventure across six countries to bring the thrills, the adventure and the magic of Africa back home to you.

Wisconsin Dells, Wis. — At [Kalahari Resorts and Conventions](#), the phrase “authentically African” is more than just a marketing ploy. The African spirit of Ubuntu, or “togetherness” — the philosophy that encompasses a belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all of humanity — is something you’ll find reflected throughout every aspect of the guest experience. It’s the driving force behind everything “The World’s Coolest Indoor Water Parks” does.

With plans to open a third all-under-one-roof family destination in the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania, in June 2015, the Nelson family, owners of Kalahari Resorts, recently completed a 23-day trip to Africa to reconnect with the land that inspired their vision, strengthen the ties with various communities throughout the continent, and source items for the newest property.

“Africa truly is the cradle of life, and in a strange way, we feel it’s really important to go ‘home’ before we move forward,” says Todd Nelson, owner of Kalahari Resorts and Conventions. “The majesty of Africa and the continent’s culture is our inspiration for the resort and a key driver in every decision we make.”

The trip — aptly titled “One World” — sent the Nelsons on an expansive set of adventures across more than 24,000 miles to bring authentic African experiences to families across the nation. With an expansive collection of video and photo content, we look forward to continuing to share Kalahari’s One World story as we steadily march toward the grand opening of the Pocono Mountains property in 2015. One World stories include:

- **One Cup** — Todd Nelson and family visit a small-scale coffee farm on the shores of Lake Kivu in Rwanda, getting up close and personal with the gourmet beans they intend to import and brew on-property in the United States.
- **One Table** — From Mopani worms to traditional beef seswaa from Botswana, the Nelsons go on a food odyssey featuring some of Africa’s top chefs to roadside grill jockeys.
- **One Wild Bunch** — Trekking up the volcanic hillsides of Rwanda, the Nelsons go in search of the reclusive mountain gorillas to see what these gentle giants have to teach us about family time.

- **One Safari** — A spiritual homecoming takes the Nelson family into the Kalahari desert. There they witness the largest migration of elephants in the world.
- **One Wild River** — The Nelsons push themselves to the brink by scaling the very edge of Victoria Falls, bungee jumping backward into Batoka gorge and taking a pounding whitewater rafting down the Zambezi River.
- **One Rhythm** — While visiting one of the largest art hubs of the world, the Nelsons met with street artists who electrify the streets with color, local surfers who cut the coastline with their artistry, and musicians and tribal troupes who are all part of one beat, one heart, one world.
- **One Wave** — Todd Nelson and his family meet with surf star, Avuyile Ndamase, where they learn how to surf the waves of the African sea for the first time.
- **One Love** — Dolphins and whales abound off the coast of Ponto do Ouro in Mozambique. Here the Nelsons come face to face with these wild creatures.

The Kalahari Story

Like any good story, there's so much more than meets the eye at Kalahari Resorts. In 15 short years, owner Todd Nelson, with the help of his family, has grown his business from a pizza pub in the Wisconsin Dells to several properties that were recently named "The World's Coolest Indoor Water Parks" by *Condé Nast Traveler* in 2014.

Although self-made success stories are a dime a dozen today, there's something special about the family focus of Todd Nelson that bleeds into the Kalahari dynamic. Nelson grew up on a farm in the Wisconsin Dells and began working a plethora of jobs at the age of 15 — from serving as Wisconsin's youngest auctioneer, to working at a railroad company, to driving a beer truck, nothing was out of the question to help support his family.

A year out of high school, he married his high school sweetheart, Shari, and purchased a bar with his brother-in-law at the age of 20. Two years later, he bought the building across the parking lot, turning it into Pizza Pub, a still- popular Wisconsin Dells restaurant. As the Wisconsin Dells began to develop into today's "Waterpark Capital of the World," Nelson built the first Kalahari Resort in 2000, and the rest is history, with a second resort opened in 2005 in Sandusky, Ohio.

What's most notable about Kalahari is the family dynamic. The Nelsons, who will be celebrating their 34th wedding anniversary this year, helm Kalahari's expanding empire with the help of their five children — Todd Jr., Travis, Natasha, and twin daughters Alissa and Ashley.

"Kalahari is a result of hard work and love and represents my family's dream come to life," Nelson says. "We truly value the opportunities we have to connect our guests with the extraordinary spirit of Africa."

A New Frontier

Currently, Kalahari Resorts are embarking on their most exciting foray yet — the East Coast. Scheduled to open in June 2015, the newest location in the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania, will be the company's most expansive property to date, which will include:

- Pennsylvania's largest indoor waterpark (100,000 square feet)
- 30,000 square foot Family Entertainment Center featuring bowling, laser tag, black light

- mini golf, arcade games and more
- 457 guest rooms containing one-, two- and three-bedroom suites
- 65,000 square feet of flexible convention center space
- Three full-service restaurants including family-friendly pub fare, a cozy, eclectic café and lounge, fresh gourmet buffet and several high-end snack areas
- Spa Kalahari and Salon
- 18-hole golf course designed by Donald Ross
- 6,000 square feet of retail space and more

The Pocono Mountains is one of the premier tourist destinations in the country, and with something for everyone, it's a diverse area that attracts a wide variety of visitors — from families to couples of all ages. Phase two of the project will include 400 additional guest rooms, an additional 100,000 square feet of indoor waterpark space and a Safari Outdoor Adventure Park with dry play features, hiking trails and more. For more information or for reservations, please visit www.KalahariResorts.com/Pennsylvania.

About Kalahari Resorts

Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells, Wis., and Sandusky, Ohio, deliver a “world-away” waterpark resort and conference experience beyond expectations. The authentically African-themed Kalahari Resorts, privately owned by the Nelson family, are home to America’s largest indoor waterparks. All Kalahari Resorts feature well-appointed guestrooms, full-service Spa Kalahari, a fully equipped fitness center, on-site restaurants, unique retail shops, and a state-of-the-art conference center. Kalahari Resorts and Convention Centers frequently receive awards and accolades for our guest and convention services. Recent recognition includes: Condé Nast Traveler’s #1 World’s Coolest Indoor Waterparks, TripAdvisor’s 2014 Travelers’ Choice Awards, Silver Star recognition for Best Family-Friendly Meeting Hotel and Resort in Smart Meeting’s 2014 Smart Stars Awards, Clean the World’s Top 50 Hot Properties in 2013, January 2015 OpenTable’s Diners’ Choice Award for Double Cut Grill’s signature dining experience for the second consecutive year, the Daily Herald’s 2014 Reader’s Choice Awards for Best Indoor Waterpark, selection as one of the nation’s Top Family Resorts by Family Fun magazine for 2013, being named the Best Conference Center in the state by the Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association, and selection as the Corporate Meeting Destination of the Year by Cleveland Business Connects magazine.

For reservation and guest information, call 1-877-KALAHARI (525-2427) or visit: KalahariResorts.com. To learn more about Kalahari Resorts, members of the media are encouraged to visit KalahariMedia.com.

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