

# David R.

By Maralyn D. Hill and Sherrie Wilkolaski

**M**y parents moved to Tampa, FL from the Northeast before I was born and I've never felt the need to live elsewhere (Caribbean Island fantasies aside). Living in a sub-tropical zone, we use ice to chill drinks rather than as a road coating to drive upon. I became fascinated with computer programming in high school and attended the University of South Florida's budding computer science department in the later half of the 1970s. I met Patricia at Sears where we both worked part time during those college years, and we married in 1977. In 1979, I started what was to be a long and wonderful career in Info Technology at GTE Data Services (now Verizon). All the while, we took every opportunity to travel around the globe. In 2012, I jumped at the opportunity to retire and I haven't looked back. The amazing thing is that our days are every bit as full as they were when we worked, but we are having a lot more fun.

#### **How did you discover your love for travel photography?**

In 1985, we made our first out-of-country trip to Bonaire, so I could capture underwater photos and Pat could bird watch in Washington-Slagbaai national park on the northern end. We were hooked. There is so much to see across this planet we share on land, above and below the ocean's surface.

#### **Are you more passionate about writing or photography? Why?**

I am definitely the most passionate about photography. I joined the camera club my freshman year of high school and I've had a camera

in my hand ever since. I love the idea of not only capturing a moment in time; I love sharing new experiences and perspectives. I hope that my images help each viewer see my subjects in a new way and add to their own desire to get out and see the world. For me, writing is how I put my images into context.

#### **What is your writing process?**

As you may have guessed by my responses so far, I love the flow of words. I am not a member of the "Say it in 140 characters" crowd. I tend to write a significant portion on a subject in my head before ever committing any of it to type. Ideas fall into my cranial spin-cycle where they thrash around (especially in the middle of the night) until I feel there is enough to build upon. Then I type it in and repeat the spin-cycle until I've worked it to the point where I can solicit my wife and a friend or two to lend me a fresh set of eyes and give me notes. While a story starts out as a solitary mental exercise, I love the collaborative process of editing with others. I have never developed a story or a presentation that was not improved by incorporating their suggestions and perspectives.

#### **When you get the chance to pick your travel destination, where do you go?**

More often than not, we select Eco-tourism destinations for wildlife encounters. We've been to Africa many times. Photographing the Big Five in South Africa and Tanzania and Mountain Gorillas in Rwanda are experiences never to be forgotten. As are Tigers in Northern India, Jaguars in Brazil's Pantanal, Pumas

in Chile's Patagonia, Dragons on Komodo Island and everything in the Galapagos Islands. Majestic whales, colorful fish and underwater reefs in the Caribbean, Atlantic and South Pacific are always a favorite too. Did I already mention bird watching?

#### **If you could be anyone else, who would it be?**

I've never really given that any thought. I am pretty happy with being me. Maybe you should ask my wife who I should be.

#### **What motivates you to be a luxury journalist?**

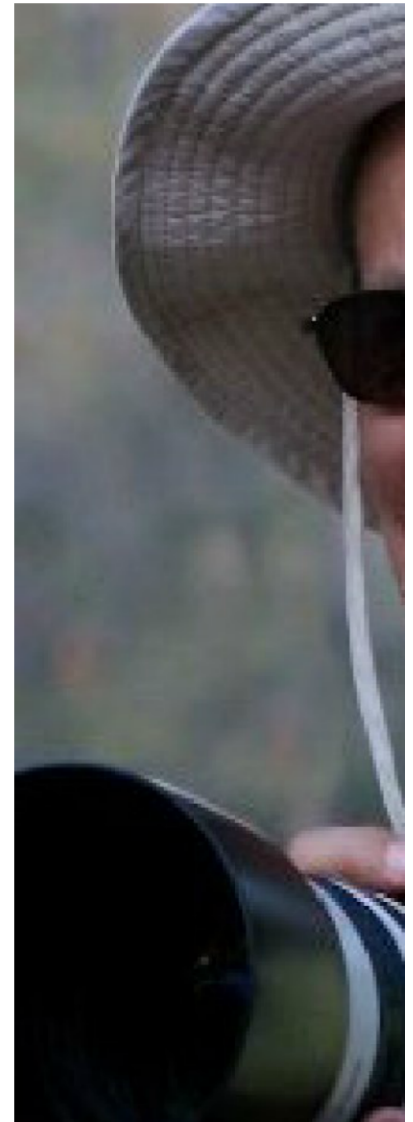
Sharing my experiences and helping people expand their horizons, while letting them know that not every great wildlife experience demands the physical discomforts experienced by those dedicated National Geographic explorers. I love being out in nature, but I enjoy being comfortable too.

#### **What is one of your favorite experiences while traveling?**

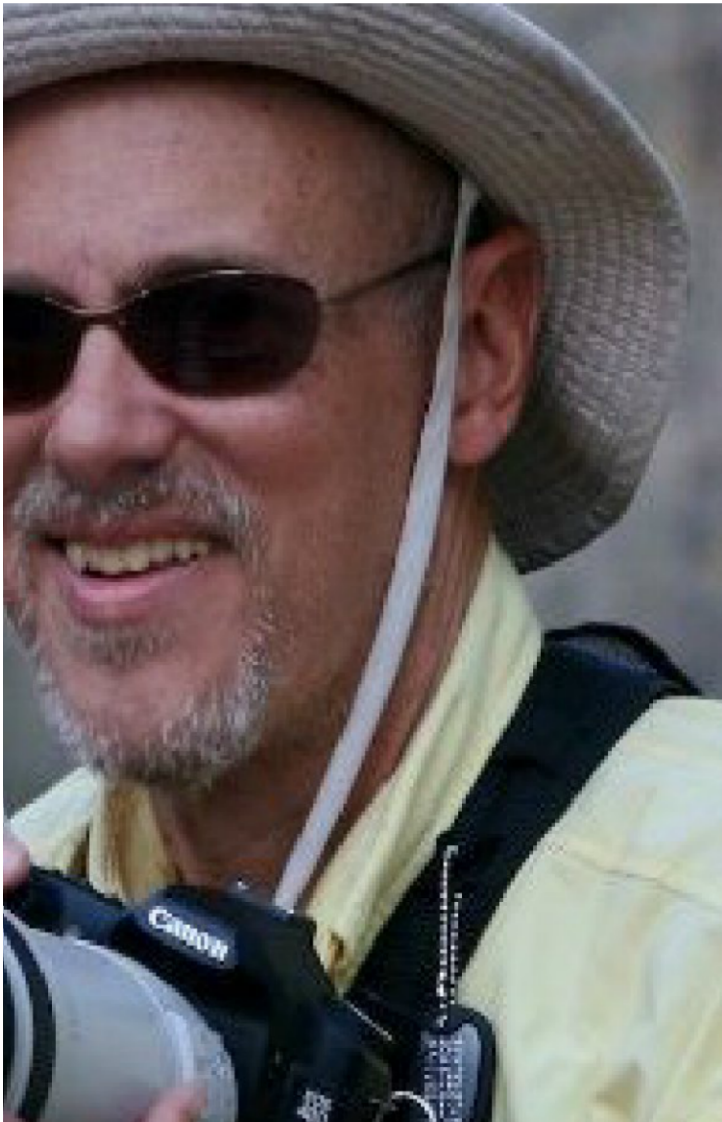
Finding new ways of seeing the extraordinary and the every-day, capturing the play of light on both new and familiar vistas and wildlife, sharing this with like-minded travelers. We've made a number of lifelong friendships while traveling that never would have happened had we stayed at home.

#### **Do you have a favorite dish or chef?**

My wife and I both have a large number of food allergies, so we tend not to be adventurous diners. That said, the Peking Duck at The Oberoi, Gurgaon was stunning. So was the Guanaco and the Rabbit dishes at the Singular Patagonia.



# Beebe



**How do you enjoy spending your free time?**

Photography is at the top of my list, whether we are traveling to the far side of the globe or watching wildlife at a local park. Video production is a close second. I edit my wife's video and my still photos from each trip with titles and music. I'll post my photos at [b2gallery.com](http://b2gallery.com) and shorter versions of our videos on our YouTube channel, [b2photovideo](http://b2photovideo). I am happy to report that I have a backlog of video projects, as we always head somewhere else before I can catch up. We've also been practicing Hatha yoga at Harmony Yoga & Wellness Center for over a year now and have started Aerial Yoga training. I've just been elected the president of the North Tampa Arts League.

**What are your thoughts on the changes in the luxury market?**

Luxury Eco-tourism has really taken off over the last decade and it appears to be very sustainable. These trips tend to be "green" adventures that are easier on the environment. They engage and educate travelers with the means and the mindset to help make a positive difference to the people and wildlife they encounter. It's a win-win.

**If you were stranded on an island, name one person and three items you would bring. Why?**

The one-person question has an easy answer. I'd bring my wife, Patricia. She will read this interview after all. For the three items, I should say food, medicine and clothing because luxury is subjective. Since this is purely hypothetical and just for fun, I'd have to bring a camera, laptop and a solar battery charger.

**What are some of the key attractions in your hometown?**

The Tampa Bay area has a great mix of everything. For attractions, we have Busch Gardens and Lowry Park Zoo, the Florida Aquarium and the Clearwater Marine Aquarium that is home to Winter the dolphin. We are an easy drive to Orlando. There are many world-class museums, including the Dali in St Petersburg. Headlining the theater scene is the Straz Center For The Performing Arts in Tampa and Ruth Eckerd Hall in Clearwater. We have many fine restaurants representing a wide variety of tastes and cultures, from world famous Burns Steakhouse and the Columbia Restaurant to modest family-owned cafes tucked into out-of-the-way corners. Trang Viet Cuisine, Pepo's Cafe and Yummy House China Bistro are personal favorites. Best of all, we have the great outdoors year round. Circle B Bar Reserve in Lakeland and Ft Desoto Park on Tierra Verde are at the top of our list.

**What are three necessities you won't travel without?**

I'm sticking with my answer to the "stranded on an island" question.

**What does Luxe Beat Magazine mean to you?**

LBM is dedicated to reporting on all aspects of luxury in a new and exciting way. Since its launch earlier this year, it has published a wide range of stories between its digital covers and I appreciate the opportunity to share my stories with its readership.

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