



There's another contender in the luxury travel e-commerce sector in China in the form of Quafrica, which specializes in adventure tours to – as its name suggests – the African continent. Soft-launched a few months ago and run by a small team based in Shanghai, the startup has a range of exclusive and pricey packages that take moneyed Chinese travelers on curated voyages of discovery to one of nine nations in Africa.

The Quafrica.com service – in both English and Chinese – currently has travel packages that encompass six differing themes, such as “culture,” “work retreat,” and the more obvious “safari.” A culture-oriented trip, for example, could be something like its five-day “bushmen of the western Kalahari,” in which the intrepid travelers will live with – and learn from – the desert people in an authentic village. Everything included, that costs 72,000 RMB (US\$11,300) for two people. But for that price you won't be roughing it à la Bear Grylls [1], as Quafrica ensures customers that even in the vast Kalahari desert there'll be all-included “house wine” and a “laundry service.”

Quafrica's Dominica Drazal tells us that the startup has had seed funding from the Shanghai-based investment group TZG Partners (note: that site is down for me at present), and that the six-person team is “focused exclusively on the Africa business and then also leverages the management at TZG Partners.”

The fledgling travel company's next business venture will be a similar yet separate site called Quoasis, which “will be oriented around ‘wellness,’ such as spa, detox, pre-natal, yoga, whitening [2].”

It's up against some classy local competition – such as the recently acquired Trip TM, or the opulent Zanadu – but Quafrica (and later Quoasis) has an interesting niche travel segment that it

can nurture.

[1]The survival expert is known for getting... ahem... quite inventive when he's thirsty.

[2]As bad as it sounds in this context, skin whitening is a big industry in much of Asia. Most mainland Chinese still equate a sun-tan with being poor, perhaps as it suggests one might work outdoors.