

Charity

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behemoths at a camp. At the time neither had seen an elephant outside of a circus or zoo.

'Scary at first'

"The guide said, 'Go and feed them; they're not going to hurt you,' but it was scary at first when you look at their size," said Perry Butler. "Then when we got in there to feed them we saw how gentle they were."

"Amazing," is the word the Butlers use most frequently in describing the intelligence of elephants.

"A guide's glasses fell off and onto the ground while we were there and the elephant picked them up with his trunk and put them right there," Perry Butler said, pointing to his forehead. "I was riding one and (because) he thought I wasn't quite stable he put his ears back to hold me and make sure I was sitting up."

"There are several stories about how elephants care for each other."

One such case is provided by Lamchok (which means "good luck" in Thailand), the one elephant owned by the Butlers. A young female, Lamchok has taken on the role of surrogate "mum" to an infant elephant rejected by its biological mother.

"Everywhere Lamchok goes the baby goes," said Butler with a smile.

In the less than a year the Butlers have supported the elephant program, they have provided enough funding to support the full care of Lam-



John Lindblom photo

Perry and Carolyn Butler of St. Helena display a bottle of a special boutique wine and an Italian designer women's shoe from collections that are being sold to support their efforts to rescue Asian elephants. Both products have sold well, they say.

chok and the baby and the family caring for them, including education costs for a boy named Tony and a salary for the mahout-father. They are presently trying to raise enough more to bring three more elephants into camp.

"The idea is continue for a time to keep the elephants off the streets," Butler said. "We just couldn't bear to see the poor things walking around the roads getting hit by cars and the families taking care of them living like roving gypsies. We just feel

as a lot of people do and have gotten more and more involved with this."

To help with this support, Butler said, one need only to purchase the wine he created — identified by a logo with Carolyn Butler aboard an elephant — or the shoes designed by Carolyn Butler, which have a small elephant logo.

If a charitable heart, like wearing apparel, came with a size marked on it, the one that the Butlers have shown would be marked "XXXXX Large."

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CONTACT US

Features desk

◆ Carolyn Younger

cyounger@sthenastar.com

(707) 967-6802