

# Safari Bali



**COOL OASIS:** The Tsavo Lion Restaurant has a pretty wild bar.

**Pictures:** Brad Elborough

## Savannah ride among rhinos

It's safe to get up close and personal with the beasts on this Bali safari, writes **Brad Elborough**

AS THE rhino looked up at the elephant I was on the back of, the words of zoo curator Tim Husband rang in my ears.

"Elephants are usually scared of rhinos, but not when they are in a pack," he said. "As long as your elephant stays in the pack, which is what they will usually do, you will be OK – and the rhinos will not attack."

My elephant, the smallest of the group, was at the back of this pack as it started to move down into the water. Mine was the only elephant left on dry land – a clear target.

I was a bit nervous – but if I had been out in the wild rather than at the Bali Safari and Marine Park, I would have been more concerned.

Husband is a consultant to zoos and has worked all over the world.

With the Bali Safari and Marine Park having been open since 2007 and rapidly growing in popularity, its owners thought it would benefit from bringing someone in to help them do things better.

Despite criticism in some circles, Husband said the safari park was not

doing anything that needed major attention.

While we sat on the safari bus, he answered the many questions I had about a few of the accusations.

Husband said that, like the young of most animals, the white tiger liked to sleep a lot.

He said suggestions the one on display needed to be drugged – while people had photos taken with it – were nonsense and that his handlers were trained to recognise when he was becoming playful and to take him away.

The baby orangutan is also free from danger, he said, and the animals littered throughout the safari are watched constantly by keepers who

are hiding behind trees, out of sight of the tour buses.

The park's promotion of conservation is another aspect scoffed at in some circles around the world. But Husband pointed out that the program put in place by the park to increase the numbers of Bali mynah birds had played a big part in stopping many smuggling syndicates.

The safari bus roams among many different animals, including my favourite, the hippo.

It's probably not very often that the park's curator will be in the safari bus as it explores the 40ha property, but that doesn't mean you won't have your questions answered about the 60 species of animals there.

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