

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of various colors and textures. It features broad, horizontal brushstrokes in shades of yellow, orange, red, green, and purple. A prominent feature is a white grid pattern that is semi-transparent and overlaid on the other elements. The overall effect is dynamic and artistic.

**INNOVATION  
AWARDS 2018**

# **DISCLAIMER**

To keep things fair, all entries included are shown exactly as they were submitted. We Are Africa Innovation Awards has endeavored not to edit for spelling, grammar or readability – as such, please be aware that we take no responsibility for such errors.

# SHAPE AFRICA

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

## THE ROYAL PORTFOLIO

NAME: LIZ BIDEN

### WHAT WAS THE OBJECTIVE?

Liz Biden was born and raised in South Africa. She has made an indelible impact on luxury travel and has always been passionate about Africa and about sharing Africa's most spectacular destinations with visitors from near and far. Liz slowly transformed the Biden family homes into the remarkable boutique hotels that they are today and was a true pioneer of experiential travel in Africa. Royal Malewane was the first to open in 1999 offering an incredible private safari experience delivered by the most qualified guiding team in Africa. The ethos at Royal Malewane is one of learning, development and conservation. Birkenhead House was next to open, offering an unrivalled coastal experience in Hermanus focused on whale watching. La Residence opened in 2008 in the heart of the Cape Winelands focussing on the wine and gastronomy of Franschoek and was soon voted the No. 1 Hotel in the World. The Silo Hotel in Cape Town completes The Royal Portfolio's circuit of quintessentially South African luxury travel experiences and has received incredible worldwide recognition. Liz's advocacy towards conserving water at each of our properties during Cape Town's drought has once again proven her dedication to benefiting South Africa through living the purpose and values of The Royal Portfolio.

### DESCRIPTION:

Liz Biden moved from the fashion industry into the hospitality in 1999. She was a natural because she loves nothing more than to share wonderful things with people. Within 17 years she has built up one of the most iconic luxury hotel groups in the world showcasing the very best of South Africa, building incredible relationships around the world with agents and celebrity clients and being featured in the likes of Vanity Fair magazine as a female pioneer of experiential African travel putting South Africa firmly on the international luxury travel map. All the while caring for her growing family and preparing the business for the next generation. La Residence was voted the best hotel in the world within 5 years of opening was certainly a highlight. The Royal Portfolio now employs over 600 staff.



## ESCAPE + EXPLORE

NAME: INGRAM CASEY

### WHAT WAS THE OBJECTIVE?

Ingram left behind a long and successful career in African tour operating to venture out into a space which was unknown creating a style of destination hosting that is innovative, exciting and completely removed from the traditional. High end guided experiences that enhance itinerary's enabling his intrepid team to share astonishing adventures opening travellers minds 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. 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.

### DESCRIPTION:

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.

### VIDEO LINK:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXbXvBwax6g>



# THE AFRICAN TRAVEL AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION

NAME: NIGEL VERE NICOLL

INNOVATION AWARDS 2018

## WHAT WAS THE OBJECTIVE?

In 1996, Nigel, a former hotelier and tour operator was elected in a non-executive role to the board of The African Travel & Tourism Association (Atta). At that time Atta was a newly formed trade association with 34 members promoting tourism from UK to 3 countries in East Africa. 21 years on, Nigel has developed Atta, into one of the most successful multinational representative organisations in the tourist sector with 590 corporate members in 42 countries globally, of which, 22 are on the African continent. Through Nigel's inspirational efforts he has earned respect and recognition as the voice of African tourism interests in UK and Europe. His efforts promoting Africa as a credible tourist destination, and his work in crisis management in all matters concerning tourism in Africa have been recognised by many of the leading tourism bodies in East and Southern Africa who now have partnerships with the association he has developed. In times of crisis Atta is usually the first point of contact for international media. Building a trade association with just 34 members in 3 countries to 590 in 42 countries is in itself recognition of the practical achievement that he has made, making this organisation unique, widespread and effective in that it effectively combines the tourist, the tour operator, the governments and the media to ensure quick and clear communication, the building of trade, good practice and safety for all parties involved. His passion drive and determination to promote tourism to Africa is recognised throughout the industry.

## DESCRIPTION:

Rarely is an industry so fortunate to have such a respected, admired and loved person at it's helm.! Nigel's calm professional character coupled with sublime diplomatic skills and deep knowledge of African Tourism, equipped him to be recognised and applauded by all those who know him including Ministers and senior Govt officials in many countries. His tireless enthusiasm and energy for all matters that positively impact African Tourism are now legendary, and he surely deserves this recognition from the entire industry and membership.



## ANGAMA MARA

NAME: STEVE FITZGERALD

### WHAT WAS THE OBJECTIVE?

Steve Fitzgerald broke the industry mould by always putting those who worked with him first. It was never about the stuff – only ever about the staff. Aged 27 he took early retirement from being a chartered accountant because he wanted to work in a business side by side with his team, making differences to their lives and those of his customers and community members. In 1983 he opened his first hotel in a fishing village from where all the staff came. They had never looked after guests before where their opinion was not only sought but respected, and where they were fully empowered to make any decision, without seeking advice or permission, as long as it was made in the best interest of the company. Steve never wavered from his North Star of staff first and instilled it deeply in the DNA of every hotel, restaurant and safari lodge he opened – 60 in all, on two continents, across 7 countries with a staff of 2500. His team trusted and respected him because they knew they were trusted and respected in return. He loved nothing more than sitting under a tree sharing ideas with the people he so loved working with. He knew that happy staff meant happy guests, happy guests meant sound business, and sound business meant making sustainable differences to this lovely continent. Please read Angama Mara's Blog written by Steve about those with whom he worked spanning his 35 year career in this industry (link below). <https://www.angama.com/leaving-out-the-dull-parts-blog/a-journey-of-wonderful-people/>

### DESCRIPTION:

Steve was most proud of the role he played when in 2007 &Beyond signed a pioneering land deal restoring 9000ha of ancestral land to the communities neighbouring Phinda.



## CHELI & PEACOCK SAFARIS

NAME: LIZ & STEFANO CHELI

### WHAT WAS THE OBJECTIVE?

Both brought up in Kenya, Liz & Stefano started this journey in 1985 “to be able to share the wonder of safari in the East African wilderness with others”. They were revolutionaries - drivers and leaders of the real safari and environmental sustainability; safari and conservation hand in hand. Safari - Their drive was to ensure safari was fun, experiential, tailor-made and for visitors to really immerse themselves in the wilderness - take a deep breath, smell the dust, watch the dramatic skies. Early days were mobile tented safaris - take only photos and leave only footprints was really how it was. Then lodges - small, relaxed, great guiding, walking, fun sundowners, open safari vehicles .... with Stefano’s Italian heritage - they revolutionized safari cooking. Opening community areas to wildlife conservation gave us wilder, private, and experiential safari, as well as ensuring long term sustainability. Conservation - Never a “numbers game”, although with no funding, every project had to pay its way. Always small, sustainable materials, solar infrastructure, no bottled water, and crucially - working with communities and creating key wildlife conservancies. So many firsts: Mobiles - Uniquely with double beds, china crockery and glasses, and women guides! Tortilis Camp - one of the original African boutique lodges - first to get open gamedrive vehicles approved in National Parks, Tourism for Tomorrow award, first lodge of its size to be 100% solar. Elsa’s Kopje - first to get permission for walking, fishing, night game drives and rafting in a National Park. First to have reusable drinking bottles in all properties.

### DESCRIPTION:

Changed the face of safari from only either hunting or minibus safaris, to the experiential safaris we have today. Passionate and kick-ass.

