

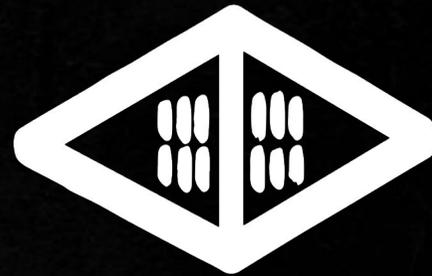
2020
INNOVATION
AWARDS





DISCLAIMER

To keep things fair, all entries included in this judge's pack are shown exactly as they were submitted. We Are Africa has endeavoured not to edit for spelling, grammar or readability – as such, please be aware that we take no such responsibility for such errors.



SHAPE AFRICA



Recognising those individuals whose tireless passion and dedication to changing perceptions of the continent are shaping Africa's future for the better.

AGGIE MASEKO BANDA

ROYAL CHUNDU

Describe their passion for Africa and the travel industry.

Born in the small village of Njilamanda in the Chipata district of Lusaka, Zambia, Aggie grew up with eight siblings, her mother a housewife and her father a general worker in the government forestry department. But her life changed when she took on a job at Royal Chundu, which saw her grow from Island Supervisor to Lodge Manager, with her own booming transfer business, and profit partnership in the lodge. Aggie's passion for Zambia was instantly given an outlet and her love of showing real Africa off to international guests was born. Through the lodge she gives local people an opportunity to shine and profit themselves. Aggie is the one of the first faces guests see at the lodge and is always one they remember, with her proud iconic chitenge dresses and welcoming smile, always ready to embrace guests as family and welcome them home to the Zambezi.



AGGIE

MASEKO BANDA

Describe their most stand-out achievements and contributions.

Since June 2012, Aggie has helped to craft the most authentic Zambian experience possible, uniting and empowering local people through different initiatives and catapulting the unique character of Zambia across the waters, with her understanding of Zambian culture and pride as a Zambian woman. She has facilitated getting a local female artist to adorn the lodge walls in murals of Zambian life, facilitated projects with neighbouring communities (seed projects, donations, women's craft centre), overseen the lodge school for local children, brought in Zambian chitenge seamstresses to dress guests and the lodge, connected with local carpenters, fishermen, farmers and producers to supply the lodge with sustainable goods that feed money back into the immediate community.

She runs the lodge and boosts the team with such high standards that the lodge maintains its Relais & Châteaux status and numerous awards, letting this model of Zambian hospitality be showcased worldwide.

How have they helped shape the high-end African travel industry?

Believing there is no need for things to be colonial when welcoming overseas guests, Aggie has helped build Royal Chundu as a genuine 100% African offering, inspiring local people to be proud of being Zambian. This has been greatly received by guests who are after something genuine and that empowers everyone involved (a growing trend in travel). Aggie has helped create a model where the community run, provide for and benefit from the lodge, with 99% Zambian people employed. Aggie helps give Zambian people a chance to tell their own stories, through Royal Chundu, proudly publicising that there is not one story of Africa, but many, many, many.



BENJAMIN JAMES PARKER

TONGABEZI

Describe their passion for Africa and the travel industry.

The first time Ben came to Africa, he was a very English gentleman. And yet he fell in love with this continent so quickly he didn't even go back and finish university, choosing to hitchhike alone through as many wild and dangerous spaces as possible instead. When he eventually settled in Livingstone he had no idea what an impact he was going to have on Zambia and Southern Africa in general.

Ben famously arrived in Livingstone in a microlight with floats which he landed on the Zambezi. When Ben loved something, he felt that everybody else ought to love it too, and that was his attitude to Africa. He dragged agents from all over the world to his little paradise and forced them into all sorts of ridiculous adventures, often in that selfsame microlight. Whether they wanted to or not, everybody who spent time with Ben left with the Africa bug. And his strain of the bug is still going strong. Many people at WAA caught it from him.



BENJAMIN JAMES PARKER

Describe their most stand-out achievements and contributions.

Thirty years ago this June, Ben and his partner William Ruck Keene opened Tongabezi and Sindabezi Island along the banks of the Zambezi as tents and bucket showers. In 2018 Tongabezi was named one of Conde Nast's Top 20 Hotels in the World. Ben and Will also created the Livingstone Island and Devil's Pool Tour experiences on the edge of Victoria Falls, this changing the face of one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World forever. He was a prominent early member of Classic Safari Camps of Africa, one of the initial and loyal supporters of many trade shows, and involved in more initiatives to promote tourism in Africa than I can list.

Most importantly, Ben fought for sustainable tourism by leading by example.

This was in a large part due to the support and stubbornness of his wife, Vanessa, who created and directed the Tongabezi Trust School and never let him lose sight of what was really important. In 2019, too late for him to have known it, Tongabezi was named the third most Socially Responsible company in Zambia.

How have they helped shape the high-end African travel industry?

Not only did Ben create his own legacy in Tongabezi, Sindabezi, and Livingstone Island, he also supported countless others in their African dreams. I will leave their words here instead of our own:

After he left us for his next adventure, emails flooded in calling him, 'an icon in the tourism community', 'a trailblazer and a gentle soul', saying that he 'created a legacy of love, inspiration and success where it was needed', that he was an inspiration. 'There is no doubt that his dedication to improving tourism in Zambia, and particularly his devotion to sustainable tourism, was something which we strive to emulate.'

'We were lucky to have such a ground-breaking creative thinker in the industry and many have followed concepts he created at Tongabezi. "What a gentleman he was and a wonderful ambassador for tourism to Zambia.' 'Ben was a true visionary and contributed so much to our industry, the entire community and to many of us on a deeply personal level.'



INGRAM CASEY

ESCAPE+EXPLORE

Describe their passion for Africa and the travel industry.

Ingram left behind a long and successful career in African tour operating to follow a vision of crafting a style of destination hosting that is innovative, exciting and completely removed from the traditional.

Despite this space being relatively unknown at the time, he forged ahead creating a style of destination experiences which allows he's intrepid team to share life changing adventures for all travellers' irrespective of age, ability and daring.

With an insatiable appetite for innovative ideas Ingram's created a brand of African travel where luxury and adventure intersect in a genuinely original way. Be it urban thrills in and around Cape Town or pioneering trips throughout the continent.



INGRAM CASEY

Describe their most stand-out achievements and contributions.

From Africa's first Stand Up Paddle Journey through the Okavango Delta, Surf itinerary's that are defining the very essence of surfing on the continent to transforming the way we explore the Mother City, Cape Town. Every aspect of the experiences created are highly original shaping a way for others to rethink what is possible within luxury adventure travel in Africa.

Building a team of super-qualified adventure guides Ingram has forged a way for a new breed of specialist guiding outside the realms of wildlife and safaris. Setting the standards for how we explore Africa's urban environments, water ways and trails with a level of professionalism and spontaneity that unlocks a modern and dynamic Africa.

Ingram's insatiable appetite for innovative ideas and remaining truly original has set the standards and shaped a brave new way we explore Africa outside of the realms of wildlife and safaris.

How have they helped shape the high-end African travel industry?

Launching Escape+Explore in 2014 Ingram set out with the lofty ambition of 'transforming travel in Africa beyond its wildlife'.

This is still the challenge set to each new member joining his team. In 2016 Escape+Explore became the first non-wildlife experience to win Most Innovative Experience in Africa.

Ingram's ambition has seen a whole new genre of adventure & cultural story tellers enter the African guiding scene. As well as leading the way in taking adventure style tourism to a much wider high-end audience than originally thought possible.



SUZANNE BAYLY-COUCPE

CLASSIC PORTFOLIO

Describe their passion for Africa and the travel industry.

For over 21 years Suzanne has owned Classic Portfolio and dedicated her time, passion and energy to purpose driven tourism in Africa.

Founded on her desire to explore Africa's wildest places in support of conservation and communities, Classic Portfolio is now widely recognised as the leading independent portfolio of visionary owners with authentic hotels, lodges and camps, committed to conservation, community and commercial sustainability while offering trusted experiences for discerning travellers.

Suzanne has explored 15 African countries and worked with over 40 private owners in the pursuit of building commercial foundations to support their conservation initiatives and community empowerment. She constantly challenges boundaries and pioneers a new way of thinking as she firmly believes we all have a role to play ensuring the best future for Africa. Hers has been to seek out the most extraordinary experiences and create success where others have failed or feared to tread.



SUZANNE BAYLY-COUCPE

Describe their most stand-out achievements and contributions.

Sustainable Africa MegaFam 2016 | 2018 | 2020:
Changing the way people think through building a community of passionate African travel specialists who are fully committed to long term sustainability, and seek to engage with each other in a progressive and forward-thinking manner. 2020 sees the 3rd and final MegaFam taking place in September/October comprising 10 hosted fam trips (5-7 trade partners per trip) all taking place at the same time across 12 African countries and ending at a 3-day workshop of sharing and collaboration. This is the largest scale fam trip dedicated to sustainable travel on the African continent.

VAST Journeys of the Soul: A photographic coffee table book dedicated to visionary owners with whom Suzanne has worked over the past 25 years. The book was created over 18 months in conjunction with leading wildlife photographer and writer Scott Ramsay and launched in 2019.

How have they helped shape the high-end African travel industry?

Through pioneering unique destinations and crafting trusted experiences, Classic Portfolio has the largest footprint of sustainable tourism in Africa with 17 exceptional members who have 60 camps and lodges in 30 protected areas across 12 African countries. We have built trust with our trade partners who know they can use the destinations across our Portfolio with complete confidence. With our passion for seeking out the unique we have moved beyond traditional luxury and brought back adventure, fun and purpose by driving sustainability through conscious travel.

