

In the frame

By Melanie Daly

If you're looking to get more out of your digital camera or you just want to take some spectacular pictures in a magnificent setting, why not try one of Ute Sonnenberg's wildlife photography courses?

Ute Sonnenberg's passion for photography is infectious, as is her love of nature. So if you've always wanted to hone your camera skills in a gorgeous environment, you should try her morning workshops at the Pilanesberg Game Reserve.

THE WORKSHOP

On selected days (chosen to suit you and her), Ute holds a photography workshop in the Pilanesberg Game Reserve in the North West, just a few hours from Joburg. Guests meet her at the reserve's gate at a designated time where they leave their cars. After a quick briefing on basic camera techniques, it's into a game vehicle for a drive through the bush.

'This course is an introduction to wildlife photography,' says Ute. 'I show people how to hold their cameras and shoot properly. I concentrate on the technical aspects before moving on to help with artistry and composition.'

'It's not a lecture. We learn by doing and I encourage people to try different things. I focus on their strengths and always see an improvement in my guests' work by the end of the course.'

After three hours, the game drive vehicle returns to the gate. While some guests elect to pick up their cars and go home, many opt to spend a few days at Pilanesberg and incorporate the workshop into their getaway.

THE SETTING

Pilanesberg is a big five reserve, so your chances of capturing big game on film are high. The landscape itself is beautiful too, and there's a picturesque lake and prolific birdlife.

'It's a beautiful setting,' says Ute. 'The animals, the light... You really do see nature through different eyes when you attend this workshop.'

THE EQUIPMENT

It goes without saying that you need to have a camera to do this course.

RIGHT AND BELOW RIGHT

The prolific bird- and wildlife in Pilanesberg provides many great photo opportunities.

BELOW

Even if the animals are shy, the vistas are breathtaking.



'Make sure it is a digital camera,' says Ute, 'as it's very important that people can see their work immediately so we can work out where they need help and what strengths we can focus on.'

ADVICE FROM THE PRO

'The one thing I tell people when they are on a safari to photograph wildlife is not to pack up until you are completely done. Believe me, that elusive leopard or cheetah always jumps out when you don't have your camera ready,' says Ute.

ANYTHING ELSE?

If you feel like splashing out, Ute also offers trips to Sabi Sands, the Waterberg, Pakamisa Private Game Reserve and Lake St Lucia.

'These are four-day workshops. Guests stay in lodges and enjoy the photography workshops during the day. In Sabi Sands we photograph leopards, while in Kwa-Zulu-Natal and the Waterberg we visit ranches to capture Arabian horses on camera. I love animals, and leopards and horses are truly my passion.' 🍷

COSTS

Ute's courses in Pilanesberg cost R780 pp and include the game drive and a snack. To find out more about her planned photography safaris or to join her mailing list, visit www.rohoyachui.com or email her on ute@rohoyachui.com.

About Ute



Ute Sonnenberg was born in Germany. She always loved photography but was told she needed to

study 'something decent' so instead went into a career in economics. She moved to Joburg two years ago and fell in love with South Africa and the bush. It was then that she decided to channel her passion for photography into her work.