

**INNOVATION
AWARDS 2019**

DISCLAIMER

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Rise Africa

Recognising up and coming young stars making a mark in the African travel industry: From influential bloggers to passionate tour guides, top chefs to remarkable hotel personnel

BLUE SAFARIS SEYCHELLES

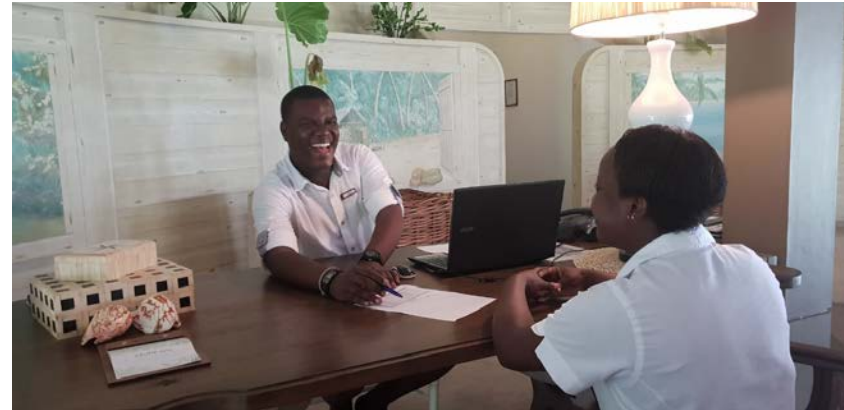
Sam Madeleine

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

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THEIR ROLE AND IMPACT IN THE INDUSTRY

Sam Madeleine's role is in Guest Relations. He has made a significant impact on guests and on Blue Safari Seychelles, whilst making an impact on the industry overall. How? Guests frequently ask for him and due to his affable manner and exceptional ability to make the impossible, possible. He has increased repeat business as Blue Safari Seychelles' guests return to experience the islands and atolls due to the unforgettable experiences, he has personally curated for them on previous occasions. Due to this, he has also increased revenue as he takes the time to develop a rapport with guests and suggests additional activities and experiences that they may like to partake in, based on his interactions with them. He has set new standards within the Guest Relations department and has motivated his team to encourage them to believe in themselves and achieve the very best that they can to elevate each and every guest experience to the next level. It is his exceptional ability, positive attitude and the relationship he forms with each and every guest that has earned him great respect and admiration within the travel industry.



THEIR MOST STAND OUT ATTRIBUTE

Sam's wit and charm steal the show on a Friday night during our 'Creole Sarong Night' where he draws guests into the Traditional Creole 'Saga' Dance. Sam is the starter of our Pool Volley Ball Competition's and has gone as far as instructing a water aerobics class! Sam has created a historic island cycle tour, guiding and educating guests of the early settlers and the history surrounding Alphonse and its coconut plantation, ending off with his famous self- created smoothies and Cocktails in the island's Smoothie Café using home-grown organic fruits and vegetables picked out by Sam himself.

DESERT & DELTA

Gorata Nyame

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

Gorata has been working in the travel industry for Desert & Delta Safaris for two and a half years. Before entering the industry, she was a special education teacher, focusing on teaching sign language for children with hearing disabilities.

THEIR ROLE AND IMPACT IN THE INDUSTRY

As a relative 'newbie' in the industry, Gorata's achievements and passion for what she does is far beyond her years. Achieving what some work a lifetime to achieve in such a short span of time, Gorata has quickly become an inspiration to both young and old. Gorata stands out as an example of the kind of person who is leading the way for the future of the tourism industry in Botswana. Focusing on not only inspiring young Botswana women to follow their passion and be fearless, but also elder Botswana who feel that they have reached a ceiling, Gorata has a fire burning inside her for educating & teaching. She speaks of an industry still in a phase of growth - not in terms of numbers of guests visiting the country, but in terms of empowering its people to provide these guests with the best hospitality service in the world. She believes that her role as a manageress of one of Botswana's most popular safari lodges is to constantly teach.

THEIR MOST STAND OUT ATTRIBUTE

Well, the fact that she is only 27 and runs one of Botswana's busiest luxury safaris lodges is, in itself, incredible! But her most stand out feature is her ability to understand. This is on any level. She understands guests needs, desires, complaints, worries, body language and even struggle with English! She also understands her staff's restrictions, culture, abilities & aspirations. This attribute steams from her past in special education. What this translates to is unrivalled communication skills and near perfect execution of all of her managerial duties. She is a challenge seeker, a visionary & a natural born leader.



ULTIMATE SAFARIS NAMIBIA

Franco Moroa

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

15 years

THEIR ROLE AND IMPACT IN THE INDUSTRY

Franco was born in eastern Namibia, and delivered to an orphanage in Windhoek at the age of two. He never knew his family and stayed at the orphanage until he completed secondary school in 2002.

By stroke of great fortune, his orphanage was approached by 'Children in the Wilderness' from Wilderness Safaris', who offered to take some of the children out to experience the natural world. The group selected included a young, ambitious and eager Franco, whose enthusiasm and passion for nature was immediately apparent. He was trained in basic mentorship skills and then enlisted as a tent leader where he took inspiration from watching the camp guides in operation. After seeing how this was done, he knew what he wanted to do himself.

Despite this, he enrolled for a four-year university bachelor's degree in 2003, but soon realized that his true passion still lay with the outdoors, so he gave up his studies after just six months and joined the tourism industry as a trainee guide.



After working as a specialist guide in many of Namibia's most iconic areas, including Sossusvlei, Damaraland, Skeleton Coast, Hartmann's Valley and Etosha National Park, he went on to lead overland expeditions throughout Namibia. Franco further elevated his skills by graduating from 'big game area' courses in Botswana and Zambia, before leading safaris for brands like Natural Habitat Adventures and WWF, as well as a number of celebrities and well-known international personalities. Franco has definitely developed into being one of Namibia's finest safari guides.



THEIR MOST STAND OUT ATTRIBUTE

From the most unlikely of scenarios, Franco has risen to become one of Namibia's most respected naturalist guides, with recognition in both local and international fora. His journey has been a fantastic affirmation for altruistic programs such as 'Children in the Wilderness' demonstrating exactly the type of result that this initiative hoped for. In addition, he is an outstanding role model for young Namibians and, more importantly, a role model for those who come from the most difficult of life circumstances. His quiet confidence has been built through his own determination and he deserves all the success he has achieved.



WILDERNESS SAFARIS

Anita Umutoni

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

Anita has been with Wilderness Safaris for over 2 years

THEIR ROLE AND IMPACT IN THE INDUSTRY

With a persistent passion for hospitality, Anita Umutoni started in the industry as a student by day and a housekeeper by night at a hotel in Kigali, Rwanda. She worked the night shift for eight consecutive years in order to pay for her school fees. She always dreamt of a career in hospitality, graduating amongst the top students in her class and securing a position in a high-end hotel chain in Dubai. After four years, Anita returned home to contribute to Rwanda's economy. She continued to work in Kigali before joining Wilderness Safaris in June 2017 as the Assistant Manager for the award-winning Bisate Lodge. She attended numerous training sessions in six Wilderness Safaris camps in Botswana and Zambia and has played an integral part in the team who has worked tirelessly to ensure the success of Bisate. Wilderness Safaris is thrilled to have promoted Anita to Camp Manager for its new Magashi Camp - set to open in Akagera National Park in May 2019.

This new appointment means that Anita will be the first female in Rwanda to manage a high-end safari lodge - showcasing that her true determination, passion and hard work has resulted in the realisation of her dream. She has already spent time camping in Akagera to get a feel for the Magashi site and area. She is a rising star in Rwanda and deeply committed to making the camp succeed, as well as making a positive difference to driving sustainable ecotourism in the region.



THEIR MOST STAND OUT ATTRIBUTE

Anita's appointment as the Camp Manager for Wilderness Safaris' new Magashi Camp will make her the first female in Rwanda to manage a high-end safari lodge. This is not only something that she can be extremely proud of, but a huge inspiration for many other young rising stars. Anita holds a diploma in Leadership and Hospitality Management from the Akilah Institute, and is currently enrolled online with the Cambridge International College. When Magashi opens in May 2019, Anita will use her skills, passion, dedication and hard work to deliver an exceptional experience to drive responsible ecotourism in Akagera National Park.

WILDERNESS SAFARIS

Abner Simeon

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YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

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THEIR ROLE AND IMPACT IN THE INDUSTRY

Born in the northern parts of Namibia in a village called Okambembe, not far from the border of Angola, Abner grew up mesmerised by the country's endless landscapes. His parents worked in a lodge outside Windhoek where he was first introduced to the tourism industry. During school holidays, he would shadow his brother in the field as he drove around attending to injured wildlife. When Abner completed high school, he started working in different lodges in maintenance, while he quietly worked on his dream of becoming a Guide. He was therefore extremely fortunate to be sponsored by Amarula and Eco-Training to become a Nature Guide in Namibia in 2014. He then went on to receive his Level 4 National Guiding certification - the highest qualification. He has worked in almost all of Wilderness Safaris camps in Namibia doing what he loves best. Every day is an opportunity for him to bring his positive energy and enthusiastic personality to the field, eagerly searching for wildlife (as well as the best sundowner spots in the region!).

For Abner, being a guide is effortless and just another way to showcase his country. Guiding is the perfect platform for him to amplify the message of conservation, while using practical examples like the human-lion conflict issue found in north-west Namibia. When he is not engaging and educating guests, he is a Children in the Wilderness Eco-Mentor, teaching children from local communities how to appreciate their pristine surroundings and care for the environment through interactive environmental games and activities.



THEIR MOST STAND OUT ATTRIBUTE

Abner's motto in life is: 'As long you are happy, I am happy too'. He is highly attentive and has impeccable attention to detail when out in the field, always ensuring his guests get the best out of their journey, and striving to do more to ensure a unique, interpretive experience. He is a rising star in Namibia and deeply committed to conservation and community empowerment. His passion for educating youth about the importance of conservation is commendable and working with Children in the Wilderness during his 'down time' indicative of his endless energy and passion to make a difference.