

# DEPARTURES

SEPTEMBER 2000

## THE STYLE ISSUE



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SEPTEMBER 2006

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The tribally inspired clothes and accessories of Anna Trzebinski. For more information, see "The Lady of Nairobi."

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*I remember so many things about Peter Beard from growing up down the road from him in Nairobi: how he lent me his car so I could roam freely around the bush; how I spent my days and nights running around the campfire at Hog Ranch, knee-high to international beauties Peter had invited, like Lauren Hutton and Iman. Most important, I remember him always egging me on to see the world in a different way.* —Anna Trzebinski, June 12, 2006

I first met **Anna Trzebinski** (the subject of “The Lady of Nairobi”) last winter when she came to New York to do a one-woman trunk show of the clothing and jewelry she’s been designing and selling, mostly through word of mouth. The pieces were amazing: richly colored cashmere

shawls, some adorned with ostrich feathers; luxurious belts and dramatic bracelets; gorgeous ankle-length suede coats embellished with beads in all sorts of tribal-inspired designs. Then in March I had the opportunity to visit Anna, who was born in Germany but grew up in Nairobi, where she still lives, now with her husband Loyaban Lemarti, a local Samburu tribesman. Together they own and operate three very small, very “untraditional” tribal camps dedicated to the authentic African experience in the Laikipia region of Kenya, where Lemarti was raised. These are not the boutique camps of gourmet dinners,

Frette sheets, and hot-stone massages

after a rough day in the Land Rover; they’re something entirely different.

The story of Anna Trzebinski—her life, her designs, her camps— **CONTINUED**



Peter Beard and wife Nejma (from left) with author Mark Shand, Anna Trzebinski, and Carol Byrne at Nairobi's Wilson airport

as told by **Mark Shand** and Anna's childhood hero, the photographer **Peter Beard**, is incredible. It's the tale of a larger-than-life original who's done everything her own determined way, with her own singular style.

# IN THIS ISSUE



## PETER BEARD

Asked to describe himself, Beard replies, “A lifelong bum.” Pretty ironic for a man who graduated from taxidermy school at the age of 12 and has spent the past five decades in pursuit of all things exotic. For this issue, Beard’s eight-page photo portfolio documents “The Lady of Nairobi,” with portraits of Anna Trzebinski as well as images of “lava-peppered stones, porcupine quills, and elephant-regurgitated euphorbia balls”—just a few small souvenirs Beard incorporated into his instantly recognizable collage that is the story’s centerpiece. In December, Taschen will publish *Peter Beard*, a 624-page limited-edition homage to this legendary photographer.

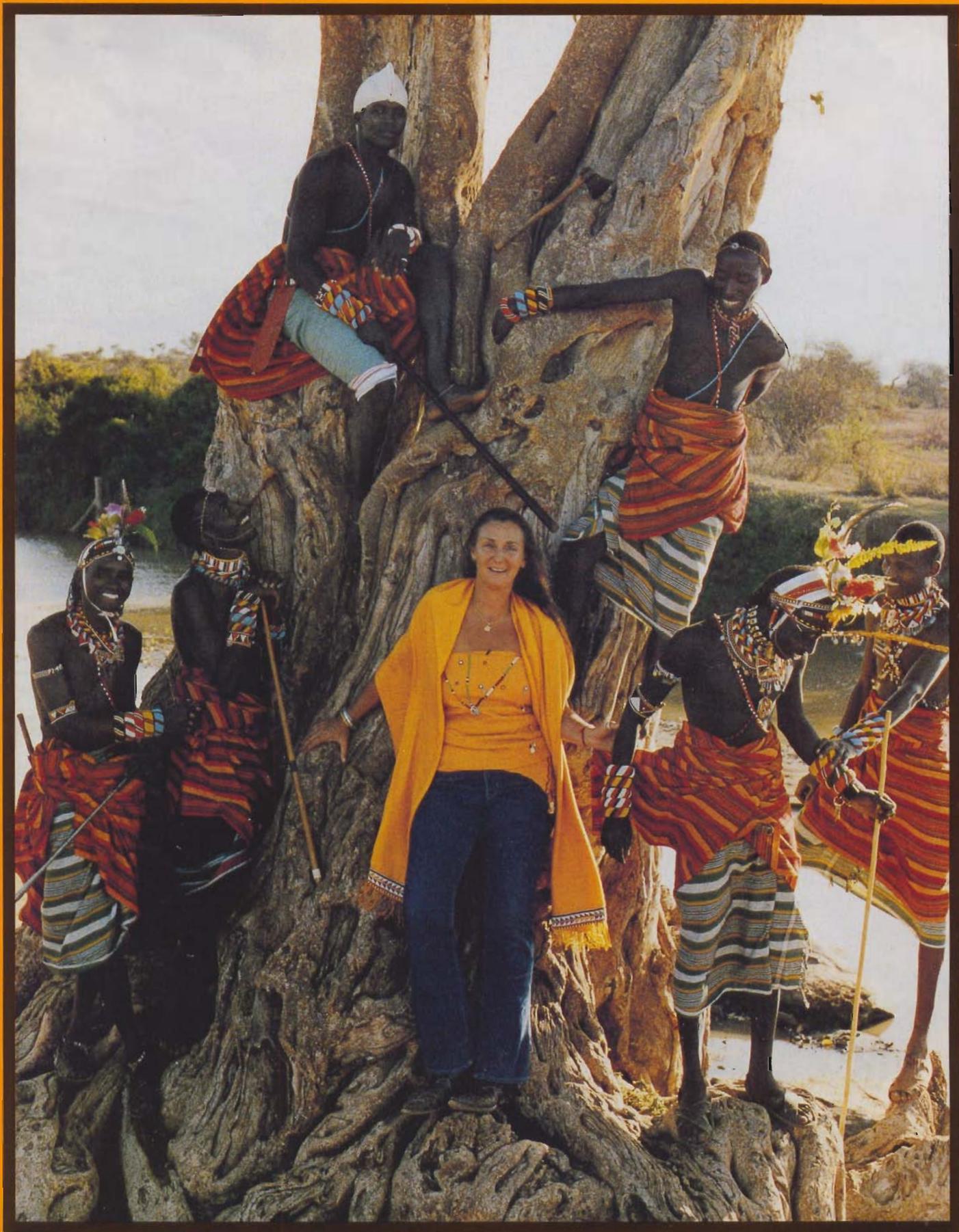
*A Photo Portfolio by Peter Beard*  
*Written by Mark Shand*

# THE LADY OF NAIROBI



**A**nna Trzebinski was brought up in Kenya. Giraffes roamed in her garden and leopards drank from her swimming pool. Anna, as she tells it, spent all her time with nannies in the staff quarters, which is why she has such an affinity for Africa's indigenous people. Though I'd never met her before, I had heard about her. I knew of the clothes she designs, extraordinary tribal pieces inspired by the bush. I also knew about Tonio Trzebinski, her first husband, who was murdered in 2001. I knew how the tabloid press had supposed this was another *White Mischief*, with Anna the jealous wife. It was absurd. For Anna to go through it all when she was totally in love with Tonio. It must have been hell. Total hell.

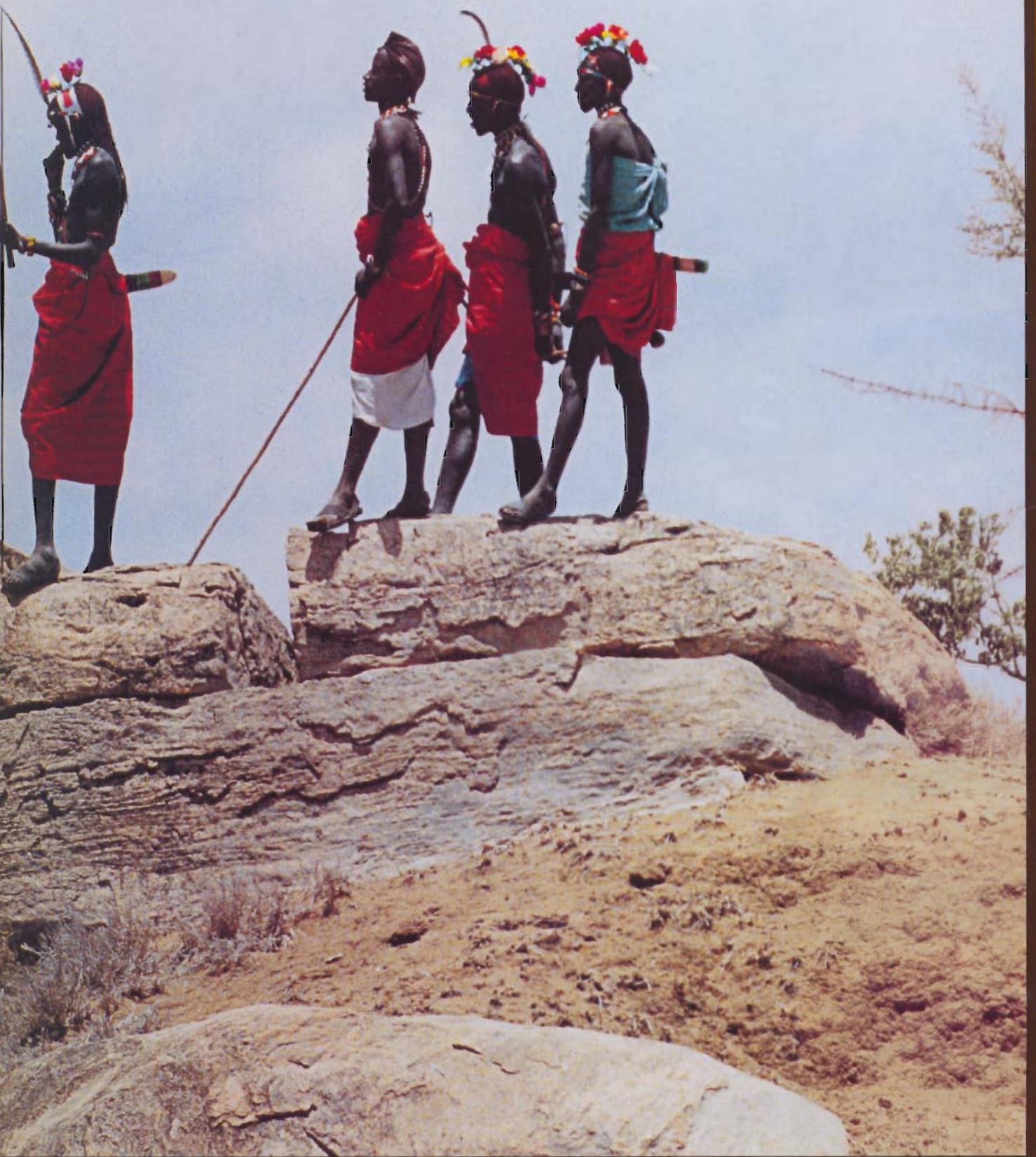
Tonio was an artist of British and Polish descent, born and raised in Kenya. He was clearly a tortured genius, larger than life. You could see it in his paintings. The couple built a house and a life together in Nairobi. Anna still lives there. She tells the story of



From designing clothing and furniture to operating camps and an atelier, Anna Trzebinski has created her own Africa, one as unique as the giant fig tree she, her husband (sitting at top), and Samburu tribesmen hold sacred.



To walk with Lemarti  
and Anna on one of  
their safaris in the  
Laikipia region is to  
experience Kenya raw  
and uninhibited.

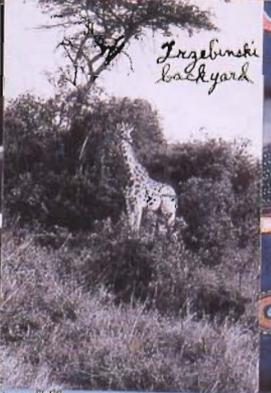
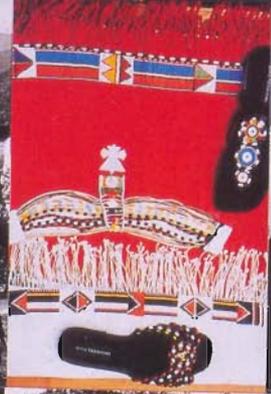




Frontier District - (The Great Rift Valley)



LANGATA - KEMSA CHEZ LES EBILI



Iragebinski  
kalkyark



Hornbill



La mariti  
@ 8000'



Gitatas



at the northern end of the LAIKIPIA PLATEAU



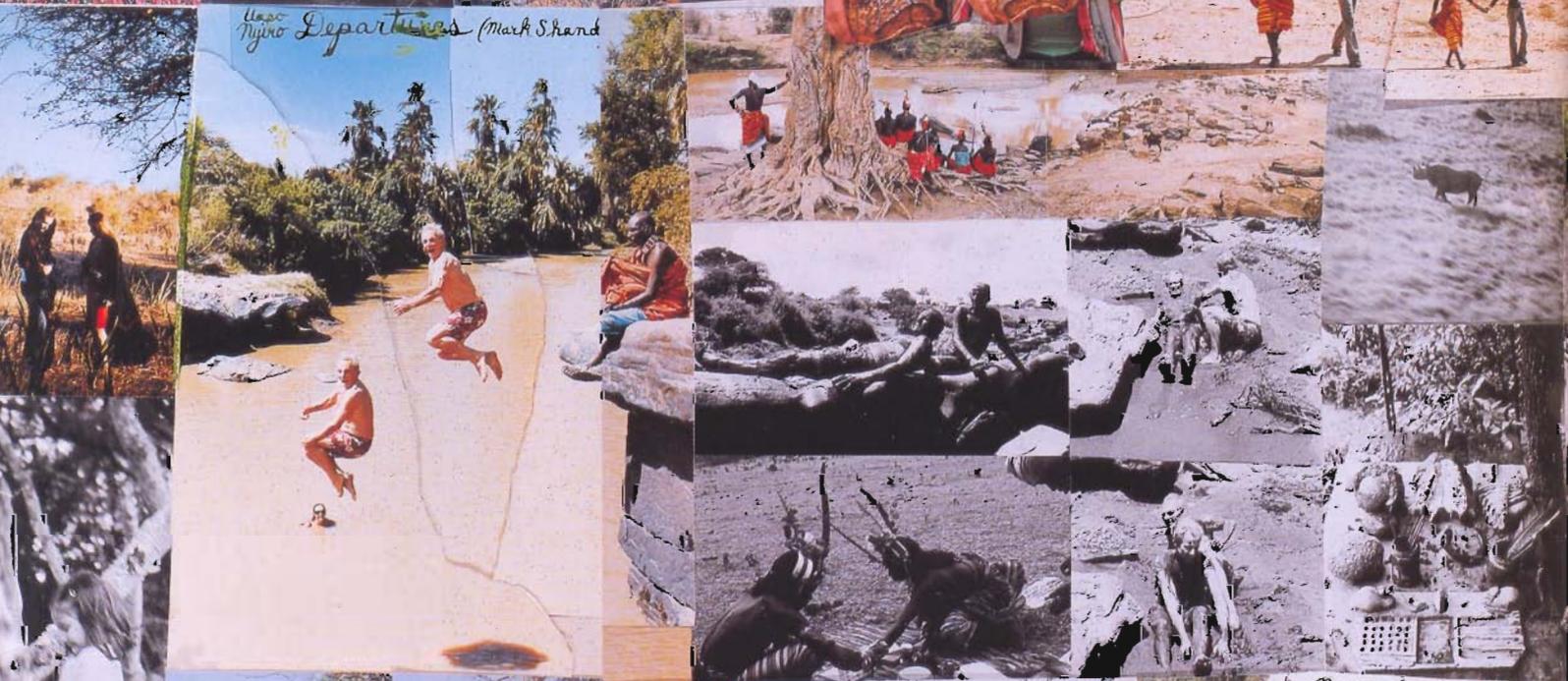
GOD'S FINGER

FINELA



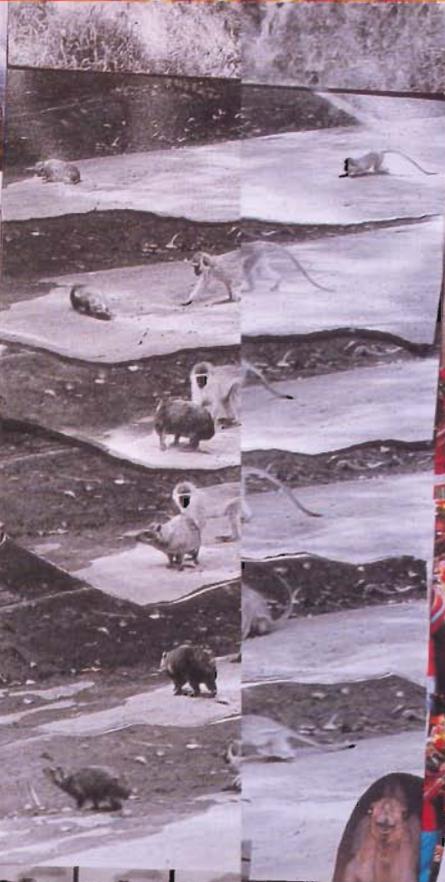
*Mzee Kibe and Jarab*

*Ugogo Nyiro Departures (Mark Shand)*



*Ngoma for Anna Trzebinska*





July (April 13, 2006)

Lemonyas

Lemonyas on his lyra 4 ana

Lemonyas fashion on the use of...

...Batter about pack





how they were at the beach one day. She was nine months pregnant with their daughter, Lana (their son, Stas, had been born the previous year). An old sailing dhow carrying tea had crashed on the reef, turning the ocean brown. All this amazing wood washed up onshore. Anna and Tonio thought it a God-sent message, and so they built their house from what they found.

A year after Tonio's death, Anna was trekking through the Laikipia region. She went there to get her head together. As she came upon a group of Samburu tribesmen, Loyaban Lemarti immediately stood out. "In the beginning of her book, Karen Blixen says of Africa: 'It's got some unparalleled greatness, freedom, integrity,'" Anna explains. "To me, Lemarti is the personification of what she describes. He knows who he is." Anna wanted to be around this guy. He made her feel safe. She can always hear him, from the bells around his feet. When I met him, I understood what she meant. Anna now buys shipwrecked dhows from all along the Kenyan and Tanzanian coast. She makes beautiful furniture with it, knotted and heavy and marked by mollusks. The pieces have an amazing patina. She uses them to furnish three new camps she has set up with Lemarti, now her husband.

**W**e flew from Nairobi to a tiny airstrip about an hour and a half north of the city where the camps are located.

Ngabolo Namunyak is the base camp at Koija, one of the local tribal communities, followed by the Nomadic Camp at Kirimom, another ranch community, and the Stargazing Camp, a mobile fly camp

on camels. Together they occupy more than 7,500 acres in Laikipia inhabited by Samburu and Masai. The elders make the rules. If they ever ask Anna to leave, all she will take with her is her wood.

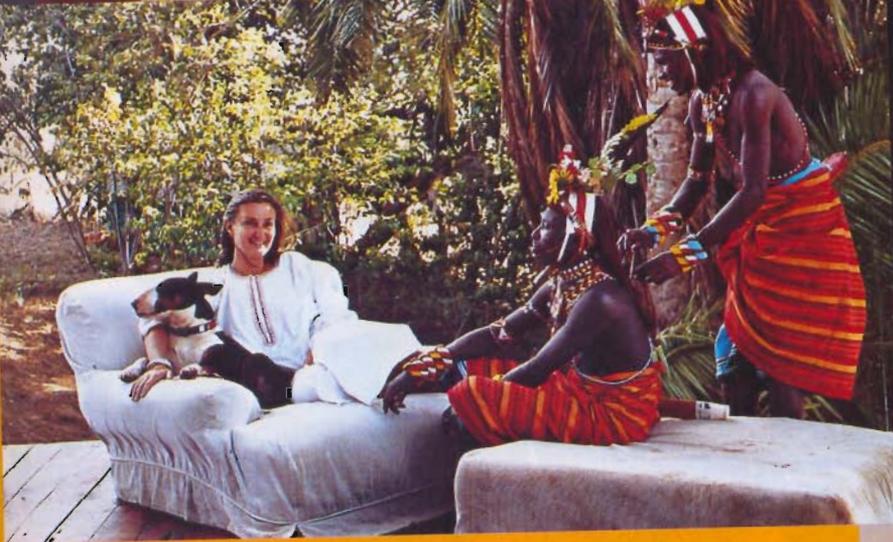
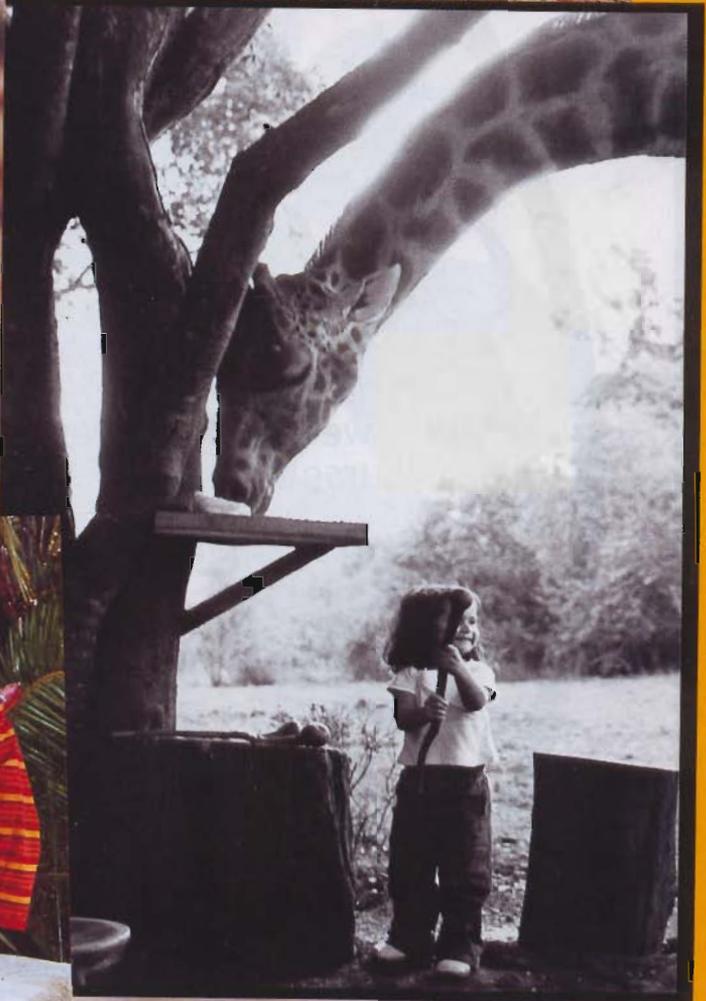
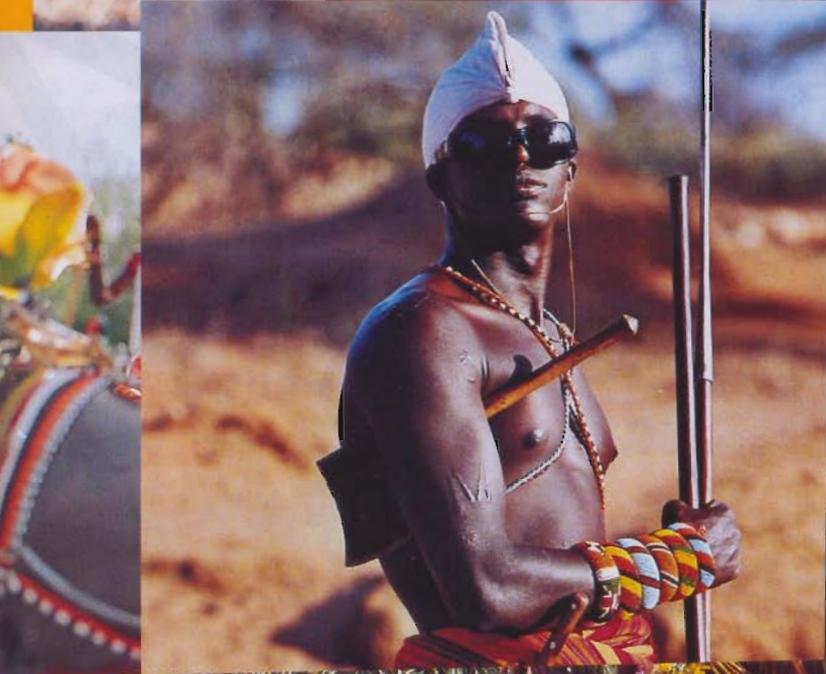
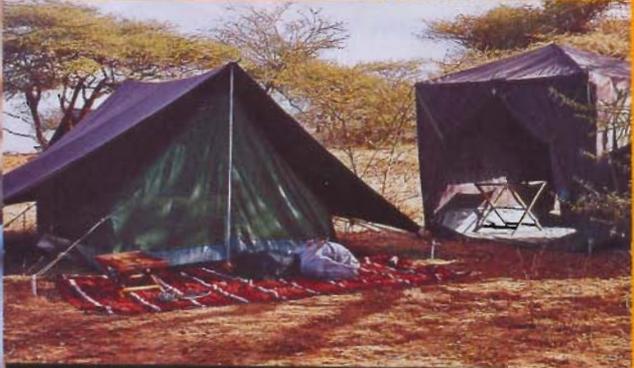
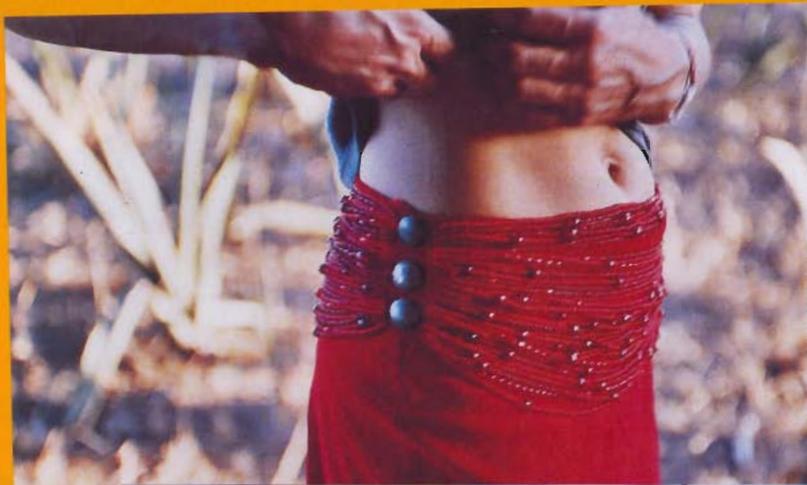
Anna sold four of Tonio's paintings to build her camps. They're real, rustic, lived in—like someone's private home. You'll be sitting on the veranda at the base camp and the old elephant hunter, Shillingi, will stop and tell you stories—how he bit off a lion's ear or how he kills rhinoceroses. At night the warriors gather around the campfire, playing music on a guitar marked FOR WARRIORS.

Ngabolo Namunyak sits on a riverbank amid total silence. It's built around a giant fig tree that spreads over the camp like an umbrella. Molded into the landscape, Ngabolo is unobtrusive, its decor simple with motifs from India, the Far East, and Africa. There are sheepskins and animal pelts. Hard and soft pillows covering great double beds. Bathrooms painted the color of bloodred earth with seats made from the lower jawbone of an elephant, reversed and set in concrete. The showers are primitive, old-fashioned buckets. Water comes from the Ewaso Ng'iro, or Brown River, which flows from the Aberdare Mountains. There's no electricity, just candles everywhere. And only five rooms, each made from cedar and canvas, each with a different river view. The furniture is extraordinary, designed by Anna using shells, ostrich eggs, and iridescent butterflies.

Days are what you make of them. I take off with Lemarti for a walk. We just walk and walk and walk, traveling with the camels. The next day I have a mud bath then lie out to dry on Henry Moore-esque rocks. Another day the warriors

CONTINUED ON PAGE 249 »





Anna's clothing and accessories are tribal inspired, using African beads, flamingo feathers, and rich hues to produce ornate details on everything from skirts to pashmina scarves. She sells these original creations at her atelier and furniture workshop ([annatrzebinski.com](http://annatrzebinski.com)) in Langata, on the outskirts of Nairobi. Her authentic designs are echoed in the motifs of her three camps, such as the tented Nomadic Camp at Kirimon (shown here). Staying with Anna and Lemarti (center) means living among the locals—giraffes included, as photographer Peter Beard's young niece Amal could tell you.